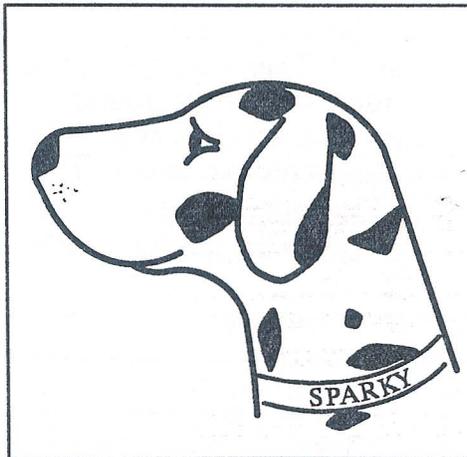




The Magazine for Those on the Brink
5th Anniversary Issue • April 1, 1991

BUY OUR WORKSTATIONS



OR WE'LL DIGITIZE THIS DOG!!

If kick ass performance and ridiculing our competition doesn't persuade you, then we'll have to take more extreme measures.

A recent reorganization at the Palo Alto Puppy Palace has put a passle of cute critters into our hands. But they won't be leaping for many more frisbees if you don't buy, buy, buy.

And remember: our workstations are born from the marriage of Hewlett Packard's experience and Apollo's ingenuity. So, buy one of the little sons of bitches!

We put the "hard" back into hardware.



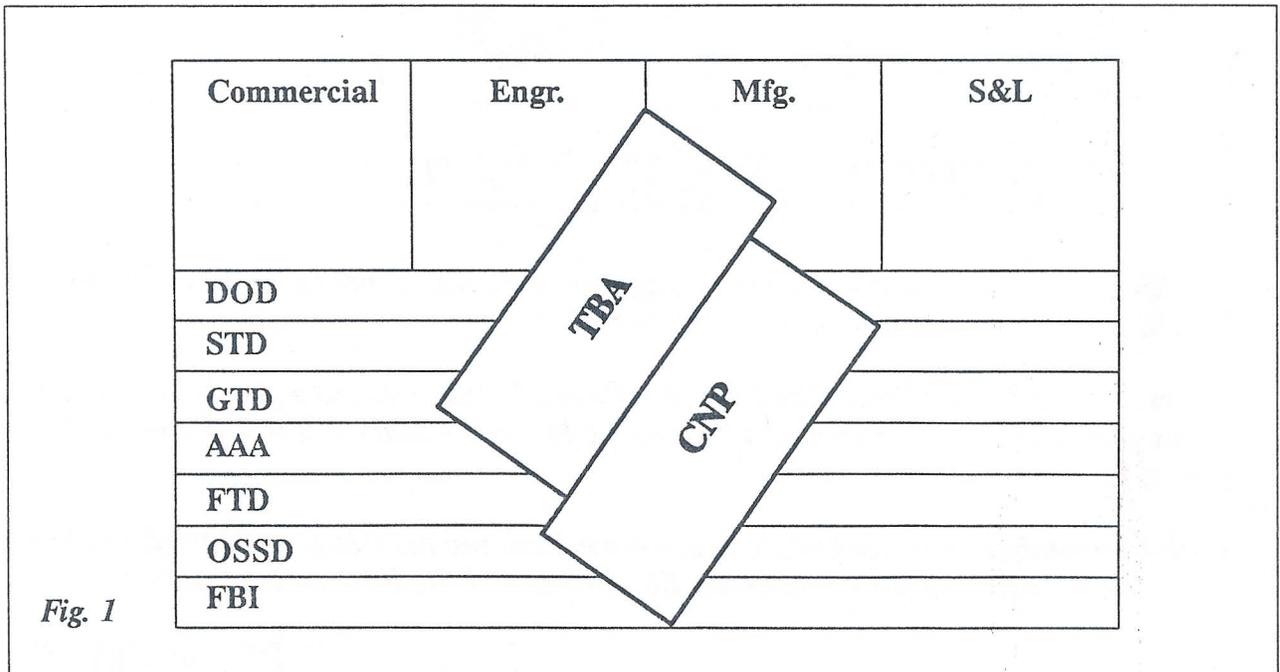
Organizational Realignment Sets Stage for Dramatic Comeback

It's been five (count 'em, FIVE!) years since our inaugural issue! In honor of that landmark event, and not wanting to miss the "winds of change" sweeping through the soon-to-be-late Apollo Systems Division, the management team at *Over the Edge* is pleased to announce the formation of a new organizational structure. This structure has been designed to maximize management complexity while at the same time ensuring peak functional dysfunctionality. "We have taken the idea of 'systems

divisions' and 'technology divisions,' and pushed it one step further," reports our Editor-in-Chief. "Given that the scheme comprises horizontal 'technology planks' and vertical 'market-driven' segments, the only piece needed to complete the picture is diagonal 'guerrilla groups' (see Figure 1). This is exactly the position that underground efforts such as this newsletter are envisioned to occupy."

Guerrilla groups are free to combine the best tech-

nologies from the technology divisions with the best systems from the systems divisions to create precisely-focused products ideal for satisfying their own internal requirements. Freed from the annoying pressure of satisfying paying customers and the headaches associated with pushing technology envelopes, guerrilla groups can finally achieve their most critical business goals. "It's kind of like HP Labs in reverse," says the Chief.



Clearly, forming an organizational structure which delivers on the full potential of such a visionary setup is not easy. The team devoted several offsite planning meetings to envisioning the possibilities. "We began with the Hoshin Planning Process, finally agreeing that our 1991 breakthrough objective would be 'to set objectives of a breakthrough nature consistent with corporate profitability objectives and the process of realizing that people are

our most important asset except for institutional investor confidence.' Once we got that down on a two-color slide in one of those tough plastic sleeves, the rest was easy."

Most innovative of all is the staff's new 3-dimensional organization chart (Figure 2), which clearly and succinctly captures the rich web of managerial interdependencies that are implicit in any *n*-dimensionally matrixed organiza-

tion. Pop-up copies of the org chart are available in the front lobbies of each building in Chelmsford, or may be ordered from the Singapore Manufacturing Operation (S'MOr). Request Order No. Q04558-90001, Part No. 002547-A03, Model No. DXEABA-ORGCHT. (Allow two years for delivery. Failure to specify ordering information accurately will result in an entity penalty of \$1000.)

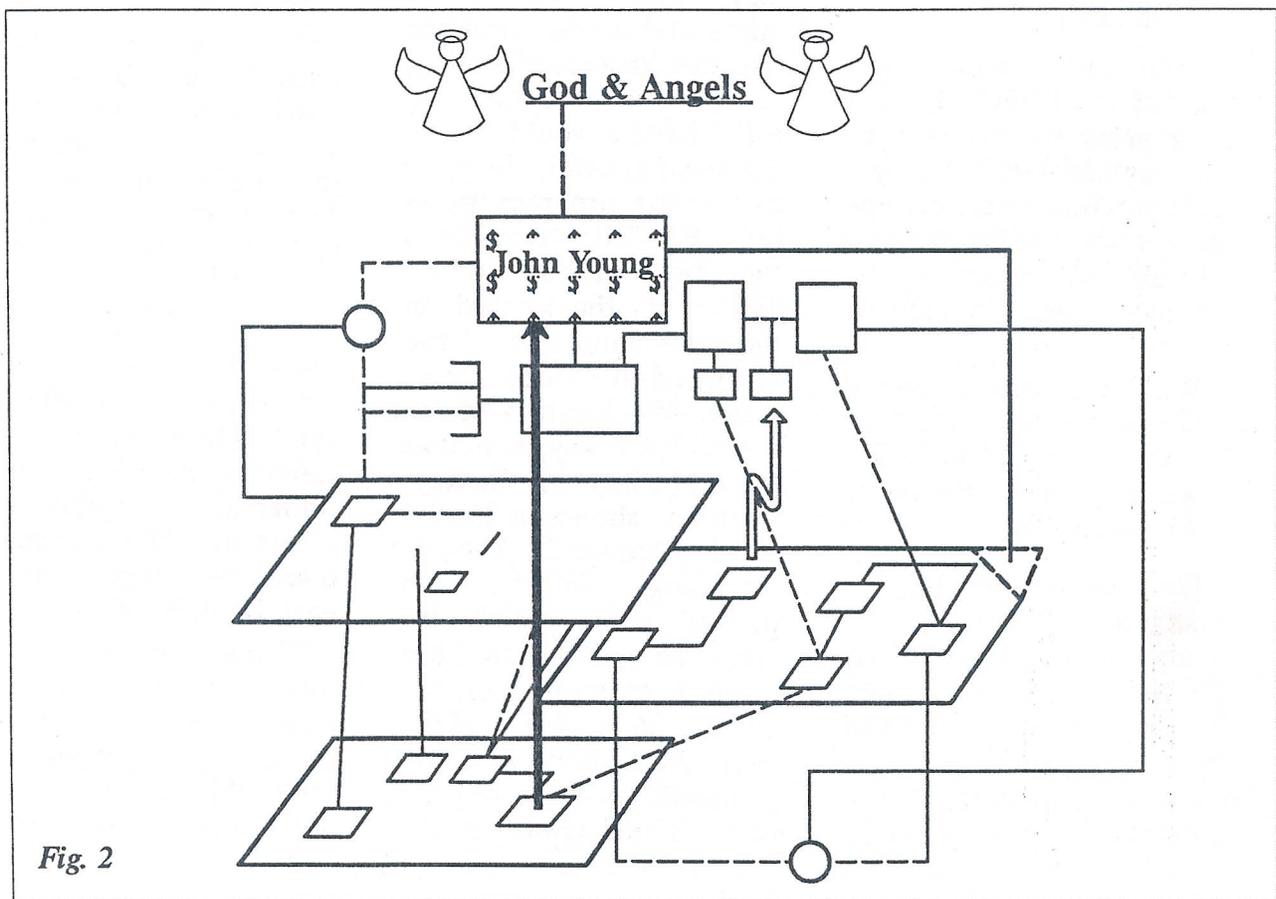


Fig. 2

Learning Products Announces Book Lite: *Less Filling, Tastes Great*

[In an exclusive interview with *The Edge*, Learning Products Head Writing Honcho (LPHWH) Polly Unsaturated recently outlined new strategies for writing and distributing manuals to customers. Not that *The Edge* would boast, but we're proud of "scooping our competition," as if we had any.]

"Our old strategy," explained the LPHWH, "was to impress customers with how sophisticated our systems are, how smart our engineers are, and how knowledgeable our writers are to produce such exhaustive documentation."

What users didn't know is that these writers were paid by the word. The more words they wrote, the fatter their paychecks.

[*The Edge's* probing investigation discovered the scam went even further. Writers' jobs were funded by the revenues derived from selling manuals to customers. Companies calculate manual costs by a complicated number-crunching process, which requires a

200-person Manufacturing department and specialized software. While the formula is too complex to explain in this article, the gist is that you multiply the number of pages in the manual by a constant dollar amount.]

This cycle led to writers being rewarded for writing more books, with more pages, and wordier sentence structure. Instead of writing, "Press <ENTER> to exit," writers would be encouraged to write, "In order to exit the program, press the <ENTER> key. This is the key marked <ENTER> on the keypad on the right-hand side of the keyboard on a Model 2 keyboard. The location of the <ENTER> key, as well as the other keys on the keyboard, is shown in Figure 2-3 in Chapter 2." The enterprising writer who penned these words increased his word count from 4 words to more than 50, while also adding a full-page illustration. A really proficient writer could aspire to someday wordsmithing speeches for George Bush.

Lately though, documentationalists have been exploring ways to reduce the number of books and pages. Customers started to wise up when they'd get 40 boxes of manuals to support a workstation that came in 4 boxes. "So we figured we'd better change the game.

"We've been exploring different ways to reduce the number of books and the size of each book. After much constructive discussion and even more meetings, we've come up with a three-point plan, which we call Book Lite," explained the LPHWH.

She proceeded to outline the plan.

"First, we kill all the lawyers. Throwing out disclaimers, copyright notices, trademark acknowledgments, and FCC notices reduces the page count in each book by 30%.

"Second, we strictly enforce tight writing and trim all excess verbiage from our manuals. Some of you might think this means we'll be able to reduce our writing staff. Well, you're wrong, *nyah nyah nyah nyah nyah*.

Writing professionals know that it takes more time to write concise, carefully pruned prose. We've changed the budgeting and funding method. We no longer pay writers by the word, but rate their job performance on how concisely they can convey complex concepts, not to mention how alliteratively. Writing assignments will go to writers who bid the lowest word count for a project. I can hear it now: 'I can write that book in 300,000 words' or 'I can document that product in 30 pages.'

"Third, our boldest step yet, is a daring breakthrough in technical writing: the marriage of technical writing's current 'minimalist documentation' fad with hypermedia.

"Here's how it works: take a manual and look at all those words. Who needs them all, since nobody reads the darn manual anyway! We can trim a lot of fat here. Take the first letter of every word and create an acronym. Do that for the next word, and the next, for the whole book.

"For example, we can rewrite the following sentence,

Lex generates a deterministic finite automaton from the regular expressions in the source.

more compactly as
LGADFAFTREITS.

The challenge of deciphering the manual adds a little spice to the reading. "That's why we call it Book Lite - it's less filling with prose, but spiced up with the taste of the hunt.

"We'll also be able to have custom versions for international use. We can save a fortune in localization costs by transliterating acronyms instead of translating manuals.

"The French version of the previous example is

TPSPSPPPFSTTPQVTS
CPOTMDPCP

"Sure, each letter stands for different words in French, but we'll let the French figure it out themselves. If you've ever gone to Paris and asked for directions you'll understand.

"As an added feature, we can print the entire manual in ALL CAPS SO USERS WILL KNOW THIS IS IMPORTANT STUFF.

"We can fit the entire HP documentation set in to 3 volumes. And the manuals won't be any more difficult to read than your typical manual from, say, DEC, Wang, or Interleaf.

"What's more, every letter is a hypertext link. All users have to do is point to a letter and they can see the expanded form of the word. A hardcopy master index, with the full form of all words, will be available as soon as we complete a deal to sell the 26-volume OED. Readers can browse through the OED to see all words that begin with any letter of the alphabet until they find the one that best fits the context."

Asked to comment on this new plan, HP's VP for Penny Pinching and Bean Counting, Mr. Preebuckle Gopholomus crooned, "This new plan saves the company zillions of dollars in printing and distribution. It's an inspiration to us all. In fact, I'm going to start talking like this. GTEGGNTCMM."

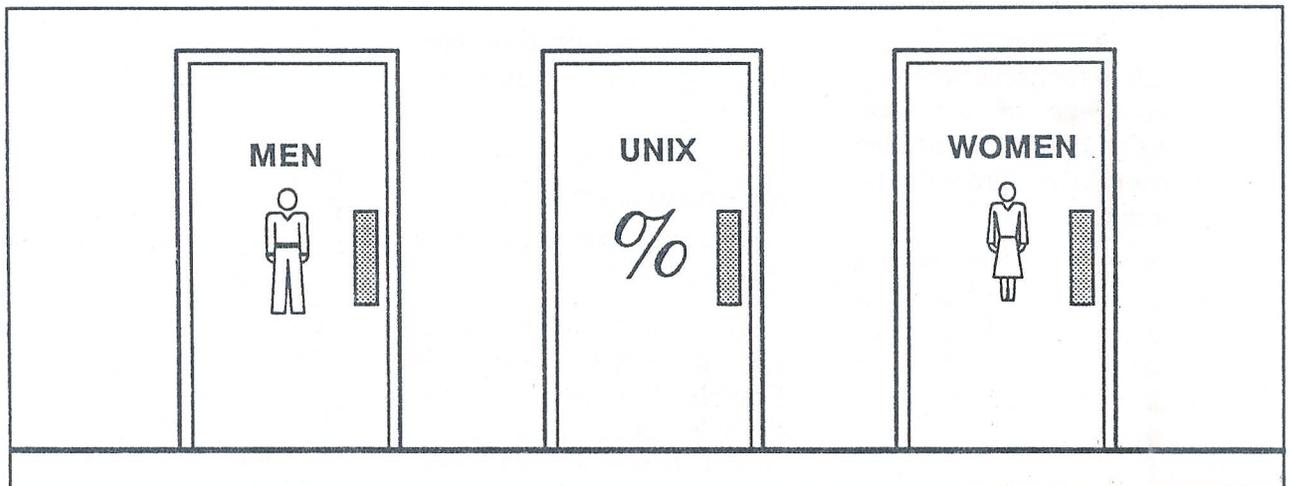
[Editor's translation for hypertextless-node readers: "Goodbye, *The Edge*. Gotta go now to count my money."]

Wall Street Weak *by Sharky DeBullion*

Sun Microsystems will use the same advertising agency as sugar-daddy AT&T. Sound byte from upcoming tv spot: "The phone rang around dinner time. It was THEM. You know, the guys from that OTHER workstation company. They said I could save real money by switching from Sun. 70 Mips? Can I get that in writing? Dead silence."...Send our troops to fight the Iraqis for oil? You bet! The Shar-

kster also supports invading Hungary to protect our vital paprika supply...How do you figure? Sharky went to school during New Math, but still can't understand how Data General, a company with 14,000 employees, seems to lay off at least 15,000 employees a month...Comedy tip of the week—precede any noun with the adjective *gelatinous*...The Commonwealth of Massachusetts had its

bond rating raised to DDD earlier this week, meaning that its bonds are now considered a slightly better investment than Confederate dollars, but not quite as safe as Eastern Airlines preferred stock...Sharky thinks it would be a better world if leaders were selected solely on the basis of hair style... Let's invade Bermuda. It's been under the iron boot of British domination far too long.



EMPLOYEE BENEFITS BULLETIN

Subject: HP Benefits Improvement Plan

Dated: April 1, 1991

I am pleased to announce the next phase of our HP Benefits Improvement Plan.

As you will remember, in November we permitted employees to participate in their health insurance premiums. This program gives every employee the opportunity to become a financial partner with HP. In November we also invited you to share in the costs of the fitness center.

We are now expanding our employee participation program in several new directions. Furthermore, an integrated network of Big-Bro devices will give you the convenience of automatic payroll deduction for all perks and benefits that have an electronic interface.

The names of these programs in the HP Happy Talk

Language appear in parentheses.

Facilities

Parking permits—issued quarterly for a nominal membership fee in our HAPPY Club (Have A Parking Place, Y'all).

Coin-operated dispensers for toilet paper and paper towels in all lavatories. (CHEER, Charmin Holds Every Employee Ransom)

Key cards—a moderate exit toll will be assessed as you leave the building. There will be no charge to enter buildings, at this time. An interface between the card key database and the payroll system will enable automatic payroll deduction for this service. Invite a favored coworker to leave the building with you, and take advantage of the added bonus of buying someone

an exit pass (it's cheaper than buying lunch). (SMILE, Spend Money in Local Exit and CHUCKLE, Caught Here Unless Card Key Licenses Egress)

Conference room rentals (JOY, Joke's On You)

Oxygen consumption (BLISS, Breathing Less Is Saving Simoleons)

Tools

Monitoring of cpu time (MERRY, Make Employers Rich: Reimburse Yours)

Message unit system for telephone calls and voice mail—will feature lower cost for interoffice telephone calls than for outside calls. Your voice mail password will ensure that only the costs of your own calls are debited from your paycheck.

Printer and copier usage (DELIGHT, Duplicating Every Little Item Gilds HP Treasury)

Insurance

A generous new life insurance program covers you for as long as you live. (LAUGH, Life Assurance Unmitigated Gall: Humbug!)

Next Month

Watch for our announcements on:

The Employee Purchase Plan—how many engineers do you think SUN, IBM, and DEC will buy from us this fiscal year?

Office Supplies Store—we are working on the mechanisms for enabling you to stock your office with paper clips, staplers, pencils, and other frills at low cost to you and with the convenience of payroll deduction. We are investigating the feasibility of changing employee ID cards into credit/debit cards, perhaps through the American Express Corporate Charge Account. We will let you know further details next month.

For your convenience, you do not have to sign up for any of these new benefits. These new benefits will be activated for you automatically, effective with the

next pay period. Employees who do not wish to participate in these generous offerings may deselect these options by completing Voluntary Termination Form HP-UY.

Hugh Le D'Pacquard,
Benefits Manager

This summer the
SUN can't burn
you with



Effectively blocks the
entire spectrum of
SUNlight - for under
\$12K!

What if...?

What if... Marketing wrote your performance review?

"Mary Smith's performance during the past year has been truly kick-ass. She's one helluva package of raw engineering power, at a price/performance ratio that her competitors—ah, peers—can't touch. Mary's oozes engineering excellence. I tell you, this baby screams..."

HP/Apollo Introduces New Colors; Retires Old Ones

Following the lead of color giant Crayola, HP/Apollo has decided to replace eight existing colors in its color system palettes with more contemporary colors.

According to Color Marketing Specialist Tawny Brown, the colors to be retired are: **Flesh** ("not ethnically correct"), **Raw Umber** ("too often confused with Burnt Umber"), **Puce** ("an unfortunate name for a color"), **Maroon** ("replaced in recent times by Wine, Burgundy, Port, and Claret"),

Maize (“only useful in agricultural applications”), **Salmon** (“yech”), **Cornflower Blue** (“a nice color that, sadly, never developed much of a following”), and **Cerulean Blue** (“a lot of blues are having a tough time maintaining popularity; this is another loser”).

The eight new colors to be introduced into the HP/Apollo palette are: **Pebble** (“sort of a soft whitish-brownish-grayish color”), **Sage** (“a dusty green”), **Ginger** (“a mustard with cinnamon overtones”), **Wheat** (“sort of a soft yellowish-

brownish-grayish color”), **Aubergine** (“a deep purple; ‘eggplant’ with class”), **Moss** (“sort of a soft greenish-brownish-grayish color”), **Fuchsia** (“my favorite; a hot pink”), and **Raisin** (“that’s dark raisins, not golden raisins”).

Over The Edge now available with HYPERACTIVE TEXT

In this issue of the Over the Edge, we proudly introduce our HyperActiveText interface. No longer need you follow only one enjoyment path; all senses of humor are accommodated.

To use the HyperActiveText interface, simply point and click on any word, phrase, indecent illustration, or any part of a page. (If you are reading hardcopy, point with either your left or right index finger (L1

or R1) and make a clicking sound with your tongue.) You will be inundated with relevant background material, related jokes, and pointers to dozens of humor paths.

But an example is worth a thousand words. Try it now. Isn’t that incredible? A veritable explosion of hilarious data is at your fingertips.

If it doesn’t work right away, give it time. Try

another word, like maybe HyperActiveText. (We’ve got 13,850 jokes on that alone.) Keep clicking.

It took us years to develop this fantastic innovation for our comedy arsenal. We know you’ve been waiting a long time for this, but it was worth the wait.

Oh, and remember: you have to have HyperActiveText installed in your brain for this to work.

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