

S U B - E T H A S O F T W A R E
Company History and Profile

COMPANY HISTORY - October 1994

In 1990, myself (Allen Huffman) and Terry Todd founded Sub-Etha Software "in support of the CoCo". Originally it would be to promote two programs Terry had created: Shadow BBS (originally known as SMORBBBS - Shadow Magic's Original Room Based BBS) and MultiBasic (which he wrote in order to create the BBS), both for RS-DOS. (MultiBasic was originally going to be released in a less powerful version called Module-DOS, and the original name for the company was going to be "Forty-Two Technology"...betcha didn't know that!) We were to begin advertising in The Rainbow in November with a 1/4 page ad. A phone conversation with Dave Myers (of CoCoPro! fame) brought to our attention how "good" it would be to make an appearance at the first Atlanta CoCoFest he was sponsoring. It was an interesting idea and, unlike RainbowFests at that time, it was one we could afford...somewhat. We split a half-booth with a Georgian named Carl England.

So...our introduction to the CoCo Community was that October and we made our way there by hitching a ride in the back of a pickup truck with some great folks from Houston. (Hello to Nancy and John Ward, wherever you may be!) The rest, as they say, is history - and what a fun history it has been. It was at this show that MiniBanners made it's first appearance after one week of mad programming. After this, five ads ran in Rainbow and massive orders were refused for the never-completed Shadow BBS (which, to this day, Terry says he will eventually finish). We even dabbled in some 5 1/4" disk drives, offering the lowest price in Rainbow, but we never did manage to find those pesky power cable adapters for the FD-502 drives so our efforts (and sales) ended up being less than planned.

In 1991, Terry hadn't touched his CoCo for some time. In his place, Mark Page (one

of the only other CoCo people around) made the trek with me to Atlanta for the '91 Fest. Established programmer Joel Hegberg was brought onboard with his CheckBook+ creation as well as dealings with Carl England to carry his fine disk utilities. We split a booth this year with Adventure Survivors - a really great couple of folks. At this show we were able to demonstrate a full page scanner attachment which hooked to your printer enabling it to do 64-grey scale images. Sadly, this product never got finalized but it did get much attention.

Mark, Joel and myself would meet again in Chicago in '92 for the First Annual "Last" CoCoFest...this time with OSK products for the MM/1 including Joel's Etha-GUI. At this gathering we helped launch the OS9 Underground magazine by taking subscriptions and handing out sample copies to other vendors. We also offered AniMajik's OS-9 products. This was an exciting show, and our cramped corner booth was shared with StrongWare.

A few Sub-Etha ads ran in the Underground and just in time for the '92 Atlanta CoCoFest Terry would return (but Mark would not be able to attend). Terry's new offering was InfoPatch - a program to modify Infocom text adventures to run in 80 columns on a CoCo 3. This was also the show that gave life to the "PVC Nightmare" which spawned from the lack of fancy backdrops. Terry and I set out to a late-night hardware store and bought tubing which we hacked up in the parking lot with a newly acquired saw (to make it fit into my Honda) and would later reassemble in the show area and drape a background from it. It was very unstable, but, then again, the same is often said about us. This was our first 'Fest with a full booth!

Things continued and a 'Fest was planned in 1993 for Des Moines, Iowa. Sub-Etha was one of the few vendors there.

This time fellow CoCoist Tim Johns helped out since Terry was out of town installing satellite dishes. Although it was a small, quiet show, a surprisingly large amount of money was made on Joel's new Write-Right MM/1 word processor making this one of our most profitable shows. The prototype of the upcoming EthaWin user-interface was also shown during a seminar.

The 2nd Annual "Last" Chicago CoCoFest happened a month later and Terry and I drove the 1000+ mile trip. It was during this trip that we had a little "run in" with a diesel on the tollway which has been immortalized in my traditional 'Fest report of the event. Other than that, it was an incredible trip - and the largest show we had attended - with OS-9 users from around the world.

Our fourth AtlantaFest followed in October. The graphic adventure simulation of the previous year's 'Fest made it's debut along with the MultiBoot bootfile manager and the first EthaWin utility, Towel! Tim Johns even managed to follow us there in a rental car. (As they say, you take to good with the bad. Grins.) Terry showed off a new RS-DOS terminal emulator that handled OS-9 screen codes. We demonstrated it by hooking a cable to his bit-banger port and letting his CoCo run full-screen text applications with window and color codes at 2400 baud. Interesting to say the least.

Would these shows ever stop? 1994 brought yet another Chicago show. A rented van brought Tim John's JoTA Productions, Sub-Etha Software, and BlackHawk Enterprises (yes, our crew gets credit for getting the new owner of the MM/1 hooked on 'Fests). Even though we forgot the PVC Nightmare, my towel and bathrobe, it was still our most organized show to date - something that no doubt impressed all who knew us as well as ourselves. It's amazing what a little pre-planning and some plastic tubs from the local discount store can do for you.

And now we are back where we started

just five years ago: Atlanta. Thanks for inviting us back. In return, we bring a few more first-time 'Fest attendees: Bob Rutherford, at whose house I first attended a CoCo meeting some seven years ago in Lufkin, and Alex Forrest, an ex IBM-PC jr owner whom I met when I worked at Radio Shack. We would have brought more, but our rental car was full <grin>. I'd try to predict how much fun we are going to have at this show, but it always seems to surpass my expectations so, instead, watch for my next 'Fest report...

Take a moment to see our new offerings: The Chicago 94 graphics adventure with images converted by Alan Sheltra (Zog) direct from Photo-CD, the high-speed Invaders09 arcade game, and many updates to our older products. It's a fine time to have a CoCo, indeed. Buy all you want - we'll write more! Don't buy, and maybe we won't. Something to think about.

Allen, Terry & Joel

SOAP BOX

Some of our long lasting Community members are giving up due to lack of response. Take a moment to let vendors and publishers know what you think, good or bad, about their products. Write letters and show your support for new ideas like The CoCo Registry. Sign up to support clubs, newsletters or magazines. We can only continue if everyone helps out. This is OUR Community. Ignore it and it will go away.

FEST INSIDE JOKE

A cookie to who discovers it. And it has nothing to do with what you have read here. (And if it did, those involved probably wouldn't tell you anyway).