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Volume 2, Issue 4

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a terminal based system. Well, to my surprise I found there was more than enough software to keep me happy.

This system comes with a number of powerful utilities (similar to the OS9 6809 but enhanced) including a good text editor, Umacs. There are also a variety of good word processors available including Ved which I quickly purchased because I use it on my COCO. My next quest was to get a terminal program. Since I was running low on cash I downloaded Stern which works well, but offers limited capabilities. There are however other commercial programs, like Info Express, available if more powerful terminal software is needed. Having achieved my basic needs, I decided to install SCREEN which would allow me to run several full screen windows and downloaded several programs including SC - a spreadsheet program. What is most important to note is that software is available.

While it is true that the software availability is not the same as the the IBM world, nevertheless, there is good software available. The bottom line is, I love OSK, it is a challenging and fun environment to work with. OSK offers new and exiting possibilities for users who want to move beyond the COCO or who just want a faster OS9 machine.

-JAMES POTTAGE
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Trenton On
Canada



About the author:

James Pottage has been a Coco OS9 user since 1987 and has just recently begun programming in C. James is 31 and works for the Department of National Defense as an Air Traffic Controller. He used the COCO as a word processor at his university and is presently using the PT68K4 for word processing and programming.

COMING NEXT MONTH: CocoFest Picture Issue

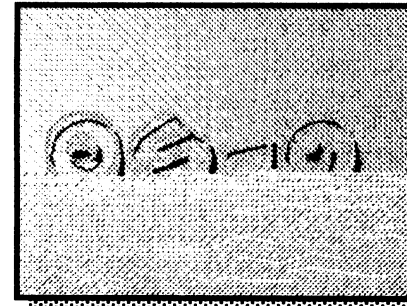
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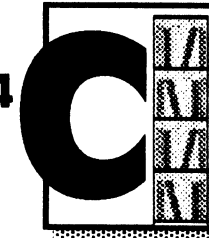
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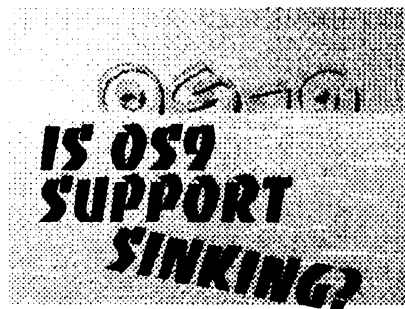
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<i>Staff</i> Editor:	Alan Sheltra
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Commentary by Alan Sheltra

Support is a two-way street. You need the vendor's and software/hardware developers to create and maintain all those neat utilities and applications for you, and they need you... to purchase, those products... and tell your friends about them.

Magazines and newsletters are one of the conduits by which both parties can reach each other. Vendors/developers through ads and you by sending in your comments, kudos and criticism.

Other conduits are the Electronic services and networks, which by their immediate nature, make them ideal for almost real time news and feedback.

Not everyone is on these services or nets, so that leaves the Magazines and Newsletters as their only source of news and at last count, that only makes 2 magazines left covering OS-9, "World of 68xxx" and the Underground. ("Metamorphosis", published by Mark Griffith, folded in August).

There are of course many specialized newsletters around the country, the biggest being the MOTD, the OS-9 User Group's newsletter, CoCo123 published by Glenside and the OS-9 Newsletter produced by the PNW Group. (I'm sure there are other smaller newsletters that I am not aware of or have overlooked).

Subscribe to all the mags and newsletters you can. They're your all IMPORTANT line of communication.

Mark Griffith, as you may have heard has completely pulled out of OS9 and while I don't agree with his method of "leaving" I do see some of his reasons for leaving. Here's an excerpt from an article he sent me (not really an article, but more a good-bye letter).

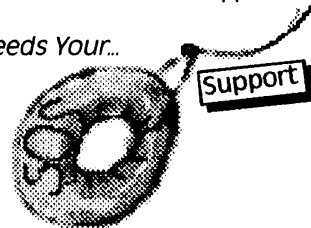
"As of this writing, I am officially out of the OS-9 computer hardware and software business. The "Dirt Cheap Computer Stuff Company" is being shut down, and the "Metamorphosis" magazine is out of print. I've taken this step with many misgivings, but no regrets..."

Mark has made many contributions to OS-9, and I will be sorry to see him leave our community.

Basically, Mark (and many others) as a software vendor was discouraged by dwindling software sales and lack of any real progress in development of OS-9. I can sympathize with him on the first part, AniMajik, my software company barely made enough to recoup it's advertising costs this year. But I have always been involved with OS-9 because it was a *hobby* and an *enjoyment* to me. Realistically, the market is much too small for Mark's financial expectations.

Don't let this discourage you though (especially you software/hardware vendors), it just means if we want OS-9 to continue to work, we have to first love it (I'm sure most of you do), and work a little harder to support it!

OS-9 Needs Your...



Building a Complete OSK System for Under \$800

by James Pottage

There has been a lot of discussion in the past about upgrading to OSK. Well, for what its worth, here is my two cents - IT IS POSSIBLE TO BUY A GOOD SYSTEM ON A LIMITED BUDGET. Further, there is ample software available that will meet the needs of most users. Last summer I began looking at upgrading to OSK.

After looking at the systems from Frank Hogg's, Delmar and Peripheral Technology, I decided it was time to get my feet wet.

Unfortunately I had a limited budget, therefore, the cost of the system became my biggest consideration. After consulting with Fred from Peripheral Technology, I believed I had found a system that I could both afford and enjoy. Peripheral Technology offers two low budget mother boards that will run OS9 68000. Both are based on the motorola 68000 processor. The first board is the PT68 K2 board which has a maximum of one meg memory, four serial ports, a parallel port and 8 IBM slots. It runs at 8 megahertz and will support, among other things, an IDE drive controller card, an MFM controller card, and a VGA card. Each of these cards are specific IBM controllers, and their model numbers can be obtained from Peripheral Technology, or you can order directly from them. Further, additional serial cards can be purchased from Delmar. The other board is the PT68 K4 board. This system has all the same features as the K2, plus it will support up to four meg of Ram and runs at 16 megahertz. Both systems are well designed and offer a solid base from which to build an OSK machine.

After looking at the prices, \$125 for a K2 vs \$249 for a K4, I decided I could afford the K4. Next I needed a Hard drive. I opted to use one of my two MFM drives connected to my COCO and ordered an MFM drive card for \$59 from Peripheral Technology. The next step was to get a case, power supply and disk drive. I found a high density 3.5 inch drive from a local store for \$59, and a case and power supply for \$89. I already had an old cybernex xl87m terminal which I decided to use as my monitor and keyboard. Finally, I needed an RS232 connector and Parallel Port cable which cost \$30.

So lets recap the prices:

PT68K4	- \$249.00
Power supply & case	- \$89.00
Terminal	- \$0.00
Hard Drive	- \$0.00
Hard Drive Controller	- \$59.00
3.5 Floppy	- \$59.00
Cables	- \$30.00
OS9 6800	- 299.00
Total	- \$755.00

The total cost was under \$800.00, *Amazing!* In mid February I had found the money and by the beginning of March I was up and running with an OSK machine.

Now as you have no doubt noticed the system I have put together does not support graphics. This concerned me, because I wondered how much software there was that would support