

## Everything you always wanted to know about computers...

Modems. Computer networks. What are they?

Will you be able to log in to NORAD central if you buy one? Will they change your life? No.

There are many misconceptions about tele-communications these days. Words like "virus," "phone-phreaks," "hackers" and "break-in" are bandied about in the media today. Most of the information available is PURE SENSATIONALISTIC HYPE.

So in hope of clearing some of that up here is a short glossary:

**Electronic Mail (e-mail)** — a computer version of the post office. You type in letters on a computer. You address them to other users on the same computer or another. The mail is then transported to the other computer through a network. Each computer in the network passes the mail on to the next one down the line until the mail reaches its final destination. See networks.

**Networks** — a group of computers connected together so they can share programs, data, and e-mail. This is what is often broken into. Networks are a relatively new phenomenon for computers, and security is often weaker at the networks than at the computers.

**Local area networks** — groups of computers situated in the same office that are wired together to share information.

**Wide area networks** — physically distant computers that share information over phone lines, microwave links, or dedicated communications lines. There are many of these, and they are often the ones that are broken into. You sometimes hear about Usenet, an informal network of university computers, private computers and computer manufacturer's computers. The Internet, is another such network of US department of defense computers. Envoy 100 is a commercial electronic mail network. There are many more networks, and

they are often interconnected so that mail on one can get to the other.

**On-Line Information Services** — companies that operate computers that you can log on to and access information on. They usually charge an hourly rate for use of their systems. A staggering amount of information is available:

You can read the New York times on one system. Systems like "Dialog" and "Canole" let you perform information searches and get bibliographic information on any subject that has had magazine articles or books published about it. In some cases they will even track down the book for you and mail it.

You can access stock information, and buy and sell stocks. You can log on to home shopping networks, buy virtually anything, have it mailed to you and charged to your credit card. You can download libraries of programs for your computer, and talk to conferences of users on specialized topics.

These services are often expensive; monthly connect bills for heavy users sometimes go into the thousands of dollars. A plethora of information is available — if you can afford it.

**Bulletin Board Systems (BBS'es)** — Smaller versions of On-Line Information systems. Usually run by private people. Most are free, some charge small fees. They usually have libraries of free programs you can download. You can usually chat to other users there.

**Downloading** — A way of sending a program from a BBS to your computer over a modem so that your computer can use it. You need a special program called a "communications program" and a modem (of course) to do the downloading. The programs are usually very cheap or free and are available for ALL computers that you can connect a modem to. There are a wide variety of different programs that all basically do the same thing.

"Blee off, you nud."

— Hobbit

"I look great in a filmy black scarf... and nothing else."

— Candyapple Grey

"If I were Hitler, I would have stuck to art."

— Bald Dwarf

These are quotes from users of BBS chat systems.

With the proliferation of computers and modems, many people are turning their computers into information and conference centers. There are more than 100 BBS's in Edmonton.

The BBSes vary widely in content and purpose. Some are chat systems, where people call in and talk to other people. Others are places where you can download free programs. Some offer multi-player games. Some do all of that. Some charge you to sign on, but most are free.

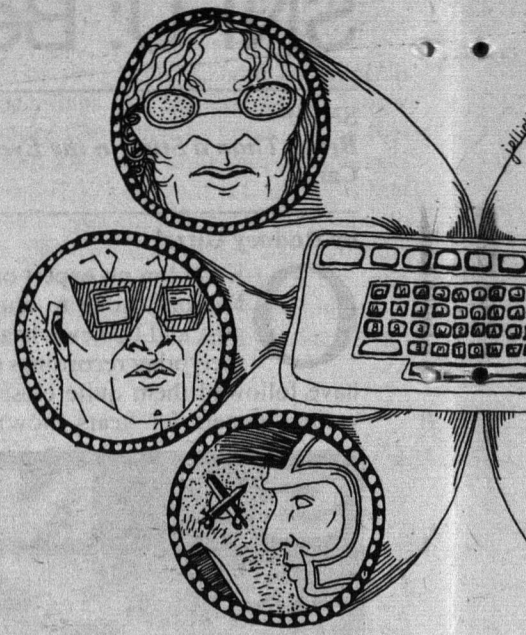
Each BBS has its own personality. They attract certain kinds of users. While some cater to technical users who need to get information about computer related topics, others attract non-technical users who know little more than how to turn their computer on.

It has become a new form of socializing. Users call in anonymously, and talk to each other under pseudonyms — names like "Bald Dwarf," "Five Fresh Fish," "Wench," "Headless Tomato."

Though people often don't know each other, their aliases begin to take on personalities. They encounter each other on different bulletin boards, they carry on conversations. Some people (aliases) garner reputations as twits while others are regarded as witty.

The aliases become so much a part of a user's "personality" on a board that some places even have anonymous conversations so that you don't even have to reveal your alias.

Most people say they call in for the conversation. The variety of discussions range from trivial discussions of theological implications of paint sniffing to serious and heartfelt discussions of romance, depression and happiness.



"I look great in a filmy black scarf... and nothing else."

Some people use BBSes as a source of friends and confidential advice. "Oooh, the cute girl from HUB phoned me. What should I do?" Others vent their political and philosophical ideas out to the world. "Laissez faire capitalism is absolutely the only political construct that can let us survive into the 21st century." Sometimes, they can be invaluable sources of technical advice. "Just how would I port TCP/IP to my homebrew Apple II 802.5 token ring interface?"

On certain bulletin board systems, your messages and conversations are networked and sent to others, so conversations can propagate between bulletin boards. One particular BBS network, called FidoNet (named after Fido the dog) boasts tens of thousands of members virtually anywhere in the world. So users in California, Edmonton, and Canberra can carry on conversations.

In Edmonton there are several local networks, as well as members of national and international networks.

I asked why people call in to BBSes. Here are some of the answers I got:

## Feature by Dragos Ruiu

### Canadian Rock History Challenge by Labatt's

Growing up in Spain and Mexico this Canadian born musician began his songwriting career at age 17. He spent a year in New York City and one also in England, and then returned home to Canada in 1983 to land his first recording contract.

In 1984 he released his debut album, "First Offence" which spent more than seventy weeks on the Canadian charts and sold over 300,000 copies in Canada alone. The hit single "Sunglasses at Night" was featured on the album and helped spark a world tour which included North America, Europe, Japan and Australia.

In June 1983 he released his next work entitled "Boy In the Box", an album which also hit the double platinum mark and which boasted four hit singles. The first three: "Never Surrender", "Boy In the Box" and "Everything in My Heart" all struck gold, with the fourth, a song entitled "Eurasian Eyes" as part of the soundtrack in the hit movie "9½ Weeks". This successful effort also prompted a second and quite extensive world tour which lasted the remainder of that year.

In the early fall of 1986 he released a third album, this one called "Fields of Fire". This album quickly hit the platinum mark and featured the singles: "I Am By Your Side", "Dancing with my Mirror", and his gold single "I Can't Help Falling in Love": a remake of Elvis' hit song from 1961.

His most recent album "Young Man Running" (1988) was produced entirely by himself and has sold over 100,000 copies so far. The singles released from this album were "In Your Soul", "Spot You in a Coal Mine" (backing vocals by England's Ruby Turner) and "Still in Love." This was also the year he graduated from international hit singles to an international hit album, which ended up 52nd in Canada's top 100 count down of 1988.

Researched by D.W. Lawrie

NOW... if you can correctly name this Canadian Rock Band you could win:  
1 Labatt's Blue Mystery Prize!

GROUP NAME: .....

YOUR NAME: .....

ADDRESS: .....

PHONE: .....

TO ENTER DRAW clip out ad, complete information, and place in DRAW BOX located at the Gateway, Room 282, SUB. Entries must be made before noon, March 9, 1989. Winner will be drawn randomly from all correct entries.



University of Alberta  
Alumni Association



Maimie S. Simpson Memorial  
Scholarship

The University of Alberta Alumni Association offers an annual scholarship in honor of Maimie S. Simpson, former Dean of Women at the University of Alberta.

The scholarship has a value of \$1,500 and will be presented to a full-time student who has attended the University of Alberta for at least the two previous years.

#### CRITERIA

1. The applicant's contribution to campus life and to the University of Alberta community will be the basis for selection.
2. The applicant should have a satisfactory academic standing and plan to continue studies at the University of Alberta in 1989/90.

\* Previous recipients of the University of Alberta Alumni Association's 75th Anniversary Scholarship are not eligible for this award.

Application forms and further information may be obtained from:

Office of Alumni Affairs  
430 Athabasca Hall  
University of Alberta  
Edmonton, AB T6G 2E8

The application deadline date is  
Tuesday, 28 March 1989.

The scholarship will be presented at the Annual Alumni Awards Dinner on 21 September 1989.

Labatt's