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*****
* ASCII EXPRESS: THE PROFESSIONAL *
*           Tutorial           *
*                               *
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*       (Revised 6/8/85)       *
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(Courtesy of Radio Free Milwaukee and The Apple Sub-Board)

For all you frustrated users of AE out there:

This is a tutorial for the terminal program Ascii Express, the Professional, hereafter known as AE. I strongly suggest you download this to study at your leisure, since some of it is useful as a reference. This tutorial will be divided into five parts:

- I. INSTALLING AE
- II. THE BASICS
- III. REMOTE OPERATION & FILE TRANSFERS
- IV. THE EDITOR
- V. MACROS

Before starting, you should make sure you have a complete copy of AE, which is the files:

```
B 135 AE
S 095 AE.HLP
B 069 INSTALL
B 109 BDOS
```

If you are lucky, you may have the following files:

```
S 003 RFM.MAC
T 002 MACRO.LIB
T 002 HELLO (if you have a //e or a language card)
```

If you don't have these, don't worry because you will create these files later.

PART I: INSTALLING AE

A few pieces of information you should know before you proceed any farther: What slot is your modem in? Do you have a printer? If so, what card and what slot? Do you have an 80 column card? If so, what brand of card and what slot

is it in? Once you know that, BRUN the program INSTALL on your AE disk. The purpose of the program is to "install" AE to your particular setup.

After it is finished loading from the disk, it will ask questions about whether or not you have lower case, and you should answer them appropriately, according to what apple you have. When the main menu comes up, choose the option I, (I)nstall Communications Driver. Answer the appropriate questions about your modem and record them to disk. The next thing to do is to set your (C)onsole Type. Enter the relevant data about your 80 column card (or lack thereof) and record it to disk. Next up is (P)rinter data. Enter the information about your printer. You may wish to consult your printer and interface manuals on some of the points to see if they require some options. Save this stuff and you should end up back at the main menu.

Most of the other options on the menu deal with the nitty-gritty of modem communications. Some of it will be discussed later. Some (most) of it never will. And you will never miss it. A good rule for Install is: don't change it if you don't know what it is. Now, in order to go on to part two, type S to save the changes and run AE.

You will only need to "Install" AE the first time you use it, or if you get a different modem, printer, or 80 column card.

PART II: THE BASICS

This section deals with the basics of making a call with ASCII Express. When you run AE, you should see the copyright notice, and then a "->". If you see anything else, go back and make sure you did everything correctly in the install program. It is easy to enter the wrong slot for a modem, or even a wrong type of modem.

First of all, you should know how to find the help menus. There are two of them, and they are accessed by pressing the numbers '1' and '2' respectively. These list all the commands that are available at the main level. For a more detailed explanation of these commands, hit '?' and then letter of the command.

Hit '#' to toggle the brief mode, which when off, provides a more detailed explanation of what's going on. Until you are fairly proficient, you should keep this mode off. If, after the first time you hit '#' it says 'BRIEF MODE ON', hit it again and it will turn off.

Ok, now we are all set to try out this new program, and what better way to try it out than to try to call RFM! To do this, type 'D' at AE's -> prompt. Its response should be 'Number:' and in response to this type '+7840830/' and hit return. If you do not have a modem with a built in speaker, leave out the '+' in front of this number. The '+' option turns on the modem's speaker until a carrier is detected, allowing you to hear a busy signal, wrong number, etc. The '/' at the end tells AE to redial the number if it doesn't get through

after approx. 30 seconds. To make it dial the number again without waiting the 30 seconds, press any key except return or escape. (Return and escape end the autodialing and return you to the -> prompt). If you wish to use tone dialing, add a 'T' in front of the number, or a 'P' for pulse dialing. If you need to pause to wait for a second dial tone (which is needed to use some LD carriers), use the 'H' command at the appropriate place in the number. It will ask you to press the space bar once you are ready for it to continue dialing.

Once you have gotten on to RFM, there are several things you can do. For example, if you are looking through the messages and see one you want to save to read later or print, type 'CTRL-Q' to go back to AE's command mode. A '+>' should appear (the + means you're online, compared to - when you're not). For example, if you wanted to save a message in AE's buffer to read later, you would type 'R' to turn on AE's copy buffer. It will then put you back right where you left off talking to RFM. When the copy buffer is on, everything that is displayed on your screen is saved in your computer's memory. To turn copy off, just toggle it with another CTRL-Q R sequence. Remember, your computer has only a limited amount of memory and it will eventually run out, which causes the computer to stop and write to the disk at the most inopportune moments.

Once you are done and want to see what you got in the buffer, go to the command mode by typing ctrl q (if you are still connected), and then 'V' for (V)iew buffer. Everything you saved comes up across the screen. If you wish to print this out, hit P to turn on the printer, and then view it. It will print it out to the printer along with to the screen. If you want to print out what you are receiving, press 'P' to turn the printer on, and everything you see will be printed. (Remember to turn the printer off when you're done). Also, if you're still on-line with RFM, bear in mind that you go back to the terminal mode after every command and have to hit ctrl-q to enter another command. If you want to save this buffer, hit W to write it to disk. This also clears the buffer. If you have decided that you want to get rid of the buffer, hit C to clear it.

In order to load a program into the buffer, use the 'L' command. If you just want to see the file and don't want to store it in the buffer, (if you were looking up a phone number, for example), use the 'J' command. This will let you see the file w/o committing it to memory. If you are wondering how much space is left in the buffer, just hit F and it will tell you how much free space you have left.

If you wish to catalog your disk, or delete some files, hit I (or tab if you have a //e) from the main level and you can use disk commands.

Just a few random notes now.. An important feature for you folks that are cursed with call waiting: Use the ':' command to turn the auto disconnect off, which will prevent the modem from hanging up when another call comes in. If you like a click to your typing, hit '"' to turn the keyclick on and off. If you want to get back to install quickly, use the % command and it will run install. If you ever can't see what you are typing, hit 'K' to turn the chat

mode on. If you ever get double letters, hit 'K' to turn it off. To hang up, use the 'H' command. That about does it for the basics.

PART III: REMOTE MODE AND FILE TRANSFERS

This is a more advanced mode where you can transfer files of any sort to anyone with AE and an apple. You call them up, get a carrier, and it should say 'Enter:' In response to this, enter the password, and you should get a '(>' password is set in THEIR install program under (R)emote parameters.) This cursor tells you that you are in control of the other persons computer, to a limited extent.

Here you have fewer commands than at your own level. To see a list of possible commands, you can hit '?' and they will all be listed. The first command is 'D' for directory. This just catalogs the selected disk drive. To interrupt the catalog, hit return or escape and it will give you the (> prompt again.

The next command you have is the 'L' command (for 'Log Drive'), which lets you select what slot and drive you want to work with. Just hitting return exits this mode.

The next two commands have to do with file transfers. The 'S'end command and 'R'eceive command both direct THE OTHER PERSONS computer to either send or receive a file that you choose. For example, if you wanted to transfer the file, 'PUBLIC DOMAIN' from S6,D2 on his computer to your disk, you would 'L'og S6,D2, and then type S (to tell it to "send" a file.) In response to "Filename:", type 'PUBLIC DOMAIN'. Next, you type Ctrl-q to get to YOUR command level, and type 'G' (to "get" a file), and enter whatever filename you want the program saved as on your disk. After that, it is all automated.

When the transfer is done, AE should say 'CRC=####' twice. If the numbers match in both, you have a good copy. If they don't, you don't.

To send a file to someone else, you first tell it to 'R'ecieve a file (type 'R' and the filename at the (> prompt), then hit ctrl-q and 'S'end it (Type cntrl-Q, then 'S' and the filename at the +> prompt. Use the (P)rotocol mode).

To leave a message for them, hit 'C' to tell it to "copy all incoming information". Type in a filename, and whatever you type will be written into a text file under that name. Hit three control-C's when you are done entering it, or three control-D's if you decided you don't want to send it after all.

Last but not least is the H ('H'ang up) command, which is self-explanatory.

In order to set up your apple to be remotely controlled, all you have to do is hit +, and your modem is waiting for incoming calls and asks for a password (that can be set in the remote parameters section of Install.)

If you want to break in and talk to the person who has called up, just hit ctrl-q and you will be in the chat mode where you can talk to the other person. The other person will probably not be able to see what they are typing, so tell them to hit ctrl-q and then k (to turn on the "chat" mode,) and then they can see what they are typing. Once you are done talking, hit ctrl Q and then +, and they will be back into the remote mode where they can control your computer and have the '(>)' cursor. Remind them to turn chat off with ctrl q K, otherwise they will get double letters.

If you have been talking to someone on voice, and then you want to hook up to each other without hanging up and redialing, one person (whose computer will be controlled by the other person) should boot up AE and hit '+' TWICE. The other person should also boot AE, and then hit 'D' (dial) and then 'A'(return). It should say autosearching, and then connection should be made. Now hang up the phones, and it is as if you had dialed the other person without using another phone call!

To change who is in control, the person who is in control currently should type ctrl q and then +, and then the other person should hit control-Q. They will then will be in control. This is useful if one person has to leave.

PART IV: USING AE'S EDITOR

Ascii Express has a built in word processor that lets you edit and add to the contents of the buffer. The editor is entered from the main level by hitting 'Y'. If you have the brief mode off, all the commands are displayed on the screen. Luckily, all the commands are self explanatory. xx stands for a line number, and the items in <> are optional options. Messages created here can be sent using the 'S'end option using the standard mode. This is by far the least complex section of AE.

One note, though. If you are using Diversi-Dos with AE, you can get extra buffer memory by typing "HIDOS" before you run AE. It will recognize that DOS has been moved, and take advantage of the extra space. You can also set up an exec file called "HELLO" to do this to save you typing it every time.

PART V: MACROS: THE FINAL CHALLENGE

Macros are the blessing, and the curse, of advanced users. If you know how to use them, you will wonder how you ever survived without them. If you don't know how to use them, you will get so %\$\$\$%\$(^*& frustrated that you just want to forget about them forever.

First of all, for those of you that don't know what macros are: Macros are one letter commands that let you perform several operations at once. In their simplest form, they can just dial phone numbers for you. At their most

complex, they can dial the number, log on, and read all your mail with just two presses of a key.

Now for the simple things. Hit 'U' from the main level to enter the macro definition level. The 'P', 'W', and 'L' commands will be the only commands we will be concerned with here. As with Install, you will never miss the other commands, and also don't change anything you don't understand unless you are willing to face the consequences.

The 'P' command lets you determine the phone number of the BBS that you will use this macro for. For example, let's define a macro that will get us into RFM AUTOMATICALLY, no matter how busy it is, with TWO KEYPRESSES. (it may take a little while though!) The first thing to do is to press 'P' to define the phone number. Use the same number we used in part one to make it redial (and turn the speaker on if you have one), "+7840830///!0". The '///!0' at the end tells AE to redial until it gets through, and then activate macro #0.

Now, here comes the complex part that will actually log us on. Hit the 'D' key to display and edit the actual macros. We want to define macro #0 as the one that will log us on, so select '0' as the one to edit.

Since writing a macro is like writing a program, we have to know the commands. They are %x, which tells AE to wait until it receives character 'x' before it goes on, <abc> which waits until it receives string 'abc' before it goes on, * which is simply a 1/2 second delay, and ' which forces a carriage return. There are also several other which will be detailed in future tutorials.

Now, to get one that will log us on. To know when to send our name, password, etc, we have to know what to wait for, or in other words, what TBBS sends us to tell us to send our name, etc. When we should send our name, it prompts us with a '?', for confirmation of our city, a '?', and for our password a ':'. The dialog between AE and the express should look something like this:

```
TBBS SENDS:      WE SEND:
?                FIRST (c/r)
?                LAST (c/r)
?                Y
:                PASSWORD (c/r)
```

Notice that we only care about the character immediately preceding what we have to type in. The above sequence should log us on (to any TBBS system). To program it into the macro, type

```
%?FIRST'%'?LAST'%'?Y%:PASSWORD (c/r) (entering your own name/password of course)
```

At first that may look like a bunch of garbage, but go back to the commands and figure out what it is doing. Note that there is no "" at the end of it. A carriage return is implied at the end of every macro, and to suppress it AT THE END OF A MACRO ONLY, use "".

Once you have typed that in, you may also want to make yourself another useful macro, one that reads all the new messages on a sub-board with only two keypresses again. The dialog should look something like this:

IT SENDS:	WE SEND:
Command	R
Forward	N
Pause	Y (no c/r)

Note, we are not going to wait for the whole string to be sent, just the first letter of it. The programming for it goes like this:

```
%Cr%Fn%Py'
```

To set it up, edit some macro other than 0, and then type it in. To activate it once you are on line, type ctrl-w and then what number macro it is. Be sure to activate it before the actual prompt for 'Command?' comes up, otherwise it will miss the opening 'C' it is looking for, and wait forever. To activate a macro that has missed a character, just type the character from your own keyboard and it will resume. In this case, if it had missed it, hit 'C' to continue. One last note about macros.. if you want to exit the execution of one, simply hit return. While a macro is activated, the keyboard will not work (except as stated previously), so this is your way out.

One you have done all this, 'W'rite it to the disk under the name 'RFM'. Now that you're done with this, use the 'X' command to go back to the main level. Enter the editor with the 'Y' command. If there was the file 'MACRO.LIB' on your disk, get it with the '.G MACRO.LIB' command. If you don't have this file, don't worry. Now that you are in the editor, type 'E/Radio Free/RFM' and then hit return. The first part is the key you have defined this macro as, the second is the title that comes up on your screen when you activate it, and the last part is the filename you saved it under. Now write it to the disk with the '.P MACRO.LIB' command. Overwrite the old file if you have it and don't bother to lock it. You have now created your very own macro! Exit the editor with a '.X'. To activate a macro, hit the 'RETURN' key. It should say 'Select (A-Z,?,/)''. To list all the macros you have defined, hit the / key. To see what macros you have currently defined, hit the ? key. To activate a macro, type the letter you defined it as. For example, to dial thr macro you just made, hit return, then 'R' in response to "Select:". That's all there is to it!

I realize most of this is not easily understood on the first reading. I am sorry about that, but hopefully it will be some help. Of course, if you have any questions, just ask! Also, if there are enough people interested in more advanced topics (how to write more complex macros, terminal emulation, and the rest of the stuff in install, for example), let me know and I'll try to find time to write a tutorial on it, if there's enough interst.

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