

The ADAM Forum

by Paul Pappas

User Groups

In order to fully utilize a computer it is helpful to join at least one, if not several user groups. A user group is a collection of people who "use" a particular computer (or related item). These groups may be informal "computer clubs" or professionally run national organizations. Most publish a newsletter which contains product reviews, tips and tricks, program listings, and news about upcoming projects. Many maintain a library of public domain software for sale or trade.

Just as user groups vary, so do their members. From the professional to the novice, just about every level of proficiency is represented. Commonly the more knowledgeable users organize the clubs activities, often holding informal seminars designed to teach what they learned "the hard way." If you have a question concerning your computer, user groups are often your best source of information.

The importance of user groups, especially local groups where you may attend meetings, can not be overemphasized. There are many excellent local user groups, and I urge you to join one. I can't list them all here, but will be happy to send you the address of the group(s) in your area. Follow the instructions I give to send me your request. Please note, I will discuss some of the more active local groups in future columns.

On the national front there are two groups who's newsletters are "required reading" for the serious ADAM user. They are Digital Express—[PO Box 37, Oak Hill, WV 25901] and Northern Indiana ADAM Users Group (NIAD)—[PO Box 1317, Lisle, IL 60532, (312) 661-3529].

Both organizations publish superb

newsletters and offer retail and public domain items to their members. I highly recommend you subscribe to both. Subscription rates are as follows—\$24 annual for Digital Express and \$26 annual for NIAD.

Hardware

It's hard to believe a computer released without a standard serial or parallel port now has such a wide variety of hardware add-ons to choose from.

Want to use an external modem (serial port) or fast, quiet dot-matrix printer (parallel port)? No problem, both ports are available. Need a RAM expander? Not the original 64K board but a 256K board designed for today's advanced programs. How about a disk drive? Choose from the single sided 5 1/4 inch (160K), the double sided 5 1/4 inch (360K), or the up and coming double sided 3 1/2 inch (720K).

Did I mention the clock/calendar boards, internal 1200 baud modems, speech synthesizers, and 80 column video boards? There is even a device for creating Digital Data Packs from standard audio cassettes called the MegaCopy Interface. I personally use SmartLOGO and a parallel interface to drive a color plotter.

When you think about ADAM peripherals three companies come to mind. They are In House Service Reps—[620 Harmon Cove Towers, Secaucus, NJ 07094, (201) 867-7038]; Orphanware—[5665 Myers Rd., Akron, OH 44319, (216) 882-4720] and TriSyd Video Games—[26 Florence Crescent, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M6N 4E4, (416) 769-6446].

In House Service Reps produces RAM expanders and disk drives. Orphanware, the largest of the three, produces serial/parallel ports, disk drives, RAM

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cessing, graphic design, desk top publishing, entertainment, program- ing aids, and many more.

Much of the credit for this dramatic improvement goes to Digital Express— PO Box 37, Oak Hill, WV 25901. In the past year Digital Express has re-

leased software at a breakneck pace. Remarkably, quality continued to im-

prove with each new release. The culmination of this work is the eminent release of a new modern operating system called GO-DOS. GO-DOS will

thrust ADAM into today's world of icons and windows. GO-DOS is well documented and makes it possible to produce programs of a sophistication

most ADAM owners never dreamed possible.

Digital Express is certainly not the only developer of quality software. Other software producers of note are

Reedy Software—10085 60th St., Alto, MI 49302; Strategic Software—PO Box 8185, Turnersville, NJ 08012 and Walters Software—Rt 4, Box 289-A, Titusville, PA 16354.

If we have left anyone out, please

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expanders, and numerous other items. TRSyd Video Games offers a 1200 baud internal Hayes compatible modem and the MegaCopy Interface. The software you need to operate these peripherals is included.

Once ADAM was a closed machine, thanks to companies like those listed above, ADAM can grow to meet your current and future needs.

Software

If you think ADAM's hardware options have grown, you just won't believe the dramatic change in software quality. It must be seen to be believed. Say goodbye to poorly written, poorly documented SmartBASIC programs.

Today's ADAM program is all or partially written in machine language for greater sophistication and speed. Most modern programs feature excellent graphics and sound, are menu driven, and well documented.

Programs are available for almost any application you can think of, including business packages, word pro-

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send in information c/o *Computer Shopper*.

Dealers

With rare exceptions, the only way to purchase items for the ADAM is by mail order. Local dealers rarely stock ADAM products. Fortunately, there are several reliable dealers that offer a wide variety of ADAM products from numerous organizations.

A good case in point is M.W. Ruth—3100 W Chapel Ave., Cherry Hill, NJ 08002, (609) 667-2526. Their latest catalog contains over fourteen small print pages of ADAM items from numerous organizations. Other dealers with a wide selection are ADAM's House—Rt 2, Box 2756, Pearland, TX 77581, (713) 482-5040; Alpha-One—1671 East 16th Street, Suite 146, Brooklyn, NY 11229, (718) 692-4120; E & T Software—1010 Westminster, Garland, TX, 75040, (214) 414-8156 and Telegames USA—Box 901, Lancaster, TX 75146, (214) 227-7694.

E & T software also produces original software and recently began publishing an ADAM newsletter. Telegames USA specializes in those hard to find cartridge games, including a few that were never before released. When requesting a catalog it's a good idea to include \$1 for printing and postage. Some dealers charge for their catalogs, and most expect you to supply postage costs at minimum. The information you receive is well worth the dollar, and some dealers give you credit for the catalog price with your first order.

CP/M

In a very real sense ADAM is a computer with a dual personality. On the one hand it has its own operating system, but it can also use the CP/M operating system. Now I realize some of you have no idea what CP/M is. Unfortunately a full description of CP/M goes far beyond the scope of this article. Suffice it to say, it was once the most popular microcomputer operating

system and is the father of Microsoft's MSDOS. Please contact your local user group, book store, or public library for more information.

One of the reasons I bought the ADAM was CP/M's availability. For the diehard CP/Mers among us (and there are quite a few) here are a few dealers who specialize in CP/M items (courtesy of the ADAM CP/M forum on Compuserve).

They are Central Computer Products—300 Central Ave., Fillmore, CA 93015, (805) 524-4189; Echelon Inc—PO Box 705001, 800 South Lake Tahoe, CA 95705, (916) 577-1105; Elliam Associates—1230 Bayview Heights Dr., Los Osos, CA 93402, (895) 528-5871; Sprite Software—4004 SW Barbur Blvd., Portland, OR 97201, (800) 237-9111 and Workman & Associates—1925 E Mntn. St., Pasadena, CA 91104, (818) 791-7979.

Echelon offers a fully compatible but greatly improved version of CP/M called the Z-System. Most of these companies can provide disks in ADAM CP/M format. For those that don't, Elliam Associates will convert other formats to ADAM CP/M format.

On-line Services

With your computer and a modem (a device that lets computers "talk" to each other over phone lines) you can tap into a wealth of on-line services ranging from games to airline reservations. A low cost source of the original ADAM 300 baud modem (and a few other items) is American Design Components—62 Joseph St., Moonachie, NJ 07074, (800) 524-0809, an electronics surplus house. These modems with basic modem software were selling for only \$30, an excellent value. Call for current pricing and shipping charges.

Currently the ADAM user has three national computer networks which support active ADAM forums (areas dedicated to a particular interest). They are American People Link (APL)—350 N Clark St—Suite 650, Chicago, IL 60610, (800) 524-0100; Compuserve Information Service (CIS)—5000 Arl-

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ington Centre Blvd, Columbus, OH 43220, (800) 848-8990 and FIDO Net. Through these services you may communicate with other ADAM users, user groups, and product developers all over the world.

The CIS ADAM forum is located in section 9 (ADAMania) and section 10 (ADAM CP/M) of the Computer Club (enter "go club" at any CIS prompt). Your Sysops (System operators) are Tim Nunes (73307,215) and Rob Friedman (73267,742) of sections 9 and 10 respectively. Each section has a message base (where you may read and respond to messages from other ADAM users) and a library of public domain software available for downloading (transfer to your computer).

The APL ADAM forum is located in section 6 (ADAM) of the Computer Club (type "go computer" at any APL prompt). Your Sysops are David Carmichael (RAM CHIP) and Charlie Summers (COMPUTER) who reside over a message base and library of public domain software. There are several quality programs in this library that are available on no other on-line service. This is also one of the least expensive pay services available, with no additional charge for 1200 baud access.

The third service is usually free or available at a ridiculously low charge. The FIDO network consists of hundreds of individual computer enthusiasts who link their machines together via phone lines. This allows them to transfer (read "echo") files from any one machine to all the others. One of the "echos" is a message base called ADAM_GENERAL. If there is a BBS (computerized Bulletin Board System) in your area (and there probably is) give it a call and ask the Sysop if he is part of FIDO Net. If so, ask him to add the ADAM_GENERAL echo to his BBS, or indicate your support if he already has it. Much credit for the success of the ADAM_GENERAL echo must go to Larry Sparks of the Chattanooga ADAM Users, who has worked to gather support among FIDO Sysops and users.

Many local ADAM user groups and

some product developers operate computer BBS's for the ADAM. I will discuss some of the more popular ones in future columns.

Service and Repair

A faulty computer is similar to a flashlight with dead batteries. It makes a great paper weight but is good for little else. For those times when your ADAM "fails to proceed" (apologies to Rolls Royce), access to a knowledgeable repair facility is vital (even if you are a hardware buff).

The most active service center is probably Orphanware—5665 Myers Rd, Akron, OH 44319, (216) 882-4720. They service the ADAM and almost every peripheral, regardless of manufacturer. If it's broken they can probably effect repairs quickly and at a reasonable cost.

Another source of inexpensive repairs is Philip Kosowsky—8 Castillion Ct, Clifton Park, NY 12065, (518) 371-7482. Philip is a former Coleco employee and is aptly qualified to repair the ADAM. Although he does not repair disk drives or similar "moving part" items, his flat repair rate for other services is only \$50.

I suggest you call with a description of the problem before sending the item for repair. This allows you to obtain a general repair estimate and to further determine if your problem is actually hardware related.

Conclusion

Would you believe I only showed you the tip of the iceberg? There is more, much more happening in the world of ADAM. Expand your horizons by getting involved.

I am always happy to hear from fellow ADAM Users. Contact me via US Mail in care of the Triangle ADAM Users, 2623-A Yanceyville St., Greensboro, NC 27405-4407. Please enclose a S.A.S.E. if you want a reply. I may also be reached on American People Link (PAPPASPM), Compuserve (72277,3303), Delphi (PAPPASPM), or FIDO Net's ADAM_GENERAL Echo (151/2). ●

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