

Computer Belles-letters

Conjugal Tips for Computer Bugs

—Chuckles

Recently I received an invitation card to a wedding. Going through the card had an electrifying effect — my nearly confirmed-bachelor-friend was going to be married! We were office pals for ten years, and during the period we could not bring him close enough to smell a perfume from a distance (if that was that complex). Since there was no possibility of attending the function abroad, I wrote him a tasty, not nasty, letter on the art of self-defence in a defenceless situation.

You have to give up or modify some of your bachelor habits and principles on your concatenation (in computer jargon joining files together) in real life. Here are tips in computer language, which might of advantage to you if your better half cannot punch the keyboard. What else she can punch you will find out as you read on.

Never try to format the Begum, as she is unformatable. Be prepared to be erased, increased, and formatted yourself, repeatedly, so better maintain a log book to preserve the data as evidence of the upgrading you had undergone in a monochrome world where 1+1=1.

She is not amenable to any DOS (disk operating system); the mighty IBM (Intermittent Begum Management system), or the graphic Macintosh; but she is familiar with the word 'toss' or 'toss aside'. You cannot offer apple, the natural fruit, or that of the computing kind, remembering the story of Adam and Eve (she has the precedence).

No backup copy of the *ginni* is allowed. It is strictly prohibited by international anti-piracy law. Must always use the original. Better not to keep her inside a vacuumed hard disk; floppy or flexible diskettes are safer.

Do not try to repair her with Norton's Disk Doctor — always take her to the best specialist around. Norton's Utilities, or PC

Tools, so indispensable for the PC (now Poor Chum) users, is utterly useless when applied to the AI (articulate intelligence — never say artificial intelligence) sharing your life. She will always be found highly frag-

not detect anything wrong; and Diskfix is out of question. You may try 'Disk Monitor' at your own risk.

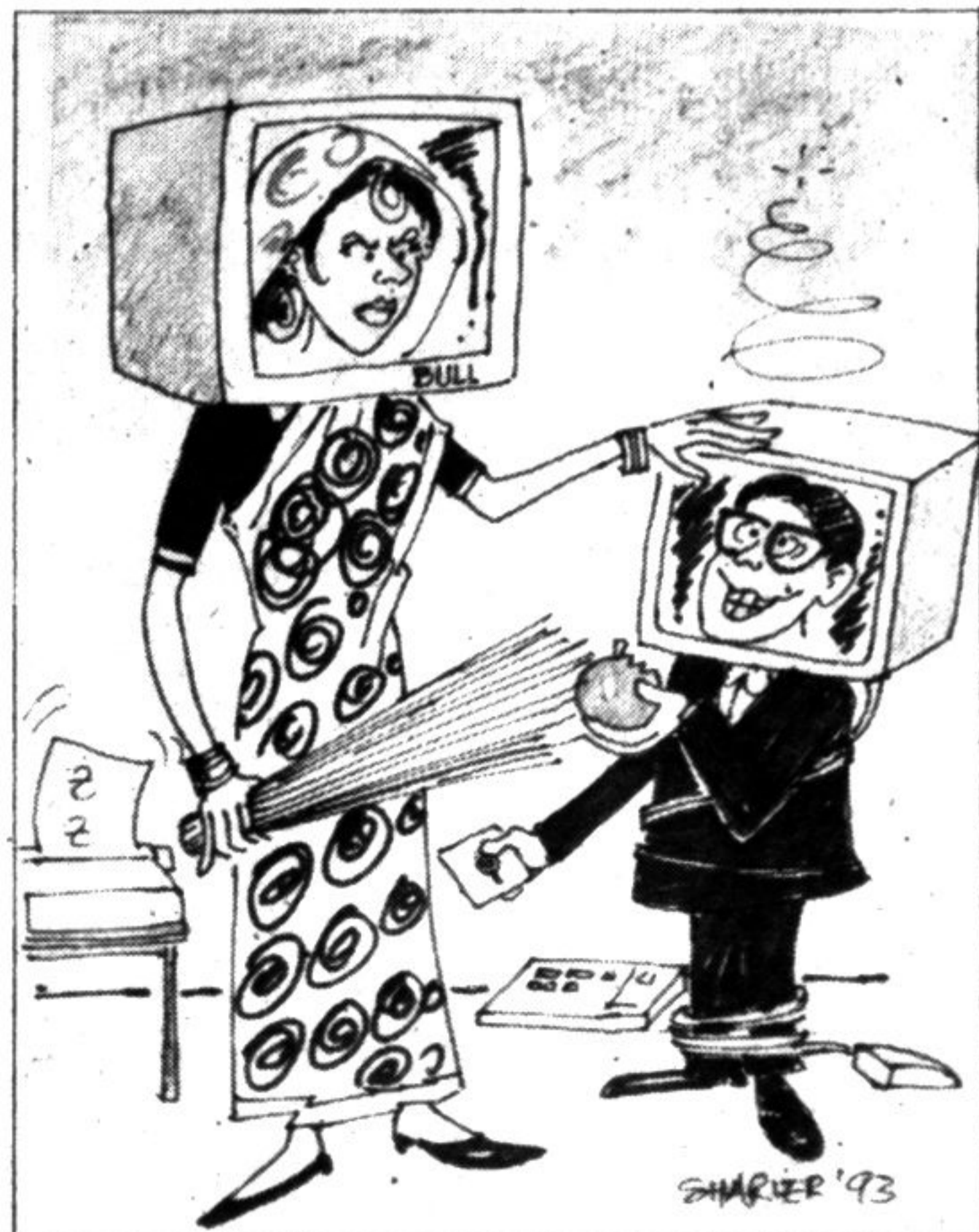
There are several tips from the world of Word Processors. Be careful while using the Page

like double italics. Do not keep a tab on her; and vice versa is not true. Are you aware that you can never print her? She is always available on the screen; dimly or brightly lit. The Save command is also useless, because later, when you bring up the file, you will find that the file has changed mysteriously. She is not radio-active; but never utter the word *virus* in her presence.

First question first: how do you initially boot her? The problem is that you do not possess the booting diskette, and there is no self-booting hard disc in the marital world. You have to borrow the booting diskette from her. Try it when she is not in the mood. As for other DOS commands, here are some hints.

You cannot use the *Append* and *Attribute* commands, nor *Assign* her anywhere else (life partner, remember?). DOS appears to be useless; cannot use *Call*, *Goto*, or *IF*. Sometimes cannot use the *Shift* key also. She is expert at using the *Control* C. Her Directory is encrypted, and you do not know the password. With experience, the *Fastopen* command might be successful, but there is no guarantee on this mysterious creature whom you brought home to share your life with her: You are unable to *Label* her, or show her the *Path*; and the application of *Mode* is rather, tricky — be prepared for unexpected results. You never have to use the *Recover* command — the recovery is always automatic. To *Restore* you in your proper place, while she resumes her reserved *Gaddi* (throne). The last resort is to use the *Prompt* command, but you have to invent the programme yourself, as no existing programming language can *Unformat* a Begum.

Still wish to get married? Excuse me, I forgot you are already beyond the point of no return



mented, but you cannot use 'Compress' to unfragment her. In fact you could try a Utility programme called 'Expand'. It is not available in the PC mode, but pull out your wallet, and check if it is there. She cannot be *Calibrated* as you do a hard disc. She generates a lot of clusters, but there is no software so far to detect it. 'CHKDSK' can-

Format in daily life. Keep generous margins; better to use double space, but avoid proportionate spacing — the law of proportions does not apply in this domestic world of 'democracy'. She can use *bold* lettering, but you cannot. You may try *italics* if you know how to use it in Bengali; for her it is easy to slant you, and make you look

PARALLEL supercomputing technology has been developed in India at two centres — Pune and Bangalore.

Dr Vijay Bhatkar, executive director of the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC) in Pune put a question to Shanti Karuna of New India Digest why India was going into the high-tech area of supercomputing when its limited resources might be more usefully channelled into tackling the pressing problems related to poverty.

In reply to this question Dr Vijay Bhatkar said, "It would be wrong to see supercomputing as unrelated to the problems of poverty and we badly needed a supercomputer for the country's weather forecasting needs. This in turn is related to India's food production, and has a direct impact on our efforts to eliminate poverty."

"It is also well-known that we faced certain difficulties in getting the Cray supercomputer from the Americans. The nego-

SUPERCOMPUTERS India Does It: Why and How?

tiations themselves took three years, and then we had to wait for another two years for the installation.

"Secondly, importing the Cray supercomputer cost us in the region Rs. 400 million — in foreign exchange.

"The future of Indian science is decisively linked with access to supercomputing resources, and we could provide affordable supercomputing to our academia and advanced research institutions through the development of massive parallel processors.

"Considering all these factors, as also our own technical skills, we decided to go in for the supercomputing project, whose fall-out would be beneficial to the country as a whole, in a manner that is not immediately realised, but will be seen in years to come."

To a question on the achievements, Bhatkar replied

that the Centre for Advanced Computing in Pune has developed what is known as a parallel processing machine called PARAM. Its latest model — PARAM 8600 — can deliver a cumulative peak computing power in excess of six gigaflops and 10,000 MIPS (million instructions per second), a world class machine in terms of its hardware, system software and application support.

Dr Bhatkar said, "About a dozen PARAM machines have been installed in Indian organisations and abroad: in Germany — at the University of Bremen — Moscow (Institute of Computer Aided Design) and Canada — University of New Brunswick. It is being used by our space scientists for a variety of applications, as also by the Central Water and Power Research Institute, Giant Metre Wave Radio Telescope, Oil and Natural Gas Commission and

Inter-University Centre for Astronomy and Astrophysics."

Dr Roddam Narasimha, Director, National Aeronautical Laboratory in Bangalore, explained to Shanti Karuna in reply to a question on how the Bangalore project was started and what the achievement was.

Dr R Narasimha said, "At the National Aeronautical Laboratory in Bangalore, scientists involved in calculating the complex flow around aircraft, or within gas turbines, had for a long time felt handicapped for lack of adequate computing power. In 1985-86 they built the first parallel computer in the country (which they named the Flosolver), and were so impressed with its performance (which was superior to that of the mainframes then available in India) that they have gone ahead to build three generations of parallel computers since then.

"The latest version of their machine, called the Flosolver Mark3, has computing power comparable to that of the Cray machines, and has been used by them to achieve the first simulations of extremely complex problems, such as turbulent flows and the behaviour of the monsoons. A Flosolver Mk3 now operates at the Supercomputer Education and Research Centre of the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore.

(Courtesy: New India Digest, compiled by R N Sanyal)

NEW HARDWARE

Tiff-Image Printing

From Talaris Systems, the 17-ppm 1794FT Imagerstation (\$7490) network laser printer can accept simultaneous TIFF files from a variety of inputs without host software or setup commands. The 1794 FT automatically skips ASCII banner pages and recognizes and switches among eight optional printer languages.

PCMCIA Serial

The Serial I/O Card (\$215) from Socket Communications fits into a PCMCIA Type II slot to provide serial data transfer rates of up to 115,200 bps. You configure the communications parameters port via software. The 5-ounce unit has an attached cable that is 8 inches long, terminating in a male DB-9 connector. Power consumption from the host system is 150 mW when active and 50 mW when inactive.

Multimedia Card

A Multimedia Upgrade Kit (\$499) from ATI Technologies includes an ATI Stereo F/X-CD sound card, a Mitsumi LU005 internal CD-ROM drive, and Windows Master and Game Master CD-ROM disks. The sound card has 8-bit, 44-kHz stereo playback and 22-kHz stereo recording capabilities, and the CD-ROM drive exceeds MPC specifications.

Voice-Processing Package

Talking Technology's multi-line Voice Ranger (\$599) card records and plays messages in compressed and uncompressed modes under DOS.

One Smart X Server

XVision 5 (\$495; upgrade, \$95), a PC server from VisionWare, lets you connect via the X Window System standard to Unix and VMS host-based applications while working in Windows or NT. The software detects network transports, optimizes graphics speed, and substitutes fonts. XVision 5 offers a drag-and-drop object-oriented desktop, a built-in VT320 terminal emulator, and file transfer and local printing.

New Life into Applications

The Quantify software development package (from \$1198) measures the performance of a programme and its components and graphically displays its evaluation. Pure Software says this will help C and C++ developers to pinpoint and eliminate performance bottlenecks and improve the speed of their applications. The package uses Object Code Insertion technology to analyze entire programs, including shared and third-party libraries.

Painter/X2 Adds Multiple Layering

Fractal Design's Painter/X2 (\$149) is an extension to Painter 2.0 (\$399) that adds the capability to layer multiple objects within paintings. Painter/X2 speeds up drawing tasks by incorporating multiple graphics elements through the use of

NEW SOFTWARE

floating selections. A new feature called the Portfolio allows you to save an image for future use by simply dragging it into the Portfolio, where it appears as a thumbnail view for easy identification. The package is available for Windows and the Macintosh.

Improve for Windows

Q+E Extend for Improv (\$199) client/server edition from Q+E Software (Raleigh, NC) is a database access tool for bringing data from PC and SQL database into Lotus's Improv for windows spreadsheet. It adds database access commands directly to Improv's tools menu. Extend for Improv provides you with direct access to more than 20 PC and SQL database formats, automatically creating the structures needed to present and analyze data in Improv's multidimensional views. Queries that are built with Q+E Software's Q+E Database Editor can be opened in Improv without translation.

EISToolKit Updated for Unix

MicroStrategy's (Wilmington, DE) EISToolKit (Designer version, \$1995; 10-pack User version, \$7995) application development system is available for Unix systems running the SunOpenLook and Motif environments. EISToolKit offers a GUI, presentation graphics, database connectivity and

spreadsheet modeling tools in addition to a full-feature spreadsheet for data analysis, and HyperScript, a 4GL (fourth-generation language) for detailed project customization. Unix clients will initially have access to Informix databases and later to Oracle and Sybase. EISToolKit for Unix ships with the Informix DataLink API.

Stop Waiting for Your PC

Quick Restart (\$39.95) from PowerPro Software (Foster City, CA) is an auto-resume utility for Windows and DOS PCs. The programme lets you restart your computer and instantly return to your application where you left off, without waiting for lengthy morning boot-ups and with no loss of data or system state. PowerPro says.

Wall Data's Migration

Wall Data's (Redmond, WA) Rumba APPC (Advanced Peer-to-Peer Communications) suite of tools (\$495) integrates Windows with SAA (Systems Application Architecture) networks and enables you to access and run AS/400, mainframe, and APPC applications on the same SNA (Systems Network Architecture) networks. The Rumba APPC engine is implemented as a native-Windows application. With Rumba for the Mainframe and Rumba for the AS/400 APPC editions, you can simultaneously run 3270, 5250, and APPC applications.

Word and Excel for Sun and SGI Workstations

Quorum's Equal 1.0 (\$ 1295) lets you run Mac versions of Microsoft Word and Excel on Sun SpareStations and Silicon Graphics Indigo workstations. Equal 1.0 is an Application.

Adapter, which quorum defines as a layer of software that allows personal computing applications to seamlessly run unmodified on workstations. The Equal 1.0 package includes the Macversions of Word and Excel, plus software from Quorum that lets you run these applications on Unix workstations. Once adapted, the Mac programs act and look like native Motif or open Look applications. You can cut and paste text and graphics between Word and Excel and native applications such as the Unix version of the FrameMaker pagelayout programme. —Compiled by RNS

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