

Chapter 18 Magazines and Newsletters

18.1 ... The Beginning

Publication of personal computing articles was initially in electronic magazines such as *Popular Electronics*, *QST* and *Radio-Electronics*. Then came the magazines and newsletters devoted to personal computing and microcomputers. Most of these initial publications were not specific to a particular microprocessor or type of microcomputer. The following are some of the more significant publications.

The first publication devoted to personal computing was the Amateur Computer Society ACS Newsletter. The editor was Stephen B. Gray who was also the founder of ACS. The first issue was published in August 1966 and the last in December 1976. It was a bi-monthly directed at anyone interested in building and operating a personal computer. The newsletter was a significant source of information on the design and construction of a computer during the time period it was published.

The *PCC Newsletter* was published by Robert L. Albrecht of the People's Computer Company in California. The first issue was published in October 1972. The first issue cover stated it "is a newspaper... about having fun with computers, learning how to use computers, how to buy a minicomputer for yourself your school and books films and tools of the future." The newspaper name changed to the *People's Computers* with a magazine type of format in May-June 1977.

Hal Singer started the *Micro-8 Newsletter* in September 1974. This was a newsletter published by the Micro-8 Computer Users Group, originally the Mark-8 Group for Mark-8 computer users. Another publication started in 1974, was The Computer Hobbyist newsletter. This newsletter had an emphasis on computer circuits and assembly language programs.

The first publication of *Creative Computing* was the November/December 1974 issue. The magazine had an

initial emphasis on education and recreational computing. The editor and publisher was David H. Ahl who had previously worked for Digital Equipment Corporation and AT&T in education marketing. Due to financial problems the magazine was subsequently purchased by Ziff-Davis Publishing Company who terminated publishing the magazine in 1985.

The Homebrew Computer Club printed the first issue of its *Newsletter* in March/April 1975. Fred Moore was the first editor.

MITS, Inc., published the first issue of *Computer Notes, A Publication of the Altair Users Group* in June 1975. The editor was David Bunnell who was also the advertising and marketing manager of MITS, Inc.

Wayne Green published the first issue of *BYTE -- the small systems journal* in September 1975. "Computers --the World's Greatest Toy!" headlined the cover of the first issue. The first editor was Carl T. Helmers, who had previously published the *ECS Magazine*. Subsequently Green lost publishing control of *BYTE*, then his former wife sold the magazine to McGraw-Hill, Inc. in 1979. The publication is oriented as a technical magazine for personal computer technology, hardware and software. Byte magazine has made a significant contribution to the personal computer industry. Unfortunately, the editor advised in July 1998 that "This is the last issue of Byte you'll be receiving for a few months." It was also advised that CMP Media Inc. had acquired the magazine and would re-launch it at a later date.

The Southern California Computer Society (SCCS) started a newsletter that became the *SCCS Interface*. The Society published the first issue in December 1975. Subsequently the editor left SCCS and founded the *Interface Age* magazine.

Jim Warren was the first editor of *Dr. Dobb's Journal of Computer Calisthenics and Orthodontia (Running Light Without Overbyte)*. The first issue was January/February 1976. The focus of the magazine was on the dissemination of free or inexpensive software for microcomputers. The first issue had an article describing "Tiny BASIC" for the MITS Altair 8800 microcomputer. The magazine name was subsequently

shortened to *Dr. Dobb's Journal* and the content focus on software and programming.

David Bunnell founded the *Personal Computing* magazine and the first issue was January/February 1977. Bunnell had previously worked at MITS, Inc., as editor of *Computer Notes*. Nelson Winkless was the first editor. The magazine is now published by Hayden Publishing. The focus of the magazine is on beginners and intermediate users who want to use the microcomputer as a productivity tool.

Wayne Green published the first issue of *kilobaud* --*The Computer Hobbyist Magazine* in January 1977. The name of the magazine was changed later to *Microcomputing*. The last issue was published in November 1984.

Other Early Magazines and Newsletters

Hal Chamberlain and some associates started the *Computer Hobbyist* newsletter in November 1974. The initial issue had articles on the Intel 8008 microprocessor.

Carl T. Helmers started the *Experimenters' Computer System (ECS)* magazine and published the first issue in January 1975. Only five issues were printed then Helmers became the editor of *BYTE* magazine.

Erik Sandberg-Diment started *ROM* --*Computer Applications for Living* magazine in 1977. However only nine issues were printed then it was merged into *Creative Computing*.

Roger Robitaille started a magazine called *SoftSide* about software that began with the October 1978 issue. Mark Pelczarski was an early editor for the magazine. Robitaille published several variations of the magazine. However, he was not successful and the magazines ceased publication in 1984.

Other publications were: *Microprocessors and Microsystems* first published in September 1976, *MicroTeck* --but only two issues were published in 1977 then it ceased publication, *ASCII* is a Japanese magazine started by Akio Gunji and Kazuhiko (Kay) Nishi in 1977. *Popular Computing* is another early magazine published for people who like to compute.

As microprocessors and microcomputers were released during the mid 1970's, magazines and newsletters devoted specifically to those devices were released. The following are some of those early publications.

Dr. Robert Tripp published a magazine called *Micro* that began with the October/November 1977 issue. The articles were usually technical and included many machine language programs. It was devoted to 6502 microprocessor based personal computers. The magazine ceased publication in 1985.

With the introduction of the Tandy Radio Shack TRS-80 in 1977, Wayne Green started a magazine called *80 Microcomputing*.

18.2 ... Apple Publications

Apple II

An Apple II user group in Seattle, Washington called the Apple Pugetsound Program Library Exchange (A.P.P.L.E.) started the newsletter *Call-A.P.P.L.E.* in February 1978. The first editor was Val J. Golding. The publication became a full magazine by 1980. The name of the sponsoring group changed to A.P.P.L.E. Co-op in September 1984 and to TechAlliance in late 1988. With declining sales of the Apple II computer the magazine changed to a quarterly part way through 1989. However with the ninth issue of that year, the magazine ceased publication.

Mike Harvey started the *Nibble* magazine for Apple II computer users in January 1980. The magazine was published by Software Publishing and Research Co. (S.P.A.R.C.). The articles had an orientation to software and programming for beginners and advance readers. Harvey published a *Nibble Mac* edition in 1985. However with declining sales the magazines ceased publication in July 1992.

Softalk is a monthly magazine that was started by Softalk Publishing, Inc., in September 1980. Two principals in the founding of the magazine were Al and

Margot Tommervik. *Softalk* was an informative magazine with a varied content and became a popular publication. It had a unique offer of a six month free subscription to new purchasers of Apple II computers. However, a significant reduction in advertising revenue in 1984, resulted in the termination of the magazine after the August issue.

A+ is a monthly magazine published by Ziff-Davis Publishing Company that started in 1983. It was an Apple II magazine for home and business users. The magazine merged with *In Cider* in 1989.

inCider was a monthly magazine founded by Wayne Green that started in January 1983. In 1989 *A+* magazine merged with *inCider* and became *inCider/A+*. The last issue of the consolidated magazine was July 1993.

Other Apple II Publications

Apple Assembly Line is a newsletter produced by Bob Sander-Cederlof between 1980 and 1988.

Peelings II is a magazine started in 1980, that was devoted to software reviews.

8/16 is a monthly magazine featuring tips and techniques for programmers that was published by Ariel Publishing beginning December 1980. It subsequently became *8/16-Central* in the form of a monthly disk. However, Ariel terminated publishing the magazine in October 1991.

Open-Apple is a newsletter founded by Tom Weishaar in 1985. Weishaar had a column in the *Softalk* magazine and developed software for Beagle Bros. The name of the magazine was changed to *A2-Central* in December 1988.

Softdisk is a disk-based magazine that was founded by Jim Mangham and Al Tommervik in September 1981 as part of the *Softalk* Publishing company. With the termination of *Softalk* magazine in 1984, *Softdisk Inc.*, evolved. Other magazines created were *Diskworld* for the Macintosh, *Loadstar*, *On Disk Monthly* and *Softdisk GS*.

AppleWorks Forum is a monthly newsletter published by the National AppleWorks Users Group (NAUG) for AppleWorks users.

Cider Press is a newsletter published by the San Francisco Apple users group.

The Apple II Review magazine began in the fall of 1985, then after five issues the name changed to *Apple IIGS Buyer's Guide*. This magazine ceased publication in the fall of 1990.

II Computing magazine was published from October/November 1985 until February/March 1987.

GS+ is a bimonthly magazine founded by Steven Disbrow and published by EGO Systems for Apple IIGS users in September 1989. It ceased publication in November 1995.

Macintosh

A number of magazines exist for the Macintosh computer. Some of these are *MacWeek*, *Macintosh Today*, *MacBusiness Journal*, and *MACazine* that stopped publication in 1988. However two of the more popular are *MacUser* and *Macworld*.

Macworld is a popular magazine for Macintosh users which was started by David Bunnell. The first issue was coordinated with the introduction of the Macintosh computer in January 1984.

MacUser is a monthly magazine for Macintosh users which is published by Ziff-Davis Publishing Company.

18.3 ... PC Publications

PC Magazine was conceived by David Bunnell and financed by Tony Gold, a founder of Lifeboat Associates. The first editor was David Bunnell and the first issue was published as a bi-monthly publication in March 1982. The magazine was an instant success. However financial considerations resulted in the magazine being sold by Tony Gold to Ziff-Davis Publishing Company in 1982. The magazine became a monthly publication in 1983 and then to twenty-two issues per year in 1984. The sale to Ziff-Davis created differences, that resulted in Bunnell and a group of the staff leaving to start a new magazine called *PC World*. *PC Magazine* now has one of the largest distributions.

PC World is a monthly magazine started by David Bunnell. The first issue was published in January 1983. It is now published by PC World Communications Inc.

PCjr was a magazine published by Ziff-Davis Publishing Company for users of the IBM PCjr computer. The magazine was available for the introduction of the computer in November 1983.

PC Week is a weekly publication started in 1984 by Ziff-Davis Publishing Company for the PC computer industry.

PC Computing is a monthly computer magazine published by Ziff-Davis Publishing Company.

Big Blue Disk is a disk-based magazine introduced by Softdisk Inc., in 1986. The magazine name was subsequently changed to *On Disk Monthly*. The company also published a disk magazine named *Gamer's Edge*.

18.4 ... Other Publications

Datamation started in 1955 and published twice a month by Cahners Publishing. It is a business magazine covering the computer industry.

ComputerWorld started in 1967, it is the oldest computer weekly newspaper with coverage of both mainframes and microcomputers. The publisher is CW Communications.

The *Annals of the History of Computing* quarterly periodical that was initially published by the American Federation of Information Processing Societies (AFIPS) Inc. The publications focus is on the history of computing including the people and companies. The first issue was in July 1979. It was changed to the *IEEE - Annals of the History of Computing* in 1984.

Glenn E. Patch started *Computer Shopper* in November 1979 as a trading paper for used computers and peripherals. It evolved into a tabloid magazine by 1983, devoted to direct sale of computers, related equipment and software. Stanley Veit became editor-in -chief in 1983.

InfoWorld is a weekly publication started in February 1980 and published by CW Communications. It provides news on the microcomputer industry.

Computist is a magazine that began publication in 1981 with the name *Hardcore Computing*. The magazine was initially dedicated to Apple II computer users with some emphasis on breaking copy-protected programs. Then in 1983 the name changed to *Hardcore Computist* and subsequently to just *Computist*. The periodical now covers IBM and Macintosh computers.

Microsoft published the first issue of *the Microsoft Quarterly* around April 1982. The *Microsoft System Journal* is another publication published by Microsoft.

Popular Electronics, an electronic experimenters magazine, pioneered personal computing with the January 1975 issue describing the Altair 8800 microcomputer. The editor was Arthur P. Salsberg and the technical editor was Leslie Solomon. In November 1982, the magazine name was changed to *Computers & Electronics*. However, the transition from an electronics to a computer oriented magazine was not successful. Declining revenues during 1984 resulted in the termination of the magazine, with the last issue in April 1985.

Springer-Verlag published the first issue of *Abacus* in 1983 and the last in 1987. It had numerous articles on the history of computers.

Loadstar is a disk-based magazine published by Softdisk Inc., for Commodore 64 computer users that started in June 1984.

Compute is a monthly magazine published by Compute Publications and targeted at beginning users of personal computers.

Pico is a magazine on portable computing started by Wayne Green.

Scientific American is a magazine that has published a number of articles and special issues on computing. An article by Eric A. Weiss entitled "Scientific American's Snapshot of Software" in *Abacus* Volume 2, Number 2 (Winter, 1985) has a sampling of computer articles from *Scientific American* on page 47. The September 1977 issue on "Microelectronics," the

December 1982 issue on "Personal Computers," the September 1984 issue on "Computer Software" and the January 1998 issue on "The Solid-state Century" are examples of special issues devoted to computer technology.

Time magazine has also had special issues and covers related to the personal computer industry. A special cover and section describing a "miracle chip" and the concerns of a computer society was featured in the February 20, 1978 issue. Since 1927, *Time* magazine featured real individuals for its Man of the Year issue and cover. On the 3rd of January 1983, *Time* magazine featured the microcomputer on the cover. It was headlined "Machine of the Year: The Computer Moves In." This change by *Time* magazine symbolized the technological impact that the personal computer had created. Another article featured Andrew Grove in the Dec. 97/Jan. 98 issue. Recent issues in 1997 with special front covers and articles are Bill Gates on Jan. 13th., Steve Jobs on Aug. 18th., and Steve Case on Sep. 22nd.

Wired magazine was co-founded by Nicholas Negroponte in 1992.

18.5 ... Reference

The publication of periodicals and newsletters relating to microcomputers is extensive. A source for additional details is a publication entitled "Microcomputing Periodicals: An Annotated Directory"[126]. The 1985 directory listed over one thousand titles.

For additional information on the *Creative Computing* magazine and publisher David Ahl, reference article by John J. Anderson entitled "Dave Tells Ahl: The History of Creative Computing" [447, pages 66-77].

An overview of some early magazines is contained in "Computer Magazine Madness" by Stanley Veit in *DIGITAL DELI* [190, pages 66-69].

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