

DISTRIBUTED DATA

The
Newsletter
of the
DDMS Family
of Companies

Finding solutions is focus of national conference slated for April in DFW

Join DDMS for the premiere industry event of the year: the 1998 National Users' conference. This year's theme is **Taking the Mystery out of your Future.**

The National Users' Conference will be held April 16 — 18, 1998 at the DFW Hilton Executive Conference Center in Grapevine, Texas.

At this year's conference, you'll find the clues that will unlock your future, clarify your goals and make your business better than ever. Assisting you will be the DDMS sleuths, acting in our best investigative manner to find the answers to all your questions and needs.

You'll notice a difference in the 1998 National Users' Conference and in our staff. Every year we strive for improvement. This year we're especially proud of the advances we've made in our professionalism, our technology and our dedication to you, our customer.

We've made strides in our products, too. We are continuously creating new platforms, programs, modules and

applications, and improving the old ones to meet your needs more efficiently.

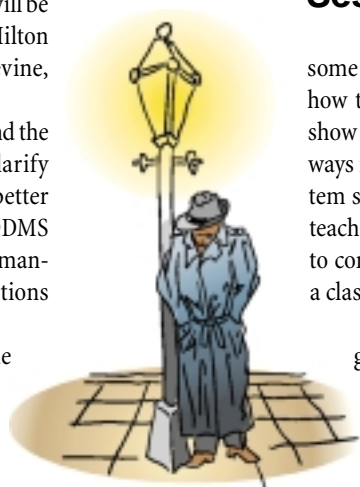
Sessions

At this year's conference, we'll present some of these exciting new products and explain how they pertain to you and your business. We'll show you the platforms of the future — the new ways in which you might be using your DDMS system soon. (Here's a clue: **Windows NT.**) And we'll teach you about *e-commerce*, the incredible ability to conduct business completely electronically. For a class summary, turn to page 3.

The sessions are organized into six groups or "tracks." Five of the tracks represent different areas of the office products industry or your business. (Here's another clue: **Marketing, Operations, Accounting, Furniture and Serialized.**) The sixth track is made up of workshops where you can get

hands-on experience with Report Writer and Procs.

(See NATIONAL page 9)



Special
Users'
Conference
Issue

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Upcoming Meetings

Users' Meeting
Feb. 13 — 14 New Orleans
Le Meridien

National Users' Conference
April 16—18 Dallas/Ft. Worth
DFW Hilton Executive Conference Center

Sweetheart of a deal: Spend Valentine's Day in New Orleans

New Orleans, one of the most romantic cities in the world, is the location of the next DDMS Users' Meeting, slated for Feb. 13 - 14.

Along with the great features and fun sessions you always find at a DDMS users' meeting, you'll also find some special attractions: some of the most successful office products dealers in the country talk about how they do it. You'll have a chance to learn about getting started on the Internet and Networking
(See NEW ORLEANS page 2)

Vol. 12, No. 1,
January 1998

DDMS Users' Meeting News

The DDMS Users' Group is the most active users' group in the industry. Each year, DDMS holds regional meetings and training classes at locations around the country.

For ideas about fun things to do and see while you're in New Orleans, see page 12.

NEW ORLEANS *continued from page 1*

in special classes taught by professionals from CompUSA.

Sessions

Strategies for Growth

Current DDMS dealers talk about the methods they employ to successfully increase their businesses. Come and discuss new ideas and approaches that will help you achieve your business growth goals.

Alliances that Work

This session is an open discussion centering on methods of partnering with your buying group, wholesalers and customer to become a successful player in today's marketplace.

Building for Success

Learn from the experiences of other dealers — and share your own — about creating a successful business environment. Points of interest include a discussion on the advantages offered by a network, hiring and motivating the proper sales force and the requirements for establishing a strong electronic order entry presence.

Planning for the Future

What happens when you retire? Do you have a plan for succession? Do your children inherit the business? How do you get it in their hands so that it benefits both parties? Come and participate in a discussion on planning for the future.

Auto Tools

Find out about creative solutions from the field in this session focusing on automation opportunities. Topics addressed include: Proc files for automating the repetitive procedures like day-end and month-end; using automated short buy; and using electronic invoicing.

Specialist Platform Options

Review and preview the SPECIALIST software platform now available to all DDMS users. See inventory audit trails, A/R collec-

tions monitor, special flushing options and much more.

Optional Topics

Furniture

The furniture sessions provide almost a full day of basic orientation and training on the current version of the O/F Dealer software. This is the training class for dealers who are interested in using the new furniture module.

The furniture track wraps up with a discussion on the direction of the O/F Dealer module and a look at enhancements that are either planned or under consideration. Don't miss this chance to influence the future of this new module! (Class size limited to 20.)

Introduction to the Internet

If you feel like the World Wide Web is passing you by, **Introduction to the Internet** is the session for you. You'll get hands-on experience with simulated Web activities, live Internet demonstrations and online discussions and presentations. There is an additional \$55 lab fee and class size limited to 20.


Network Fundamentals

Learn how to interact over a network. Topics include basic structure and operation of networks; network fundamentals; understanding the transfer and storage of data; and equipment and software basics. As with Introduction to the Internet, there is an additional \$55 lab fee for this class, and class size is limited to 20.

Accommodations

While you're attending the meeting, you'll be staying at the luxurious Le Meridien, adjacent to the French Quarter. Room rates start at \$145.

Saturday evening, join us for an elegant dinner at the Palace Cafe across from Le Meridien. After dinner, join us in the grand stands on Canal Street for a New Orleans tradition — the Krewe Sparta parade.

To receive a meeting registration, call the DDMS Training Department at **1-800-366-3367**. 



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Taking the Mystery out of the 1998 National Users' Conference: What can I learn?

The 1998 National meeting features 27 sessions making up six tracks including marketing, accounting, operations, furniture, and serialized. Plus there are three workshops you can attend to get hands-on experience.

With so many opportunities, you're only limited by the number of hours in a day. Having trouble deciding which classes will benefit you the most? Here's a session summary to help you get the most out of the National conference.

Marketing

DDMS Windows Remote Order Entry Options

In this session, learn about the various DDMS remote order entry options: the standard remote order entry system, ACUMA, WinOrder, and Road Runner. A demonstration will take you through these programs and show you their unique abilities, including the benefits for you, your customers, and your salespeople. We'll give you an overview of how these systems work and show you the latest enhancements. Our experts will help you isolate your target market and your end-user so that you can investigate these windows and Internet options and determine which best suits your needs. Finally, DDMS professionals will give you how-to tips on marketing your remote order entry system.

Gateways to Our Business Partners

Finally, a comprehensive overview of the many (and sometimes confusing) gateways on the market that you can use to do business electronically! Eliminate the enormous job of researching all these gateways yourself and join our discussion of the benefits, drawbacks, and differences between electronic catalogs, ECAT, EPIC, IntelliNet, IntelliTransfer, PromoNet, SPRRelease, and SPRWeb Connection. This session should answer all your questions and save you a lot of time.

Platform Options: Contrast and Compare

Just when you get used to your system, the computer industry comes up with yet another new platform. Do you need it? What can it do for you? Is it really that much better than what you're using? This session eliminates the guesswork: Learn the difference between the platforms and discover which one suits your business needs. Is it PGDOS, the versatile, tried-and-true system you're familiar with? Or UNIX, the powerful, proven, large-system performer? Perhaps it's Windows NT, the up-and-coming operating system that is suitable for dealers of any size and offers instant connection to applications.

Custom Programming Options

One goal of the DDMS system is to have enough software options and flexibility to meet all the needs of all our customers. But every company is different, and some have unique software needs. If your company is one of these, don't despair! The DDMS Special Services Department specializes in finding creative solutions to address every unique situation. In this session, the Special Services team examines some of the customization DDMS offers and presents the current custom programming options. Learn how to set yourself apart from the pack and gain the competitive edge!

Database Marketing Strategy

Is your marketing strategy getting the results you want? Do you need a fresh approach to the same customers? Learn how to reach the customers in your existing database in an innovative way. Let an industry expert teach you how to maximize the sales potential of your database and develop a new marketing strategy using tools such as the PM (Telemarketing) module, DataPipe, and WinFax. Don't let an outdated marketing strategy hold you back!

Operations Track

Inventory '98

You asked for it, we did it, here it is: The new Inventory module! Don't miss the world premiere of DDMS' Inventory module rewrite, presented for the first time in this session. We'll show you the ins and outs of this new, user-friendly version and demonstrate additional features such as multiple vendors, multiple bins, and multiple units of measure. Your inventory never had it so good!

Barcoding and Credit Card Authorization

Barcoding and credit card authorization add that extra professionalism and efficiency that your business may be missing. Show your customers that you are a leading-edge company! In this session, DDMS professionals will teach you how to add barcode scanning to your operations and how you can expect it to affect your business. Learn about the hardware required and the best techniques to use when implementing barcoding in your business. Also learn how adding credit card authorization will help you maximize your profit dollars and reduce average days to pay. This comprehensive session takes you through adding and operating these two electronic necessities in both commercial and retail environments.

(See SESSIONS page 10)

Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii Jj Kk Ll Mm Nn Oo Pp Qq Rr Ss Tt Uu Vv Ww Xx Yy Zz



In December, DDMS released a Windows-based version (ACUMA O/S 2 version) that supports access via the Internet, and point-and-click mouse capabilities. Regardless of whether you're using DOS-based ACUMA or the new Windows version, the best part is that your customer does all the order entry, eliminating the need for one of your employees to do it. As an added bonus, customer returns decrease dramatically because the customer can see a picture of exactly what he's ordering.

Steve Light is one of the owners of Artlite, a 34-year-old office products dealership in Atlanta. He believes so strongly in the value of ACUMA, he offers his 13 outside salespeople an added

incentive for every customer who orders using the system.

"If I can lower my cost of doing business, I should be able to pay them (the salespeople) a little bit more. The online ordering keeps someone from having to take the order over the telephone or receive it by fax, then put the order into the system. It also eliminates the chance for errors.

"Each month, we have even more customers sign up for remote order entry. With some of the new programs coming out — like the new ACUMA package — it looks even more exciting," Light said.

He said the company is making the change to the new ACUMA package. In the meantime, they're using the DOS-based software that lets the customer dial into his system via modem.

"Most customers have modems now. Believe it or not, we did run into a few customers who didn't, so I bought a modem and loaned it to them." Light said he's killing two birds with one stone. "They're enjoying using the modem and it locks the door a little bit more against a competitor coming in. Also, it lowers my cost of doing business."

Light shares the business with two brothers and a brother-in-law. Artlite, a United affiliate, employs about 75 people. Light said the vast majority of the business — over 90 percent — is commercial, but they also operate a small retail floor.

According to Light, the company is maintaining their market share in the face of stiff competition. Light emphasizes the need to find ways to market to the customer. "Big companies are taking over businesses left and right. There's a lot of dollars in the Staples organization and the Office Depots, the Corporate Expresses and Boise Cascades. We're hanging onto our market share. But you have to work at it. It doesn't come to you. The Atlanta market has been growing. We've been lucky on that. But you've got to work. When you stop working, you're going the other way."

The story of e

There's a new kid on the block and he gets a little bigger everyday. Even in his infancy, he's a force to be reckoned with. His virtual playground is the Internet, the World Wide Web. You'll find his name linked with everything present and future. It's his lowercase "e" at the beginning of e-mail, e-tailing, e-commerce, e-marketplace, e-catalog, e-tetra. He is information technologies — electronic communication — the new mass media.

The Internet's growth from nine million users in 1995 to 35 million users worldwide today is unprecedented. Another 150,000 new members join the fray every month. The Internet access market alone is projected to be a \$4 billion business by the year 2000. Its explosive growth makes it the medium of choice for electronic commerce. In 1996, 175 Fortune 500 companies had a web presence; that number had more than doubled by the end of 1997.

Saving Money the e-way

That lowercase "e" which has become *the* letter for the late 90s, also brings us concepts like efficiency and effectiveness, two of the superstores' greatest strengths. Electronic communication in general, and the Internet in particular, are great equalizers. By making use of some of the tools available to you, you can project a great presence, service your customer more efficiently, and save money doing it.

ACUMA — the DDMS remote customer order entry system — lets your customers shop, check pricing, enter new orders and check the status of existing orders, all from their desktop PC. Since the ACUMA software works online with your DDMS system, customers always see their guaranteed contract pricing, as well as catalog descriptions and full color product photos.

In mid-January, Office Depot fired another shot across the bow of independent dealers everywhere by opening a cyberstore. According to published reports, "The Office Depot site will be aimed at small and home businesses, a market that has traditionally relied on mom-and-pop establishments to purchase office supplies."

That constant-growth mentality extends to Artlite's computer system. "We depend on DDMS to keep our system going and updated. We like to stay on top of enhancements with upgrades. That's important. That's what's going to help us in the future. You can't stand still."

Using the DDMS system, Artlite builds reports that give them a business profile of prospective customers. That way, they can target customers with the greatest potential.

Thrifty Office Supply in Oklahoma City switched to the new ACUMA package late last year. According to Victor Tomlin, a spokesman for the company, the new communications package is working well for them. He said their Dallas and San Antonio, Texas, locations are also connected to their Oklahoma City server.

"The customers can look at their own orders and look up items themselves without having to call us. It gives our order-entry people a little breathing room," Tomlin said.

Making Money the e-way

With its explosive growth, one might be tempted to look for ways to make money on the Internet; however, one would be missing the greatest gains.

A report published by two California companies, Internet Business Services, Inc., and Focus Software International, Inc., compares the Internet to the telephone. "Nobody expects millions of people to call just because they installed a telephone. Similarly, it is naive to think that millions of customers will buy from the web site just because they have a web site. However, just as the lack of the telephone will seriously handicap the business, so will the absence on the World Wide Web handicap a business which wishes to stay on the leading edge of competition."

In mid-January, Office Depot fired another shot across the bow of independent dealers everywhere by opening a

cyberstore. The Delray Beach, Fla., company launched an e-commerce site on the World Wide Web, offering a the full line of Office Depot products. According to published reports, "The Office Depot site will be aimed at small and home businesses, a market that has traditionally relied on mom-and-pop establishments to purchase office supplies."

Now that you have another reminder that the Superstores have you in their sights, what can you do to keep them from eroding your customer base? If the best defense is a good offense, the Internet certainly levels the playing field.

According to ILINK Internet Services, to compete on the Internet, you must be able to:

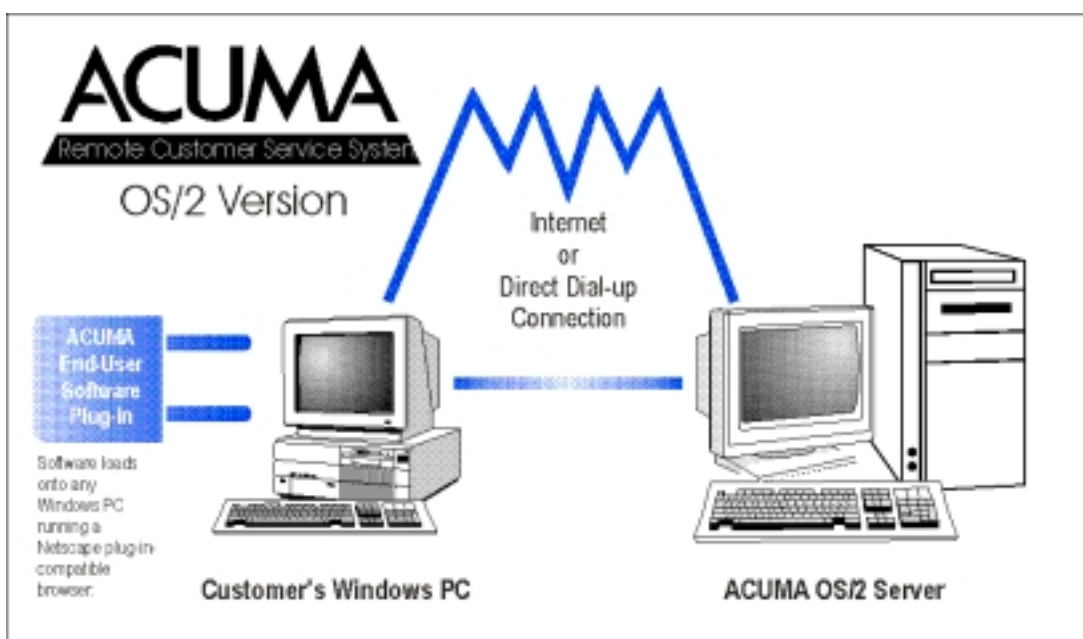
- design and develop a web site that advertises your products/services and delivers information about you;
- provide an interface for ordering your products/services;
- have the ability to process orders;
- fulfill and ship orders;
- provide post-sale support and service..

It sounds like a tall order, but using ACUMA, it's a cakewalk. Because ACUMA provides the website and lets your customers browse through your inventory electronically, then place their own orders, all you have to do is process, fill and ship. If you're stockless, using EDI to transmit your purchase orders to your vendor and using the wrap-and-ship option offered by some wholesalers, the bulk of the order is handled. With that kind of a setup, it's easy to see why some dealers are restructuring the commission scales to favor ACUMA users.

Electronic commerce is not only the future; it's the present. In Light's words, "If you're not going forward, you're sliding backward." **D**

"Online ordering keeps someone from having to take the order over the telephone or receive it by fax, then put the order into the system. It also eliminates the chance for errors."

**—Steve Light,
Artlite**



A Dealer Profile

Making lemons into lemonade

How an office products dealer used his DDMS system to diagnose his ailing business — and how he healed it.

A Quiz for the 90s:
 So if the number of retail office supply stores drops by half in a five year period, what happens to those casualties of the marketplace? Do they:
 A) Sell out and retire to a life of leisure on the Riviera?
 B) Throw in the towel and go to work for Staples?
 C) Try anything.

While the Riviera is always inviting, if you're Hank and Fran O'Donnell, you'll try anything to keep the family business afloat, including turning a dignified 45-year-old family enterprise into an innovative toy store with a color scheme by Crayola. The change from O'Donnell's Office Supply to O'Doodle's Toy Store was anything but quick; however, they employed some useful DDMS tools, even if you're not planning to remodel your image.

Henry O'Donnell opened his office supply store in 1954 in the historical Chestnut Hill area of Philadelphia. Over the next four decades, O'Donnell's became a retail shopping destination for office supplies, with a branch location.

O'Donnell's success did not go unnoticed. In 1991, Staples opened a store within four blocks of the O'Donnell's branch location, and another discounter, The Paper Cutter, moved in on the main location. The damage to their retail trade was extensive.

"We were hit on both ends," said Fran O'Donnell. "To remain competitive, we figured we needed to expand the business and not be this mom-and-pop looking office supply store. We renovated and expanded our main location, trying to make ourselves bigger so we looked like the big boys."

However, they realized just changing the O'Donnell's image was not enough — they needed to tap into a new market. They decided to expand into the commercial market by aggressively promoting their Shamrock Savings plan. "We went out with a Staples look-alike catalog and we started to expand the commercial end of the business. But even though our sales increased, the profits weren't there like they were on the retail counter."

So they sold their delivery truck and put their driver on the phone servicing office supply customers. "We were totally stockless. We'd do the United flyer and use the wrap-and-label. A delivery service picked up the orders at United and delivered them. Our customers didn't know any different since we were still giving them next day service. Even though we weren't making the margin in that department, the costs were so low that we continued. But we saw from the numbers there was an erosion based on the competitive pressures in our area."

The O'Donnells realized that they needed to look at

margin, not just sales and pursue the part of the business that was bringing in the most profit. "We needed to cut costs as well to keep profits up, so we went to bar code scanning at point-of-sale. We used the DDMS system for that. We didn't think we'd be able to do it, but over a period of two months, we loaded the items from the United catalog. That let us focus on operational efficiency. But we found that even though we were trying to look like the big boys and trying to cut our costs, we still weren't making any money. If Staples stocked it, we couldn't be competitive on it. We realized we needed to look at other avenues."

As part of the store's expansion in 1991, the family opened a small art store next to the office supply's main location. In 1992, they expanded their product line to include craft items for kids. Using the DDMS system to analyze what they were selling, the O'Donnells were able to pinpoint the items that were moving out the door. "We were selling beads and macrame kits. We linked up with a wholesaler so we could sell the items one day, use the restock reports, apply them to the P/O, then go ahead and transmit them out and get the items the next day." It worked well, but according to Fran, "You have to sell a lot of beads to make up for file folders."

They knew that in order to survive, they had to expand their product line — they just weren't sure which direction they should go. As Fran said, "When your business is sinking, you'll try anything." For five years, the O'Donnells tried first one thing and then another, beginning with storage/organization products. They classified everything through the (E) Inventory Master screen so they could see what worked and what didn't. Storage systems didn't work so they had a half-price sale.

"That's the beauty of the computer. You can bring the items in and within two weeks time, you know whether it's a winner or a loser," said Fran.

Next it was perfumes and collectibles, kids' creative toys, puzzles and games.

"Being able to get the exact information we needed so we could see which departments were ready to grow and which were dwindling away was critical," Fran said. "Trying to figure out how to replace \$2 million in office supply business as we're losing it and still stay in business . . . it was like replacing the windshield and all four tires while driving down the road at 60 miles an hour."

Then Fate lent a helping hand. KayBee Toys restructured their organization and closed the neighborhood toy store six days before Christmas 1995, opening a niche market for the O'Donnells. Because of their investment in the (E) screen, they were able to see which items were profitable.

**"Being able to get the exact information we needed so we could see which departments were ready to grow and which were dwindling away was critical."
 —Fran O'Donnell
 O'Doodle's**

“The sales figures and the reception from the customers was great. So we were in toys,” he said.

The transition was gradual over a two year period. The art store became a gift shop/stationary store that does high-end imprinting, such as for wedding invitations. They sell collectibles, greeting cards and picture frames.

They converted the retail office supply store into O’Doodle’s. “We wanted the ideal, knock-your-socks-off, great toy store,” Fran said, “So we asked our customers what they wanted to see. They wanted an area where kids can play, free gift wrap and a particular product line. We took all that information to our designers and now we have this crazy, whacked-out store.”

There’s an area for trains, and a stage at the back of the store with a ballet bar and mirrors for the kids to play. The doll and stuffed animal area was designed by Fran’s daughter. She thought it should be like a little girl’s room, complete with a queen-sized bed and two hutches stuffed with animals.

As the toy business grew, the brothers decided to ease out of the commercial office supply business by turning over their customer base to another Independent Stationers dealer in the area in exchange for a cut of the profits over a three-year period. After that, they’ll exit the market permanently.

A lifetime of office supply experience doesn’t translate exactly into toys. “We were buying them like office supplies — we wanted to be totally in stock all the time, 100 percent on everything. Then we found out that right after the holiday season you don’t want to be really heavy in inventory. We were used to buying by the truckload. Some toy manufacturers set their minimum at \$50 and we were buying \$1,000 just because we thought we could move the stuff.”

The pricing plan is a little different, too, Fran said. “In office supplies, you discount everything. So when we got into toys, we brought in some Brio trains that were really expensive, so we thought we should have them on sale all the time. Then we realized we were blowing through the trains but we weren’t making any money on them.”

One thing that translated surprising well to the new business was the DDMS system. The O’Donnells continued to use their system as they always had — but with a few variations on the usual applications. For instance, they use the (A) Customer Master screen to manage their Kids’ Club — a database of customers they can use for direct mail offers and special promotions.

The (EB) Bill of Materials Link screen lets the staff make gift recommendations to shoppers, based on what’s popular with the O’Doodle’s clientele by age and gender.

Once again, their extensive use of the (E) screen had another advantage.

“We can do a promotion or a display or a sale on particular items. We can put our train department on sale because we have that all classified,” he said.

Through the (+G) Special Portable Scanner screen, the retail manager uses a hand-held scanner to refill the store. Fran said, “Instead of applying the information to the P/O, we have a format that prints out the stock list with a line that says we have this item on-hand, so we know what’s out of stock. Then the report goes to the purchasing department and they can see what they tried to fill in the stores today, so we have a second check on that.”

Procedure files have become very important to the businesses’ smooth operation. As they phased out the commercial business, they lost their driver/telemarketer/DDMS report runner.

“He was the guy who came in every morning and ran all the reports. Instead of replacing him, we used the DDMS system to do his job.

We have a (ZB6) Bye-Bye program that runs all the day-end reports and a lot of the other morning reports.”

“We took a P-Master report that we call a T-13 that shows us profitability. Every morning our retail manager sees what he has to do that day. One of the variable lines shows what each of the salespeople have to do, then a third line shows month-to-date.”

Through a Buy Cycles report, the buyer knows which items he needs to purchase, and a Rep Cycle report shows all the items by vendor rep.

“We use a launcher a lot, too, for inventory. It’s name is No Gots.” When A-classified items are out of stock, a report prints since they try to be in-stock at all times on those items.

Another report figures shrink. Through it, O’Doodles realized that their video and audio cassette department was very “liftable.” “We may have to look into security tags,” Fran said. “It’s having the knowledge from the DDMS system that lets us monitor those changes.”

The brothers run both businesses on a single Pentium DDMS system. “We have four POS terminals in O’Doodle’s and three in O’Donnell’s. One Saturday in December, we ran 1200 customers through without any problems with the system.”

Of course the bottom line is always is this new course of action profitable? Can you lose a significant portion of your business and still stay in business?

“In December our sales were five percent above last year for the total company. We got rid of 20 percent of our business (the commercial office supply component), but the total company’s sales were up five percent. By going into toys, we replaced the commercial business while retaining the retail end.” ■



The big yellow Ticondaroga in front has been replaced by a bright orange Crayon. And that’s only the beginning.

“That’s the beauty of the computer. You can bring the items in and within two weeks time, you know whether it’s a winner or a loser.”
—Fran O’Donnell

Taking the Mystery out of the 1998 National Users' Conference: Things to see, do in the Metroplex

Dallas-Ft. Worth is a fascinating mix of cultures, cuisines, attractions, accommodations and people that could take a lifetime to explore. It's a paradox of Old West and new funk; haute cuisine and country cookin'; bed and breakfasts and the only US hotel ranked in the top ten in the world.

Conveniently located next door to the DFW Hilton where this year's National Conference will be held, is the new Grapevine Mills Mall. It's more than just a mall — it's Shoppertainment. You'll find an exceptional selection of manufacturers' and retail outlets, big-name superstores and value discounters. There's also a world of entertainment venues and fun-filled restaurants including GameWorks, AMC Odyssey 30 Theatres and Rainforest Cafe.

Nicknamed Cowtown, Ft. Worth is a city built on hooves, hides and horns. But don't let the name fool you — there's a lot more to Cowtown than cows.

Ft. Worth's cultural district is the third largest in the nation, surpassed in size only by New York City and Washington, D.C. Each of the four museums offers a stunning collection. The Amon Carter Museum is home to the art of the American West and features a special showing by

Erwin E. Smith, cowboy photographer, during April. The Ft. Worth Museum of Science and History is the Southwest's largest science and history museum. Described as "America's best small museum," the Kimbell boasts masterpieces by El Greco, Cezanne, Rembrandt, Picasso and Matisse. Ft. Worth's oldest museum, the Modern Art Museum, houses modern masters of 20th century art.

The city's 114-acre Botanic Garden is the oldest in Texas and has both a European Rose Garden and a tranquil Japanese Garden, as well as a botanical conservatory.

See some of the world's top equestrian athletes at the National Cutting Horse Association's Super Stakes at the Will Rogers Equestrian Center April 7 — 18. You'll be amazed by this ballet on hooves.

The Stockyards National Historic District hasn't changed much from the early 1900s. The Livestock Exchange, built in 1904, now houses the Stockyards Museum, providing a peek at Ft. Worth's livestock legacy. There's a rodeo every weekend at the Cowtown Coliseum, which first hosted the

World's Original Indoor Rodeo in 1918.

For the price of a ticket, you can chug back to 1896 on the Tarantula Steam Train. The train makes round-trips daily between Grapevine and the Stockyards. The Stockyards Station, once bustling with cattle, now is home to specialty shops, regional eateries and Wild West theme-park rides.

No trip to Ft. Worth would be complete without a stop at Billy Bob's Texas, the world's largest honkey-tonk. Billy Bob's has top country performers on two stages, live indoor bull riding and two dance floors.

Sundance Square in the heart of Ft. Worth's downtown entertainment district is 14 blocks of fabulous shopping, delectable dining, live theater, movies and the Caravan of Dreams with its world-famous entertainers and rooftop grotto bar.

The MAIN ST. Arts Festival takes over downtown April 16 - 19 with a marketplace of food, arts, crafts and live entertainment.

Good buys are the order of the day at Ft. Worth Outlet Square. One of only a few urban outlet malls, it offers over 40 upscale retail outlet stores, including an indoor ice rink.

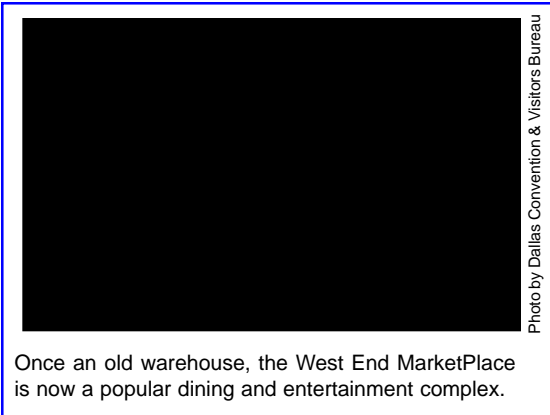
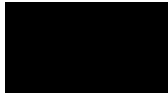
Dallas, not to be outdone by her country cousin, offers its own flavor of excitement.

The West End Historic District is where street life is lived to the fullest with over 80 shops and 55 restaurants, street mimes, horse and buggy rides and nightly live musical entertainment. The Arts District features stunning new architecture and a constantly changing parade of exhibits and performances. Dallas has over 160 museums, galleries and artistic attractions highlighted by the Museum of Art and the magnificent Morton H. Meyerson Symphony Center, home of the Dallas Symphony Orchestra.

In Dallas you'll find more restaurants per capita than in New York City and a dining selection that is virtually endless. From internationally acclaimed haute cuisine to Tex-Mex, dining has become an art form here.

Dallas is a shopper's Mecca with more shops per shopper than any other city in the country. You'll find the best of everything from designer originals to western chic. The renowned Galleria, Dallas' own Neiman Marcus, Macy's, Tiffany's, Saks Fifth Avenue, Marshall Fields, and Barney's are here along with internationally renowned designer boutiques. At the West End MarketPlace craftsmen sell an intriguing selection of one-of-a-kind gift items and a uniquely-Dallas variety of souvenirs.

One of the most infamous spots in Dallas is Dealey Plaza where President John F. Kennedy was killed during a November 1963 visit and where whispers of conspiracy still linger in the air. The Sixth Floor Museum, examining the life, death and legacy of JFK, is located in the former Texas School Book Depository. **DI**



Once an old warehouse, the West End MarketPlace is now a popular dining and entertainment complex.

Want to know more?
Check out
www.fortworth.com
or
cityview.com/dallas
or call Grapevine
Mills at
1-888-MILLS-GV
Ft. Worth
Convention &
Visitors Bureau at
1-800-433-5747
Dallas Convention &
Visitors Bureau
1-214-746-6677

NATIONAL
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Vendor Expo

The National Users' Conference will host representatives from a variety of wholesalers and peripheral and service vendors, beginning on Thursday. This early opening gives you a chance to meet the vendor reps and ask questions without missing any conference sessions. The vendors' tabletop displays will feature new products and services available to you. You'll also find DDMS documentation on CD-ROM available for sale.

Special Events

Golf anyone? The conference tees off with an optional golf outing to Timarron Country Club — one of the area's premiere golf courses.

It's no mystery that all work and no play drove Jack to REDRUM in "The Shining;" so we've planned an evening of intrigue and dinner hosted by DDMS on Thursday. You'll witness a murder most foul and have an opportunity to solve the crime. Observe the investigator's interrogations and listen to the information given by the suspects. Put all the clues together to determine who committed the murder and why.

Then Saturday night, put on your Ropers and kick up your heels — we're going to a ranch party! After dinner at

the Austin Ranch chuck wagon, waltz across Texas or two-step till the cows come home.

Registration

The cost to attend the 1998 National Users' Conference is \$399 for the first person, \$299 for the second, \$249 for the third, and \$149 for each additional person from your company. Your registration fee includes breakfasts, snacks and lunches Friday and Saturday; the Thursday evening dinner; the Saturday evening dinner and dance; and all meeting materials. Bring a non-participating guest to Thursday's and Saturday's dinners for just \$40 each night.

Accommodations

DDMS has reserved rooms at the DFW Hilton Executive Conference Center for guests arriving Thursday, April 16, and departing Sunday, April 19. A special group rate of \$139 a night for single occupancy or \$159 a night for double occupancy is available. To make reservations, call the Hilton at 1-800-645-1019. Be sure to request the DDMS group rate.

Travel Arrangements

When you make your travel arrangements through Pegasus Travel Services, you can save on air fares and car rental. To make your travel arrangements, call Pegasus at 1-800-972-1118, ext. 180.

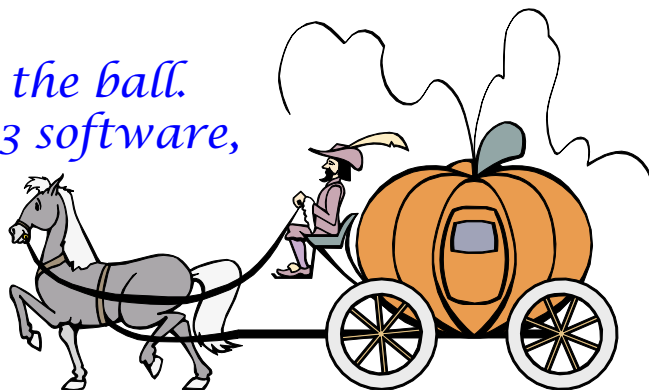
Questions?

You can call the National Users' Conference Information Line at **1-800-366-3367**. Your call will be answered by an automated attendant. From the menu, select **3** for Training and Support, then press **2** for Training. Leave a message and we'll be in touch with you within 24 hours.

At the stroke of midnight, will your system turn into a pumpkin?

If you have a DDMS system, you don't have to worry when the clock strikes 12. Our Version 3 software accepts Year 2000 dates. You have enough to worry about without wondering if something as simple as tomorrow's date will change your gilded coach into a gourd.

Go ahead and enjoy the ball. With DDMS Version 3 software, January 1, 2000 is just another business-as-usual day.



SESSIONS
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Optimum System Performance

This session is essential if you want to keep your system operation at peak performance. Let the DDMS Support Department professionals teach you the ins and outs of system maintenance so that you know exactly how to keep your system running smoothly at all times. Don't miss this chance to learn how simple computer maintenance can be.

Commercial Order Entry

Be sure your Order Entry usage is the most efficient possible by joining us in a discussion of everything you thought you knew about Order Entry and more. Learn about the 37 key features you should be using in Order Entry and experience the difference between having competition and being competition. Version 3's new (EL) Customer Item Price Check screen lets you do price checks and displays the same selling price that a customer would receive in order entry. It also lets you adjust quantity, pricing cost, list price, selling price, discount, and gross profit percentage.

Vendor Credit Returns

Finally, a simple, automated way to return merchandise to your vendors! The new vendor credit returns application can create debit memos for merchandise returned at order entry and then update accounts payable and the debit memo record in PO-MASTER. You can even fax the debit memos to your vendors through this application. Learn how easily your business can benefit from this handy application!

Automated Short-Buy

Are you still doing all your short-buys manually? Why?! Save yourself time and money by letting the system handle the short-buy process for you. After this session, you will be ready to begin using the DDMS application to automate day-to-day short-buys, including transmission to wholesalers and receiving. This is your opportunity to learn how to make the system work for you.

E-commerce w/ Wholesalers

Leap ahead of your competition by purchasing the *e-commerce* way — eliminate the time-consuming paper trail and utilize the immediacy of electronic commerce. In this session you'll learn to expand your purchasing capabilities by taking advantage of all the features offered by both your regional and national wholesalers. Start your timesaving order processes now!

E-commerce w/ Manufacturers

What is *e-commerce* and what can it do for you? Come to this class and learn which vendors you can partner with in electronic purchasing for faster and more reliable service. Find out how to streamline outbound EDI documents and

monitor all EDI transactions. Using e-commerce, you can do the following tasks (and more) electronically and immediately: receive updated pricing; transmit purchase orders; receive acknowledgments; and receive invoices. E-commerce is ready for you; are you ready for it?

Print It, Pick It, Pack It, Wrap It, Ship It

Is there room for improvement in how quickly your orders go out? Learn to expedite orders and deliveries using the features in the version 3 picking manifest and the current shipping manifest. Don't keep your customers waiting!

President's Screen

The President's Screen puts all of your key financial information at your fingertips. It gives you a financial snapshot so you can view and monitor totals for sales, A/R, A/P, and bank totals. You can view totals for the year-to-date, or for a particular day, month, or quarter. This screen is a great summary of your vital information and an ideal vantage point for spotting financial trends.

Accounting

Electronic Invoicing

Electronic invoicing is another way to save your company time and money. Make your business as efficient as possible! Let our experts teach you how to reduce man-hours, increase accuracy, and enhance efficiency by using electronic invoicing and the (DO) Accounts Payable Purchase Order module.

Accounts Payable

Are you new to accounts payable or an old hand? Either way you'll benefit from this session! Learn accounts payable procedures and get some handy tips from the pros who know the system the best. Newcomers will learn how to bring your accounts payable online and set up accounts, transaction flow, and manual and automatic posting of P/Os.

Payroll and Version 3

DDMS has updated Payroll to keep it as current as possible. Let our pros show you the changes and how to use them to your advantage. Examine the new state tax tables; investigate your expanded reporting capabilities; explore the updated program security. Learn technical tips to help you maximize your understanding of this module.

General Ledger

G/L experts and newcomers alike will benefit from this informative session. Learn standard and more specialized general ledger procedures and catch our experts' tips on how to make the best of this module. Explore your new recurring allocations options and discover how to allocate recurring expenses by percentage. With the new Version 3 software you can explode A/P detail on G/L reports. Make sure

you know how to make the best use of the general ledger module!

Workshops

Report Writer I

Report Writer can seem intimidating, but writing your own reports allows you to create reports that meet your company's specific needs. In this session for beginning report writers, our Report Writer experts will walk you through hands-on basic report modification and creation. You do the work and you take your report home. By the time you leave, you'll have finished your first report!

Report Writer II

The experienced report writer will benefit from this session, which covers more advanced topics. In a hands-on class, you'll learn how to add subtotals, breaks, generic math, generic math tables, and barcodes to your specialized report. Now you can tailor even the most detailed and complex report to meet your business needs. To get the most from this class, it's important that you have completed Report Writer I some time prior to taking Report Writer II.

Procs

Tired of working late to run reports? Procs automate your reports so that all you have to do is start the proc and go home — or make it even easier by using the launcher rather than manually executing the proc. In this hands-on session, designed for the new proc writer, our proc pros will teach you how to automate reports. With Version 3 enhancements, you can create a list of proc files to appear in the (MJ) screen as a menu. Learn how to make the system work for you!

Furniture

Furniture Can Be Your Future, Parts I & II

Learn how our new furniture module can make furniture a more profitable part of your future. This two-part session includes using CAD systems to enhance your business and controlling POs from order entry. (Did you know you can create a PO right from order entry, reducing your workload and increasing your accuracy?)

Learn new ways to manage your projects. With Version 3, you have complete control over every aspect of a furniture project.

Serialized

The DDMS system can make your machine dealership run more smoothly. The Serialized sessions will focus on these topics:

• Backorder Workorders

Backorders don't have to be a hassle — if you know how to handle them. Learn to backorder parts through the short-buy process, receive purchase orders, flush

backorders and reopen the original call automatically. Find out if the backordered item is available at any other location and transfer it while billing the service workorder in serial order entry, reopening the original call and using the original pick ticket, all at the same time.

• Time Block Contracts

Learn how you can sell blocks of time and how to keep track of the time sold, time used and time left. You determine whether you keep track of time by click or by date.

• Umbrella Contracts

Enhance your customer service by offering your customers the option to have all their machines covered under one maintenance contract. You can track contract history by a single machine or by all machines. You can also track contract history by click usage.

• Set Up Cost

The price of the serial items you sell can more accurately reflect their cost when you add the cost of labor, supplies, parts and freight to the cost of the items you sell.

• Billings to Leasing Companies

Bill contracts, meter overages and contract renewals to a leasing company.

• Split Techs on a Call

Service to a machine can't always be handled by a single technician. Now you can cost a service workorder with the time spent by all technicians, while billing the customer on one tech's time.

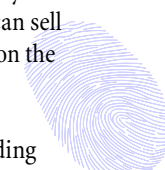
• New Analysis Reports

Need a better picture of your business? Four new reports can give it to you. The Tech Recap report shows information on each tech's work and travel hours using data displayed in the (EZT) screen. The Tech Totals report summarizes monthly work and travel time by technician using data displayed in the (EZTT) screen. The Contract Profitability Report shows profit analysis information for your items and contracts. The Cost Per Copy report shows each item's profitability and service costs.

• Rentals, Demos and Loaners

Gain more control over your rental, demo and loaner units with new screens that show you inventory by category at a customer's site. Find out how you can sell a rental, demo or loaner item by doing a return on the same order.

• Version 3: Serialized

Find out about Version 3 enhancements, including building a P/O file for Sharp; additional G/L department breakouts; additional SHIPTO address in the (EZ) [G] screen for service only; additions to the notepad; and changes to the Tech Work and Tech Recap screens. 

'Nawlins: You gotta see it to believe it



Photo by Ron Calamia

New Orleans' famed St. Louis Cathedral in Jackson Square.

It would be a sin to go to New Orleans for a conference and not have a little fun while you're there.

Reducing the city to a few paragraphs on paper is nearly impossible. With an endless parade of sights, sounds and tastes, sensory overload — especially of the waistline — is a very real possibility. When it comes to the Crescent City, the Big Easy or simply 'Nawlins, there's plenty from which to choose.

New Orleans is stately riverboats, elegant plantation homes, Bourbon Street, muffulettas, crawfish etoufee, gumbo and shrimp Creole, cafe au lait and beignets, Creole, Cajun, Mardi Gras, antiques, throws, Cities of the Dead, voodoo, hot jazz, cool blues and hopping zydeco. It's a city with its own language, look and sound.

There's a festival almost every day of the year. Mardi Gras, while certainly the most famous, is by no means the only party in town. During the DDMS Users' Meeting in February, you'll have a chance to experience the Krewe Sparta parade. After an elegant dinner, you can retire to the grandstand to watch the world go by. Parades, fireworks, masquerade balls and colorful celebrations are the norm in New Orleans.

A walk through the French quarter is something of a festival

in itself. Jackson Square, the hub of the Quarter, provides a forum for Dixieland jazz bands, African drummers, artists selling New Orleans canvases, mimes, jugglers, tap dancers and fortune tellers.

Royal Street offers numerous antique shops and art galleries, while the Faubourg Marigny, adjacent to Esplanade Avenue, has become a bohemian paradise, filled with restaurants, music clubs, coffee houses, galleries and nightclubs. Within the few blocks of the French Quarter, you'll find everything from the finest in haute cuisine to soul food, from the carnival atmosphere of nightclubs and music halls to the peaceful, old world charm of residential areas. Any time, day or night, you can sample chicory coffee and beignets at Cafe du Monde. The open-air French Market is another round-the-clock attraction, where prominent New Orleans chefs rub elbows with shoppers in the flea market atmosphere.

The romance of riverboat gambling returned to New Orleans in 1993. You can cruise the waterways, betting on blackjack, craps, roulette, video poker and slots, or just enjoying an evening of dining and dancing on any of several floating casinos.

New Orleans has brought us painters, sculptors, Pulitzer Prize winning writers, chefs of great renown....and musicians. Louis Armstrong, Harry Connick, Jr., Fats Domino, Dr. John, Pete Fountain, Al Hirt, the amazing Marsalis family, Jelly Roll Morton, the Neville Brothers, and King Oliver are just a very few.

Much has been written and said about the city — and most of it's true. Whatever else you might say about New Orleans, it's an experience not to be missed!

Want to know more?
Check out www.nawlins.com or call 1-504-566-5005



P.O. Box 507, Keller, TX 76244

Mail To: