

DDISTRIBUTED DATA

Software to manage your business

Journal
of the
DDMS Family
of Companies

Year 2000-compliant Version 3 software release available

Have you received your Version 3 software yet? Terry Poindexter, the General Manager at Rogards in Champaign, Ill., picked up an early release copy at the National meeting in April.

"We just loaded the new Version 3 software this past weekend. It was the easiest new software install we've ever had," Poindexter said.

Poindexter was one of about 250 company representatives at the National meeting who picked up their Version 3 software. The general release of that software is now under way. To get yours, fill out the form on page 3 and fax it back to us. You'll receive your update in a few weeks.

(see VERSION 3 page 3)



The National Users' Conference was your first opportunity to pick up the new Version 3 software.

Inside:

San Francisco 2

Level I Serialized training 2

Marketing 101: What is your customer buying? 4

Dealer Profile: Williams Office Products 6

Record number attend meeting 8

National sessions manual CD-ROM available now for limited time 12

Year 2000 Alert!

Your software is ready — is your hardware?

January 1, 2000 is just a date on a calendar, but one with far reaching ramifications.

At DDMS, we saw the next millennium coming and prepared our software for it. If you've loaded Version 3, your databases and applications are ready.

Version 3 is available right now to all current DDMS customers *at no cost*. Some of our competitors are charging \$5,000 to \$10,000 — and more — to make their systems year 2000 compatible.

Now that your software is ready, how about your hardware? Some older systems may not be able to roll over to year 2000 and that could cause big problems.

The Scope of the Problem

"The Year 2000 problem is the most serious global threat to finance, commerce and government operations in modern times," said Alan Simpson, international broadcaster and noted speaker.

The administrator of the U.S. Small Business Administration, Aida Alvarez, in April said of the problem, "There's no getting around it. Y2K is a problem that demands the attention of every computer-dependent small business."

Version 3 is available right now to all current DDMS customers at no cost. Some of our competitors are charging \$5,000 to \$10,000 — and more — to make their systems year 2000 compatible.

Upcoming Meetings

Serialized *Level I Training*
July 22 - 24 Dallas/Ft. Worth

Furniture Training
Aug. 20 - 21 Dallas/Ft. Worth

Users' Meeting
Oct. 16 - 17 San Francisco

(see Y2K page 11)

Vol. 12, No.3,
May/June 1998

DDMS Users' Meeting News

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

San Francisco: Golden gateway to DDMS

Okay, so you didn't make it to the National Users' Conference in April and the Toronto meeting in June wasn't on your travel itinerary either. You've got one more chance this year to learn what you need to know about the new Version 3 software release and how to make the most of your DDMS system. The last users' meeting for 1998 is scheduled for Oct 5, 16 - 17 in San Francisco.

Look for classes on ACUMA, Multiple Vendors and Bins, a Version 4 preview, Windows NT platform, Automated Short-Buy, Debit Memo module, Picking Manifest, Specialist/Custom Software, and Multiple Units of Measure.

San Francisco's hilly streets provide gor-

geous glimpses of San Francisco Bay and its famous bridges. This is a mosaic of a city, a big picture made from the colorful tiles of the Latino Mission, the Castro, Chinatown, and Haight-Ashbury.

The city by the bay is also the gateway to California's great wine country. Napa and Sonoma Valleys are an easy drive from San Francisco. You won't believe the breathtaking scenery at every turn. An afternoon's wine tasting at the local wineries will turn even the greenest novice into a connoisseur.

Don't miss this opportunity to learn more about your DDMS system while you're visiting one of the country's most exciting cities.

Serialized, Furniture training classes scheduled for July, August at DDMS

If you're ready to put the Serialized or Furniture modules to work for you, now is the time to schedule your training.

Serialized Level I

Your machine dealership can run like a well-oiled machine when you implement the DDMS O/M Dealer module. To help you get started, we've scheduled a Level I training class July 22 - 24 at DDMS. Attendance is limited to 20.

Wednesday

You'll start your training with an introduction to the O/M Dealer module. This overview walks you through the Serial Master Menu, screen-to-screen flow and system files. Next, you'll find out what you need to know about some required initial setup and related parameters. Wrap up the day with the process of selling serial machines, service contracts and rentals.

Thursday

Learn about the automated billing process for contracts and meter overages. You'll also find out how to enter your existing machines and service contracts into the O/M Dealer module so you can begin tracking performance and income with

DDMS. Establish techs, qualifications, territories, etc., in preparation for logging service calls. Then log the calls, monitor and dispatch them. Complete the process by billing the workorder.

Friday

Contracts expiring? Learn how the contract renewal program can work for you. Let the DDMS renewal program show you contract profitability before you renew. See what the reporting system has to offer. Wrap up your training with an overview and a Question and Answer session.

Furniture

Get started on the Furniture module with a two-day authorization and training course Aug. 20-21. You'll learn everything you need to know to get started. Topics include:

- Parameters
- Order Entry
- Creating a Quote
- Creating a Purchase Order
- Tracking an Order
- Using TranSpec

To reserve a space in either class, call 1-800-366-3367 and select [3] and then [2] Training from the menu.



Published by
**Distribution Data
Management Systems, Inc.**

**Managing Editor
Charles Russell**

**Editor
Cindy Zepeda**

Distributed Data is the bi-monthly newsletter of the DDMS family of companies. DDMS, O/PUS, and Silver Plus customers can obtain multiple copies for \$12 per year for each additional copy (one copy is included in software maintenance). Subscriptions for non-users are \$10 per issue or \$100 per year. DDMS is not responsible for the review, testing, or evaluation of any products advertised in *Distributed Data*, nor does the publication of an ad imply that we endorse or recommend the advertised product or service.

DDMS
Attn: Distributed Data
P.O. Box 507
Keller, TX, 76244

All contents copyrighted by DDMS.

*The
DDMS
Family of Companies
Phone Directory*

DDMS

Local: (817)431-0668
Accounting: (800)959-3373
Accounting Fax: (817) 431-8303
Administration: (800)366-3367
Administration Fax: (817)431-8303
Sales: (800)366-3367
Sales Fax: (817) 431-0955
Support: (800)366-4778
Support Fax: (817)431-0201 or 431-0956

O/PUS

Local: (817)431-0668
Support: (800)359-6787
Fax: (817)431-2246

Silver Plus

Local: (817)431-8120
Support: (800)200-4226
Fax: (817)431-5117

This training course is a must for machine dealerships.

*Version 3
continued from page 1*

Leap into 2000

On Jan. 1, 2000, computer systems all over the world will be adversely affected by programming that does not accommodate four digits in the year field. Some programs will interpret the "00" as 1900 rather than 2000. Among other things, accurate dates are important in computing interest, due dates, delinquent accounts, bonuses, commissions, bills and loans.

Your Version 3 software will prepare your DDMS system for the next millinnum. (Depending on your hardware, further measures may be required. See *Year 2000 Alert! Your software is ready — is your Hardware?* on page 1 for more details.)

Vendor Credit Returns

With your Version 3 update, there's an automated way for you to track items returned to the vendor through the new Vendor Credit Returns feature. Create debit memos for merchandise returned at order entry and then update accounts payable and debit memo records in PO-MASTER. You can even fax the debit memos to your vendors through this application.

Warehouse Efficiencies

You can take control of your warehouse with the new DDMS Picking Manifest module. Expedite orders and deliveries by consolidating product handling. Automat-

ing your warehouse can eliminate bottlenecks and the need to print pick tickets for most orders.

Inventory

The Inventory Module in Version 3 is all new for '98. The new multiple vendors feature automates communications with vendors. Using the new multiple bin feature, you can assign an item to multiple bins while the system automatically tracks the quantity in each bin.

Imagine being able to sell items to both commercial and retail markets *without item duplication*. Version 3's multiple units of measure feature lets you simplify your inventory database.

Commercial Order Entry

Version 3's new (EL) Customer Item Price Check screen lets you easily 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.

Electronic Invoicing

With Version 3's electronic invoicing capability, you'll make your business as efficient as possible by having your wholesaler transmit invoices to you electronically. Reduce man-hours, increase accuracy and enhance efficiency by using electronic invoicing and the (DO) Accounts Payable Purchase Order module. **D**

Version 3 Order Form

Documentation Type:	Price	Qty	Total
Basic Software materials (tape, diskettes, overview video)	\$27.95	1	\$27.95
Indicate drive type: <input type="checkbox"/> 3.5" floppy drive	System type: <input type="checkbox"/> PGDOS		
<input type="checkbox"/> 5.25" floppy drive	<input type="checkbox"/> Windows NT		
<input type="checkbox"/> combination floppy drive	<input type="checkbox"/> UNIX		
*You need to order some form of documentation.			
CD-ROM Documentation	\$35.95	_____	_____
Printed Documentation Update	\$59.95	_____	_____
CD-ROM and Videos	\$89.00	_____	_____
Printed Documentation and Videos	\$97.00	_____	_____
CD-ROM, Printed Documentation, and Videos	\$119.00	_____	_____
Additional Set of 7 Videos*	\$69.00	_____	_____

Grand Total: _____

Your order will be charged to your DDMS account.

COMPANY INFORMATION

Company: _____
 City: _____ State: _____ Current Software Version : _____
 Phone: _____ Fax: _____
 Contact Name: _____

Fax or Mail to
(817) 431-8303
Attn: Version 3
DDMS
P.O. Box 507
Keller, Texas
79422

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



Using the Customer Sales Comparison by Periods Report, you can compare customer sales between two business periods. It calculates the average sales per month and also calculates the customer's percentage of the salesman's total sales based on average monthly sales dollars.

What are your customers buying?

Successful marketing is not rocket science. In fact there are only three key steps to it:

1. Determine what your customers' needs are.
2. Provide a quality product or service that meets those needs.
3. Tell them.

You already provide quality products and service. Your sales people take care of telling your customers. So how do you know what your customers need?

Where are they getting them?

Assessing your customers' needs is fairly simple. "If you look at a secretarial desk with a computer, you know almost exactly everything they use," said Doug Parsley, sales manager for Williams Office Products in Dallas. "And if we're not selling them all of those things, where are they getting them?"

Comparing their needs to what you're selling them will tell you exactly how much of their business you're not getting. Your DDMS system can tell you precisely that.

Use DDMS Reports

Using the (URG) Sales Journal Selection screen, you can print four different reports. They use information from the sales journals you have set up in the (LGA) Sales Journals Parameters screen to look at your sales in different ways. You can use these reports to compare information for specific business periods.

Customer Sales Comparison by Periods

For example, the Customer Sales Comparison by Periods Report allows you to compare customer sales between two business periods. It calculates the average sales per month and also calculates the customer's percentage of the salesman's total sales based on average monthly sales dollars.

Item Sales Comparison by Periods

The Item Sales Comparison by Periods Report lists sales and gross profit percentages according to item stock class. This report prints detail including net sales, cost, margin, and gross profit percentages for both the current business period and any prior business periods you specify.

Customer & Salesman +/- Sales by Period vs. Period

The Customer & Salesman +/- Sales by Period vs. Period Report lists sales figures by comparing two different business periods. Using the two periods, it compares the increase and decrease in sales.

Period Comp. Sales, for Customer w/ Invoice Info

The Period Comp. Sales, for Customer w/Invoice Info Report compares sales dollars, sales margins, and gross profit percentages for any two business periods you specify. It also compares the number of invoices and average invoice amounts for both periods.

You can set up to five sorts for each report. You can use any of the following:

- Customer salesman
- Customer name
- Customer number
- Customer status
- Customer SIC code
- Item number
- Company
- Item class
- Item department
- Item SIC code
- Frequency
- Quantity
- Gross profit %
- Sales dollars
- Contract
- Invoice
- Margin dollars

In addition, you can limit by

- Customer number (customer account number)
- Status (customer status codes)
- Customer SIC code
- Item number

"And if we're not selling them all [of their supplies], where are they getting it?"
— Doug Parsley, Williams Office Products

A DEALER PROFILE

E-commerce empowers independent dealers

Williams Office Supply in Dallas is a David in a field of Goliaths. They're surrounded by Office Depot, Office Max, BT, Boise Cascade, USOP, Corporate Express, and Staples. Sound familiar? Most independently-owned office supply dealerships are in the same situation. Williams, however, doesn't just survive, they thrive.

Doug Parsley, general sales manager for Williams, said their business philosophy is pretty simple. They believe if you continue to do what you've always done, you'll continue to get the same results you've always gotten. That's fine — so long as the marketplace remains static.

"We follow a guideline," Parsley said. "Albert Einstein once said the problems we face today cannot be solved with the same level of thinking we have when we recognize the problem. We have to elevate our thought process in order to solve the problem. It's a continual challenge."

While that's simply stated, it is sometimes harder to accomplish. "We, as human beings, get set in our ways and we tend to think if a solution eliminated a similar problem before, it ought to work now. While it may eliminate the symptoms, it doesn't solve the problem and it comes back again. It's like putting Ambesol on a toothache — it takes care of it for a while, but the pain comes back."

Change is the only constant in business today. Family owned stores that had always done very well, found themselves a few years ago in the midst of a revolution. They either evolved or were swallowed by bigger competitors.

Albert Williams knows about that first hand. Williams owned a thriving dealership in Dallas, which he sold to a larger competitor. Under new ownership, the business went bankrupt. Williams moved on and opened another store in 1984. He serves as chairman of the board. His wife is president and his daughter and son-in-law are vice presidents.

"For years, dealers thought all they had to do was buy better to solve all their problems. But that was back when

they could get good margins and back when customers were willing to pay the margins," Parsley said. "A paradigm shift has occurred. The customer can get the price. There is no keeping any customer from getting the price. The small home office can go to the power channel and get nearly as good a price as somebody like GTE can get."

E-Commerce

Parsley said the Williams' goal is to be the office products resupply for their customers. As an IS dealer, he's been using EPIC for about three years. Currently, Williams makes extensive use of the Internet, WinOrder and RoadRunner for business-to-business selling.

"Buying office supplies is about 10 percent of an employee's job, but about 60 percent of their headaches," he said.

Using WinOrder, a Williams sales rep can assume the order process responsibility, including maintaining a business's office supply inventory. The rep can place the order from the

business and process it through the DDMS system without ever touching it.

"If, using e-commerce, I can reduce those headaches, I win," Parsley said. "WinOrder allows direct dial-up order entry processing for the customer. I can be the least-cost provider because it costs me less to process the order. Every independent dealer should be using e-commerce."

Parsley trains reps how to sell using e-commerce and trains end-users how to recognize where the savings are when they use it.

Since he said he's no computer programmer, Parsley is excited about RoadRunner. Williams no longer has an employee who can write reports, and he says that using RoadRunner, he'll be able to get the reports he needs.

RoadRunner is the new DDMS interface that makes your DDMS database available to you in a Microsoft Access format. You can use it to evaluate sales, analyze customer usage and project the impact of varying your margin, all in a user-friendly Windows environment. Import infor-

"WinOrder allows direct dial-up order entry processing for the customer. I can be the least-cost provider because it costs me less to process the order. Every independent dealer should be using e-commerce"
 — Doug Parsley, sales manager
 Williams Office Products

mation into Microsoft Word, Excel, Publisher and Binder, just to name a few. You can build professional documents, spreadsheets, catalogs, mailing lists and newsletters. The possibilities are limited only by your needs and imagination.

Parsley said, "What has changed is that the price is determined by the amount of service the customer wants."

Recognizing that, Williams developed a new strategy, offering what the giants can't: service. Parsley maintained that a quality, well-trained sales force is the key to good service.

"We've got good people. We've got reps who still believe it's important to be problem solvers. They still communicate very well. They're very positive-thinking, very proactive. They work."

Williams focuses on the eastern half of the Dallas/Ft. Worth metroplex.

Parsley said that while the market's present open-pricing ability is a sword that cuts against them, it also cuts for them.

"It's nice when somebody calls and says they're very unhappy with their supplier's service. After trying Williams they say they're so pleasantly surprised to discover that changing suppliers is not as expensive as they had thought. That's good."

Presently, Williams employs 25 people. The company sells office supplies, furniture, printing and computer supplies.

Using reports to make sales

Parsley said DDMS reports offer users the kind of information they need to make a sales force effective.

"I want to know what products customers are buying, what products make up what percent of their purchases, what products make up what percent of my salesperson's sales. I want to see those, not because of what's there, but because of what's not there."

"If you look at a secretarial desk with a computer, you know almost exactly everything they use," said Parsley. "And if we're not selling them all of those things, where are they getting them?"

Using DDMS

Parsley said the DDMS system is a particularly important tool to the Williams warehouse.

"The purchasing department uses the system extensively in running the low-stocks, maintaining the inventory and keeping it correct. We label a lot of our own products and we use the system to print those labels," he said.

"We use the DDMS system throughout the process. We use the short buy report, the economic order quantities that are there," Parsley said.

"We pay attention to what's in the warehouse. We look to see what's not selling and we get rid of it. We use the system to be conscious of what our top 250 SKUs are by

hits and obviously those are the ones we want to stock. It's real easy to know what you want to stock if you can look and see what the top numbers are. The system helps you know."

Parsley said Williams doesn't use the automated short-buy yet, but is working toward it. Williams has successfully loaded Version 3 and is preparing to utilize more of its features.

Parsley started in the office products industry in 1961 as a part-time clerk while he was in college. He worked his way up to owning his own store for 12 years. "I ran my own store until I was offered too much money for it and I sold it." He planned to leave the industry — and did for 4 years. Then S.P. Richards offered him a small territory. "It wasn't a big enough territory for somebody to work who really wanted to work, so they asked me to work it for a while." From there, Parsley went to NOPA, where he worked as a regional manager for eight years. In a restructuring move, NOPA eliminated the regional positions, so Parsley moved on to consulting. "I did that for a few years until I got tired of running from coast to coast, so I settled down with Williams." He's been there for two years.

If you'd like to know more about using e-commerce in your business, you can reach Parsley at (972) 241-8895.

"It's real easy to know what you want to stock if you can look and see what the top numbers are. The system helps you know."

DDMS to go

RoadRunner lets you export your DDMS database in a Microsoft Access format. It's a powerful tool designed with the salesperson in mind. It runs under Windows on any Windows 95 laptop or PC. It's powerful, portable and easy to use.

- Review and analyze what your customers are buying *before* you make the sales call. Import database to a spreadsheet program for easy analysis. Print usage reports and quotes for customers.
- Maintain a 24-month sales history for customers and retrieve past invoices.
- Perform real-time stock checks so you know what you have available right now and what you can backorder.
- Access your complete customer database including billing and shipping addresses, buyers lists, order entry and pricing settings, remarks, and monthly sales totals.
- Access customer pricing, contracts and laundry lists to create marketing tools with a professional look.

RoadRunner gives your sales team the edge in today's competitive market.

Record number attends meeting

It was the largest meeting in DDMS history, with over 500 in attendance. Representatives from more than 200 companies converged on Dallas-Ft. Worth April 16 - 18 for the 1998 National Users' Conference.

They came to see the future of DDMS, to attend classes, to meet with other dealers, to find out what's cutting-edge in the industry and to pick up their Version 3 software.

Our Vision

The theme of the 1998 National Users' Meeting was "Taking the Mystery out of your Future." We're carrying that theme over to our strategic plan for the future. Our goal is to give you the tools you need to compete with your multi-million-dollar competitors. Toward that end, we've been working to open our platforms, so that now you have three platform options.

Interface with other packages

Because there are companies already writing excellent software tool packages, we are focusing on what we do best — distribution software. So instead of writing our own tool packages, we're forming strategic alliances with companies that already build leading-edge software. We want to give you a choice so you can build the system that works best for your business.

A good example of that is our interface with **GoldMine**, the award-winning sales automation package. You'll still have access to the DDMS telemarketing module, but for dealers who want more, now you can add GoldMine. It gives you unlimited fields and databases that can help users store and use vast amounts of valuable customer information, as well as offering full call scheduling with graphical daily, weekly, and monthly calendar views.

Some of the products already are:

Umbrella joins the growing DDMS Internet access options: **ACUMA**, **IntelliNet** and **PromoNet**. We're working with **Smead** to solve your data storage problems. **Facet/Giza** and **CAP** have both developed excellent design programs that interface with your DDMS system. **Optio** gives your UNIX system faxing capability. **WinFax** lets you fax through your PGDOS and Window NT systems.

Vecta is information analysis that allows you to analyze what your customers are buying and develop better ways to market to them.

Look for accounting and payroll interfaces in the near future.

The advent of RoadRunner gives you flexibility and portability. It lets you export data from your DDMS database

into Microsoft's Access program. From there, the options are endless. You can evaluate sales, analyze customer usage and project the impact of varying your margin, all in a user-friendly Windows environment. Export information into Microsoft Word, Excel, Publisher and Binder, just to name a few. Build professional documents, spreadsheets, catalogs, mailing lists and newsletters. The possibilities are limited only by your needs and imagination. Using RoadRunner, you can import your DDMS database onto your laptop computer so the salesperson in the field has complete information about every customer.

Windows NT and AIX/UNIX

DDMS has invested in two new open platforms. With the power of Windows NT and AIX/UNIX, you'll experience unparalleled versatility. They let you move information into and out of other applications and give you hardware flexibility that PGDOS doesn't.

The Windows NT interface also allows for dumb terminals so you can develop an internal network. That way you can ease into a new way of looking at your DDMS system without spending big dollars on new equipment for every employee. Already in 1998, 22 dealers have made the move to Windows NT.

UNIX was the first platform we opened. It offers the same flexibility as Windows NT but has the added benefit of more power for larger companies and those that already have AIX hardware.

Graphical screens

Currently, DDMS is developing graphical screens for our Version 4 software release. The graphical screens will require either the Windows NT or AIX/UNIX platform running on a PC — it will not work on a dumb terminal. However, you can still use dumb terminals with both platforms for the text screens you're already familiar with. Whether you're using Windows NT or AIX/UNIX, you can use both PCs and dumb terminals. That shrinks the learning curve since employees already familiar with text screens need not switch to graphical screens. The graphical screens are easy to use and flexible and are utilized in RoadRunner.

The Classes

During the National conference, classes on 26 different topics took the mystery out of marketing, operations, furniture and serialized.

Sandy Crump, office supply manager with the Wise County Messenger in Decatur, Texas, said she'd heard so much about the National meeting in the Going Live class she attended that she was certain it would be time well

(see NATIONAL page 10)



DDMS 1998 National Users' Conference April 16 - 18



The conference opened with an evening of intrigue and dinner hosted by DDMS. The whodunit was a real head turner.



The latest DDMS products were on display, including RoadRunner. The Windows-based software lets you export information from your DDMS database into Windows programs. You can also import data into your DDMS database with RoadRunner.



S.P. Richard's was one of nearly 30 companies that participated in the Vendors' Expo. S.P. Richard's also hosted breakfast Friday.



Marcia Wilkes and Ted Dyer confer prior to teaching Pick It, Pack It, Wrap It, Ship It.

Students in Electronic Invoicing learned to reduce man-hours, increase accuracy and enhance efficiency by having their wholesalers transmit invoices electronically.



Item file updates are a breeze with O/PUS.

Taking
The Mystery
out of your
Future



By noon Saturday, Caroline Brewer and Cynthia Peterson had registered over 500 participants — a record attendance.



United's Lory Howell discusses opportunities with a customer. United hosted Saturday's breakfast.

NATIONAL
continued from page 9

spent. She said she wasn't disappointed.

"If I was going to give you a grade for the meeting, it would be an 'A'. We've been live for three years and we have our tasks that we do everyday and occasionally we need to learn new things. We wanted to get up and going on Version 3, Automated Short-Buy, and Furniture."

"I really appreciated the meeting. We learned some really useful things," Crump said. "The atmosphere in the classroom is very relaxed. It is a classroom, but you're not afraid to ask questions."

Roadmap for Operations was the most popular class and was an overview of the Operations track. It focused on using Version 3 software to increase overall efficiency.

Another key class in Operations was Optimum System Performance. Lynne Newman and Alice Busler of Lyng's in Watertown, N.Y., said they learned how to verify tapes and about hardware maintenance.

"We found out some things that we'd never learned. We'd never purged our uncataloged file, so I came home and began purging in six-month increments," she said. "It wasn't as bad as it could have been since we've only been on the system for two-and-a-half years, but purging is critical."

Newman said they also picked up some valuable tips in the Payroll class. Version 3's payroll module contains new reports that put more information at your fingertips.

Three workshop classes, in addition to our lab area in

the Vendor Expo, gave participants hands-on experience with Report Writer and Procs.

The Participants

While Newman enjoyed the classes and learned from them, she said what most people do after a users' meeting: "We learned a lot from the other dealers —shortcuts, priorities, tips and procedures. We made a lot of contacts, like a more experienced dealer in Nevada that's about the same size as we are. They told us we could call whenever we have questions."

The Vendor Expo

Over 30 booths filled the Vendor Expo with displays and activities. As always, it was the hub of activity before, between and after classes. It was the place to find out what's new in the industry and what's next. S.P. Richards and United Stationers each hosted breakfast during the conference.

Version 3

The National meeting was the first opportunity dealers had to pick up their Version 3 software release. Version 3 is essential if you plan to do business in the year 2000. (For more information, see *Year 2000-compliant Version 3 software release available on page 1.*)

Rogard's general manager, Terry Poindexter, put his software to work right away. "We just loaded the new Version 3 software this past weekend. It was the easiest new software install we've ever had," Poindexter said. **D**



Special Thanks

to the following vendors for sponsoring the

1998 DDMS National Users' Conference

Action Wholesale

BPIA

Corporate Supply

Network

DDC Company, Inc.

Independent Stationers

Optio Software, Inc.

Umbrella Systems

Azerty Incorporated

CAP

Daisytek

Facet/Giza

LED Enterprises, Inc.

Smead

S.P. Richards Co.

United Stationers

Y2K continued from page 1

Experts have estimated the price tag for exterminating the Y2K bug between \$52 billion and \$3.6 trillion.

One economist called the Y2K bug "a trivial yet overwhelming problem" that increases the probability of a 20 percent drop in the stock market. Depending on its global scope, such a drop could add trillions to the Y2K cost and impact economies worldwide.

The snag is in the PC's BIOS (Basic Input-Output System), a set of procedures in the computer's read-only memory (ROM) that handles functions like screen graphics, freeing the operating system to perform other tasks.

Typically, a PC's internal clock shows two-digit dates, but the BIOS reads dates in four digits. Older systems may read "2000" as "1900" or the default year "1980" (the year when DOS became available.)

Incompatible systems may fail to boot, showing only a BIOS error message or getting stuck in a "divide-by-zero" loop.

To correct the problem, you may only have to manually reset your system's clock — or you may have to upgrade your hardware.

Because we are not the hardware manufacturer, it's difficult if not impossible to make a blanket statement about your hardware's compliance. It varies from one machine to the next. There is no way to know for sure until you test your system.

Testing your system

If you plan to be in business Jan. 1, 2000, you must load Version 3 *and* test your hardware. The July issue of *Key Ops* will include instructions for the testing procedure. Be sure to test your system when you receive your *Key Ops*.

If everyone who needs to upgrade their hardware orders today, we'll have to double or triple the number of systems we ship every month just to make the deadline. We can do that, but the longer you wait to place your order, the further back in the queue you are. We recommend that you install and test your hardware, then load and test your Version 3 software early enough to be live on it before the end of next year.

Options

If you discover that your hardware won't make it into the next century, you still have options. There are several upgrade paths you can take. DDMS soft-

ware is available for PGDOS, Windows NT and AIX/UNIX platforms.

When you upgrade to a Pentium for PGDOS you can boost your system's power with a new SCSI hard drive that improves performance. You'll access your data 30 - 40 percent faster than with an EIDE hard drive. Bradburn, Inc., a school, art and office supplies dealer in St. Louis, Mo., was experiencing system lockups. Installing SCSI drives was the answer, according to Bradburn's A. William Larson.

"These new hard drives are working beautifully! I can actually say my expectations have been exceeded. All of the searches in the F and G screens are significantly faster. The time it takes for EOD backups has been cut in half," he wrote. "The system does a great job of prioritizing sorts to prevent the system from locking up. I am so thankful to have a solution that works this well."

DDMS for Windows NT is the up-and-coming powerhouse for businesses. Its versatility makes it a natural for growing companies.

Generally AIX/UNIX is reserved for large customers or companies that already own AIX-compatible hardware.

If you're an inactive customer...

Let's face it: there are lots of companies that purchased a DDMS system and elected to discontinue software support. Without the Version 3 upgrade, your system will fail. If you've invested enough in your DDMS system to run your business on it, invest a little more to keep it running in 2000. There is still time, but not much. As with the Prodigal Son, we're ready to welcome you back into the fold. Call the DDMS Sales department at 1-800-366-3367 today to discuss your upgrade options. **D**



After a full day of classes and gathering stickers from vendor booths, conference participants were ready to hit the Austin Ranch chuck wagon.

National sessions manual CD-ROM available now for limited time only

Want to find out what you missed at the 1998 National meeting? For a limited time, DDMS is offering the 1998 National Users' Conference Sessions manual on CD-ROM.


You'll be able to take the mystery out of the new Version 3 software with handouts on every session, including:

- Using the New A/P General Ledger Detail Features
- Using the New G/L Allocation Feature
- What's New in Serialized
- DDMS Remote Order Entry Options
- Proc File Basics

- Pick It, Pack It, Ship It with the New Picking Manifest Feature
- Using the New Furniture Features

The cost of this special CD is \$24.95 if you attended the National meeting, or \$49.95 if you did not. This special edition CD also contains Acrobat 3.01.

System requirements: PC running Windows 95 or NT 3.51 or later; 8 MB of RAM (16 MB of RAM for NT).

Don't pass up this opportunity to get the National meeting on CD-ROM! 



YES!

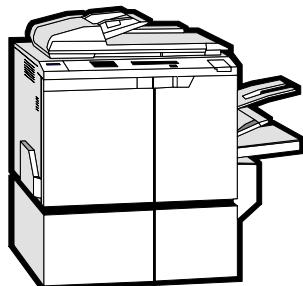
- I want to receive the 1998 National Sessions manual on CD-ROM!
- I attended National. I understand my DDMS account will be billed \$24.95.
 - I didn't attend National. I understand my DDMS account will be billed \$49.95.

Company: _____
 Address: _____
 City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
 Phone: _____ Fax: _____
 Contact Name: _____

Fax or Mail to
 (817) 431-0955
 Attn: Mike Malloy
 DDMS
 P.O. Box 507
 Keller, Texas 79422



P.O. Box 507, Keller, TX 76244



Mail To:

**Serialized
 Level 1 Training
 July 22 - 24, 1998
 at DDMS**