

ICN—more than a bargain

by John Freeman and Emmanuel Goldstein

Last month, we printed a story on a company called ICN. This month, we have more details which may prove useful.

The Independent Communications Network supposedly allows you to make all the calls you want for \$100 a month. To sign up for this, you need a sponsor. You can also, if you choose, sponsor other people. If you manage to convince somebody to use this system, you make \$25. If that person convinces someone else, they make \$25 and you make \$5. It goes down six levels, so the maximum you can make is \$50 on one sale. But there's no limit to how many sales you can make. That's how that end of the deal works. Some people who sign up for ICN choose the "marketing plan", which is what was just described. Others choose both this and phone service (which is referred to as "partyline service"). And some just choose to use the phone service alone.

We called ICN to ask about signing up. The person at the other end said that if we wanted to sign up, we'd be given an 800 number to call to get our dial tone. Everyone gets the same 800 number. If it's busy or if it rings more than once, the customer must hang up and try again. He said straight out that we probably wouldn't get through the first time. He said on the average you have to redial for about ten minutes to get the dial tone. He said that evenings were very busy and it wasn't a good idea to try then. "What about days?" we asked. "They're busy too," he said.

What ICN is doing is reselling ATT's WATS lines. This in itself isn't illegal. But ICN is estimated to have over 8,000 customers and only 54 lines for their long distance network. It would be quite a trick to find out how many customers ICN *really* has. All personnel seem to take offense at this question.

ICN was started in Wautoma, Wisconsin on July 15, 1986. It didn't take long for complaints to roll into the Wisconsin Public Service Commission. In September, ICN relocated in Cody, Wyoming. The representative told us that there is no corporate income tax in Wyoming.

ICN saves a lot by never sending out bills. The \$100 is due on the last working day of the month. Presumably, if they don't get paid, your access code is shut off. There is also another method, which is a little frightening. They subscribe to a service known as Checkomatic, which will automatically take \$100 out of your checking account every month!

We have yet to find anyone who has successfully completed a call on this system, or even gotten a dial tone. The 800 number we obtained never stops ringing.

And not all the complaints come from irate customers who can't get through. In ICN's first ad campaign, they gave an example of a WATS number. The number was given presumably so customers or sellers could see what a real 800 number looks like. The number they gave, 800-ICN-FREE belonged to the Life Control Institute in New Jersey. LCI was stuck paying for every call that people made to the sample 800 number, thinking they could get free phone calls. Eventually the people from LCI sent ICN a letter requesting that they pay for their share of the WATS bill, but ICN never sent a response.

According to the representative, customers have 30 days to claim a refund. He also told us that once you did get through,

there were three possible ways your call could be completed. The first was optic-fiber, which gave the best connection. The second was FX copper, which was fairly good. The third was AT&T WATS, which he said was the worst and that you could barely hear the person on the other end.

The company has some kind of a deal worked out with AT&T in which they get more lines put in as they get more customers. Their codes are six digits long and calls can be made to anywhere in the United States, including Alaska, Hawaii, and the Virgin Islands. Calls can't be made from Alaska or to Canada or Mexico.

WELCOME FROM CODY... ICN's new Cody staff is comfortably housed in the environs of the old Marathon Oil Company office building, and surrounded by the grandeur of Cody Country.

All's well at new Cody offices

ICN's headquarters are healthy, and humming in Wyoming, and when a good move the last summer, has proven to be a triumph of people and favorable circumstances you'll be able to see if you can attend our open house Nov. 21-22. Called for a new way over, but especially open to attend the open house. The present month for ICN and its customers is that people are on hand here for ICN and the help-line staff of nearly 500 people working at headquarters, the more we need in the local market. We move also in all public use state of the local technical, service and administrative staff groups in the local market. Many of our new people were trained and experienced in all company departments, but for a number of reasons their customers were not able to learn more.

Cody had been the successful state for many years and an excellent business location. Located for a number of American business, turned the interest for Wyoming. The Housekeeping was purchased by Marathon, including a large new office building, and Marathon brought men, materials and technicians here. Their career and its future, maintenance of many sites and a 50 percent rate in use, unimpaired.

You'll see this in action, later around ICN, though, as people shifted in all company credit sales, making and management staff, providing into traditional marketing of the long distance service. As a matter of fact, some of the people already know their way around the building, as we moved into the office, formerly occupied by Marathon Oil.

The only time ICN get into-month nothing in the move to Wyoming, but a few more are coming as well. There is no money in Wyoming and no more income tax.

It's a great working atmosphere, with clear air, low cost, by movement, friendly people, great service, learning, taking and much more. The city's founder, Col. William F. Shafter, 1867, Cody and wife a mountain ranch near here, was a close to reason that when the land was cleared through the trees, you could see the top of the range of the people, and all of the hills, meant our industries of unimpaired and steady.

If you have an opportunity to attend the open house, give them a call at (307) 587-4730. There is not new staff and customers, reasons, details. She worked for the Chairman of Commerce before moving ICN, and moved immediately, as we moved to Cody, and began operations. She'll be happy to assist in all aspects of your move in, headquarters.

THE FIRST ISSUE of ICN's newsletter, "Partyline". But the party may be a surprise for subscribers—buried on the back of one of their "application" forms in tiny print is the fact that commissions are not paid to you for any customers you sign up, but only on customers that also pledge to be salesmen. If you sign up for the service, you may discover a whole world of similar surprises.

Specifics

We did a little detective work on ICN and this is what we came up with. The General Manager is Larry Hartsough, the President is John Heeg, and the Vice President is Robert Boch. The current address for ICN corporate headquarters is 808 Meadow Drive, Cody, Wyoming 82414. At this address they have 25 lines allocated as follows: 307-587-4700 to 09 is the customer service department. As of Monday, November 3, there was only a five line hunt sequence. 4701,6,7,8,9 are being eliminated. They have another ten-line hunt sequence: 307-587-4730 to 39. We suspect this is used for sales people to call in regarding sales that have just been completed. On these lines,

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MASTERING THE NETWORKS

by John Anderson

The desire to allow computers to talk to each other has given way to a multitude of networks each having their own protocol and characteristics. These diverse networks are all gatewayed to each other such that a user on any one of these networks can communicate with a user on another network. In a sense the networks themselves are networked together. In this article, we will attempt to untangle the wires connecting these networks and examine the ARPAnet, BITNET, CSnet, Mailnet, UUCP network, and their gateways.

The ARPAnet is perhaps the most well known of all the networks. The ARPAnet is funded by the Advance Research Projects Association (Department of Defense) and exists to allow the various research institutions to share both resources and information. All types of machines running every imaginable operating system are on this network. Having an account on a machine which is an ARPAnet node is the most desirable position to be in from a networking standpoint. This situation is advantageous because the ARPAnet has gateways to all of the networks we will discuss. Because of this and some properties we will discuss later, the ARPAnet has also been termed the InterNet. Physically, ARPAnet nodes are connected by dedicated data lines and use the TCP/IP protocol for communications. The TCP/IP protocol is one of the most popular and versatile networking protocols currently available. TCP/IP was made popular by the ARPAnet and evolved on it. A node on the ARPAnet can remotely login to, send mail to, and transfer files with any other node on the network directly. This is the only network which allows a user to remotely login to all of the nodes on the network. The hacking possibilities for a user on this network are almost unlimited. The Network Information Center computer which is available to ARPAnet users is the ultimate network resource. It provides abundant information about the ARPAnet and the various gateway sites. A user on the ARPAnet can contact NIC by using the command TELNET to open a connection with SRI-NIC.ARPA.

The BITNET is similar to the ARPAnet in that it also uses dedicated lines for communications. The similarities end there because instead of the TCP/IP protocol the BITNET uses the RSCS (Remote Source Control System) protocol. This network was originally composed of IBM mainframes and minicomputers due to its use of the RSCS protocol which is exclusively IBM's. Recently RSCS emulators have become available for machines running VMS and UNIX. Several non-IBM machines have joined the BITNET using these emulators and many shall follow. It is doubtful, however, that the BITNET will ever support all of the features that the ARPAnet boasts since the RSCS protocol is very restrictive. The BITNET only supports electronic mail and file transfer between its

nodes. It is *not* possible for one node to remotely login to another. Inquiries about the BITNET can be addressed to:

Educom

Bitnet Network Information Center

P.O. Box 364

Princeton, NJ 08540

Phone: (609) 734-1878

The CSnet or PhoneNet is a network of university computer science departments and other research institutions. The CSnet is radically different from the networks mentioned above in that every node on the network is only connected to the relay node (CSNET-RELAY). The connection to this central node is not via a dedicated line but via dial-up phone lines. Periodically (usually once a day) the CSNET-RELAY will call each node on the network to see if there are any messages to be transferred. This type of network architecture gave the CSnet its second name, PhoneNet. The CSnet only supports electronic mail and is not likely to ever support any other network functions if it does not change its method of networking. The CSnet is run by Bolt Beranek and Newman Inc. and can be contacted at the following address:

Bolt Beranek and Newman Inc.

10 Moulton Street

Cambridge, MA 02238

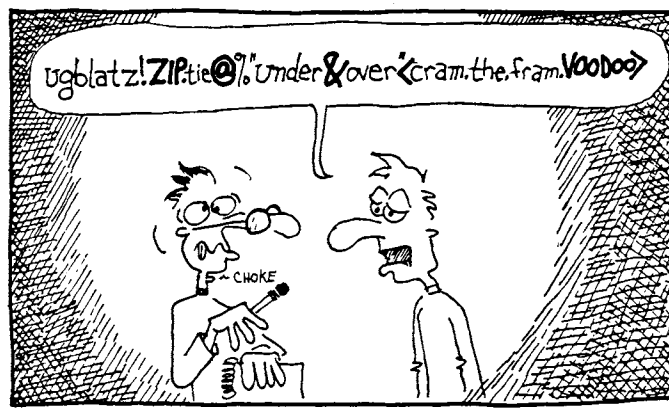
Phone: (617) 497-2777

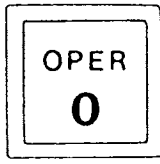
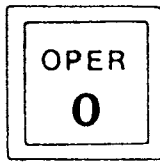
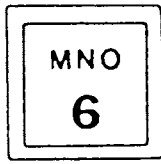
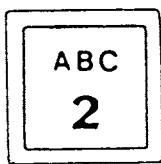
A network similar to the CSnet is the Mailnet. Apparently this network only supports the transfer of mail. At this time the type of network structure and machines using this network are unknown to the author. However, it would not be unreasonable to assume that this network uses a structure similar to the CSnet's. Please address any additional information about Mailnet to this magazine.

Perhaps the largest and most loosely structured network is the UUCP network. This network has nodes in Canada, Japan, Europe, Australia, and many other countries. The UUCP network is composed exclusively of machines running the UNIX operating system. The network uses dial-up phone lines for the transmission of data and uses the UUCP protocol. UUCP (Unix to Unix Copy Program) is found on every system running Unix and systems need only establish a connection with one system on the network to become a fully functioning node. The transfer of mail to any node on the network is supported. Remote logins and file transfers are only supported with your direct neighbors.

With so many different networks, a need for inter-network communications arose. Gateways are the bridges which link these networks together. Gateway sites are sites which reside on two or more networks. These gateways allow for the transfer of mail messages from one network to another. They do *not* allow

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Voice of Reagan Tortures Patients

Reuters

A Republican plan to phone targeted voters with a pre-recorded message from President Ronald Reagan backfired when critically ill patients at Mesquite Community Hospital in Texas were inundated with the calls for nearly four hours.

Nurses and visitors in the hospital's intensive care ward, weary of answering telephones every few minutes only to hear the same presidential message, said they finally took all patient telephones off the hook on a recent Saturday night.

"There were a lot [of calls] and they were very aggravating. I'd like to know who did it," said Bob Grimes, associate administrator of the suburban Dallas hospital.

A spokesman for the Republican National Committee said the party was trying to encourage voter turnout in the election, but did not intend to press for votes among sick people.

The telephone calls were generated by computers and were supposed to go only to enrolled Republicans and Reagan supporters in specific areas of 25 states, but not Texas, he said.

[So maybe it was Reagan himself! Presidents get bored too...]

FBI Actions Anger Parents

Combined News Sources

More than a year after the FBI seized computer equipment used by 23 North County (California) teenagers, there have been no arrests and no charges—just a number of angry parents.

On October 15, 1985, 50 FBI agents, armed with search warrants, confiscated computers, keyboards, modems, and software from homes in Vista, Escondido, Oceanside, Carlsbad, Poway, and Rancho Penasquitos (all in Southern California).

The FBI alleged that the teens had used their computers to illegally tap into a financial database used by the Chase Manhattan Bank.

The investigation has now ended, with the teenagers signing deferred prosecution agreements stating that if they do not commit any crimes within the year, they will not be prosecuted. The government has kept the computer gear.

U.S. Attorney Peter Nunez is confident that if the case ever came to trial, the youths would be convicted.

"I think justice was done," Nunez said. "I don't think it was necessary to convict people or try them. When we got their attention, they basically acknowledged the problems had been created and they walked away. It's unfortunate they still want to carry on the battle in the press."

Several of the teenagers and their parents—in their first interviews about the case—say there was no indication that the database was restricted. They are also upset about the conduct of the FBI; they asked that their names not be revealed.

"He [the FBI agent] accused and harassed my son and said if he talked about it to anyone, he'd be accused of obstruction of justice," said one parent.

The FBI denies that its agents acted rudely.

"Any time a warrant is served, people feel uncomfortable. I think anyone would," said FBI spokesman Gary Laturno. "Our agents are gentlemen, they do not intimidate people, they don't scare people." [They sure don't scare us!]

One teenager, who was at church when the FBI came knocking, said that his mother and an FBI agent came to the church to get him. He said that it was only when the FBI started to question him that he realized what he had been accused of.

"There was no way to know that it was a high-level system used by a bank," he said. "They ended up by telling me I was in a lot of trouble."

The trouble had all started months earlier, several teens contend, when a toll-free number on an electronic bulletin board gave them access to an unknown system.

That unknown system turned out to be the massive Interactive Data Corporation, used by up to 25,000 customers

who pay for access to its financial information. Unknown users had been tapping into the system and changing passwords.

But both youths and parents say that the teens were encouraged to use the system and were given an account to access.

"You had the telephone number and the code name, then you connected with the system," said one parent. "At some point, there would be a help operator who would deal with you. That person would offer any kind of help you would want."

"Why would they ask how can we help you and explain different parts of the system, and literally ask my son to call back? It was an extremely friendly attitude. If they had even once told him they didn't want him on the system, it would have been different."

One parent thought the system included games and an encyclopedia and that system owners would eventually ask them to purchase the service.

"They had the trap on, they wanted the kids to call, they were afraid they had a hacker on the system. I know it sounds naive and stupid—but none of the parents knew."

Nunez labels as "nonsense" the idea that the teens did not know they had tapped into a major database.

"All of these kids were getting into a computer that they knew they should not have," he said. "Whether they knew all the rest of it is just a bunch of nonsense. You just don't go rummaging around in other people's property."

The teens and their parents say the Chase Manhattan system had absolutely no warning or name on the system—except the identifying code "IDC 370"—to explain that this was a private, financial database.

"There was no warning," said one mother. "If anyone would have said get off, you're breaking the law, this would have never happened."

"It would have been funny, if it wasn't so terrifying," another parent said of the incident. "I kept thinking there will be an apology and we'll all laugh about it, but that will never happen."

"Q" and "Z" Controversy Rages

Combined News Sources

Most people never noticed they were missing, but a computer consultant from Lambertville, New Jersey calls it unfair that the letters "Q" and "Z" have been left off the telephone dial.

Bernard Riskin, operating under the name "Quentin Zygmundt", is the organizer of "Citizens Quest to Squeeze Q and Z Back Onto the Telephone Dial". He says telephone makers are discriminating against a large number of businesses.

Riskin said it's hard to come up with a catchy vanity number—most of which are actually words—for pizza shops and barbecue restaurants without a complete alphabet.

"Amtrak's number is 1-800-USA-RAIL, but there's no 'Q' or 'Z' on the telephone dial to spell out Pizza Queen or B-B-Q," he said.

Riskin, 58, has written to New Jersey Bell, Bell Atlantic, and six other telephone companies around the country trying to get the letters on the telephone dials and buttons.

New Jersey Bell spokeswoman Lynette Viviani said no one ever complained about the missing letters before.

"We couldn't identify where in history it was determined what letters would go on what buttons," she said. But the number 1 is reserved for area code use and 0 is reserved for the operator, she said.

Under the old Bell system, telephone listings began with two letters, followed by five numbers.

Few exchanges began with "Q" or "Z" so those letters were left off the dials, Ms. Viviani said. "We now assign telephone listings by numbers, not letters," she said.

The change would have to be made on the set itself, which is standard throughout the nation and probably elsewhere, she said.

[Pizza Queen?]

Letters You Wrote

Dear 2600:

Are there still any hard-core Telenet hackers out there? Are you tired of Telenet dropping carrier on you after x number of tries? Then use Dunsnet! I found these numbers originally posted as Unix dial-ups, but found them to be Dunsnet access numbers. The @ prompt on Dunsnet looked familiar so I tried some Telenet addresses and they were the same as Telenet.

Here are the numbers: 612-893-0294, 612-893-0296, 201-464-5222

Amadeus

Dear Amadeus:

Thanks for the info. However, we found that Dunsnet drops carrier on users too after a certain number of unsuccessful tries. And not all the addresses are the same. For instance, typing MAIL won't get you Telemail as it will on Telenet, but another type of system. There also seem to be more commands. Typing HELP reveals some of them.

Dear 2600:

I'm trying to find out what my ANI is. Can you help?

Frustrated in Miami

Dear FIM:

ANI's (Automatic Number Identification) come in many shapes and sizes. Ours is 958. Other people must dial 311 to hear their phone number read back to them. Others we've heard of are 1223, 114, 4102222, and even 1-200-555-1212. We'd appreciate hearing any others from our readers.

It might actually be easier in some cases to find out from the operator when you're not sure what your number is. They won't tell you on many occasions due to "privacy" considerations, but one way around that is to act like a repairman and request the "drop line ID". This, we're told, usually works.

Dear 2600:

This comes from a Pacific Bell bill insert:

"A new prefix, 811, will soon be available for you to call your Pacific Bell business office toll-free from any area served by us. All our business office numbers will be replaced by toll-free numbers with an 811 prefix.

"If your PacBell business office numbers changed to an 811 prefix, the new prefix and number will appear on your telephone bill.

"After this change, you only dial 811-XXXX from any PacBell area in the state to reach your local office toll-free. However, if you are calling from an area where 1+ dialing is required, you must continue to dial the 1 before dialing the seven digit 811 number.

"Some of you who have specialized equipment could have a problem in dialing the 811 prefix. You may need to contact your vendor. Until equipment modification is made, you may continue dialing the old business office numbers available from 411.

"This change will save you the cost of a toll call to PacBell when a call is made to all non-local offices. (Today, calls to our BO's are normally toll free from a customer's home or business area.)"

Reader on the Pacific

Dear Reader:

Something else which is popping up in many places is the ability to choose your operators. Generally, dialing one "0" will get you your local operator, i.e. New York Telephone, New Jersey Bell. Dialing "00" will get you an AT&T operator. The local operators are used for making collect, third party, and credit card calls to local areas whereas AT&T operators handle longer distances. We presume they both have the same capabilities, equipment-wise.

Dear 2600:

How come Northern Virginians can't dial (202) 976-XXXX calls *at all*? Since these are local calls, 7-digit dialing is called for.

976 numbers are trapped to the general "cannot be completed as dialed" recording. If you dial 202 first, you get the same thing. If the 976 service provider has also signed up for the 976 exchange in Baltimore, you can reach it by dialing 301+976-XXXX, but you'll be charged for an interLATA long distance call on the carrier of your choice, assuming that carrier accepts 976 calls (Sprint and MCI do not).

Actually, there is a way to reach 202-976 numbers from Northern Virginia: use a long distance service which accepts calls via your dialing a 7-digit local access number which their switch answers. Do your security code, then 202-976-XXXX and the call will go through. The only long distance service which accepts 976 calls to my knowledge is Allnet (formerly Max), and they charge \$2.00 plus tax for each call regardless of length of time or distance.

AT&T accepts 976 calls, but only to other LATAs. AT&T also charges only the cost of the long distance call itself to 976 numbers; they don't carry back the 976 provider's premium charge to the caller. Presumably, this is the reason most alternate long distance companies either don't allow 976 or charge through the nose for it. Neither of these reasons appear to bother AT&T.

(The Virginia PUC does not allow the "dial it calls" as they believe they cost too much and are of dubious value, i.e., dial-porn, etc.)

Private Sector Subscriber

Dear PSS:

While those folks may very well be right about the lack of quality on dial-it services, they really have no business deciding for you what you can and cannot call. Everyone should be allowed access to those phone numbers if they're willing to pay the charges. We're shocked that Sprint and MCI don't allow calls to 976. As far as we're concerned, they have absolutely no right to do this. If you want to call the weather in New York from Chicago, who are they to say that's not allowed?

Fortunately, there are always ways around their system. Unfortunately, 2600-types are pretty much the only people who know this. So, for the benefit of everyone else, we suggest complaining day and night to any company that selects what phone numbers you can call.

In the meantime, here are some alternatives. In our area (516, 718, 212, 914), a new exchange has opened up. The 970 exchange also has dial-it services as well and may be reachable when 976 isn't. So far, we've only found two working numbers, 970-0000 and 970-9999, both of which can be described as alternate porno services. And if the weather is all you're after, then we've got good news. Weathertrac is a new service that not only gives the weather, but allows you to choose what city you want to hear a forecast for! You simply key in the area code or, for foreign cities, the first three letters of the city. This system is also useful for telling you the local time. There are even some hidden cities, we're told. Here are the numbers for this we've found so far: 212-355-1212, 213-337-3737, 214-350-5050, 214-869-9200, 303-639-1639, 312-956-0950, 404-976-7676, 512-222-2222, 602-230-2323, 619-444-4444, 713-875-8585, and 817-975-7575. We're also told that 1-976-7676 will work from inside the 612 area, but not from outside.

Dear 2600:

You ask why there is no "Q" on the phone dial. Name me one
(continued on page 3-86)

The 2600 Information Bureau

BRITISH BBS NUMBERS

12007577	16796183	272421196	222461824	482859169
12485747	16808245	273773971	222464725	484657299
13411719	17356153	27445246	223243642	486225174
13417840	17940655	277228867	224641585	48676535
13467150	18533965	279441188	224647158	486788710
13489400	18630198	279443511	22523276	49249194
13736337	18640459	295720812	226292118	493781334
13992136	18835290	313461097	227232628	502515935
14293047	18888894	315566316	243511077	50638526
14509764	19022546	316573272	244549336	508418152
14556607	19275820	3617368449	244677978	512605607
15423772	19414285	376518818	246865843	514248526
15424977	19549847	384635336	247455162	514288924
15710026	19604742	39253116	249815204	514288984
15792288	19687402	394276306	25654494	524426132
15796748	19853322	395272611	25752974	524426133
16064194	19864360	40150745	25854494	52460399
16282034	20641401	402473041	26552346	524822336
16313076	206862354	42934346	26822177	533387128
16382034	206867134	440820002	26825122	53439389
16480018	207543555	443733343	268710637	53455855
16588754	214303761	443755298	268778953	5333387128
16697249	214440274	45554798	268778956	56884607
16791888	214441484	482497150	270767025	592860313

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2600

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POSTMASTER: This is private mail.



"It's the Defense Department. They're calling around the neighborhood to see if anyone can help them figure out why every one of their missiles keeps overriding their commands and aiming themselves at Mrs. O'Reilly's house down the block."

BBS NUMBERS

(continued from page 3-85)

602289783	728265078
60420441	73478568
614271596	74266798
614273711	742667983
614564157	752364059
614946938	75373544
617368449	762333872
617489101	7664154
622681590	76750511
622850440	772452773
62533703	782265078
626890014	78438110
62846691	792203953
628463571	795842324
633366467	84332637
642486643	874711147
692630186	883844164
69576474	895420164
698884804	89552685
702546373	903212552
702552941	90342013
703437200	908614469
705524805	908668398
705736025	909773564
707328723	912514271
70752242	923676644
724852302	92639871
	9367025

Letters (continued from page 3-84)

word that starts with "Q" that doesn't start with "QU". (Only one "Q" exchange is possible.)

Here's an interesting "letter-number" for the collection: 612-RAW-BEEF. It's a Minneapolis liquor store.

Any Mouse

Dear AM:

Actually, ten exchanges would be possible with "QU" since an exchange is three digits. And besides, there would be two other letters on the same number, so every exchange could still have a name. How many words do you know of that begin with "X"? That's on every phone yet "Z" isn't.

Obviously, the situation is becoming more serious (see Flash page). It's time we all stood up and demanded our Q's and Z's!

Keep the "letter-numbers" coming, folks! But remember, they must be letters that the company on the other end doesn't want spelled out.

Dear 2600:

Some numbers which may be of interest to readers:

US Sprint (formerly US Tel, but now used by Sprint as a calling card number) 8003450008 (9501033), SBS (really MCI, but not the same as MCI's other two dialups) 8004464462 (9501088), and MCI calling card number 8006241022 (9501022).

Now for some tricks. On US Sprint, after hearing the dial tone, dial #, then one of the following numbers: 1 will get the main office in Dallas, 2 will get something that answers as "installers", 3 is silence, 4 is a reorder, 5 is a recording saying "the speed number you dialed is invalid", 6 is a 1000 hertz tone, 7 is the same as 5, 8 is the old customer service number, 9 is the field office, and 0 is the old customer service number. You can key in two digits in some cases and get the "speed number"

(continued on page 3-88)

Wrath of God Strikes 2600

On July 26 of this year, 2600 came very close to being wiped out of existence. While we have taken extraordinary precautions to protect ourselves against any form of harassment from all kinds of authorities, there was one occurrence that we were almost completely unprepared for. We stress the word almost.

On this fateful night, our offices took a direct hit from Mother Nature herself in the form of a lightning bolt. While nobody was injured and no fires were started, nearly every piece of electronic equipment was completely and irrevocably fried.

Computers, modems, printers, tape machines—all totally nonfunctional. We started sending equipment out for repairs the day after this horrible kick of fate, and even now we're still waiting for satisfaction on a number of them. We feel we must point out that two companies in particular—Epson and Zenith—seem very much bewildered as to how to fix their own machines.

But there is a bright spot and that should be pointed out as well. Only a few months earlier, we had taken out a policy with Safeware, the computer insurance people. We don't mean for this to come off sounding like an advertisement, but these people were simply incredible. Immediately after we notified them of our problems, they sent us forms to fill out and were ready to answer any questions we had. And in less time than it took for any of our equipment to be fixed, they had a check sent to us for the entire amount, minus the fifty dollar deductible.

We whole-heartedly recommend these folks for all computer users. They protect you against theft, fire, power surges, and in our case, lightning. Most users can be fully protected for well under \$100 a year. You can reach Safeware at 8008483469. We'd be interested in hearing other insurance stories regarding computers.

Naturally, this incident and its aftermath have set us back a bit. You may have even noticed a slackening off from our usual efficiency. New subscribers were subjected to longer waits for their first issue and back issue orders were delayed up to a couple of months! Our long-awaited expansion and format change had to be delayed. And all of our uninsured radios and monitoring equipment were destroyed.

It's now November and we're about back to the point that we should have been at in August. Most of our equipment has either been replaced or repaired. We're better prepared for the next lightning hit, although little could have been done to ward off that last dagger of destruction. Our phones are in working order most of the time but occasionally you may get a busy signal, a reorder, or total silence that will last for days. This, according to New York Telephone, is not really happening. We'll see if the Public Service Commission agrees.

We're back on track now. Many thanks to those who lent their time and support during this time of crisis.



SYSTEMATICALLY SPEAKING

More Banks Link Arms

Associated Press

Three million holders of plastic cash cards from five New England banks will share the banks' 1,300 automated teller machines under a new agreement, while a sixth bank has expanded its outlets with a separate agreement.

The Bank of Boston, Bank of New England, Fleet National Bank, Shawmut Bank, and State Street Bank, as well as the eight banks of Connecticut Switch, an electronic fund transfer service, will be linked by a system to be called "Yankee 24."

Officials said that in six to nine months, customers with cards from any participating bank will be able to withdraw cash from any of the banks' machines. Eventually, that is expected to give those card holders access to 1,800 machines in New England.

Meanwhile, Baybanks Inc., which has 1,250 machines in four New England states and 200 Money Supply machines in retail outlets, will be joining the New York Cash Exchange. This will give Baybanks' one million card holders access to 2,700 additional automatic teller machines. [Of course, they'll have to leave the state to use them....]

Sprint—Too Many Customers

Philadelphia Inquirer

U.S. Sprint, the third-largest long distance company, which has been adding thousands of customers across the nation because of a special promotion, has been having capacity problems in South Jersey.

New Jersey Bell Telephone Company officials say they erred four years ago in growth forecasts for the South Jersey market and did not build enough switching capacity to handle the unanticipated expansion.

Aggravated by Sprint's recent offer of 10 percent off all bills for a year, Bell's capacity shortage has made it difficult for customers to get through. When they dial a long distance number, they hear a recording that says all circuits are busy. The problem, according to Sprint, affects mostly residential customers in the evenings and on weekends.

Although the capacity shortage could affect other carriers, MCI has had no reports of customer calls being blocked.

AT&T uses its own switching equipment and would not experience problems because of Bell's switch shortage.

More Magic Buttons

USA Today

A Denver company has developed a new telephone device called "In Touch" that makes latch-key kids feel safer.

"Now [a child] doesn't have to worry. You just push that button," says Larry Modesitt, of Family Communications, Inc.

An 8-by-6-inch box that connects to your phone's jack keeps your child in touch with a computer center where operators are on duty 24 hours a day. Personalized information on every subscriber family, including instructions on what to do if buttons are pushed by a child, are stored there.

There are two buttons each for police, fire, and medical emergencies. Another pair of buttons turns off a pre-set alarm when pushed by the child, letting the operators know the child is home. The two-button system prevents such glitches as accidental set-off by a baby crawling on the box.

In response to pushed buttons, the operators call the home to

find out what the child needs, or they call a parent, a neighbor, or the emergency agency.

In Touch, tested on 50 Denver families, should be available elsewhere by the end of the year. In Denver, the leasing price is \$49 with a monthly service charge of \$29.95. Or the system can be bought for \$419 with a monthly charge of \$9.95.

New Payphone Service for Michigan

Communications Week

The Michigan Public Service Commission has authorized the installation and operation of customer-owned coin-operated telephones (COCOTs) in Alltel Michigan Inc.'s service area. The price that the owners of COCOTs can charge per local call are restricted to a ceiling of 20 cents. Alltel Michigan of Stockbridge, Michigan, provides the local dial tone and loop, but the owners are responsible for installation, operation, and maintenance of the phones.

Meanwhile, Michigan Bell Telephone Company of Detroit has added to its list of service features. Recently, the Michigan Public Service Commission authorized the phone company to start its "charge-a-call plus" service. This allows users of Michigan Bell's coinless pay phones to charge calls to selected commercial credit cards.

Nickname Listings In Small Town

United Press International

In Breaux Bridge, Louisiana, you can give "Coon" Latiolais a call. Get "Patat" Guidry or "Corn Cob" Castille on the phone. Reach out and touch "Pee Wee" Frederick.

In this small Cajun town in the heart of south-central Louisiana, it's easy to find the phone number for any of them, even if you don't know their first names.

Coastal Telephone and Electronics Corp. has kept alive a tradition by allowing residents to include nicknames in their phone book listings.

Myrtle Conrad, whose late husband Earl "Teddy" Conrad started using the nicknames when he published Breaux Bridge's first telephone directory 35 years ago, said the nicknames are practical as well as colorful because so many people in town have the same name.

Conrad bought the Breaux Bridge Telephone Co. in the late 1930s when the town had 150 phones and no need for a directory, since a central operator knew everyone in town. But in 1949, a dial system was put in place and the telephone directory that followed was confusing to many residents, who didn't know the given names of their neighbors. That prompted Earl Conrad to allow the use of nicknames.

Computer College

Associated Press

At Electronic University, it's possible to earn college credits without setting foot on a college campus.

The "university" is run by Tele-Learning Systems from San Francisco. The courses range from Right Brain Drawing to Informational Systems for Management and cost between \$45 and \$295. The two-year-old Electronic University leads to two associate degrees, two bachelor's degrees and three graduate programs. It presently has only two accredited institutions—Thomas Edison State College in New Jersey and City University of Bellevue, Washington.

ICN (continued from page 3-81)

the representatives seem much nicer. Some useful info: Larry Hartsough's phone number: 307-527-6812. The WATS resale switch is located at 526 West Main St., Wautoma, Wisconsin 54928. The WATS service number is 800-367-8672, which translates to 414-765-9027 in Wisconsin. We believe this is the number that is supposed to give you a dial tone. We've tried hundreds of times at all hours with no success. This line has a 54-line hunt sequence. It used to always be busy but now they've "fixed it" by making it ring forever instead.

The offices in Wyoming are in a small office building, formerly the Marathon Oil office building. It's about 25,000 square feet and approximately 55 people work there. They use a Novell Star "state of the art" computer with Epson Equity 1 terminals. They tell us there are other companies like them all over the country, including one called Ideal in Washington state. Ideal supposedly charges \$120 per month.

We thought it would be interesting to find out what the rates are for AT&T WATS lines to see if these people are doing well or not. To start with, it costs \$123 to install a line and \$99 to have someone come out to do it. Rates for "Service Area 6", which enables you to call the entire United States are:

	Day	Eve	Night
First 15 hours	\$21.77	\$14.15	\$9.63
Next 25 hours	\$19.37	\$12.67	\$9.63
Over 40 hours	\$16.98	\$11.04	\$9.63

If ICN has 54 working lines and they are all in use at all times, it would cost them about \$8000 per line per month, close to \$430,000 in line charges alone for 54 lines, assuming they pay the lowest rate. Now, 54 customers paying \$100 each only bring in \$5400. It doesn't sound very profitable. But consider this. There is a very definite limit on the line charges, high though they are. There are only so many hours in a month. But there is no limit to how many people will send ICN \$100. So, if instead of a mere 54, their estimation of 8,000 actually sent them money, they'd bring in \$800,000. After paying the phone company and the salespeople, they'd still have over a quarter of a million dollars coming in per month. And if that's not enough, consider this. What if those WATS lines weren't really available 24 hours a day? From the beginning, they tell you how days and evenings are the worst times to call and you should never expect to be connected during those hours. So why bother leaving the lines on in the first place during those times? Nobody is going to expect to get through anyway. This maneuver would bring their costs down to \$180,966.96 in total for the WATS lines. They'd only need 1,810 customers to break even. The possibilities are endless in a situation like this, where the customer never really knows what's going on. That's why we feel it pays to stay away.

Letters (continued from page 3-86)

recording or precede any of these numbers with a 0, but this only happens on the 800 number. You can also get the dial tone back by hitting the # for a couple of seconds, but not after a 3 or a 6.

On SBS, after getting the tone, enter 800002 for customer service, 800042 rings somewhere, and 800034 is investigations.

Some 800 extenders are 8002471800, 8008822255, and 8006434344.

**Nynex Phreak
Silicon Sorcerers
NYC**

Dear NP, SS:

We appreciate the info. We have one thing to add. When dialing 800002 for customer service on SBS, you get an answering machine. But it's not an ordinary answering machine. It's a tie-in to Phonemail, an IBM service. By hitting a 0 in the middle of the message, you will hear a voice asking you what extension you want to be transferred to. If you enter

NETWORKS (continued from page 3-82)

remote login or file transfer. Almost every gateway site is a node on the ARPAnet/InterNet. Therefore if a user can send a message from his/her network to the ARPAnet, it is possible to communicate with any other network which has a gateway site on the ARPAnet. Below is a list of gateways to and from the ARPAnet and the mailer syntax required:

Gateways to the ARPAnet		
From	ARPAnet gateway site	Mailer Syntax
BITNET	WISCV.M.BITNET	user%node.ARPA@wiscvm.BITNET
CSnet	CSNET-RELAY.CSNET	user%node.ARPA@csnet-relay.CSNET
MailNet	HARVARD.MAILNET	user%node.ARPA@harvard.MAILNET
UUCP	SEISMO.UUCP	seismo!user%node.ARPA
Gateways from the ARPAnet		
To	ARPAnet gateway site	Mailer Syntax
BITNET	WISCV.M.ARPA	user%node.BITNET@wiscvm.ARPA
CSnet	CSNET-RELAY.ARPA	user%node.CSNET@csnet-relay.ARPA
MailNet	HARVARD.ARPA	user%node.MAILNET@harvard.ARPA
UUCP	SEISMO.ARPA	node!user.UUCP@seismo.ARPA

Example #1: A user on the BITNET wishes to send a message to a user on the CSnet.

user%node.CSNET%csnet-relay.ARPA@wiscvm.BITNET

(The @ is known as the separator and specifies the username at the node. An address can only have one @ in it. As the message gets closer to its destination, the @ and everything to the right of it will be chopped off. The % that is furthest to the right will then become an @. The % indicates additional directions.)

Example #2: A user on the UUCP network wishes to send mail to a MailNet user.

seismo!user%node.MAILNET%harvard.ARPA

(The UUCP network syntax is reversed. The ! appears on the left. In this example, Seismo is the machine or gateway the user must go through. There can be more than one ! in a line. As the message progresses, the ! furthest to the left and everything to the left of it is chopped off. When the last ! is chopped off, the % on the right becomes an @. UUCP is not auto-routing, while the other networks are. This makes the ! feature necessary.)

By following the above examples, a user with a little knowledge of the network he/she resides on can communicate with any node on any network. It is quite possible that a user in Europe and a user in Australia could communicate with each other on a regular basis with a message delivery time of only two days. The uses for the above mail networks are limited only by one's imagination. These networks could be used to unite hackers all over the world at an almost negligible cost.

anything with an 8 or a 9 as the starting number, you will hear a dial tone which cannot be broken by touchtones. It will then start ringing and be answered by an MCI person. If instead of entering an extension, you hit a star three times (not too quickly), the system will list the extension of every subscriber on the system, and possibly their name. Of course, the trick is to find the phone number that allows you to login to these users' accounts—what this is is simply a way of leaving messages. We suspect that the folks at MCI/SBS have just gotten themselves a Rolm phone system. This is indicated by the way they keep hanging up on people as soon as they answer the phone. With a Rolm system, you must either press the button next to the flashing light (which indicates that a line is ringing) and take the call on the built-in speakerphone or pick up the handset (the phone automatically knows which line to select). If the person picking up the phone picks up the receiver and presses the button (as almost all office workers have been brought up to do), their penalty is immediate and total disconnection.

And so it goes.