By Lloyd R Borrett

LOTUS 1-2-3 release 1A is one of the few software packages currently available which allows access to the DOS 2.0 directory structure. Most packages force the user to have all program and data files in the same directory if they are all to reside on a hard disk. The purpose of the following example is to show how some of the features of 1-2-3 can make it even easier to utilise the hard disk fully.

First you will need to install 1-2-3 on the hard disk. The instructions in the manual give clear directions. However, I suggest that you put all the program files in a sub-directory called 123, and create some directories subordinate to C:\123 for use as working directories. For example:

```
C>CHDIR_\

C>MKDIR_123

C>CHDIR_123

C>MKDIR_DEMO

C>MKDIR_TEST
```

Copy all the files on the Lotus diskettes into the directory C:\123 and perform the necessary configuration procedures. With C:\123 still the working directory, start Lotus. Select the 1-2-3 spreadsheet and finish off the configuration procedure by using the command/wgddc:\123~uq to define C:\123 as the current directory at start-up.

Create the following template and save it using the name AUTO123:

```
I1:  '/xmmenu~

I4:  "123

J4:  "A:

K4:  "Demo

L4:  "Test

I5:  'Use directory c:\123

J5:  'Use directory A:\

K5:  'Use directory c:\123\demo

L5:  'Use directory c:\123\test

I6:  '/wey

J6:  '/fda:\~

K6:  '/fdc:\123\demo~

L6:  '/fdc:\123\test~

J7:  '/wey

K7:  '/wey

L7:  '/wey
```

Cell I1 should be given the range name \0. Cell I4 should be given the range name MENU. Make sure that the cursor is at cell A1 when you save the worksheet.

When the 1-2-3 spreadsheet is selected it will automatically search for a worksheet called AUTO123 in the current directory at start-up, and if found, load it. Whenever 1-2-3 loads a worksheet it executes the keyboard macro named \0, so now 1-2-3 should find and load the worksheet just created. This worksheet causes 1-2-3 to execute a menu which allows you to specify the working directory to be used. Quit the spreadsheet and re-enter to see it working.

Unfortunately 1-2-3 still needs more changes before it will fully support DOS 2.0. When Release 1A is installed on a hard disk in this manner the File Management and Disk Management access system functions become next to useless. I understand another release will be available soon which enhances some of 1-2-3's existing functions as well as adding others such as word processing. Let's hope it also completes the support of the DOS 2.0 directory structure.

Epson/IBM Printer Ribbons

About 18 months ago I installed an Epson/IBM printer for the first time. I recall being intrigued by the EXCHANGE TIMES markings on the ribbon cartridge, but never did find any reference to this in the operation manual. Well, recently the time finally came to get a new ribbon and it led to a money-saving discovery.

Obviously it is possible to buy a complete new cartridge, but that is expensive and seemed wasteful. I made enquiries with some local consumable suppliers about a ribbon inker advertised in various US magazines, but alas, no success. By then I had gone off the idea of messing about with ink and ordered some new cartridges. About two days later I received a message from Greg Moyle at Magmedia to say that he had a replacement ribbon for me to try instead of a new cartridge.

I accepted the offer and Greg duly arrived in my office with a Nova Inked Ribbon Refill Pack. He had only just got them and I was to be the guinea pig. It was a simple task to remove the old ribbon from the original cartridge and replace it with the Nova ribbon, and it works just fine. I recommend that you check this option out with your supplier when your ribbon fades.

Book Reviews

Three books were sent my way for review a few months back, and here are the results. The first to be looked at was *Your IBM Personal Computer: Use, Applications, and BASIC* by David Cortesi (Holt, Rinehardt and Winston). The preface says, "This book aims to be a companion and guide to you, the new owner of an IBM Personal Computer." It achieves that aim. Cortesi emphasises practical things such as unpacking and setting up the machine, back-ups, organising a diskette library, and learning to use new programs.

As I've been around computers for a long time, and have been heavily involved with the IBM-PC for well over a year, I expected to gain little from this book. I was wrong. There are a lot of new, and what must appear strange, ideas and concepts for a new user to pick up. Cortesi introduces the subject matter simply, builds on it logically, and leaves the new user at a level where they can safely go solo. He has shown me how to improve the way I introduce these same topics as well as more advanced ones to those I am responsible for introducing to the world of personal computing. I recommend you check it out for yourself.

The second book received was *PROGRAMMING the IBM Personal Computer: BASIC* by Neill Graham (Holt, Rinehardt and Winston). Graham covers all the usual topics found in books with similar intentions; however, he does so in a unique sequence. Features are introduced in the order in which the new user will need or wonder about them. The new user I tried the book out on was surprised at the way Graham consistently managed to second guess him.

The book is full of well thought-out descriptions, warnings and explanations. For those users who already know another implementation of BASIC this book offers an excellent way to learn the traps and features of the IBM-PC version. Each chapter ends with a short list of suggested exercises, which I think would make the book suitable for classroom use. If you intend to program the IBM-PC in BASIC then you would do well to consider reading this book.

The final book received was *How To Program The IBM-PC* by Tim Hartnell (Interface Publications). This is really just another 'How To Program In BASIC' book, and doesn't cover the traps and features of the IBM-PC at all well. The content and presentation of this book leave me with the impression that it is one of those "I Can Cash In On The ▶

IBM

Market Too' styles of book, which are becoming all too common.

DOS Hints

More than one person I know has been caught by the fact that DOS 2.0 fails to give any warning about the FOR-MAT command. If a hard disk user types FORMAT without specifying a diskette drive it is possible to erase the entire hard disk. The following procedure will prevent this catastrophe:

```
C>RENAME FORMAT.COM PCFORMAT.COMR

C>COPY CON: FORMAT.BAT

PCFORMAT A:

Press <F6><ENTER> to write the file to disk.
```
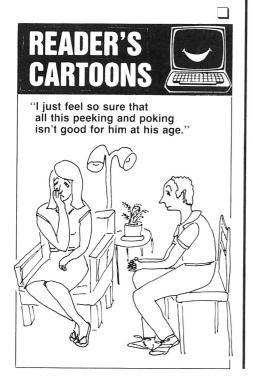
It is easy to trick up this batch file to test for various diskette drives, and you may like to include the /S and /V switches.

The DOS TYPE command doesn't accept wild cards (* or ?). The way around this annoying restriction is to use the COPY command, which does accept wild cards, to copy the file(s) to the screen. Create an eXtended TYPE command with the following procedure:

```
C>COPY CON: XTYPE.BAT

COPY %1 CON:

Press <F6><ENTER> to write the file to disk.
```

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