

Byte me

Memory Loss

IT WAS 4 A.M. ON A TUESDAY WHEN BURGLARS BROKE INTO A small suite of offices at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. By 6 a.m., when the first employee arrived, they had gotten away with \$30,298 in computer memory microprocessors.

At the U. of Michigan, a doctoral candidate was baffled when his computer wouldn't start. A quick peek under the hatch revealed that the machine's memory and hard drive were gone. Along with them, the sole copy of his thesis.

That's right. College campus thieves are bypassing VCRs and bicycles for a much more lucrative booty: computer chips.

This distinctively '90s phenomenon is afflicting campuses from Georgetown to UCLA. It's fueled by a worldwide shortage of memory chips coupled with an increasing demand for memory by users running multimedia applications and powerful operating systems like Windows '95.

Among the most coveted targets are 4-megabyte memory chips that are designed to snap in and out so users can upgrade their machines easily.

Kenneth Moinz, a computer security specialist in Boston, says the postage stamp-sized chips sell for \$150 to \$200 each through legitimate channels. When the stolen chips hit the black market, they pull in an appealing \$50 to \$75.

Ironically, the computer industry is inadvertently helping the black mar-

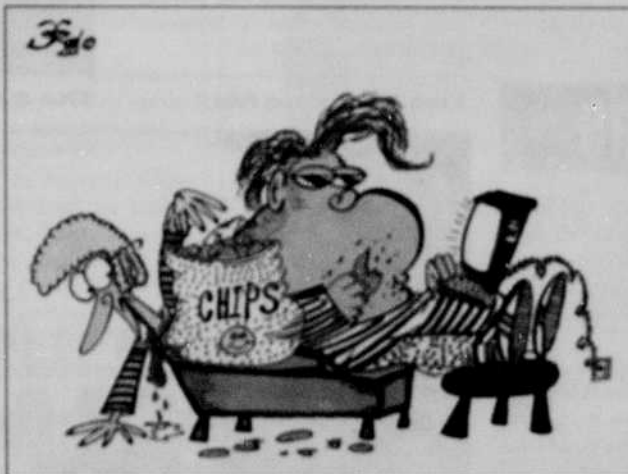
ket. For example, Macintosh makes a series of computers with covers that are designed to slip off in seconds for repairs and upgrades.

"Press two buttons, and the entire top comes off," Moinz says. "Someone can clear that memory out in a heartbeat."

Once the chips are stolen, police have a tough time tracking them down. Since they don't have serial numbers, they can be sold quickly to "gray market" dealers that specialize in computer repairs and upgrades.

Just goes to show that when it comes to chips, you can't have just one.

By James M. Wahl, Massachusetts Institute of Technology / Illustration by Gerard Arantowicz, Pennsylvania State U.



Wrong chip, stupid!

Bits & Bytes

Ssshhhhh!

Hold on to your habit — monks may be the newbies on the technological block. Thanks to companies like The Electronic Scriptorium, monastic communities and university libraries are teaming up to bring the traditional card catalogues of old into the digital age of electronic databases. The complex data-entry work requires the patience of, well, a monk, and several companies are now in the business of matching the modern-day scribes with libraries in need of updating.

Take a peek

If the fifth class of MTV's *Real World* just isn't peeping your tom, catch the Virtual Dorm online. The Dorm chronicles the lives of five students at a small New England college — specifics, like last names and the name of the college, are confidential. (Guess they don't trust

all you voyeurs.) Cameras in the bedrooms, living room and in the kitchen area of the residence hall suite spy on their daily lives. The cameras send both real-time video/audio and still photographs over the Internet. Check in on them at: <http://www.taponline.com/tap/v-dorm.html>.

Win Money

If you're a computer maestro, check out these contests. But hurry, the deadline for both is March 31.

- The College Press Web Site Competition is open to any news-oriented Web site operated by a campus-based journalism organization. Sponsored by College Press Exchange, the grand prize is \$1,000. For more info, check their site at <http://www.webpoint.com/contest>.

- The Java Cup International, sponsored by Sun Microsystems, is offering \$1 million worth of Sun products for the best application developments in several categories. For more info, check their site at <http://javacontest.sun.com>.



BE WITH THE ONE YOU WANT TO BE WITH.

Somewhere, there is someone you want to be with. Let Greyhound take you there. We go to over 2400 destinations around the country. Fares are low every day on every bus. Just walk up and buy your ticket. You'll be on your way to a great time together. Don't let a few miles stand between you and that special someone. To find out about our low fares and convenient schedules, call 1-800-231-2222.



© 1996 Greyhound Lines Inc. Certain restrictions and limitations apply.