

Continued from Page 1

"We're dealing with human nature here, and the key issue here is we don't know how people are going to react," Osanka said. "You could have a lot of strangeness going around as people get crazy."

Technological concerns dominate the list of current troubles, but some religious groups believe the apocalypse is near.

This was the primary fear for those who lived through the first millennium change in the years 999 to 1000.

"It was frightening," said history professor John Nicols. "They thought it was going to be the end of the world."

Nicols said people today have grown up with the folklore surrounding the end of human existence. But back in medieval times religious visionaries truly believed that Christ's second coming would be the end, the final judgment.

To prepare for the first millennium, people increased their visits to the local confessional, practiced self-flagellation as punishment for their sins and

construction of long-term projects ceased, Nicols said.

Most beliefs were related to religion, but some people relied on the calendar and numerical mysticism.

"The sense of 1000, the number element in Y1k, isn't prevalent today as it was back then," Nicols said. "People take these ideas of an order, a kind of mathematical order underlying the physical world as a pattern."

Even computer experts don't know what will really happen this time around, but the day of the first millennium was a day like any other.

"It was a normal day like any other and people quickly forgot it," he said.

For skeptics who believe this will be the case again, Osanka advised to assume the worst and hope for the best.

"We're dealing with a world that is increasingly complex and things are more and more interconnected," Osanka said. "I know enough about computers and the interconnectedness of things that I'm nervous."

Today's Events

Wednesday, March 10

■ The New Wedge Trio will perform at 6 p.m. at the University Museum of Art. Refreshments will be served.

■ The Baptist Student Union will be holding a Bible study from 1 to 2 p.m. in EMU Century A.

■ The Multicultural Center is holding a Multicultural Law Day from 4:30 to 9 p.m. in the EMU Fir Room.

■ The Jewish Student Union is sponsoring an Israeli dancing event from 7 to 10 p.m. in the EMU Walnut Room.



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