COMPUTERS & YOU
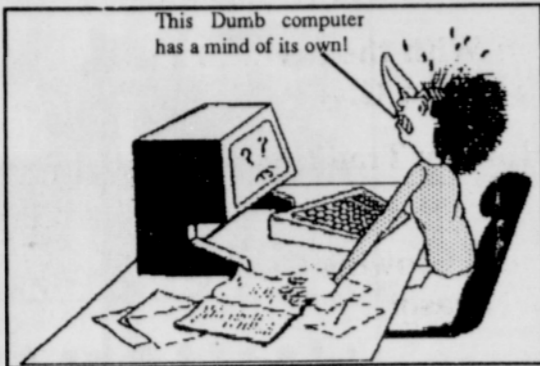### What Is MS/DOS and PC/DOS

by T. West

Often times those of us who use personal computer regularly forget about the importance of an operating system. In fact, there are many users in several businesses who do not know what an operating system is nor its purpose.

MS/DOS means Microsoft Disk Operating System and PC/DOS means Personal Computer Operating System. Both programs are operating systems. Without an operating system your computer hardware (the physical equipment) could not communicate with other devices such as disk drives, printers, modems, scanners, etc. For the IBM compatible systems MS/DOS is required before you can use such application programs as Lotus 123, DBASE III Plus, Wordperfect, and others. The operating system tell application programs how they must function - how information should be stored to the disk, how information should be sent to the printer, what disk drives are available, and other features such as copying, deleting, formatting disks, and backing up files. An operating system is like a traffic cop to the application programs instructing them as to what can or cannot be done.

Prior to the 1950s there were no operating systems used with the most sophisticated systems. During the early 1950s General Motors Research Laboratories designed one of the first operating systems for use with the IBM 701. In 1955 with the help of North American Aviation, General Motors wrote an operating system for what was at that time the most powerful computers of that era, namely the IBM 704. In fact, many of the early operating systems were designed by users, not the computer manufacturers. AT&T's UNIX operating system is another good example of powerful operating systems being designed by non-computer manufacturers.

In the mid-1970s personal computers were introduced to the public and Digital Research designed the CP/M operating system for these microcomputers. In 1982 Microsoft designed the MS/DOS operating system for use in the new 16 bit IBM PCs. During the first six months of this introduction, IBM PCs were established as the standard for the business environment, this automatically made Microsoft and instant success. Soon thereafter, IBM designed and marketed their own operating system called PC/DOS, which was basically the same as MS/DOS but not precisely. You can run into problems trying to use MS/DOS on an IBM PC. However, you can run PC/DOS on any 100% IBM compatible system, so there are some internal differences between the two operating systems.

Before you can use any of your application programs the operating system must first be loaded into your computer's memory. Usually when you purchase your computer you also receive a book, with the supportive disks containing the operating system. On these disks (usually called the systems disk, or boot disk) are the programs which make up the operating system. The computer is started by first inserting the disk containing such programs into your disk drive and turning your computer on.

The PC/DOS operating system is an area where many businesses do not place enough emphasis. Secretaries may know how to use Wordperfect and not know how to format a disk, backup files from the harddisk to floppy disks or tape, erase a group of files, configure the DOS configuration file, create subdirectories and manipulate between them, and other operating system features. It is vital that your firm's personnel be trained properly in the use of the operating system as well as application programs. The most efficiency of your business is not because it uses a computer, rather because the person who instructs the computer knows how to get every measure of power out of the existing operating system as well as the application programs. Training should be a part of the cost analysis study whenever your business consider purchasing a personal computer.

All responses or comments may be made to the Observer or to T. West at 287-8511.

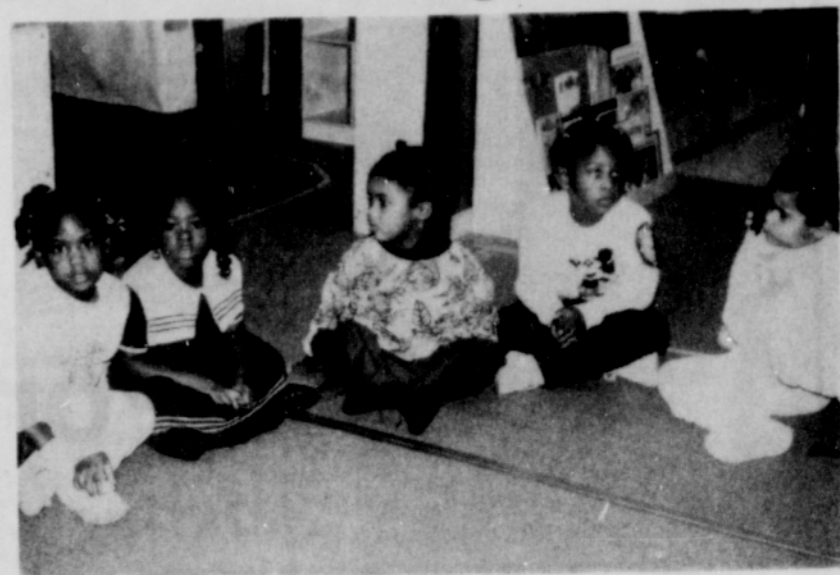This Dumb computer has a mind of its own!

Congratulations

A FEW GOOD MEN–As regional accounting supervisor for McDonald's Corporation, Stephen A. Betts, left, keeps his eye on the company's bottom line. And David M. Moore, center, is vice president and co-owner of Quality Croutons, whose product tops McDonald's garden salads. The two, however, have more in common than their McDonald's affiliation. They recently were named by Dollars & Sense magazine two of America's Best and Brightest Young Business and Professional Men. Now in its second year, the "best" award salutes 60 of the nation's most talented, well-educated and highly-motivated men between the ages of 25 and 40. Dollars and Sense publisher Donald C. Walker, right, was on hand to congratulate Betts and Moore at a banquet held to celebrate the recipients.

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