# ATARI DEVELOPMENT PARTNER NEWSLETTER

*March 1990*

## NETWORK NOTES

Networking is rapidly becoming a standard part of computing. Multiple computer installations are no longer rare, even in homes. For instance, almost everyone who reads this newsletter is using more than one machine. Network applications ("groupware" is currently the vogue expression) are beginning to appear on other platforms. It is clear that all major productivity products will need to be groupwareized in the next couple of years. Undoubtedly games will need to be, too. What we're talking about here is multi-user, multi-player versions.

We are working with network vendors to establish compatibility standards so that your groupware products will run on all their networks. As a first step in this effort, we have invited them to describe their existing products here in the Newsletter. We encourage your reactions and discussions. Let us know what you think about the current products.

Paul Swanson of Lantech opens the discussions in this issue with his high-speed, low-cost entry. He discusses another possibility with a high-speed network like his, distributed processing: putting the power of those extra computers to work for a single application. He is also extending a discount to registered developers.

## IT'S SHOW TIME

There are some important trade shows coming up. Atari will be attending some of them and encourages you to be there, too. The first one is **CEBIT** in Hannover, Germany on March 21–28. Atari Germany is exhibiting with 880 square meters of booth space. Although we realize that this is very short notice, US companies who wish to participate, can contact Thomas Huber at Atari Germany, phone 011-49-6142-2090, FAX 011-49-6142-209180 (that's not a mistake, the FAX number really does have more digits than the voice number).

**SO FAR...**
*Charles Cherry*

A little further down the line in Germany is the **Atari Fair** in Dusseldorf, August 24–26, 1990. Atari Germany will have 18,000 square meters of exhibit space! Again, if you wish to participate, contact Thomas Huber, Atari Germany, at the above numbers.

Closer to home, the **World of Atari** show is at the Disneyland Hotel in Anaheim, California on April 7 and 8, 1990. Atari is supplying equipment for exhibitors' booths. You must be registered by March 15, 1990 to get an equipped booth. Late registrants will have to bring their own setups.

Contact ST World, 2463 Latona Court NE, Salem, OR 97303 (503-393-9688) for information. We're going to put together something special on networking. If you have network products, or are developing them, give me a call.

Spring **COMDEX**, June 3-6, 1990, Atlanta, GA. Atari will not exhibit.

Spring **CES**, June 25, 1990, Chicago, IL. Atari will exhibit. Details on developer participation opportunities next month.

## DEVELOPER DATABASE

We are compiling an up-to-date, world-wide database of registered Atari developers. This database will be distributed world-wide to registered developers. In the future it may be distributed to other interested groups, like dealers. If you do not want to be included in this database, notify Gail Johnson in writing by April 1, 1990.

***Inside This Issue:***

# ATARI SOFTSOURCE

Dan McNamee

Ok, so I lied. This is not the next newsletter, but the one after. Sorry, but I have been real busy here, and did not have time to complete my article for the last newsletter. I will try to make sure I do not miss any more. Also I am not yet able to give information on how to make your entries into Softsource, next time for sure. This month I will go over a few more details of Softsource itself.

Softsource has many fields in it, but all of it is useful information for the end user. The following is a list of fields and their sizes:

| Field Name | Type | Size |
|---|---|---|
| ID-No. | TXT | 5 |
| Company Name | TXT | 30 |
| Address | TXT | 30 |
| City | TXT | 20 |
| State | TXT | 20 |
| Country | TXT | 25 |
| ZIP Code | TXT | 20 |
| Phone No. | TXT | 26 |
| Product Name | TXT | 30 |
| ISPN No. | TXT | 20 |
| New or Update | TXT | 1 |
| Integrated | TXT | 1 |
| Package | TXT | 30 |
| Source Code | TXT | 1 |
| Source Cost | NUM | $99999.00 |
| Updates | TXT | 1 |
| Update Cost | NUM | $99999.00 |
| Backup | TXT | 1 |
| Backup Cost | NUM | $99999.00 |
| Demo | TXT | 1 |
| Demo Cost | NUM | $99999.00 |
| Category | TXT | 4 |
| Summary | TXT | 255 |
| Rev. No. | TXT | 5 |
| Date Entered | DAT | mm/dd/yy |
| Price | NUM | $99999.00 |
| Hdw Require | TXT | 255 |
| Crippled | TXT | 1 |
| Availability | TXT | 255 |
| Dealer Orders | TXT | 40 |
| Overview | TXT | 1080 |

**Now for some descriptions for the fields.**

**ID No.** is your developer identification number. This is used for internal tracking, and will not be visible to the end user.

**Company Name, Address, City, State, ZIP Code** and **Phone No.** are just that. I would suggest that the information you put in here is where an end user can call or write for further information on the product, orders and support.

**Product Name** is, of course, the name of the product.

**ISPN No.** is the ISPN number assigned to the product. This should make ordering easier in some cases. A Bar Code number is based on the ISPN number.

**New** or **Update** should have an N or U in it so the users and dealers will know if it is a new product or an update to an existing product.

**Integrated** should have a Y or N (yes or no) in it. This is to indicate if it is part of an integrated package or not.

**Package**, the next field, is only necessary if the product is part of an integrated package. What should be in here is the name of the package this product goes with.

**Source Code** and **Source Cost**. Source Code is also Y or N. These fields will let the user know if source code is available for purchase, and what the cost is.

**Updates** is also Y or N. Basically this is to indicate if an update exists, is planned, or is near completion.

**Update Cost** is for the amount it will cost to get an update.

**Back Up**, Y or N, is to let the user know if they can purchase a back up for their product, and Back Up Cost is the price.

**Demo**, also Y or N, is to let the user know if a demo of the product exists.

**Demo Cost** is the amount to purchase the demo. Hopefully these will all be free, and available for downloading directly from the database.

**Category** is a number that designates which product category the entry falls under. Last time, I gave a list of categories, next time I will give you an updated list with associated numbers. If I missed any obvious categories last time, please let me know so I can get them taken care of for the next newsletter.

**Summary** is a brief description of the program, and should list the major points that make it stand out.

*(Atari Softsource continued on page 4)*

# A FAST, AFFORDABLE LAN FOR ATARI ST COMPUTERS

by Paul Swanson, Lantech Systems

*This article is for your information and evaluation. It is not necessarily endorsed by Atari Corporation.*

Lantech Systems recently began shipping a 10 megabit per second local area network (LAN) for the Atari ST computer. The Lantech LAN is the only high-speed, low-cost LAN currently available for the Atari ST in the US. Its suggested resale price of $179 per connected computer makes it affordable for most small business installations.

At 10 megabits per second, a 200K program set, including .RSC, .INF and associated files, takes about 8 seconds to transfer. This includes all system overhead, error detection and correction and the software overhead of locating and loading the supplementary files.

Most existing applications software does not expect a LAN environment, and cannot take advantage of the extra power it offers. However, the user can configure the LAN so that each computer emulates the one-user, one-processor environment existing software expects. This allows the end user to operate almost all existing software, imposing restrictions on only a few programs.

But developers can now write software that takes advantage of the additional power offered when a series of computers are connected together over a LAN. For example, software can use distributed processing to increase the throughput of the system. Several computers running in the same installation can communicate directly using the built-in message system, which is designed for fast, direct communications between computers. This message system allows an application to send a message, which is a 512-byte block of data, to any other computer on the network. The message arrives in approximately 30 milliseconds, which is fast enough for dividing the processing over the network.

***"Software can use distributed processing to increase the throughput of the system"***

The message system on the Lantech LAN uses a BIOS call and the LAN driver software. BIOS 12 requires two parameters, which are a word and a long word. The word is a network node number in the range of zero to 63, inclusive, or a code (greater than 63). The long word points to a user-defined buffer at least 512 bytes in length. To send a message, put the data in the buffer and call BIOS 12 with the network node number of the target computer. To receive a message, call BIOS 12 with your own node number. You can find your own node number by calling BIOS 12 with a "nodenumber" of 64. This places the LAN parameter block into the first 40 bytes of your buffer. The first word of this block is your own node number.

BIOS 12 normally returns an "error code" of zero when the LAN is operating. When you read a message successfully, the error code is set equal to the node number that sent the message. When you send a message that is accepted or when you call for the LAN parameter block the error code returned is zero. An error code of negative 19 is returned under two conditions. 1) If you attempt to send a message to a node that already has a message which has not been read by the application. 2) If you attempt to read a message when one hasn't been received. If the LAN driver software is not loaded, calling BIOS 12 returns 12 as the error code.

BIOS 12 can be added to other LANs for the sake of compatibility of applications software. It is also possible to add "message drivers" to software designed to use this message system. For use with other LANs, add a TSR program that traps BIOS, looking for a call to BIOS 12, that translates the Lantech LAN message format to and from the format required by the other LAN. For use on computers that are not connected to a LAN, such a driver could just take the message and turn it around to be read back by the same application, or it could return some other error number to indicate to the application that there is no LAN active. BIOS 12 also has other functions described in detail in the Lantech LAN user manual.

To encourage development of software for the Lantech LAN, Lantech Systems is offering a discount to registered Atari ST developers. If you are registered as a developer with Atari Corp., you may purchase a two- or three-station Lantech LAN for $120 per connected computer ($240 for two stations or $360 for three stations). Contact Lantech Systems by telephone at (508) 667-9191 or by mail at P.O. Box R, Billerica, MA 01821 for more details.

*(Atari Softsource continued from page 2)*

**Rev. No.** is the current revision number of the product.

**Date Released** is the date the revision was made available for sale.

**Price** is, of course, the price of the product.

**Hdw Required** is hardware required where you should list systems that are know to be compatible with your product, such as 520ST, 1040ST, MEGA2, MEGA4, color, and monochrome. You may also want to list any additional hardware the user may need such as certain types of printers, or keyboards for MIDI programs.

**Crippled** is similar to Demo and is a Y or N field. Basically it means is there a crippled version of the software available.

**Availability** is for when the product will be available. For those of you that like to jump the gun, you can put in a date for when you believe it will be available. If it is already out, you can just put Now.

**Dealer Orders** should have the name of the distributor(s) that they can order the product from.

**Overview** is a long summary of your product and it's capabilities.

In a final note, I would like to give some advice. When creating your self running demos, please use the Atari DemonSTrator package (formerly called Switzerland).

When Atari Softsource is mastered onto CD-ROM for the dealers, DemonSTrator will be on the disk for running these demos. If you did not use DemonSTrator, your program will not be displayed in the file selector or be executable from the DemonSTrator program.

Your demo program will be included on the CD whether it is in DemonSTrator format or not, however there will be hundreds of files on the CD. This could prevent your demo from ever being seen, since the dealers and users would have to search through the file directories to find your demo. We are planning a layout for the CD that will make locating the files as easy as possible, but the easiest way, of course, is to have them all located in one place.

Well, I'm worn out here, and I'm sure you are all bored. So until next time... Dan

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