Where the New Software Will Come From
An Editorial by David Plotkin

It has become increasingly obvious that the production of new, useful software for the 8-bit Atari computers has slowed to a trickle, if not ceased altogether. By useful, I mean utility and productivity programs such as spreadsheets, databases, and other such programs which enable you to do substantive work on your Atari. This category does NOT include games, production of which has also slowed, although some new ones continue to be announced. This editorial will attempt to analyze why the software flow for the Atari home computers has reached the current state, and where any new software is going to have to come from.

The question of availability of new software is an important one. Sales of software tend to drive sales of hardware (computers), and so an important measure of the viability of a home or business computer is the flow of software. The classic example of this is the case of the Apple II and Visicalc. As the story goes, people actually went out and bought Apples (which, remember, sold for over $2500 in those days) to have the machine that the spreadsheet Visicalc ran on. This maxim is still true today. The Amiga computer from Commodore is probably the most technologicially advanced home computer available. Yet it languishes, and sales lag far behind the Atari ST and Apple MacIntosh. Reasons for this have been proposed in the literature which supports Commodore machines: the machine is too expensive, or it is marketed poorly. These are contributing factors, no doubt. But I think there are a lot of people who would willingly pay the high price of the Amiga if there was something they could do with it. The real problem is that there is no software, and this situation doesn't appear ready to change in the near future. So software is the driving force behind computer sales--as you have heard, without software, computers are just doorstops. Now, there is a lot of software available for the Atari. However, very little of it fits our definition of "useful". Also, human beings like new things--witness the popularity of Christmas. It is very depressing to search the catalogs and shelves of the software stores for a new piece of software to take home and play with. As the months (and years) go by with little new software, owners have the tendency to give up and maybe even move to another machine which has a more active software producing community. At the very least, they may stop using their Atari regularly.

So--there is not very much "useful" software available for your Atari, and little likelihood for the production of more. In contrast, the Apple II has a multitude of productivity programs, and new programs are constantly being announced. Yet, to hear tell, the Atari is a more advanced computer, possessing more sophisticated sound and graphics. Why the difference? Part of the answer has to do with history. The Apple computer was available about one and a half years

before the Atari, and had a sizeable installed base when the Atari
first appeared on the market. Despite the fact that it was VERY
expensive, it was virtually the "only game in town". Software
developers, encouraged actively by Apple, began writing programs quite
early on. The historical reputation of Atari as the manufacturer of
the 2600 game machine also hurt. I would guess that every Atari owner
at some time has had to explain that his or her cherished computer is
"not a toy!". Atari was the first of the computer makers to try
mass-marketing techniques, making their computers available from
places such as K-Mart and Toys-R-Us. This alienated the computer
stores, and also helped convince people that these computers were not
to be taken seriously. Game software prevailed, and the soft voices
of the people who realized that their Ataris could also do "serious"
work were lost in the roar of explosions and sound effects.

     Another part of the answer has to do with the technology. The
Atari does support more advanced sound and graphics--which
unfortunately helps promote the image of it as a game machine. But
the Apple is an "open" system--that is, there is easy access to the
system buss. Even today, Atari computers have no way to add hardware
"cards". These cards can add a multitude of features that the basic
system didn't have. Need more sound? Use a sound card, capable of 6
voices in stereo. Need more memory or 80 columns? Buy a card and add
it in. You get the idea. The Apple computers had 128K of memory and
80 columns early on, and current cards can expand the Apple to 4
megabytes. Atari is just now beginning to catch up, with the
announcement of additional memory and Atari's 80 column box. Thus, in
the features which are important to productive uses of a computer,
Apple has an almost insurmountable lead.

     Finally, there is the question of the programming languages.
Pascal, Fortran, a compiled Basic and C were available very early for
Apple owners. Atari owners had Basic A+ (now Basic XL and XE), but
until the advent of ACTION, there was no fast, easy-to-use language
for Atari programmers. This explains in large part why the programs
in the Atari public domain are almost all written in Basic, and a lot
of them are pretty mediocre.

     Where, then, does this leave us? We have the productivity series
from Synapse (Syncalc, Synfile+, etc.) as the primary productivity
tools for the Atari, as well as some packages from other companies,
some good, some not so good. Synapse is no more. Broderbund,
Synapse's parent company, does not appear to be actively supporting
the series, even to correcting some of the nasty bugs which crept into
the 130XE versions of the programs. And don't hold your breath for
Broderbund to upgrade the programs to 80 columns. Most of the other
major software houses, including some that have historically supported
the Atari, seem to be also ignoring us.

     So far, I seem to be painting a pretty grim picture. Let me put
this in perspective. What I am saying is that there ARE programs for
doing useful work on your Atari available. Many are quite powerful,

and some are very cheap--even to the cover price of a magazine and a
few hours of typing. But I doubt that many of the older commercial
programs will be updated for the new features of the Atari computers,
and I also doubt that much effort will be put into publishing new
programs. There ARE exceptions. XLENT Software has their line of
printer utilities, and just produced a new word processor. Its claim
to fame is the ability to include "Typesetter" graphics in the text
and use multiple fonts. Batteries Included has consistently been
updating "Paper Clip", which is the word processor I happen to be
using for this article. And, of course, OSS has BASIC XE.

        The most promising source of the new software necessary to keep
the 8-bit Atari line alive is the users themselves. Very early on,
Atari made an effort (APX: Atari Program Exchange) to market
user-written software at good prices. Chris Crawford's classic,
"Eastern Front", was first published this way, along with a multitude
of other games and utilities, including the C programming language and
a two-drive version of Pascal. I still use Sheldon Leemon's Instedit,
a character set editor, and play "Caverns of Mars" on occasion. APX
did encourage programmers to get working and made these programs
available for very little money. But APX was a victim of the Atari
upheaval, and is no more. ANTIC Magazine now publishes a catalog of
some of the old APX line, and includes some new material as well.
Unfortunately, the prices have gone up, and the standards for
acceptance of programs are very stiff. Provided a suitable way to
distribute programs can be found, however, the users are still the
best source of new software. This is especially true of the people
reading this editorial--the customers of OSS. You are the people who
take programming seriously. You must: you laid out quite a lot of
your hard-earned dollars to purchase OSS products. In general, these
products are programming languages. MAC65 is quite likely the best
assembler ever published for an eight-bit computer. It is quite
possible to produce very good software using BASIC XL, BASIC XE, and
ACTION. Many of you have seen my ACTION games in ANTIC and ANALOG,
and my commercial "MINIATURE GOLF PLUS", available from XLENT
Software, was written in BASIC XL! With runtime packages available
for both BASIC XL and ACTION, they are prime candidates for
programming new software.

        The question then remains: if you have written a good utility or
productivity program, how do you get it out there and maybe even make
a little money from it? OSS will be announcing the details of a new
software line, entitled "BareWare" (racy, huh?). Its primary purpose
will be to make new software, primarily written by OSS customers,
available to others at a reasonable price. Look for the announcement
in this newsletter.

        We have analyzed how the state of Atari software has gotten to
where it is now, and looked at some hopes for the future. I firmly
believe that the majority of useful software will come from all of you
out there. You have the tools--the excellent programming languages
and utilities from OSS (and others). And OSS will provide the

distribution. It is time for all of you (and me) to get busy and
begin turning the software ideas that have been bouncing around our
brains for a while into reality. The Atari community is depending on
us, and OSS can't do it all alone.

                          OSS has a BBS!

     We were very surprised to discover that almost half of you have
modems. This fact pushed us into getting around to one of those items
on the back burner: a Bulletin Board System (BBS). Thanks to Clinton
Parker and Mark Rose we now have a functional BBS.

     First of all, our BBS is private. This means that you send
messages and programs to us here at OSS, and not to other users. We
screen all incoming messages and programs, and will make anything of
interest available to everyone else via either a system message or a
download-able library file. This restriction helps to keep gossips
from hogging the BBS.

Here's what the BBS lets you do:

1.   Read system messages. These messages give information on bugs,
     updates, and new releases, and answer commonly asked technical
     questions.

2.   Download library files. Our library contains both program and
     documentation files, organized by product.

3.   Upload files. You can upload files that you think are worthwhile
     enough to put in our library. These programs must be public
     domain. You might also want to upload programs with which you
     are having some problem so that we can inspect them. These must
     be programs that relate to one of our products.

4.   Leave messages for us. If you think you've found a bug, or are
     having a problem with one of our products, or just want to give
     us a piece of your mind, leave us a message. It's your dime (or
     dollar).

     The BBS phone number is (408) 446-3451, and is active 24 hours a
day. There is no password system, so getting on should not be a
problem. This BBS runs in ASCII (not ATASCII) mode, and supports
XON/OFF and XMODEM protocols at both 300 and 1200 baud. If you don't
have access to a modem, or don't want to spend a fortune downloading,
you can still get the BBS files from us. Simply send us a check
(outside US send postal money order) for $7.50 per disk (minimum of 2
disks), and specify which disks you want on the order form. Choices
are:

     A1   (ACTION! #1)
     A2   (ACTION! #2)
     BXL (BASIC XL)
     CDM (C/65, DOS XL, and MAC/65)
     WT   (Writer's Tool).

Technical Support from OSS

For those of you who are new to OSS, you might be interested to know that we do offer full support. If you have a problem using one of our products, simply give us a call or write us a letter. Our technical support staff is on duty from 8:30 to 12:00 and 1:30 to 5:00 (Pacific time), Monday through Thursday. When calling, please be prepared to provide us with the following:

    The model of your Atari,
    Any enhancements you've added to it,
    The version of the product with which you're having problems,
    The exact steps that produce the problem, and
    Patience.

If you write us, include all of the above, plus a disk containing an example of the problem and (if possible) a listing.

If you want info about a product of ours that you might purchase, ask the receptionist for a product brochure. If you have questions regarding our sales or update policies, ask to speak with the sales department.

OSS Bug Sheets

So just what is a "bug sheet"? It's simply a list of all the known bugs in a given product. If you would like to get the bug sheet from us, please send us five domestic 22-cent stamps or $1 (per bug sheet), and we'll send you the list of known bugs and their fixes for the product you specify. Simply print which bug sheet you want on the front of the envelope that contains the stamps or money. We currently have the following bug sheets:

    ACTION!, PAD, ATK, RunTime Bug Sheet   DOS XL and OS/A+ Bug Sheet

    BASIC XL and BTK Bug Sheet   C/65 Bug Sheet

    MAC/65, MTK, BUG/65, DDT Bug Sheet

P.S. - These bug sheets are also in the BBS files library, and on our BBS (see BBS info).

                        Programming Contest Winners

[Editors Note: In our last printed newsletter, we announced a
programming contest. Unfortunately, we never published a follow-up
newsletter to announce the winners! We hope that you will forgive us
for the delay!]

You surprised us again! We expected that most of the 1K program
contest entries would be games, but you proved us wrong. Over 80% of
them were utility programs. Due to this we decided to have four
categories: ACTION!, BASIC XL, MAC/65, and games. The winner in each
of these categories received a $100 credit toward the purchase of any
OSS products. The winners are:

ACTION!: Claude Galinsky of Watertown, MA won with his program that
     prints program listings on a serial printer. Joseph Santorelli
     receives an Honorable Mention.

BASIC XL: Gary Baker of Dearborn, MI won with his program that sorts
     the variable list produced by the LVAR command. Honorable
     Mentions go to Tim Roulo and Eric Alchowiak.

MAC/65: Donald Seay of Palmyra, VA won with his program that allows
     users to initialize their FX-100's to special print-out
     configurations. Honorable Mentions go to James Granger, Evan
     Arnerich, and Rich Andrews.

Games: Greg Anderson of Los Gatos, CA won with his BASIC XL game
     "Squish". Honorable Mentions go to Steven Grimm and Cheney Bath.

BASIC XL Bugs and Fixes

BUG: Version 1.03 doesn't seem to work with the extensions on the
     ToolKit.
FIX: This is true only for early versions of the ToolKit. If you have
     Vers. 1.03 and the ToolKit extensions work, then don't apply this
     fix.
```
     100 F$="D:EXTEND.COM":N=$02d6:Gosub 130
     110 F$="D:AUTORUN.SYS":N=$039f:Gosub 130
     120 End
     130 Unprotect F$:Open #1,12,0,F$
     140   For I=1 To N:Get #1,C:Next I
     150 Put #1,9:Close #1:Protect F$
     160 Return
```

BUG: Any program reference to line number 0 (e.g. Goto 0, If X=1 Then
     0) will not be RENUMbered. This applies even if a previous RENUM
     created the reference (i.e. you did a RENUM 0,xx).
FIX: There is no practicable solution. Simply don't use a starting
     line number of 0 when you NUM or RENUM.

BUG: You want to make sure that you're not in FAST mode.
FIX: Make the following the first line in your program:
```
     10 IF PEEK($B9)&$80 THEN DEL 0
```
     $B9 is BASIC XL's FAST flag, and the DEL statement turns off FAST
     mode. You can't have a line 0 in your program if you want to use
     this fix.

BUG/65 Bugs and Fixes

BUG: The "P" option doesn't work with the newer Atari OS ROMs.
FIX: On BBS and Bug Sheet, or refer to p. 7 of the Spring 1984
     newsletter. This fix works with one exception: the last line
     doesn't get printed, so make sure your last line is just a
     RETURN.

BUG: If you try to go into BUG immediately after you boot using
     DOSXL.XL, you get back to DOS instead of going into BUG.
FIX: Press SYSTEM RESET and then run BUG.

DOS XL Bugs and Fixes

BUG: The patch to convert version 2.30 to version 2.30p in our Spring
     1984 newsletter didn't work.
FIX: Run the following program and then use INIT with the "Write
     DOS.SYS Only" option to write out the patched DOS. Make sure

     that you don't have DOSXL.SYS (either .SUP or .XL version) active
     when you do this.

```
100 READ CNT:IF CNT=0 THEN END
110 READ START
120 FOR ADDR=START TO START+CNT-1
130 READ BYTE:POKE ADDR,BYTE:NEXT ADDR
140 GOTO 100
150 DATA 3,5481,32,1,21
160 DATA 29,5377,141,217,22,169,16
170 DATA 141,23,22,169,23,141,24,22
180 DATA 169,49,141,30,22,169,64,141
190 DATA 12,0,169,21,141,13,0,96
200 DATA 1,7425,112,0
```

BUG: INIT does not work if you use drive numbers 4 through 8.
FIX: Run the following program:

```
10 OPEN #1,12,0,"D:INIT.COM"
20 FOR I=1 TO 116 : GET #1,C : NEXT I
30 PUT #1,ASC("9") : CLOSE #1
```

BUG: Bill's DOS 2.0S patch for 1050's in his 8/84 - 9/84 Insight:
     Atari articles doesn't work with DOSXL.SYS.
FIX: There isn't one, but don't despair: Bill's patch isn't compatible
     with DOS 2.5 anyway, so the problem becomes moot.

                    The Writer's Tool Bugs and Fixes

BUG: Version 2.2 LinkPrint crashes the system if you try to link an
     invalid or non- existent file.
FIX: Run the following BASIC program this program, first making sure
     that your WT file is called AUTORUN.SYS. This will convert
     version 2.2 to 2.21.

```
100 ? :? "Put a Backup of WT disk in Drive 1,":? "and hit
START"
110 IF PEEK(53279)<>6 THEN 110
120 XIO 36,#1,0,0,"D:AUTORUN.SYS"
130 OPEN #1,12,0,"D:AUTORUN.SYS"
140 FOR I=1 TO 346:GET #1,X:NEXT I
150 PRINT #1;"VERSION 2.21":CLOSE #1
160 OPEN #1,12,0,"D:AUTORUN.SYS"
170 FOR I=1 TO 14278:GET #1,X:NEXT I
180 PUT #1,90:GET #1,X:PUT #1,91
190 CLOSE #1:XIO 35,#1,0,0,"D:AUTORUN.SYS":END
```

                    ACTION! Questions and Answers

Q: What is the best way to declare an ARRAY?
A: Always give the array a size or an address (unless you really
     want a floating pointer). If you give it neither a size nor an
     address, your array will point to some arbitrary location, and
     could easily cause your system to lock-up or crash.

Q: What is the ACTION! RunTime disk, and what will it do for me?
A: The RunTime disk contains files that you INCLUDE in your ACTION!
     programs so that they will work without an ACTION! cartridge.
     This is useful if you want to distribute copies of utility or
     game programs to people who don't have the cartridge. If you
     plan on giving away these programs, the RunTime license is
     $30.00. If you're going to sell these programs, the publisher's
     license is $200.00. You pay these fees once, and then may use
     the RunTime package with as many programs as you wish.

                    BASIC XE Questions and Answers

Q: Why won't BASIC XE work properly with my 1030 or XM301 modem?

A: Without going into too much detail, it has to do with the way the
     1030 and XM301 handle the carrier detect signal. When the modem
     answers the phone and connects with the calling modem, the 1030
     or XM301 uses a previously unused signal to tell the Atari
     computer that another modem has connected. This line causes an
     interrupt and sometimes results in the handler failing to
     recognize the incoming call. A fix for this problem is in the
     works, and will be included in the next version of BASIC XE to go
     into production. Watch these pages for the news!

Q: What is Error #33?

A: Error #33 was left out of the manual, but if you look for error
     100, you will see that the manual says "Extensions not
     installed". This usually happens when you have booted up a disk
     that does not have the BASICXE.OSS file on it, and try to use
     EXTEND or FAST or some other Extended Command. The solution:
     Copy the file BASICXE.OSS onto the disks that you boot your
     system from. DO NOT rename it to AUTORUN.SYS!! It must be named
     BASICXE.OSS for BASIC XE to properly load the extensions.

BASIC XL Questions and Answers

Q: Do the extensions on the ToolKit work with the RunTime package?
A: Not as shipped, because it would make the RunTime package
     unacceptably large for those who do not use the extensions.
     There is, however, a simple program available on the BBS that
     will allow you to use the extensions in conjunction with the
     RunTime package.

Q: How can I toggle my Bit3 board between 40 and 80 columns from
     BASIC XL?
A: It's possible if you have the Bit3 patch to DOS XL. Simply run
     the patch from DOS, go into BASIC XL, and run the following
     program:
```
          10   For I=$100 TO $12F
          20   If Peek(I)=$68 Then Pop :Goto 50
          30   Next I
          40 Print "Can't Find Bit3 Toggle":End
          50 Toggle=I:Rem "Use USR(Toggle) to toggle 40/80 columns"
```

BUG/65 Questions and Answers

Q: Why do I lose my program when I load BUG?
A: BUG doesn't know where your program resides so, if you don't
     specify where you want BUG to load, it can wipe out your program.
     There are two solutions to this: assemble to disk instead of
     memory, and then load your object file once you're in BUG, or
     specify a load address for BUG (your program can't reside above
     about $9800 since BUG loads there before relocating itself).

Q: Why does the system lock up when I trace ROM with BUG?
A: BUG cannot trace ROM, but (since ROM can't be changed) you might
     just use a "TS" command at the point where your code JSR's or
     JMP's to ROM.

DOS XL Questions and Answers

Q: Can I get TYP to work with binary files as well as text files? I
     could then use it instead of COPY to copy files from one drive to
     another.
A: There is a patch program on the BBS and in the DOS XL Bug Sheet
     that makes TYP work with binary files.

Q: Is there a RamDisk for the 130XE that works with DOS XL?
A: Yes, one similar to Atari DOS 2.5's RamDisk. The file and
     documentation are on the BBS.

                    MAC/65 Questions and Answers

Q: How do I turn off the listing as a program assembles?
A: Either put a .OPT NOLIST at the beginning of your source file, or
     use #- as the list device in the ASM command, as in
          ASM ,#-,#D:FILE.OBJ

Q: How many labels are permitted in MAC?
A: The number of labels is limited only by memory size, but watch
     out - it is possible to have a symbol table so big that it can't
     be cross-referenced. Also, there is a maximum of 63 .LOCAL
     sections.

Q: How can I change MAC's default screen colors?
A: With Disk MAC this is easy. Version 4.20's screen colors are at
     $8B3F (background/playfield) and $8B44 (character luminance).
     Change these using the "C" command, and then BSAVE $8800 to $BC1F
     to MAC65.COM. With cartridge MAC the process is a little more
     difficult. Assemble the following program (making sure you write
     the object to disk), and then simply BLOAD it when you first
     enter MAC. Change the two .BYTE values to get different default
     colors.
          100   .ORG $483
          110 BAK   .BYTE $00 ;Background Color
          120 LUM   .BYTE $06 ;Character Luminance

Q: Where can I get subroutines that turn the supercartridges on and
     off?
A: On our BBS.

Q: What memory is available for machine language programs and
     variables?
A: Parts of page 0 above $80, page 6 (most of the time), and between
     MEMLO ($2E7) and MEMHI ($2E5). The size of the last area varies
     with DOS and graphics mode. However, all of this depends upon
     what application program (if any) you are trying to interface
     with. (See Bill's 12/84 Insight: Atari article.)

Q: How can I use the disk version of MAC/65 with Atari DOS?
A: Use the "L" option to load MAC65.COM, and then use the "M" option
     with 8800 (hex) as the address to run it. (This applies only to
     vers. 4.2 of MAC.)

Q: Why does MAC "hang" for a while at the end of a large assembly?
A: MAC is sorting the symbol table so that the symbol listing is in
     alphabetical order.

Q: Why doesn't a JMP or JSR to zero page produce proper code in the
     MAC cart?

A: Version 1.01 and 1.02 are fixed to produce the proper code (PS -
     1.02 is the latest version). For update information see the
     update info sheet.

Q: Why do I get an Out-Of-Phase error (#13) during assembly?
A: For a complete discussion of phase errors and what they mean see
     Bill's 12/84 Insight: Atari article, or send us a SASE asking for
     it.

Q: How can I specify a RUN or INIT vector address within my object
     file?
A: Put the following at the end of your source file:
          *=   <vector>
          .WORD   <label>
     For a RUN vector, <vector> is $2E0 and <label> is the run address
     of your program. For an INIT vector, <vector> is $2E2 and
     is the init address of your program. Also, a program can
     have both RUN and INIT vectors.

Q: How can I make my MAC program return to DOS when it's finished
     executing?
A: End your code either with an RTS (if you haven't messed with the
     stack) or an indirect jump through DOSVEC ($0A).

Q: Is there some location that controls how MAC works?
A: Yes and no. The MAC cart uses bits of $CF to control some
     functions:
          $80 Bit   If 1, the space after a line number can be used as
                    a REP or FIND character (e.g. FIND/ LABEL/ will
                    find 10 LABEL).
          $40 Bit   If 1, MAC will not list lines changed by REP.
          $20 Bit   If 1, local variables will appear in the symbol
                    listing.
     When you enter DDT, it saves this flag at (LOMEM)+$CF, so you can
     change as follows: use the "E" command to find the contents of
     LOMEM ($80 & $81), add $CF to this two-byte value, and then use
     "D" to change the contents of this computed address. When you
     return to MAC, your change is automatically copied into $CF.

Q: Why doesn't my RX-80 work with MAC?
A: The RX-80 (and some other printers) takes so long to do a form
     feed that MAC thinks that the printer has gone off-line. To
     solve this problem, either press CONTROL 1 whenever the RX-80
     form feeds, or use .SET 3,0 in your program to force MAC to use
     multiple line feeds instead of form feed.

                          News You Can Use:

In this section we present items of interest to all Atari computer
users.

Atari Corp. to go Public

By now, most of you have probably heard the news: Atari has filed
with the SEC for an initial public offering of 4,500,000 shares of
Common Stock through an underwriting group to be managed by Paine
Webber. The price range is anticipated to be between $11.50 and
$13.50 per share, and offering is scheduled for mid- to late October.

Atari Corp reports that total sales during the period from January 1,
1986 to June 30, 1986 were $105,000,000, and profits were running over
12%. The average company typically aims for a 5% to 7% profit margin.

Atari Expositions

The Atari Exposition shows appear to be doing quite well, generating a
lot of interest in the capabilities of the Atari product line,
including the 8-bit XE computers. At the San Jose Atari Expo we
recently attended, there were fairly huge crowds of people pushing
their way around the auditorium. Not bad for a show dedicated to the
products of a company that was "on the skids" a few years back!

We heard a lot of requests for "more software for the 8-bit Ataris."
Some visitors to our booth felt that software producers had given up
on the 8-bit computers. I feel that the interest shown at these Expos
can only help remind software companies that there are still a LOT of
8-bit users out there and that they are VERY hungry for quality
software. One thing to remember is that YOU have to get involved.
Make your desires known to the software companies--they won't bother
producing software for a machine if they think the users have no need
for it! Write letters, make calls, join a users group! Make NOISE!

OSS has plans to introduce new software products for the 8-bit Atari
computers. We will be announcing these products in the near future.

XEP80 80 Column Adaptor

The long awaited 80 Column adaptor is finally a reality. We should be
playing with one in-house here at OSS by the time you get this.

The XEP80 has an 80 column by 25 line display, redefinable character
sets, some form of bit-image graphics (I don't know what resolution),
standard ATASCII block graphics characters, and a printer port built

in. It will work with any composite video monitor, but for best
results it should be used with a monochrome monitor. The unit plugs
into joystick port 1 or 2.

Price has not been announced as of this writing.

                    New Atari Explorer Magazine

The new Atari Explorer Magazine is here, put together by David Ahl (of
Creative Computing fame) and friends. It has a totally new look, and
has some really useful information. We just received our first copy
the other day, and we are impressed! It is right up there with the
other Atari magazines in quality and content. I for one am wishing
Mr. Ahl the greatest of success in his new endeavor!

                       Pirate BBS Shut Down

A group of software publishers working under the aegis of the Software
Publishers Association have shut down a BBS in Cincinnati known as the
Star Chamber. The Star Chamber allegedly had 40-50 megabytes (!!) of
copyrighted software available for downloads, mostly 8-bit and 16-bit
Atari software. Among the copyrighted material was a disassembled
listing of the Apple Macintosh operating system, which could be used
by some ST owners to build Macintosh emulators.

Among the group of software publishers involved in the action were:
Antic Software, Batteries Included, Digital Research, Hippopotamus
Software, Infocom, Michtron, Megamax, Quickview Systems, Quantum
Microsystems, Procopy, Regent Software, and Xlent Software.

In a joint statement issued after the BBS was closed down, the members
of the consortium vowed to continue pursuing legal action against
pirate boards and any other centers of the illicit trade.

                        What is BareWare?

     We feel that there is still a demand for high-quality, reasonably
priced software for the Atari computers, both 8 and 16 bit. By
reasonably priced, I mean under $30.

So what's the problem? Support!

     While we understand the need for continued high-quality support
for our products, we cannot profitably market software for under $40
and still provide our normal level of support.

     So -- what's a company like OSS to do?

     Well, we could just charge $35-$50 for these programs, but that
just wouldn't be right!

     Why not sell the software at a minimal cost, just enough to cover
advertising and materials, and the royalty to the programmer? How
about offering no telephone support on those products? That way we
aren't "adding in" a fee for support when the product is purchased.
People who don't need or want the support (there are a lot of those!)
aren't penalized up front!

     This is why we started BareWare. BareWare is a new way for us to
market software. BareWare will bring to market all those programs
that people would love to have but can't justify paying the high
prices for them.

     As of this writing, we are still putting the finishing touches on
BareWare products for the 8 bit line, including an ACTION! Graphics
ToolKit! In the meantime, if you are (or anyone you know is) working
on a great piece of software that you think others would love to use,
let us know! Don't be shy! We have only a few rules for BareWare
products: Programs must be bug-free, well documented, and they must
be a good solution to a problem. We are happy to review any and all
programs which fit these qualities.

                      OSS Has T-Shirts for sale!

Be the first one on your block (or in your users group) to wear the
incredible all-new OSS T-Shirt! Amaze your friends, impress your
boss, improve your love life!*

High quality Haynes all-cotton t-shirts: Navy blue, yellow
silk-screened with the slogan "OSS Programmers do it top down".

The price? A mere $7.50 each, plus $2.00 postage and handling. Be
sure to specify Small, Medium, Large, or Extra Large.

                          *DISCLAIMER:

OSS does not really mean to suggest that buying our t-shirt will cause
these things to happen, but you never can tell!

                        Update Policies

We at OSS have always tried to maintain a reputation for taking care
of our customers. To that end, we would like to say that we can
provide free updates of all our products to all our loyal customers.

Unfortunately, because of our low prices (compared to other systems
software companies) and deep dealer and distributor discounts, we
really don't make enough of a profit on our products to be able to do
this and still remain in business. However, we do endeavour to price
our updates as reasonably as possible. We try to come close to
breaking even on these updates, as prices reflect only our costs plus
shipping and packaging expenses.

In any case, then, here is our update price list. Cartridge updates
are returned to you via U.S. Mail (1st Class) unless otherwise
specified. Shipping charges are $5.00 unless payment is made via
check or money order in which case shipping charges are waived.
Foreign users should estimate shipping costs or use a credit card.

                        UPDATE PRICE LIST

All OSS Cartridges may be updated to the latest version by returning
the old cartridge and a check or money order for $20.00. Current
revision levels are as follows: BASIC XE--4.1; ACTION!--3.6;
MAC/65--1.01; BASIC XL--1.03; Writer's Tool--2.1

California Residents please add 7.0% sales tax.