The Reflection

August 1990 Volume 1 Issue 9

The Chief Sez

Each month seems to bring more change and more controversy. The IMAGE network has been updated and changed, improvements were made and the network has grown, and with that growth has come controversy. How to pay for the expanding network?

When the network was small, and manageable, it was not terribly expensive. At one time I had long distance nodes to Canada, Florida, and Michigan, and allowed the board to call 24 hours a day. My total bill for any one month was about $30.00, easily manageable.

Since the phenomenal growth of the network my connections have changed a bit, now I'm connected to Florida, Colorado and Michigan. I only allow my board to call out at night (cheapest hours) and still my bill has soared to $150 a month or more. Just for the network.

The controversy comes in deciding how to pay for the network. I feel that every board that is in the network should be expected to pay a share of the overall cost of the expense of the network. If someone is not willing or not able to pay his share his board should not be in the network. I have made no requests of the USERS, just of the sysop. If the sysop wants to pass any expense along to the users that is up to the individual sysop. My proposal has been met with total rejection.

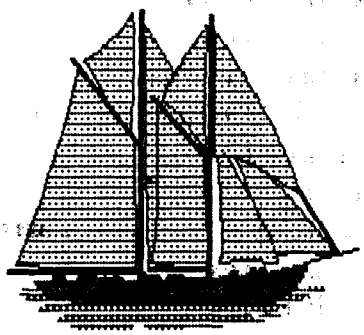
I don't know where that is going to leave the network. There are several, like me, that feel that they have been paying more than their share, while others pay none at all. Somehow I fail to see the equity in that. Perhaps if IMAGE were a very large company with vast resources we could undertake to provide a FREE network to all that wanted to join. Perhaps we can find a "sponsor" willing to pay for everyone to use the network. I doubt it. I suspect that we are going to have to come up with something in between and I would think that in all fairness it should be a pay as you go service.

I'm open to suggestions. We posed the question on the network, in the Sysop section and got little or no response, and what response we did get was negative. Perhaps someone has a better idea and would be willing to voice it?

On the brighter side, IMAGE

passed a couple of milestones, we sold serial number 1000, meaning there are now a potential 1000 LEGAL IMAGE boards running. We know that not all are running but the potential is there. We also started shipping to Australia during the month and now have at least two boards running down under. Our Australian "connection" will be netted in soon and has been busy converting the natives to a GOOD BBS. We're looking for a lot of good things from the boys in Oz.

Ray has been continuing work on 1.3, some of the planned improvements will be real attention getters. We don't want to spoil anyone's fun by giving out too much information, suffice it to say that you WILL be pleased with the results. Remember though, we are going to take our time and do it right so do NOT look for 1.3 to be ready soon. And PLEASE don't rush us, we do our best work when we are given the TIME to do it right.



Port Commodore
801-423-2734
Node 9 In Salem, UT

After about 18 months as a Xetec Dealer Dr. Shade has had topass the dealership on due to pressing personal and business affairs. The Xetec sales have been passed to FandF Products, the company that produces this newsletter. Sales will be handled by Fred Dart at the 801-423-2209 voice phone number and the Salem,UT address.

We will miss Dr. Shade but know that he will remain in close contact through the IMAGE net and through his regular host spoton Quantum Link. It is hoped that we can serve you as well as he did.

In keeping with the low prices he established for the Lt.Kernal we will continue to offer the same price structure:

C64 20 Meg Lt. Kernal $650.00
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20 Meg Add-On $575.00
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If you'd like to order send a check or money order to:

FandF Products
P.O. Box 525
Salem, UT 84653

Allow two to three weeks for delivery.

By: Al DeRosa (BUCKO)

Hiya again from the land of NISSA. To get everyone up to date on what has happened in the past month, we just held our second NISSA meeting on Qlink, the major topic there was the SSB test, and how it is going to be administered and what kind of test it will be. As many of you know we had to nullify the SSB test that was sent out as it was compromised. That is old news now. I feel it shouldn't be discussed anymore. What I would like to do this month is pose a couple of questions, they have probably been talked about before but I think we need a little refresher on it.

What is NISSA? Well it's a SUPPORT organization formed by Little John and The Syslob back in the days of C-Net 12.0, it was formed as a sysOp group to prevent the spread of stolen p-files, and to help Lt Kernal owners make the program work better on their drive. At that time, it was known as the CSSC, and not too many boards were involved. When New Image came out with the IMAGE BBS John (Little John) changed the name and NISSA was formed. To make a long story short they started accepting applications from anyone who felt they were qualified to be a member, Since that time NISSA has had as many as 107 member boards and is currently at 75 members, and still growing.

What will NISSA do for me? Plain and simple, nothing! We can give you tips on how to make your BBS better, help you if you need the help, and help promote your BBS through the NISSA Board list. But what it all comes down to is what will YOU do for NISSA? What I mean by this is you must be willing to provide support to any IMAGE owner who might need the help. If you can't help them know who to send them to for help. Another point don't guess at what the problem may be, if you don't know, be honest, tell the person "Sorry I can't be of help, you might want to contact So and So". That's the easiest way of doing it and works best that way.

Ok now that I have wasted your time with that here are some ideas I tossed around at the meeting on Qlink. How about the Members of NISSA write a multi-user online game? We all could decide on what we want to write then break up parts of it and distribute the parts that have to be done amongst the members who want to be involved and they will write a file to go along with it. When everything is written the files can all be set up and we can see what becomes of it. If it is a great file then NISSA has something to be proud of, if it isn't then NISSA has something to work on until it is great. It's not an easy task but could probably be accomplished It's up to you folks.

Ok here are the Board list changes:

New Members

219-522-4756 Myriad G0910

303-420-6297 The Yellow Pages G0666

312-243-9321 Master Chins Acad G0913

313-422-9356 Jamaican Sands G0529

619-444-4163 Underground Press E0657

619-528-9218 Alabasters Cove G0213

716-652-6722 Technology Station G0234

Returning Members

215-755-6052 Gates Of Death G0516

216-232-1716 Titanic Resort G0375

216-386-9524 The Other Side G0938

312-202-1801 Master Chins Dojo G0211

716-836-9419 Paradise Oasis G0294

Deletions:

The TruckStop

Number Changes

Spider Ones BBS number should read 619-447-7003

Welp that about wraps it up for me,, if anyone has any questions feel free to ask me by NetMail to Node 14 on the IMAGE Net, or by leaving me mail on any of the Company Support Boards or on Qlink to NISSA Al D... Thanx and enjoy the rest of the summer.

Bucko

Al

TIDBITS

There is much about IMAGE that seems to be seldom used. Perhaps it is just that people don't know it is there or have never taken the time to learn. I can understand it in the case of the users but when I see IMAGE sysops that seem unaware of the features of the boards they are running I wonder if it was worth the time and effort to put them in in the first place. We'll discuss a few of them here, see if you are aware of all of these.

The first place most users go is to the E-mail section. It is surprising how many do not know how to read ONE message. They will type A every time. They also often type R1 when they have one message waiting. We've even added a simple "mod" to our E-mail section to provide the new, uninformed, about a couple of basic commands. At the E-mail prompt just pressing RETURN will read the first message, or the next message as the case may be. Many are unaware, or seem to be, that they will be given the option to delete mail when they quit the email section and will, instead, type D to delete mail. Nothing wrong with that but if you are just leaving Email anyway you can delete it as you leave. Save a step.

Also lost seems to be the ability to go from place to place on the board. Why is it that everyone seems to think it is necessary to Quit to the main prompt before they

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can go to other sections of the board? IMAGE has always had the ability to go from any major section of the board to any other section of the board without the wasted stop at the main prompt. Perhaps this needs to be emphasized more as it is a marked advantage.

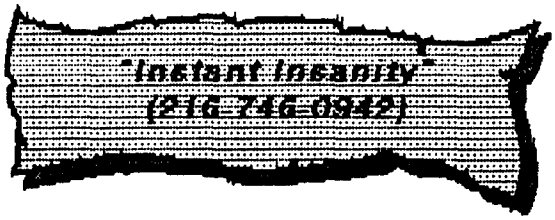
The keyboard colors seem to have escaped the notice of many sysops. I am really surprised at the number of sysops that still use MCI commands for every color change. Often when I see someone doing that I will change his text for him by using the keyboard colors. Perhaps that has been done to some of you. It gets an interesting reaction when the user finds that his keyboard works as well as MCI color commands, and he can see the results instantly.

Many of the editor commands remain a mystery. I watch people struggle with editing text on my board and cringe at the lack of knowledge. Especially from sysops. Many seem unaware of commands like CTRL n which will immediately restore text while editing a line. The replace command, .k, seems to be virtually neglected by many. So too, with the move and copy commands and several other very powerful editing commands.

Command stacking seems to have found a wide following, however with the new Turbo Rels there are some additions that can be used to make life a bit easier and they have NOT found wide acceptance. For example when one wants to go to a specific board in a specific SIG you can enter SB1,1 (first SIG, first subboard) or UD2,9 if you wanted to go to UD library 9 in the second SIG. My typical command string when going to the SB looks like this: SB1,1^RA which allows me to read all in the first SIG.

One of the "commands" that is available on my board, and many others that is under-used is the QM command for Quick Mail. Many times I see people leave the SB area (usually with Q) and go to the EMail area just to send mail...often to me, when they could simply use Quick Mail (or feedback for that matter, which can be left from ANYWHERE on the board). It is wasteful steps like these that Quick Mail was created to avoid.

There is much more that could be covered. Basically what I'm getting at here is that we, as sysops, need to learn our boards well and we need to make the information available to our users.



By: Joe Scrogham (COBRA DOC)

IMAGE net node 58 in Youngstown, Ohio.

Instant Insanity is operated by "Lizzard" and "Patsy". They have been married for 13 years and have a 10 year old son. I didn't expect to find a BBS operated by your typical American family. I ask if their son had sysop access and the answer was "No, no not yet. He is much to young for that. We can screw it up all by ourselves."

When you first log-on to this board you get the feeling that these folks really know how to have fun. They have several nice C/G screens through out the place and have some very interesting subboards. Like Open Opinions, The Padded Room, (Crazy post here lots of fun though) and Dear Patsy, just to name a few. They have a very active message base as well as a pretty good selection of IMAGE files. There is also a good selection of online games (I liked "A Barmaid from Hell" where you are a bartender and you try to kill the people in the bar).

I ask the Sysops a few questions and here is how they answered them:

Q. How long have you been running a BBS?

A. About two years. We started running IMAGE about a year and a half ago. We used to run C-Net for a while but it crashed like crazy (heh heh that was her exact words, honest.)

Q. What kind of equipment are you using to run your BBS?

A. A Lt. Kernal (40 meg) a C-64 we have a Star printer and a 1571 drive with a Supra Modem.

Q. Where did you get the Theme for your board?

A. All of our friends say that we're insane so we decided to go with it.

Q. Why do your friends say you are insane?

A. Hmmmm... You should ask Lizzard about that. I guess because we do things that most people don't do. (I was itching to explore this further but decided the imagination was better.)

Q. What would you like to do with your BBS that you haven't done yet?

A. We would like to see it grow into a respected national board. That would be the biggest compliment for us.

Q. What would you most like to see IMAGE do next?

A. We would like cursor movements instead of MCI commands and we would love to have sound.

Q. Other than the name what do you think is uniqne about your

BBS?
A. We have a very active message base The users are what makes a BBS unique. Without them there really wouldn't be any sense of having one.
Q. What advice would you give to someone just starting out that has never run a BBS before?
A. To keep in mind that the users are what makes the board. Make sure you have the time to devote to running it and get IMAGE.
Q. How many users do you have on your BBS?
A. 135
Q. What is the most calls your BBS has been without a re-boot?
A. 174 and we re-booted because we wanted to make some changes.
Q. What kind of work do you both do?
A. I'm a housewife and mother (in other words a slave) and Lizzard works for a division of GM and is a union representative.
Q. Where do you get the majority of your support from?
A. The Atlanta System Net, Port Commodore and Twilight Zone.
Q. Is there any comments that you would like to make?
A. Only that if it wasn't for the support that IMAGE supplies this board probably wouldn't be running. The people involved in IMAGE have always done their best to help us out.

Just one little note before I logged off I took a look at the board activity screen. The total percentage for use was 85%

If you would like to see your BBS featured in this article then send in your BBS ad to "*The Reflection*" because that's where the boards for this article are chosen.

Till next month. See ya!

An Ode

By: Al DeRosa (BUCKO)

"Ode to a Support Line"

Yea this is a brown nosing article.

Did you ever have a problem with your system that you just couldn't figure out? Welp if you haven't then don't bother to read the rest of this because you are probably the person whom I amtalking about....

This article is about Fred Dart. The man behind the phone! Alot of people might not feel the same way as I do about Fred,and that's your tough luck, ;)

Back in August of 1988 when Don Gladden decided to breakout on his own, I, of course, had already ordered 12.1 and got pretty worried about what was going to happen to my order. And since I couldn't get in touch with Don I called Fred to find out what was going on, he told me not to worry and if I wanted to order the New Image BBS they would be glad to honor the $7.95 upgrade price that was set.

After that initial phone call I called HIM anytime I had aproblem or a question, he was always there to answer the phone call and the question. When I finally got my

IMAGE 1.0 I noticed I was missing the Plus disk I ordered, this was at 11:45PM EST. I said "Sheesh now I have to wait until Monday to call and find out what happened" on a gamble i called Fred and much to my amazement he answered the phone! He fixed up my order and said they (he and Don) would be manning the phones all weekend long answering questions. Now that AMAZED me considering I never had that kind of support before.

Between chatting with Fred on the phone and on Qlink, I feel I know him pretty well, he may be a little rough around the edges at times, but he has a heart of gold, and for that I thank him foreverything from the little "Hey Fred it's that pain in the neck from NY calling, " His Reply " now what Al??" to "Fred it's Al, I have a MAJOR problem" His Reply "What's Wrong?" or "Change line 930 of +. whatever to read this and everything will be fine!" He has always been there and I hope always will, he knows his programming VERY WELL, and knows his hardware VERY WELL!

I could probably go on for hours telling you the many times he has helped me but that would probably bore you folks. Sol will end this with, "Fred this Bud's for you!" And it's on me!!!

Bucko
The Wrong #][
NISSA SSB
Ed Note: Thanks Al.

POWER

By: Mike Laponis (ROADMASTER)

During the past 3 years I have gone through 5 power supplies on my C-64 that runs The Crossroads. I always could find another "stock" 64 power supply, and would put it on and be good for another 6-months to a year. The last time I bought a 64 power supply I purchased a third party supply (from a mail order business). Well, it didn't last long either. The problem is that these power supplies were designed to be marginal, at best, for the 64 and especially marginal when running it 24 hours per day with peripherals that also may call on some of the current available from the keyboard's supply.

How do you know if your power supply is causing problems? Well, anything from the VERY obvious of the computer will not turn on, to the intermittent problems that I was experiencing. In my case, (and it has happened to me many times before, for the same reason) my board would lock-up intermittently. The lock-ups would always occur in different places in the board (that told me it probably wasn't a problem in the program, since it happened throughout). It would happen once or twice every day or two. Sometimes it would just lock-up, and sometimes it would lock-up and turn the top-half of the sysop screen into garbled characters. If that is happening to

you, try a new power supply.

Being tired of spending all my money on "marginal" power supplies, and knowing a little about electronics, I built my own. It is pretty simple to build (if you can read a schematic and know how to solder). I picked up the design from a local user group years ago, and knew someday it would come in handy. Most of the parts are fairly easy to find (although it did take trips to 3 electronic stores to get everything I needed). Most of the parts can be purchased at Radio Shack, although some items will need to be purchased at a little more "serious" electronics store. The cost will vary somewhat based on what you include/don't include, and the prices in your area. For me, it ran about $65.

The good thing about it is it is MUCH "beefier" in terms of electrical characteristics. It also includes surge protection and EMI (electro-mechanical interference) and RFI (radio frequency interference) filters! All fuses can be mounted in the chassis, which makes them easily accessable. Included with this article is a parts list, and a schematic.

Should you have any questions, feel free to contact me via Net-Mail @ The Crossroads - CRO, Node 55. Perhaps this will solve your 64 power supply woes as well!

C64 Power Supply Parts List:

(All part numbers (#) indicated are Radio Shack #'s, unless otherwise indicated.)

Resistors listed are 1/2 watt unless otherwise noted.

Estimated Cost: $65-$75

1. D1 2-25 amp, full wave rectifier bridge, # 276-1185
2. D2-D3 1N4004 Diode, # 276-1103
3. D4 1N4148 Fast switching diode, # 276-122
4*.D5 5.8 volt zener diode, 1 watt
5. C1 4700 MF. 35 volt, electrolytic capacitor, # 272-1022
6. C2 10 MF. 35 volt, electrolytic capacitor, # 272-1013
7. C3 1000 MF. 35 volt, electrolytic capacitor, # 272-1019
8*.R1 1K ohm resistor, 1% tolorance
9. R2 330 ohm resistor, 1/2 watt, # 271-017
10. MOV Metal Oxide Varistor, MOV V130 # 276-571
11. S1 Switch S1, 6 amp, 120 volt, # 275-690
12. Fuse1-3 Fuse holder, # 270-364, with 3 amp fuses
13*. Filter EMI/RFI Filter, 5 amp, # 273-103
14*. T1 Transformer, 5 amp, 120 volt primary. One 9 VAC secondary, one 8-28 volt secondary
15. LM338 Voltage regulator, 5 amp

++ Miscellaneous Parts ++

16. TO3 Transistor socket, # 276-0029
17. One 120 volt AC cord w/ground pin
18. 2 strain relief insulators for power cords, # 278-1636
19. One 7-pin DIN connector
20. Perforated Board, # 276-1395
21. TO3 Transistor heat sink
22. 8 feet Beldin, # 9744, 2 pair (twisted), 22 GA. Cable
23. Aluminum chassis box, 6in. X 8in. X 3.5in.
24. 8 spacers to mount T1 and perf. board

* NOTES:

D5 - If unable to locate a 5.8 volt zener, a close value will be fine. (5.6 volt, 6.0 volt)

R1 - If unable to locate 1K ohm with 1% tolerance, 2% is good, and 5% will do.

Filter - You may not be able to find the Radio Shack part # and may have to locate a similar component from another electronics store.

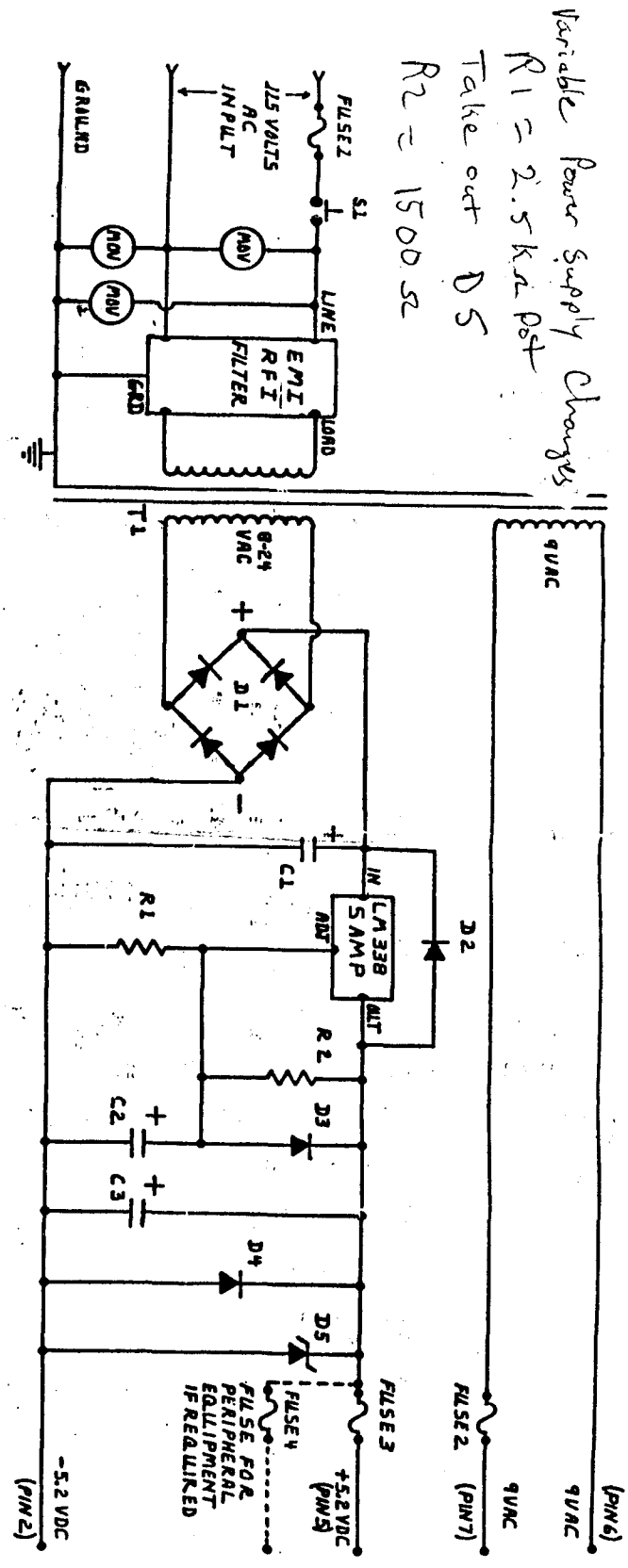
T1 - If unable to locate a transformer with TWO secondaries as indicated, you can substitute with two seperate transformers. One with a 120 volt primary and a 9 VAC secondary, and the other with a 120 volt primary and a 8-28 volt secondary. Just be sure that the combined power requirements to run the two transformers do not exceed specifications of other components.

If you desire to make this a variable power supply, make these changes:

R1 = 2.5K potentiometer

Take out D5

R2 = 1500 ohms



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