

I Made a Rock Video

# video

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MARCH 1985

The #1 Magazine of Home Video

Tape Tests  
Beta Results Are In

## How to Make Money With Your Camera

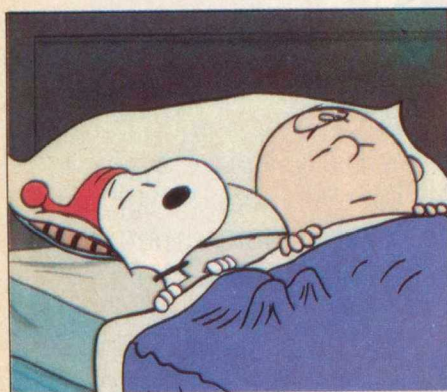
**Antique TVs**  
*The New Collectibles*

**Good Grief!**  
*Peanuts on Tape*

BERGER-BRAITHWAITE VIDEOTESTS  
Polaroid 8mm Camcorder System  
RCA 'Dimensia' Monitor/Receiver  
Toshiba Beta Hi-Fi VCR  
Multiplex ChannelPlus Source Combiner







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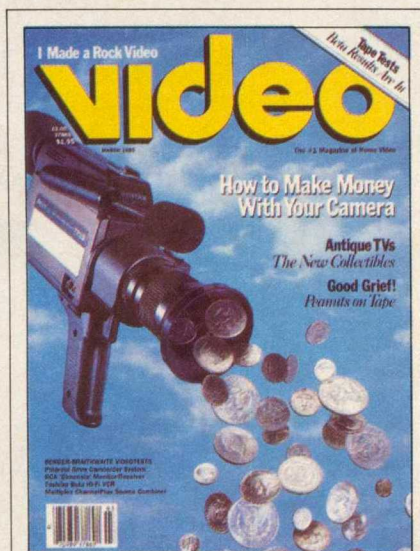
Polaroid P8-1 8mm Camcorder System

RCA 'Dimensia' Monitor/Receiver

Toshiba V-S443 Beta Hi-Fi VCR

Multiplex ChannelPlus Source Combiner

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**About the Cover.** Video can make money as well as consume it. Cover photo by Vittorio Sartor.

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# Random Access

## Personal Computers, News, and Games

### Intelligent Micros?

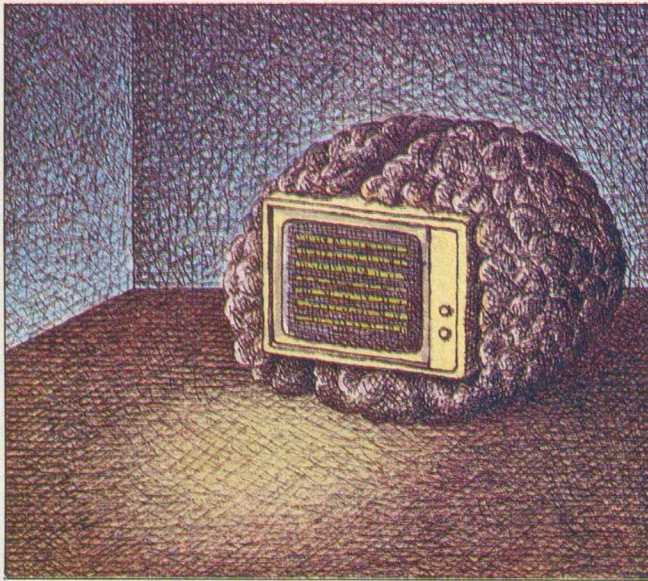
The words "smart" and "intelligent" have long been associated with computers and software. But is a computer that repeats a sequence of activities truly smart? Can a program which only responds to a predetermined set of circumstances be intelligent?

Researchers working in the field of artificial intelligence will say no, and tell you that notions of "smart"—which once meant endowed with the power of a computing machine—and "dumb" (devoid of the same) are changing. But will our machines ever impress us with the quality of their thought?

Take the case of *ELIZA*, the first program to mimic the process of psychoanalysis. Written in the early 1960s by MIT's Dr. Joseph Weizenbaum, it asked probing questions in much the same way a psychologist or therapist would, drawing personal responses from users who were led to elaborate on their problems and feelings.

*ELIZA* would do this because it was designed to act the way a psychologist would act. The logic behind the program was relatively simple. It would continue to ask about whatever topic the user typed into the machine. If you said you had trouble sleeping at night, it would ask why you thought you had trouble sleeping at night. *ELIZA* was also loaded to randomly interrupt into the conversation. It would ask, for example, "Why do you resent your father?"

*ELIZA* opened a few eyes. Some psychiatrists reacted fearfully and defended their honorable practice. (Would they be the next victims of



automation?) Computer scientists, though, were stimulated to think that they might be able to imbue their machines and programs with the real thing—inductive logic.

Today, one of the hottest microcomputer party games is a small but impressive program called "Mind Prober." Principally authored by a psychologist, Dr. James H. Johnson, it prepares personality inventories about people. Using it, one person describes another by agreeing or disagreeing with a list of personality traits, terms like "self-blaming," "distant," and "striving."

Instead of simply issuing a statement based on a one-to-one correlation of these traits, *Mind Prober* constructs an intricate map of the responses and, by inductive logic, prepares a complex report that includes advice on the subject's ability to cope with stress, respond to competition, and even react to affection. A *Mind Prober* report can seem astonishingly accurate.

It shouldn't be surprising

that Dr. Johnson's academic research has centered on computer-aided psychological assessment and on a classic psychology test called the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI). This is the test given to many American college students in the 1960s that included seemingly bizarre questions such as, "Are you afraid to touch doorknobs?"

A spokesman for Johnson's company, Human Edge Software, emphasizes that *Mind Prober* isn't so much a psychological program as a demonstration of an "expert" system at work. The so-called "knowledge base" around which it is built is Johnson's, and the reports it delivers are his wisdom.

Soon Human Edge will begin offering another higher-powered program for microcomputers called *Expert Ease*, which will allow anyone with access to a personal computer to construct a knowledge base of what they know best. So social workers can advise other social workers, auto mechanics can offer counsel to other auto mechan-

ics, and secretaries can presumably tattle on their bosses to one another—all via the machine.

But, like *ELIZA*, are *Mind Prober* and the other coming "expert" systems really intelligent? Or do they offer only the illusion of intelligence?

Wisdom differs from knowledge, just as knowledge is more than a collection of facts on hand. Real wisdom, we should remind ourselves, relies on depth of experience and quality of thought. If in fact wisdom could be compressed into a hundred or so pages of text—the capacity of a typical floppy disk—then it would be an easy thing to acquire, with or without a machine. As we all know, however, wisdom remains the most illusive of human commodities.

We will undoubtedly be suitably awed by experiments in artificial intelligence such as *Mind Prober* and the coming wave of expert programs, just as we are suitably awed by the performance of a new model of automobile. The computer has proven that it will continue to astonish and amaze us with its capabilities. We should not, however, confuse engineering with humanity—nor mistake it for true wisdom. —Tim Onosko

### The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy

Infocom, IBM PC, Apple II series, Atari

Unless you've been in the neighborhood of the Crab Nebula for the last few years, you've probably run across *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* in one of its incarnations. Originally a BBC radio show, it has also shown up as three books and a television serial. Now it's on



floppy disk as well, with new material written by Douglas Adams, the original perpetrator. Programmed by Steve Meretzky, who wrote Infocom's earlier space adventure, *Planetfall*, it survives the transition as wacky and spaced-out as ever.

Like all of Infocom's adventures, *Hitchhiker's* is text-only—you'll have to provide the graphics yourself. The story is a simple one: you are Arthur Dent, a rather ineffectual but lovable Englishman who awakes one Thursday morning to discover that his home is about to be leveled by bulldozers. What he doesn't know is that his planet faces the same fate. Luckily, his friend Ford Prefect is a native of a planet near Betelgeuse and the owner of a Sub-Etha Signaling Device (or Thumb). Ford uses this to hitch a ride for himself and Arthur on one of the Vogon ships intent on destroying Earth to make way for a hyperspatial express route. And that's only the beginning.

The opening scenario will be familiar to anyone who's read the book, but that doesn't exactly give you a great head start. Familiar characters do pop up throughout the game, however, such as Marvin, the Paranoid Android, Zaphod Beeblebrox, and the Ravenous Bugblatter Beast of Traal. (Consult the *Guide* for details on these and other matters of importance).

There may be a few minor problems with *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, but the game is so engrossing, funny, and often so infuriatingly difficult that you'll hardly notice them. It is worth noting, however, that unlike other Infocom text adventures, this one has a particularly perverse sense of humor. Be prepared to be deviously misled. When this

happens, be persistent and suppress any desire to torch your computer.

—Louise Kohl

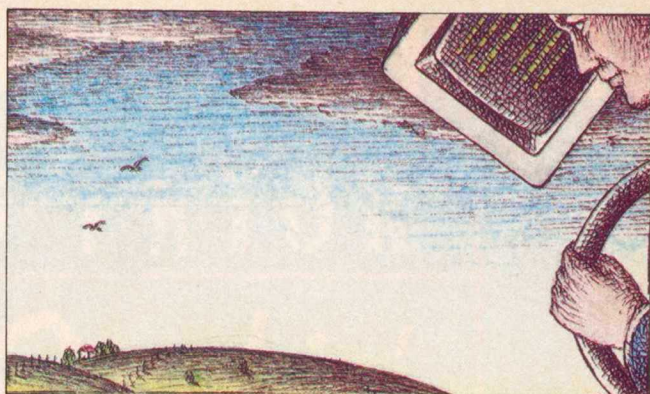
## Flight Simulator & Flight Simulator II

Micro Software and Sublogic/  
IBM PC, Apple II series,  
Commodore and Atari

Flight simulation has been a popular subject for computer software virtually since its inception. The headspinning success that's followed Bruce Artwick's *Flight Simulator I & II* is unprecedented.

Although released by two different companies (*FS* is offered by Micro Software for the IBM PC while *FS II* is a Sublogic product now available for the Apple, Commodore, and Atari), the programs are virtually identical and have, in fact, spent most last fall playing musical chairs with the top two spots on the bestseller list. *FS* is software created for a powerhouse computer while the sequel/update takes advantage of the action-graphic capabilities associated with the popular micros.

At first glance these programs may seem more than a little daunting to the computer novice. The documentation, while it can hardly be faulted for thoroughness, could certainly have been presented more concisely. Few would-be pilots will be inclined to actually read the two hefty books that comprise the instructions before takeoff. One book contains exhaustive directions on everything from disk loading to landing while the second publication is a treatise on aerodynamic theory and makes for interesting background material. For those not inclined toward an hour or two of heavy reading, however, there is a card containing the function capability of each computer key. Unhappily, this data—which could just as easily been printed on a single sheet of paper—has instead been run off on *both sides* of a half-size card, which means constantly having to take hands off the keyboard to flip over the data card. Still, it won't be long before most players are conversant with all commands.



The program itself has three types of flight. The standard mode offers, as might be expected, standard flight simulation, complete with a second disk containing a quartet of destinations. (L.A., New York, Chicago, and Seattle). While piloting your Cessna, you have access to aerial views from all directions. The graphics are sparse but topographically accurate.

A second mode allows more advanced armchair pilots the thrill of stunt, or

"trick," flying—a subject covered at great length in the documentation—and once you become adroit enough, you can check out the Dogfight option for more game-oriented thrills.

In short, these programs offer something for every user. The detail is magnificent and, though I have never flown a real plane, creates an environment that seems scrupulously realistic. And that, after all, is what simulations are all about.

—Bill Kunkel

## BEST SELLERS/HOME

1. **Dollars & Sense.** MAC, APc, IBM, AP, TIP. Monogram.
2. **Print Shop.** AP. Broderbund.
3. **Bank Street Writer.** AP, APc, IBM, C64, AT. Broderbund.
4. **Music Works.** MAC. Hayden Software.
5. **Managing Your Money.** IBM. MECA.
6. **Mac the Knife II.** MAC. Miles Computing.
7. **Mac the Knife.** MAC. Miles Computing.
8. **Print Shop Graphics Library.** AP. Broderbund.
9. **Home Acct.** APc, TIP, EPS, AT, C64, IBM, TRS, AP. Arrays/Cont.
10. **Micro Cookbook.** APc, APe, IBM, AP. Virtual Combinatics.

## BEST SELLERS/RECREATION

1. **Flight Simulator II.** AT, C64, AP. Sublogic.
2. **Flight Simulator.** IBM. Microsoft.
3. **Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy.** C64, IBM, AP. Infocom.
4. **Sargon III.** AP, C64, IBM, MAC. Hayden Software.
5. **Zork I.** AP, DEC, IBM, AT, MAC, TIP. Infocom.
6. **Lode Runner.** AT, C64, IBM, AP, MAC. Broderbund.
7. **Suspect.** AP, MAC, IBM, AT. Infocom.
8. **Ultima III.** AP, AT, IBM, C64. Origin Systems.
9. **Wizardry.** IBM, AP. Sir-Tech Software.
10. **Trivia Fever.** C64, AP, IBM, PCjr. Professional Software.

LEGEND: AP = Apple, APc = Apple IIc, APe = Apple IIe, AT = Atari, C64 = Commodore 64, COM = Commodore Pet/CBM, CP/M = 5¼" and 8" formats, DEC = DEC Rainbow, EPS = Epson QX-10, IBM = IBM-PC, MAC = Apple Macintosh, PCjr = IBM PCjr, RIP = Texas Instruments Professional, TRS = TRS-80, VIC = Commodore Vic-20, VTR = Victor 9000, WNG = Wang Personal Computer, ZEN = Zenith 100.

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