

EDITORIAL COMMENTS

This is a story about a little birdie in the coldest winter Iowa ever had. This little bird fell out of his nest onto the freezing ground. He was 'sooo' cold that all he could do was peep.

He peeped and peeped until a cow heard the noise and came over to see what the problem was. Well, the cow thought of a solution and dropped a hot steaming cow pie on the little bird. The little bird was toasty warm and so happy he began chirping his favorite tune. A coyote heard the joyful tune and came to investigate. The coyote gently lifted the little bird out of the stench and brushed him clean. Then the coyote ate the little bird.

There are two morals to this story. The first is that sometimes it is hard to tell who your friends are, and the second is that sometimes it is better to keep your mouth shut. So far I am learning the first pretty well.

I have recently discovered the word "**coopetition**". What a great new word for my vocabulary! I have struggled a bit to find a proper descriptive word for the relationships that are evolving within the computer industry. This new word means that we may be a competitor today, a loyal customer tomorrow, and a joint partner the day after that. It may require a new way of thinking, but it seems to be the wave of the future.

We, at Computer Support, are very proud of the new relationship we are developing with Altos Computer Systems. It really typifies what I think coopetition means. We have been something of a competitor to Altos in some of our actions, and yet we have invested hundreds of thousands of dollars to assist them in providing support to their dealers.

This new arrangement doesn't mean that they are going to be wild about everything we do, just as I reserve the right to pick at their actions. It does mean that both companies have arrived at the same conclusion; a symbiotic relationship is far better than perishing independently! I have never intended to do anything, even as a competitor, that was harmful to Altos' future, and I am comfortable that they have operated in the same manner. If we can play a useful role in supporting Altos dealers and customers, we will all benefit.

Perhaps the 90's may be as much about defining new relationships as it is about hot new technological trends. If we can learn to combine the best of the options available to us, and be a little more flexible on the rest, it may be the key to reaching the goals we all long to reach. Coopetition may be the first of a series of new business tactics that we will use in our efforts to serve our customers. Perhaps the little bird and the cow were the first to define coopetition. ■

ALTOGETHER is published monthly by Computer Support of Sioux City, Ltd., for UNIX/XENIX multi-user computer dealers. If you wish to submit an article for publication, send it to:

ALTOGETHER
P.O. Box 2159
Sioux City, Iowa 51109

We reserved the right to edit all articles for space and style. Deadline is the first of the month of publication. CSSC also publishes **Bull'sEye** for Bull product dealers.

TECH NOTES:

Don't Say Oops, Say UPS

"Sags", unacceptable decreases in power, also called "brown-outs" are the major cause (87 percent) of traditional power supply problems. The rest are "surges", an unacceptable increase in power. It doesn't take a hurricane or an earthquake to shake up your computer and corrupt your data. Do you sell UPS subsystems to handle these power fluctuations?

A UPS should be an integral part of the computer system. It should be on-line all the time, taking the alternating current (AC) from the utility company and converting it to the direct current (DC) the batteries use. A "rectifier", as its name implies, removes the eccentricities of the electricity and transforms the power to match what's coming out of the battery. On most UPSs the DC flowing from the battery and the rectifier then travels into an inverter and transformer, which transforms the power back into AC and ships it onto the CPU. Some UPSs take the inverter out of the normal operations loop and place it in an emergency operations loop. However, time constraints in keeping a UNIX system up and running dictate that the inverter should be on-line at all times. On an Altos subsystem the computer is actually running on DC, eliminating one conversion step, and a number of problems!

There are basically four categories of UPS products: off-line, hybrid, line-interactive, and on-line. Each of these varies in terms of speed and its abilities to filter the impurities of power. The off-line, or stand-by, power system, for instance, only kicks in when the power stops but has no facility for dealing with sags and surges.

The Altos UPS, designed specifically for Altos Computers, is an on-line UPS, the best kind for UNIX systems. It combines the most secure power in terms of both switchover time and power conditioning. ■

What the Technical Support Person Needs:

The patience of Job
and
the wisdom of Solomon
and
the technical brilliance of Einstein
and
the mind reading capability of Mr. Spock
and
the compassion of Mother Teresa
and
a sense of humor doesn't hurt.

Don't Say

O-O-OOPS!

Say UPS!

Now Available From Computer Support

Genuine Altos On-Line UPS

The Best Design for UNIX

UPS 3068	\$837
----------	-------

UPS 2000	\$837
----------	-------

UPS 1000	\$905
----------	-------

Designed specifically for Altos Computers
Completely refurbished with one year Altos Warranty
Includes mounting brackets



**COMPUTER SUPPORT
OF SIOUX CITY, LTD.**

Order Desk (712)258-8888 • FAX (712)277-2638
Tech. Support (712)258-7777 • General (712)277-0095



Halloween Special

All New PC Hardware

**ProModem 1200G from Prometheus
1200/300 Baud Intelligent Modem
with Software \$35.00**

**Trident 256K VGA Cards
Upgradable to 125K
\$125.00**

**Wyse 16 Bit ST506 Controller
From New Wyse Systems**

**Other Overstocked Items:
Surge Suppressors \$10.50
Amdek Video Cards \$29.00**

**No Minimum Order
You Pay Freight
No Handling Charge**



**COMPUTER SUPPORT
OF SIOUX CITY, LTD.**

Order Desk (712)258-8888 • FAX (712)277-2638
Tech. Support (712)258-7777 • General (712)277-0095

Thoughts From A Summer Intern

by James Hodgins

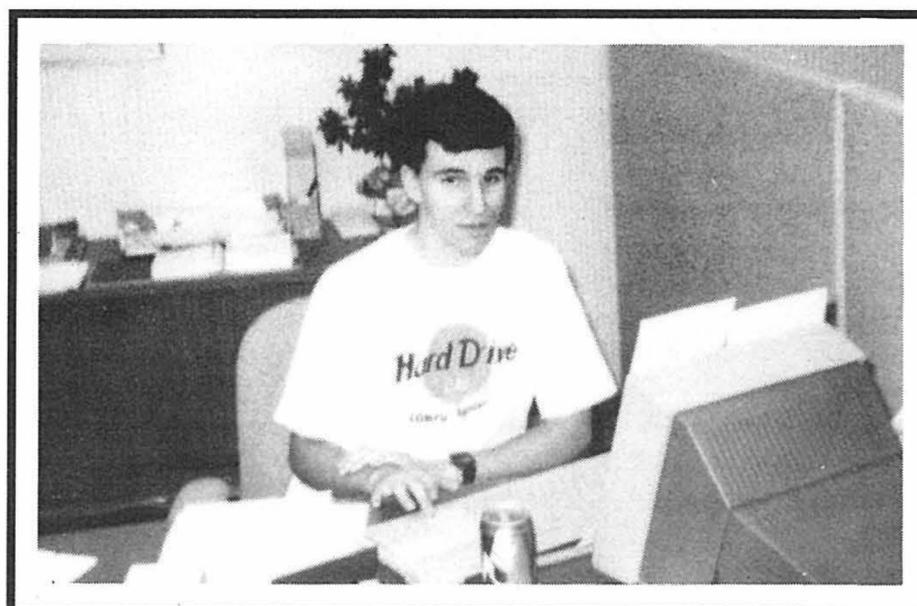
My first article covered some things I learned while I was a summer intern at Computer Support, but I didn't really tell you what it was like to work there.

I have worked in a variety of places. Most of my jobs have been manual labor. The theory is, learn your job, then do it. I've noticed that my co-workers didn't always "go the extra mile", because there was nothing to entice them to do so. I have always strived to have pride in my work, and I think supervisors recognized this, though little was said. The reward was going home feeling "I have done my fair share".

Computer Support has a different theory of management. They maintain a loose atmosphere and instill a sense of proprietorship in their employees. The attitude of the staff impressed me the most; they were happy with what they were doing, and this positive attitude affected everyone around them.

This positive attitude may be exemplified. The first day I heard, "You'll really like it here." People affirmed me for my good work. The employees keep the atmosphere light by the occasional joke, and people are happy and pleasant to be around. Management elicits this positive attitude from the employees. Not only did we have the classic Suggestion Box, but we had managers who would talk to employees.

The loose atmosphere at Computer Support relies on people's honesty; there is no clock to punch, no set break-time. We were encouraged to break up our work in the way it was best for each individual: shooting baskets, playing video games, taking a walk



James Hodgins, CSSC summer intern, wearing his Hard Drive Cafe t-shirt.

around the CSSC golf course. Each person selects the working conditions suited to their own productivity.

Computer Support sponsors a party once a month so that employees can get together for fun in a non-working environment. They also have special lunches for birthdays (one for me, with a cake and balloons) or other special occasions. They show in many ways that their employees' welfare comes first.

The relaxed environment produces productivity and instills a sense of proprietorship. Working at Computer Support makes you feel like part of a team, or a family. How amazing! Out of 27 employees there are 6 brothers and 2 sisters working there. Maybe that is the key: they work together like a family, fostering trust, loyalty, and dependability, and that is what it's like to work for Computer Support. ■

Introducing the Computer Support "Answer Line"

1-800-475-0095

As a part of our increased commitment to Altos Computer Systems customer support, Computer Support has installed a Toll-Free 800 number, available to end-users.

CSSD COMPUTER SUPPORT
OF SIOUX CITY, LTD.

Order Desk (712) 258-8888 • Fax (712) 277-2638
Tech. Support (712) 258-7777 • General (712) 277-0095

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL



*"Your report isn't worth the floppy disk
it's saved on!"*

