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Product Update Status

Basic-2C is now supported in the following environments:

Single-User MS-DOS Systems

AMSTRAD PC1512	LEADING EDGE PC (D)
AT&T 6300, 6300 PLUS	MAI/BASIC4 PC
COMMODORE PC-10, PC-20	MULTITECH LAN 500 (ACER)
COMPAQ DESKPRO	MULTITECH 700,710 (ACER)
COMPAQ PLUS	MULTITECH 900,910 (ACER)
COMPAQ PORTABLE	MULTITECH 1100 (ACER)
COMPAQ PORTABLE III	NCR PC6
COMPAQ 286 DESKPRO	NEC APC IV
COMPAQ 286 PORTABLE	SPERRY PC,PC/IT
COMPAQ 386 DESKPRO	TANDY 3000
COMPUTERLAND PC	TELEVIDEO TELE-PC
DEC VAXMATE	TELEVIDEO TELE-XT
EPSON EQUITY I,II,III	TI BUSINESS PRO
HONEYWELL PC AP	TOSHIBA T3100
HP VECTRA	TULIP COMPACT
IBM PC,XT,AT	WANG PC,APC
IBM PC XT 286	WANG PC280
IBM PS/2 MODELS 30,50,60,80	WYSE PC,PC286,2108,2200
ITT XTRA XP	XEROX 6060PC
KAYPRO 1610	XEROX 6065
KAYPRO 16/E	ZENITH 150 SERIES
KAYPRO PC,PC10,PC30	ZENITH 248 SERIES
KAYPRO 286i	
KAYPRO 386	
KAYPRO 2000+	

Multi-User Shared Logic Systems

Computer Operating System

ALTOS 686	XENIX 3.0
ALTOS 886	XENIX 3.0
ALTOS 1086	XENIX 3.0
ALTOS 2086	XENIX 3.0
ALTOS 3086	VMS
DEC MICROVAX II	VMS
DEC VAX 8000 SERIES	SUPERDOS
HONEYWELL XPS100	UNIX V
IBM PC,XT,AT	SUPERDOS
IBM PS/2 SERIES	SUPERDOS
WYSE PC 286 SERIES	SUPERDOS
WANG APC	XENIX 3.0

Multi-User Distributed Logic Systems

(Networking)

NOVELL E/TI NETWORKING
 SPERRY USERNET
 (PLUS 35 OTHERS)
 IBM & ALL APPROVED COMPATIBLES
 (SEE SINGLE USER MS/DOS)

Novell ELS NetWare 286, Level I

Several licensees have reported problems in attempting to use the current (rev. 2.00.04) Novell/IBM RunTime on the new Novell ELS software. The problems reported have varied somewhat, but all relate to operation of the RunTime on the non-dedicated file server node.

The typical problem is that the file server node hangs during the initial start up phase of the RunTime. In some cases the hang occurs before the Gold Key check, in some cases after. Passing the Gold Key check on another node does not avoid the problem. In addition, in some cases when the file server node hangs, the entire network hangs. In other cases, other nodes may continue normal operation.

The problem seems to be related to the type of file server used. So far, all the reports we have had of this problem have been with AT clones as file servers.

One problem that has been encountered on an IBM AT file server is that although Basic-2C does not hang when executed on the file server node, it sometimes hangs when exited.

On the other hand, some users have reported no problems whatsoever when executing Basic-2C on the file server node.

In all cases, Basic-2C operates without problems on nodes other than the file server node. These problems occur only when Basic-2C is executed on the file server node itself.

Note: These problems do not occur with Novell 286 Non-dedicated software.

Niakwa is currently working with Novell to attempt to resolve the problems with ELS software. Until the problems can be resolved, we recommend that you configure ELS systems so that execution of Basic-2C on the non-dedicated file server node is not required. Note that with ELS software you can configure up to 4 non-file server nodes as long as the file server remains in console mode.

Wang MS-DOS 3.20 for PC/APC

Wang has recently released a new version of their MS-DOS operating system for the Wang PC and APC. This release, MS-DOS 3.20, contains many enhancements over previous Wang MS-DOS releases including improved IBM emulation. However, Wang did not maintain full upward compatibility with prior versions of MS-DOS. Unfortunately, Basic-2C is adversely affected by this.

Basic-2C RunTime revision 2.00.04 for the Wang PC does not operate on the Wang PC/APC under Wang MS-DOS 3.20. Attempting to execute the Wang version of the RunTime program results in a message "incorrect processor". The RunTime program then quits. We had initially hoped that this problem could be resolved through a patch like solution. However, once we worked past the processor code problem, we found that other incompatibilities existed, particularly in diskette access. Unfortunately these problems can not be resolved by a patch for the existing version.

Future versions of the Wang MS-DOS RunTime will be modified to support operation under Wang MS-DOS 3.20 on the Wang PC/APC.

Patch File for Digital

In June, 1987, Niakwa released the Basic-2C RunTime and Development Packages for the DEC VMS Operating System, Release 4.4. Unfortunately in the third quarter Digital released VMS Release 4.6 which no longer supports the method of record locking used in the original Interpreter and RunTime Packages. As a result, the Basic-2C Interpreter and RunTime did not operate on VMS Release 4.6.

Niakwa has changed how record locking is handled so that the existing DEC VMS RunTimes with the NEW, Patch Files as of 11/20/87, will operate on VMS Release 4.4, 4.5 and 4.6. In addition, other bugs in the Basic-2C Compiler and RunTime have been corrected.

All of our Digital Licensees should have received this patch file. If you didn't get yours, contact Niakwa's technical support department.

Sort 4 - A New Solution

The problem of making the Wang Sort 4 utilities work well under Basic-2C has been a persistent one. Previous solutions were:

1. Capture the generated 2200 code in a work file, compile it, and modify Sort 4 to directly load the compiled version. This worked well for stable sorts, but did not handle situations where the sort parameters were modified by the operator.
2. Allow Sort 4 to generate code each time, but then use the compiler (B2C) via \$SHELL to compile to generated code at execution time. This provided a dynamic method of generating sorts but in some cases caused problems because of insufficient memory. In particular, this technique does not work well under SuperDOS because of the SuperDOS task size restrictions.

Well, there may be a better solution. Jim Mellon of Mellon Software has written a replacement for the code generation routines which uses \$OBJECT to directly generate compiled code without the need for invoking B2C. This method allows dynamic sorts to be performed entirely in the standard 56k user partition. Please be aware that Niakwa has not tested this product and cannot support it in any way. We are providing this information simply as a convenience to our customers.

For further information on this product, please contact...

Jim Mellon, President
Mellon Software, Inc.
101 Center Street
Hobart, Indiana USA 46342
(219) 947-1660

The 3.5" Diskette with Basic-2C

With the implementation of Basic-2C on 3.5" diskettes, Niakwa has received numerous support calls from users trying to format a 3.5" diskette in 2200 format. It should be noted that 2200 format on a 3.5" diskette is not supported.

The 3.5" diskette can be accessed from Basic-2C by first formatting the diskette under MS-DOS, and then scratching a Basic-2C diskimage on the diskette.

Refer to section 6.2.4 of the Basic-2C IBM/MS-DOS Supplement for details on using diskimage files on MS-DOS diskettes.

Whom Do I Call For Basic-2C Help?

Recent changes at Niakwa and several new Niakwa Distributors make requests for a 'Who's who at Niakwa' quite common. The following is just that.

Technical Support for Basic-2C Software Products

Kevin Brownell - Product Analyst
Terry Lippert - Product Manager
Kurt Skaronea - Product Analyst

Sales and Marketing Support

Jennifer Mondy - Account Representative (North America)
Cyndee Philyaw - Account Representative (International)

Order Processing

Marcy Markiewicz - Administrative Assistant (North America)
Glenda Fayta - Administrative Assistant (International)

Management

G.J. Dederich - President
E. Darrell Lynds - Vice President of Research and Development
Richard Drew - Vice President of Sales and Marketing

Other Changes

The following Basic-2C staff members have accepted positions with our parent company, Bluebird Systems:

Larry Fredrich - VAR Regional Manager (Mundelein office)
Mark Phinick - Area Manager (Mundelein office)
Barry Slotten - Sr. Sales Support Analyst (Carlsbad, California office)

TOM Software Debuts Speed 1, Version 3.0

The following is an excerpt of a recent Tom Press release:

"Speed 1, Version 3.0 Debuts"

The new system is distinguished by the inclusion of both a hashed-access method and an indexed-sequential-access method (ISAM) of data retrieval.

Although operating systems typically incorporate only one of these methods, SPEED I, Version 3.0 offers both: hashed access retrieves randomly stored records most efficiently, and ISAM retrieves records stored alphabetically or in numerical order most efficiently.

Any data element can be retrieved by either method, allowing the operator to establish keys for accessing individual records by the most advantageous method. SPEED I also lets the user set up both primary and multiple alternate keys for any record, and to specify either method of access for any of the keys. For example, where customer records must be displayed alphabetically by company name, the records are located and retrieved most efficiently with ISAM. However, in an invoice posting situation where customer records must be updated -- but in no particular order -- hashed access is much faster than ISAM. A system that offers both methods speed up data retrieval considerably.

Furthermore, the system maintains up to eight alternate keys automatically. This method, called Automatic Maintenance of Alternate Keys, maintains key paths to record files when records are added and deleted, or when changes are made to the file. For example, if the user changes an alternate key during file maintenance, the key path for that alternate key will be automatically adjusted.

SPEED I, Version 3.0 also incorporates many of the advanced features of fourth-generation languages, including:

- o Screen-painting capabilities for simplified modification and customizing of input formats
- o Data dictionaries that store file parameters, field definitions, and data entry screens
- o Design and database functions that permit changes to files or fields without changes to program code

- o Proven subroutines that create highly structured, error-free programs
- o Ad hoc reporting, which allows journals or reports to be modified as they are selected for printing

Prices for SPEED I, Version 3.0 start at \$1,000 and depend on the CPU and the number of terminals. Prices for SPEED I-based applications start at \$1,000. SPEED I, Version 3.0 is available through TOM-authorized value-added resellers. For more information, contact TOM Software, 127 S.W. 156th, Seattle, WA 98166. Telephone (206) 246-7022. Telex 32-011 (TOM SEA).

Note to Basic-2C licensees: SPEED I, Version 3.0 is ported for use under Basic-2C and will run on any Basic-2C supported system.

Newly Approved Compatibles

IBM PS/2 Model 80
 Kaypro 386
 Kaypro 2000+
 Wyse PC286
 Xerox 6065

Allow 5-7 Days on Orders

Niakwa's standard delivery policy for Basic-2C orders has always been one week. We have strived to process all orders as quickly as possible in the past and most orders received have been processed within 24 hours. As we add new Basic-2C licensees, announce new RunTime packages and port Basic-2C to new systems, it becomes more difficult to process all orders this quickly. Please remember our standard policy and allow 5-7 days delivery on all Basic-2C orders.

Review of the Flex Spreadsheet

We have recently completed an evaluation of version 3.2 of the Flex spreadsheet system from FlexSystems, which is available on all approved Basic-2C machines.

Most of us are familiar with PC spreadsheets such as Lotus 1-2-3 and Multiplan. What struck us about Flex is the thoughtful approach the authors have taken with the idea of two-dimension data manipulation.

A case in point is the way Flex handles formulas. In a "traditional" spreadsheet, to sum two cells you put a formula in a result cell which names the cells being added by their row and column coordinates, such as B2 + B3. By placing such formulas in many result cells, you define a process which can perform complex operations with large amounts of data.

The problem with this approach, which virtually all other spreadsheets seem to follow, is that the person building the model soon loses visibility over the order in which calculations occur. This becomes particularly acute when cells used in later stages of the calculation are themselves result cells from earlier formulas. Traditional spreadsheets solve this with complex algorithms which examine all formulas and decide the proper order of calculation. This is fine for a computer but of little help to a person trying to unravel this spaghetti of formulas.

The Flex solution is elegant and typical of the way the entire product has been designed. The authors simply removed the formulas from the cells and placed them in a numbered list, a Flex program. Now you can see the order in which your steps will calculate (step 2 follows step 1) and you may delete, insert, copy, move and otherwise edit your spreadsheet program just as you would any traditional computer program.

And if you think this makes it harder for the user to get work done, think again. FlexSystems proudly showed us a Lotus spreadsheet from a recent issue of PC World which computes an amortization schedule in 110 "macro" instructions, some of which rival assembly language in complexity. The Flex version of the same spreadsheet is calculated with only 12 instructions which use realistic variable names such as PAYMENT = INTEREST + PRINCIPLE.

Other features set Flex apart from competing systems. Flex spreadsheets use virtual storage to permit up to 4,000 rows by 4,000 columns per model (a whopping 16 million cells!), yet disk usage is limited to just the sections that actually store data. Cells in any model may be accessed by any other spreadsheet and their data transferred with simple Flex instructions. And not just between spreadsheets; FlexSystems provides interfaces to such established Basic-2C systems as SPEED I, DATA 3500 and AIMS, and offers a Designer Interface to link Flex spreadsheets to any other Basic-2C system.

We were particularly impressed with the features in the new Flex version 3.2, which include help screens, operator prompting, a scripting and template-building capability, control of available special function keys and much more. The Flex language has evolved to offer Pascal-like LABEL verbs that let a developer create a routine in any spreadsheet program, and make it immediately available to any other model.

The focus of Flex is on the application developer. The scripting tools allow consultants to build sophisticated interactive templates that can then be executed by entry-level operators. Since templates may be developed in any language, Flex has proven popular with our European licensees.

In summary, we feel that Flex is an exceptional system which offers tremendous opportunities to developers and users of both 2200 and Basic-2C software.

For more information contact:

Alan B. Green
 FlexSystems Ltd.
 4811 South 76th Street, Suite 401
 Milwaukee, WI 53220
 (414) 281-1400 (Telex: 33-2074)

Help Wanted

Niakwa is growing! Due to the continued growth and success of the Basic-2C product line, Niakwa is expanding the Basic-2C technical support department.

The position available is Senior Product Analyst and is located in our Mundelein (north suburban Chicago area) headquarters. Primary duties of this position are:

- * Provide systems level technical support for Basic-2C distributors. Includes responding to questions about operation of Basic-2C language features, providing information regarding installation and operation of Basic-2C on different hardware/operating systems, diagnosing problems reported by distributors, and reporting potential bugs to Niakwa R&D. No end user support!!!
- * Technical writing. Includes preparation of Basic-2C manuals, newsletter articles, bug reports, and other technical documents as required.
- * Quality assurance. Involves testing of new products and reporting of potential bugs to Niakwa R&D.

Candidates for this position should have the following qualifications:

- * Minimum of 2 years Wang Basic-2C/Niakwa Basic-2C programming experience.
- * Experience with at least one hardware/operating system supported by Basic-2C. Experience with multiple operating systems is a plus.
- * Strong analytical skills.
- * Strong oral and written communication skills.
- * College degree.
- * Management or supervisory experience would be a plus, but is not required.

- * The ability and commitment to do the job right and provide high quality technical services to our customers!

Salary - Open

To apply for this position, please send your resume with salary requirements to Terry Lippert, Product Manager, at our Mundelein office. Or call 312/634-8700. Don't delay - this position is available immediately!

End User Support

Our technical support department has been receiving numerous calls from end users requesting assistance. Many end users have indicated that their Basic-2C Distributor suggested they to call Niakwa direct.

A key benefit to Basic-2C distributorship is discounted pricing on development packages and runtime packages. This allows our distributors to profit from the resale of Basic-2C software. In return, Niakwa requires its distributors to technically support their end users. If a distributor should require assistance, Niakwa is available to answer your questions.

Please note Exhibit A, Section III, Item 6 of the Basic-2C License Agreement for all distributors:

"Licensee shall be responsible to support end users to whom it has distributed Niakwa Software."

Thank you for your cooperation and support of Basic-2C.

Basic-2C Leads from Niakwa!

One benefit of your Basic-2C Distributorship are the leads provided by Niakwa. We refer all end user inquiries who are not supported by a current Basic-2C Licensee to our current Basic-2C resellers in their geographical area or area of expertise.

These types of prospects can generate billable hours for program and data conversion from the 2200 to Basic-2C, hardware revenue and ongoing support revenue.

If your company is interested in servicing these types of leads, please fill out the form below and mail to:

Jennifer Mondy
Niakwa Management Services of America, Inc.
23600 N. Milwaukee Avenue
Mundelein, Illinois 60060

Lead Information

Contact Name

Company Name

Hardware expertise

Software expertise

Additional comments

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If there are others in your firm that should be receiving the Niakwa Newsletter, please forward this one or make them a copy. If you would like them to receive it on a regular basis, please fill out the following and return to Niakwa.

Name

Title

Company Name

Address

City, State, Zip

Country

Name

Title

Name

Title

Name

Title



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