NeXus Memo
NeXT User Society in Japan
NeXus Memo Vol. 1 Issue 4
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NeXus Memo:

The English version of the NeXus Memo (what you are reading) is formatted on a NeXT cube using WriteNow and is printed on the NeXT Laser printer.

The Japanese version is produced on a NeXT cube with a 330 MB hard disk using XNeXT, kterm, nemacs and JLaTex (ASCII version) and printed on a LaserWriter II NTX-J which has Kanji fonts. The equipment is networked by Ethernet and Appletalk bridged with FastPath4.

English version Editors: Mitsuhiro Kishimoto, Youichi Tanaka, Kaoru Ozawa, and Teruo Utsumi.

1. About NeXus

NeXus is a non-profit organization to facilitate collaboration among members and to collect and exchange NeXT and NeXT related information. The main topics we cover are:

- · Easy-to-use, superior human interface
- · Integrated network environment for interpersonal computing
- · Graphical and multimedia applications
- · Advanced object-oriented programming environment.

Our mother ship is a NeXT computer (NeXT station and cube). We, however, do not restrict our activities to NeXT. Other advanced high-tech computers are also of interest. We are the first and only NeXT user group in Japan and Asia. One of our principal interests is using Japanese on the NeXT computer. We have local activities in mainly the Tokyo area and our meetings are open to the public. We place our newsletters on worldwide ftp sites to distribute them freely. NeXus is not affiliated with any company. Enthusiastic volunteers support NeXus. We welcome your contributions.

NeXus Activities:

Meetings:

Monthly meetings are held on the 4th Wednesday of each month starting from 7:00 p.m. The meetings are open to the public. The guest fee is 1,000 Yen, including the latest NeXus Memo.

The NeXT meeting will be held on November 28 at the ASCII Corp. Kurokawa office.

Newsletter:

We publish a monthly NeXus Memo and quarterly Newsletter. NeXus Memo is distributed at every monthly meeting. The first Newsletter is expected to be published this fall.

Special Interest Groups:

We are planning to have several SIGs: Japanese, Mathematica, DSP, Graphics, Mach OS, Programming, Object-oriented Programming, Music, and others. If you are interested in any of these, please contact the executive staff.

Software Library:

We have a publicly distributable software library on MO disks and floppy disks.

Networks:

Currently we run mailing-list (NeXus-mail@sran125.sra.co.jp) on JUNET. We are also trying to create a NeXT news group called 'fj.sys.next'.

Other Activities:

We also have seminars and symposiums, contact and exchange information with overseas user groups, contact with NeXT Computer Inc., Canon Inc. (distributor in Japan), and other third party developers.

Executive Committee:

Kazunori Shioya:	President
Katsuhiro Ohashi:	Newsletter editor
Syuichi Tashiro:	Software library admin
Yoshio Yamada:	SIG coordinator
Mitsuhiro Kishimoto:	International liaison

Volunteers

Shouichi Hachiya, Kazuyuki Inoue, Taketosi Mori, Hironobu Suzuki, Norimasa Yamagichi, Kenichi Yanase, Youichi Tanaka, Kaoru Ozawa

Membership:

A one year NeXus membership includes four issues of NeXus Newsletter and 12 monthly NeXus Memos. You can pick them up at monthly meetings or, if you miss any meeting, you can receive them by snail mail. The first fiscal year started in October '90 and will end in September '91. Members joining NeXus in the middle of the fiscal year will get back issues of NeXus Memos and Newsletters. You also get our software library with only shipping and handling charges. There are four types of memberships: regular, student, overseas, and corporate. An application form for regular, student, and overseas membership can be found at the end of this memo.

2. Summary of the Fourth NeXus Meeting

Written by Norimasa Yamagishi and Katsuhiro Ohashi
Translated by Kaoru Ozawa

Date: November 28, 1990
Place: ASCII Software Development Center (Kurokawa), Computer Education Hall
Number of Attendants: 35

2.1. Software Library

We started MO disk circulation at last month's users meeting. Only NeXus 2 MO (Japanese programs) is still in the process of circulation because of its popularity. The others were already returned to the NeXus Secretariat. XNeXT, which is included in the present circulation, is not compatible with NeXT OS 2.0. Canon Inc. gave us the new version of XNeXT which runs under OS 2.0. The NTT version of JTeX received from Mr. Kitagawa of NTT will also be updated after the first circulation because of some deficiency and requires a special installation procedure.

XNeXT will be included in NeXus 3 MO and jTeX in NeXus 2. "NeXT Answer" and "Technical Note," received from NeXT Inc., will be included NeXus 3.

Q: Does the new version of XNeXT (Canon) run under OS 1.0?

A: It is supposed to.

Q: I found that NeXus 2 copied at Canon Software Inc. did not include wterm. What happened?

A: NeXus2 initially contained wterm, wnn, jserver, JLaTeX, and others. However, the NeXT cube at Canon Software Inc. had a directory called "NeXus2" before we started circulation. At the beginning of circulation Canon Software Inc. added files such as wterm from our MO to their directory "NeXus2." As a result, if you copied the "NeXus2" directory from Canon Software Inc. before circulation, you found that these Japanese programs were not copied.

2.2. NeXT Quarterly - by Mr. Yamagishi

NeXT Quarterly is a newsletter issued four times a year. This newsletter consists of new information obtained in SIGs or articles written by members. NeXus Memo, distributed at every monthly meeting, contains a summary of the previous meeting and new information. While NeXus Memo is temporary, NeXus Quarterly is a more formal publication includes information not containined in NeXus Memos. The contents of NeXus Quarterly may overlap those of NeXus Memo.

At present, the contents of the first NeXus Quarterly will be as follows:

(1) Connecting third party hard disks with NeXT

(2) How to install the ASCII version of jTeX, which is included in the circulated MO NeXus2

(3) Reporting on a international conference on object-oriented programming

(4) The newest trends of NeXT

(5) Topics relating to software distribution

(6) Introducing SIGs

We ask members to write articles voluntarily, on either hardware or software. Please send them to Mr. Ohashi (ohashi@sunrise.ocean.juice.or.jp) through e-mail or by snail mail. If you have a Nikkei MIX's account, you can send them to 'shioya'. If you have a NIFTY-Serve account, send them to 'PDG03047' (Yamada). The articles shown in fj.sys.misc will also be included in NeXus Quarterly pending permission from their authors. We also welcome your requests or comments on NeXT and NeXus.

Our future schedule is as follows:

By the end of November we will compile the drafts of articles. Then the editors' meeting will be held the first Wednesday of December. The second issue of NeXus Quarterly will be published in March. We plan to distribute the first issue of NeXus Quarterly on December 20, thus you should expect to receive it before the next NeXus meeting.

2.3. NeXT Answer and Technical Note - by Dr. Tashiro

NeXT Inc. in the U.S. is providing a unique user support service through networks. Let me explain how it works.

First, NeXT Inc. selects several universities and gives hardware and other technical information. These universities receive the information under some obligations. The universities' duty is to provide the information to users or answer the questions from them. Someone from each university is designated to be the NeXT Campus Consultant. NeXT Inc. has established a system in which the usual questions from end users can be answered locally without inquiring directly to NeXT Inc.

One key document of information is "NeXT Answer" (about 30 MB uncompressed). This is a database of Q&A from users. By registering it into digital librarian (you should note that it may take more than one hour just to make its index), you can get answers by searching it. At NeXT Inc., there are engineers monitoring the news system and responding to questions. They compile these Q&As as "NeXT Answer." When I asked one question on trial, I was surprised that an answer returned immediately.

"NeXT Answer" is located at three universities ftp sites in United States, which anyone can freely access. The personnel of NeXT Inc. gave us a ready consent to re-distribute freely in Japan. There is "Technical Note" which is a re-edited and re-organizeed version of "NeXT Answer." The updates to "Technical Note" are made, so far, on an irregular basis.

In Japan, both "NeXT Answer" and "Technical Note" are located on the ftp machine at ETL (etlport.etl.go.jp <192.31.197.99>). Anyone who has linked with WIDE Network can obtain the latest information buy accessing the above ftp machine. "NeXT Answer" and "Technical Note" are also available from the software copying service at Canon Inc. and Canon Software Inc. or PDS circulation by NeXus.

2.4. The Discussion with The NeXT Inc. Engineer - by Mr. Hachiya

Mr. James Higa (who managed the development of KanjiTalk at Apple Computer, Japan), Mr. Itoda, and Mr.

Hosoi are in charge of Asian user support of NeXT Inc. Several members of the NeXus Executive Committee had a chance to talk with Mr. Itoda. We also had another discussion with him at the NeXT show. We report the main points below.

(1) Interface Builder

NeXT Inc. considers this to be very good software. Its feature is that a developer can design the user interface first, then write a program. The new revision in OS 2.0 has been extended to add custom objects into the IB's pallet window. Various object libraries will be provided from third parties.

(2) Localization for Japanese

Although we cannot disclose many points on localization because of the restraint by the agreement with NeXT Inc., we will report what can be disclosed:

a. If you use text objects correctly, it is relatively easy to develop applications in Japanese.

b. NeXT Inc. would like to hear from users to what extent localization for Japanese is required.

c. NeXT Inc. is considering the support of a kana keyboard.

d. With respect to a front-end processor (FEP) for kanji conversion, NeXT Inc. disclosed the interface to and negotiated with several vendors to promote the use of the FEP. Though the Canon FEP will be bundled as a standard feature, you will be able to use your favorite FEP.

(3) User Support

NeXT Inc. is seeking to become the world's No. 1 computer maker, and No. 1 in user support. NeXT Inc. would like to answer inquiries through networks. Please give NeXT Inc. your opinions about how to best provide user support. However, it is said that the contract provides that only Canon Inc. can perform user support in Japan.

(4) Others

At present each employee of NeXT Inc. has one NeXT and his or her own e-mail address and works in a network environment. Since NeXT Inc. connects with IP, mail or files can be transferred on a real-time basis. Though in the U.S. such an environment can be used very well, it is difficult to do the same thing in Japan. IP networks have just begun to be widely used. Service through networks is not used in Japan. Though there are many barriers to network service in Japan, we look forward to future developments.

The delivery of 68040 machines such as NeXTstation has been substantially delayed because the supply of the 68040 chip is tight. This is probably because Motorola is now focusing on its RISC chip (88000). In Japan, we want to deliver the Release 2.0 software before hardware comes. We hear that if you order NeXT during December, Improv, the new generation spreadsheet by Lotus Development Corp., is bundled.

Note: We plan to give the details of the above discussion as a round-table talk in NeXus Quarterly #2 to be issued in March.

2.5. Bundling of Sybase - by Mr. Aoyama

Mr. Aoyama, one of the participants of the meeting, explained that it is not likely that Sybase will be bundled with NeXT OS 2.0:

"I (Mr. Aoyama) come to Tokyo from Akita every month in order to attend NeXus meetings. I work for a consulting company called System Architect, and am engaged in the development of a medical clinic investigation system. For this purpose, I need database software. Since acquiring a NeXT last year, I have been using the bundled Sybase, though it is said that Sybase will not be bundled after OS 2.0.

Though it is very little known, the software license agreement with Sybase provides that the use of the bundled Sybase is not permitted on network systems having more than five machines (both server and client), even with NeXT OS 1.0. If you use Sybase with more than 5 machines, you have to make an agreement with Nihon Time Share (NTS), the authorized distributor in Japan and be supported by NTS. In this case, the regular price is more that 3 million Yen for the server. The price for clients are between 50,000 and 60,000 Yen. In addition, a maintenance fee is required (more than 600,000 Yen per year).

When you look at the header file of Sybase, you will find that it assures Sybase can run under 4.2 BSD instead of 4.3 BSD. We assume that NTS is now testing compatibility under OS 2.0. With OS 2.0, if you try to use Sybase, even with less than five machines, you need to obtain a program and license from NTS.

2.6. The Impression of New NeXT at Data Show - by Dr. Tashiro

I found that the speed of NeXT Dimension was relatively slow when I tried text scrolling or window dragging. In fact, the color NeXTstation was faster than NeXT dimension.

However, I heard that each demo version of NeXT Dimension, of which only SEVEN units exist in the world, has a different versions of hardware and software. As a result of these differences of versions, each machine has substantially different performance. I heard that the performance of commercial versions will be improved.

It seemed that the performance of monochrome version NeXTstation was substantially improved.

InterfaceBuilder was greatly modified and improved. It became very easy to build a custom object. With this feature, we can easily reuse the software module. I expect that custom objects created with InterfaceBuilder will be distributed as independent products in the future.

3. NextStep on PowerStation

Written by Yoshio Yamada
Translated by Mitsuhiro Kishimoto

3.1. NextStep on the IBM RS/6000 (PowerStation): My Experiences - Part I -

This is a brief explanation of my trial use of a beta-version NextStep on a RS/6000. The machine I used was a model 320 (27.5 MIPS), the low end of the RS/6000 series. It had a 16 MB memory and 240 MB hard disk. NextStep was a beta-version and the hardware configuration was not enough powerful. Though I could not sufficiently test the software, the following are my first impressions.

You can use an AIX window and NextStep on the same graphic display with the HFT (High Function Terminal) feature. ALT + ACT keys switch the screen. It is very convenient but 16 MB of memory is not enough. NextStep is limited to use by a single user and only on the graphics console.

It is a pity that you can use only the two two-dimensional graphic boards (color and B&W) with NextStep. The other two three-dimensional graphic boards can not be used.

The current version is a port of NextStep 1.0. NeXT Computer Inc., as well as IBM Corp., will introduce NextStep 2.0. There has been no formal release announcement of the current version. I strongly hope 2.0 will support three-dimensional graphic boards and color support.

The top icon of the icon dock is the IBM logo instead of the NeXT logo.

Bundled Applications are a subset of NeXT's: Edit, Terminal, InterfaceBuilder in NextApps, alice, breakapp, calc, clock, compositelab, draw lines, stopwatch, tiffview, yap in NextDeveloper/demo.

The beta-version does not have Digital-Librarian nor the Webster dictionary and the last press release included neither of them. The golden will also not have them. AIX has a similar program called Info-explorer. I don't think they will add NextStep documentation to the Info-explorer. I referred to NeXT's reference manual for Appkit class library. As you know, there is no support of the sound and music kits.

3.2. NextStep on the IBM RS/6000: My Experiences - Part II -

This time I used a model 530 (32.5 MIPS) which has 32 MB of memory and a 710 MB hard disk. Model 530 solves all the problems I had with the model 320. Thirty-two MB memory is necessary for convenient use of AIX window and NextStep. I do not know the exact figure of drawing speed, but I felt it was smooth even with the slowest graphic board.

NeXT's NIB file format is completely compatible with RS's. You can copy a NIB file from NeXT to RS and open IB to use it. Some fonts revert to default settings due to some incompatibility with RN's envirnoment.

To use a application made by Interface Builder you need to recompile after re-making the Makefile using Project Inspector. Proj file is used without change. I didn't test the compatibility of PSWRAP. Some demonstration programs, however, show that they are compatible.

Two drawbacks of RS's NextStep are:

(1) RS has only Terminal applications, which have no scroll bar. NeXT has not only the Terminal but also a Shell application, which has scroll bars. So RSs make use Terminal to make user's application. The Terminal has a small fixed size window. If you re-size its window, the message will be disabled. It makes debugging too hard. The Shell application is essential for debugging. One other problem is in changing the font size of Terminal's window. There is no way I know of to change this. The default font is also too small to read.

(2) Directory Browser is not stable. Multiple files operation: copy or move or delete sometimes falls into infinite loops. Make operation also may not complete.

I used a beta-version of NextStep. There is no problem making simple applications. My personal opinion is that IBM Corp. will concentrate on a 2.0 release instead of fixing of the problems in the current version.

Even if you bought PowerStation for another purpose, it is worth your while to use NextStep even if it cannot use Japanese. You should consider buying NextStep as a option software for you NextStep.

I certainly hope that NeXT's Japanese NextStep will come earlier than IBM's.

A. NeXus Membership Application

Welcome to NeXus! Please complete the following application.

1. Name :____

2. Address:____

City:_________________________ State: __________ ZIP CODE:________

Country: __________________

3. Method of contact (please prioritize, 1 = highest):

( ) Internet:__________________( ) CompuServe:________________

( ) Nikkei Mix:________________( ) Fido Net:____________________

( ) Snail Mail:_________________( ) Facsimile:___________________

( ) other: _____________________

4. Membership type:

( ) Regular 7,500 Yen/Year, ( ) Student 4,000 Yen/Year

( ) overseas 10,000 Yen/Year (air mail delivery, include Students)

5. Method of payment:

( ) Pay dues to NeXT User Group, Fuji Bank Yotsuya branch (241)

Saving account:1642210

NeXT User Group, 4-4-2 Ebara, Shinagawa-Ku, Tokyo 142 (office address needed for deposit)

( ) Pay at the NeXus user meeting.

6. Do you have a NeXT?

( ) Home ( ) Office ( ) Do not own,

Model:________ Hard disk:____ MB, RAM: ____ MB, Printer: ____________

Daily applications: _____________________________________

7. What other computers do you use besides NeXT?

____

8. What would you like to do in NeXus?

SIG: ____

Volunteer work: ____

9. How can we improve the user group ?

10. Comments and Suggestions: