

This is the Computers in Diplomacy zine published by Mark S. Keller, 9536 Shumway Drive, Orangevale, CA 95662. Phone: (916) 988-7224
Subs are on a sub balance basis. Issue price is normally \$.30.

This zine will attempt to be the source of information about the use of computers in Diplomacy activities. It will be publishing letters, articles, and programs. I'll also be trying to collect information on what hardware and software each of you has.

No programs this time but I may have one or two of general interest by next time. I'll lead off with what will have to pass as an article this time.

I have recently purchased a Commodore 64 computer (just before the price dropped of course). It is now available in town for \$190. The disk drive is going for \$220. Owning the 64 has been a very positive and negative experience. The one I have now is my third. The last two were defective and I now have a small problem with this one. The best advice I can give for those who buy 64's, is to get local dealer support in case you get a lemon. On the positive side, the 64 is the best computer for the money. It has great graphics, excellent sound, 64K RAM, good keyboard, a good BASIC, and a lot of available inexpensive software.

[from Bill Quinn] I am glad to see that someone is picking up where Beyerlein's *California Reports* left off. If you haven't read any of his issues I may be able to find mine and I'll send you copies.

My current project is compiling a data base of all reported games. From this individuals can request information about individual games, players, or GM's. Currently the data includes all of E52-55 and I am offering print outs on three players for \$1.00.

The data was broken down into 92 string variables based on the longest game with the most number of players. I decided on allowing five players and five results of each player for each country. Also five string variables were allowed for a zine-GM entry. Additional string variables were made for the game #, country name, and the supply center chart for the countries.

However by popular demand the program was modified to allow access by GM. This resulted in an additional nine string variables.

As you can see by the enclosed program I am not too adept at computer science so any suggestion for improvement is welcome.

[I have all of the issues of CR, thanks anyway. I'm enclosing some comments on Bill's program directly to him. If there is enough interest I'll print Bill's program. In case you want a profile done, Bill's address is: Bill Quinn, 1225 Ridgecrest, Orlando, FL 32806]

[from Michael Nelson (excepts)] ... Do you run postal games? What kind of programs (computer) do you print? ...

[I won't be running any games in this zine but do run games in my other zine, *Hai! Jikai!*. I'll print any program, that I write or that is given to me to publish, that is related to the Diplomacy hobby. What would my subbers like to see?]

Systems section:

Bill Quinn: Atari 800 48K w/ Disk, Tape, & Printer

Michael Nelson: Color Computer w/ Disk & Printer

Jim Bumpas: Atari 800 48K w/ Disk, Tape, & Printer

Bob Olsen: Atari 400 w/ Disk, Tape, & Printer

Steve Langley: CPM w/ Disk & Printer

Evans Givan: C-64 w/ Disk, Tape, & Printer

MARK KELLER
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6/17/82

THE TWO FACES OF TOMORROW

Dear Mark,

I heard about your 'zine in Murd'ring Ministers, and it sounds interesting. Ron Brown says that you're involved with home computers and Diplomacy, and so am I. I put out a small 'zine -- almost exclusively game reports -- on my Franklin (Apple work-alike), and I've been fooling around with some ideas on an automated way of tracking the games: from move entry through adjudication and on to printout and recordkeeping. In fact, I have written the adjudication program, but unfortunately it is on my "big" machine at work. Actually, it almost works -- there's only a small bug left that comes up in some of the long convoy orders -- you know how it is, there's always one more bug to fix.

Anyway, I don't see any reason why all the Diplomacy publishers who are computer hackers should have to reinvent the wheel. I know that Billy Highfield, and "Judy Winsome," and probably many others, have access to a pc (not "PC"), and it seems to me that we in the hobby should be able to set up some sort of common information pool about "automated Diplomacy." I know, too, that Flying Buffalo is said to have a commercially available Dip. Adjudicator, but I have a moral aversion to buying programs that I have already written for myself.

I'm enclosing a SASE for a sample copy of T2FOT (sounds like a Star Wars 'droid), and I'll be interested to hear your thoughts on the subject.

Regards,



BILL PLACEK
2157 GILBRIDE ROAD
MARTINSVILLE, NJ 08836

11 Jun 83

Dear Mark,

I'm enclosing a check for \$5 to maintain a sub balance to both Hai Jakai and Two Faces of Tomorrow. At present, I don't have a computer, but I am a programmer and I'm ~~busin~~ busily saving my cash in hopes of entering the computer market before too long. I do have a few ideas for a Diplomacy program, some ~~of~~ of them based on the computer game "Adventure". The way that works is like this. Each area has a number. In a file you have a record for each area. The area number comes first. Then you put the numbers of all ~~adjas~~ adjacent areas. At the end of the string you put a zero. In effect this gives the computer a map that it can work with. The main problem with ~~it~~ that is the convoy. It isn't really that easy to come up with a way to describe a convoy to the machine. I believe that Flying Buffalo, Inc.; P. O. Box 1467; Scottsdale, AZ 85252-1467, has a computer adjudication program. They were selling copies a while ago but I don't know if that's still true.

Best,

Ben Schilling

10 May 83

RONALD JAMES BROWN
1200 SUMMERVILLE AVE.
OTTAWA, ONTARIO
CANADA K1Z 5G4

Dear Mark,

THE TWO FACES OF TOMORROW set me to thinking, so I decided to see if I could write a program to adjudicate Diplomacy games. Thought I'd share my experience with you--and your readers.

I have, at this point, reams of paper covered with flow-charting. I decided that unless the program can check the validity and legality of orders it would be too prone to error. I didn't want to have anything left to operator intervention. I wanted to have a program which would call up the game records, accept new orders, then print out the adjudication; keep track of supply centres, season, etc.

At this point, I conclude it will take at least 800 lines of coding, plus several files which will have to be called up. In other words, it would require a minimum of 40 - 45 K of RAM just to run the program. Unless my calculations are a way off, it would be impossible to run on many home computers.

There are two ways around this. One is to write the program in a language which requires fewer lines of code than Basic. However, most home computers have only a Basic compiler. The other solution is to break the program up into pieces and have a master program which will call up the parts of the program which are needed ("chaining").

Another solution would be to leave out the sections which check for order validity, calculating support strength, etc. and leave all that to the operator. The trouble is, if you do that, you may as well do the whole adjudication yourself.

I believe I mentioned in an earlier letter that if I had a home computer, the way I'd use it would be to store orders, entered as received, call them up on the deadline and do the adjudication via an editor, then print that. I've concluded that unless you have a very large home computer ("large" is relative), that is the only way to proceed. If you do have a computer with, say, 256K of RAM, then it may be worth it to write an adjudication program. In such a case, one would be able to run as many games as you could lick envelopes and stamps for. (I assume addressing would be done on such a computer.)

I have heard of hobbierst trying to write adjudication programs, but they had too many bugs and problems. The reason is: they didn't think of everything; and their computers were not big enough to handle all possibilities.

I'll probably continue to pick away at the flow-charts in my idle moments, but that's about as far as I'll take it for now. It's not an impossible task, but it's much bigger and more complex problem than the results merit.

Look forward to more TTFOT. Please continue to send them and we'll work out mutual subs.

Best wishes,



25 Apr 83

RONALD JAMES BROWN
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Dear Mark,

11-301
Thanks for TFOF. Seeing as I don't have a home computer, I didn't fill out your form. However, hope to get one some day. I'd make the same uses of it as you (addresses, word processing). However, I think it's pointless to write a program to adjudicate Diplomacy. There are some things that humans can do more efficiently than machines--and that's one.

How I'd like to apply this to store orders as I receive them from players, with a sort program so that on the deadline I could call up a game and have the latest orders displayed (in order, etc). Then, using an editor, I could do the adjudication right on the screen and get a printout.

Thanks for the Bourse program. Of course, my Bourse rules are different, but, with the basic (pun!) idea you gave, I'm sure it would save me time in writing my own program--some day.

I've enjoyed using a Xerox 860 word processor lately (see this issue). I find I can write much faster on it than on a typewriter. Mainly because if I don't like where a paragraph is headed, I can just delete it--and don't have to start over. Corrections are much simpler too. I've been taking printouts home, editing them, then going back to make the corrections. That's a lot easier than retyping paragraphs or trying to paste over corrections. I'd also like to use it for address labels, but will wait to see what kind of schedules I'll have and if I can continue to get access to it--as I don't want to become dependant on it at the moment.

Anyhow, I would like to get both HJ! and TFOF. Possibly a trade or mutual sub?

Best wishes, 

[Comments on the preceding 4 letters: I too have thought about a dip adjudicating program. It hasn't been very high on my priorities though. I can handle my current adjudicating by hand very easily (including triple checking). I think computers with a decent amount of memory (48K?) ought to be able to handle it. There are a number of things you could do to make it easier for the program. You could always use the same abbr. Set up tables of legal army and fleet moves without convoys. Then handle convoys programatically (with logic like this?). Look for any fleets that are ordered to convoy that move. Do the fleets ordered to convoy provide a route for that move (probably using a special convoy table). Was any fleet ordered to convoy that unit dislodged? If so present the situation to the GM for his approval or denial of the convoy (whether the convoy was successful would depend on how a particular GM adjudicates convoys).

One of the points being, you could save a lot of complicated code by making the GM decide any really oddball situations that come up.

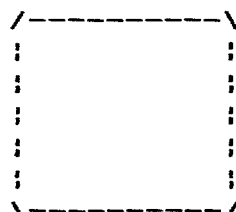
Although I doubt I'll be writing an adjudication program soon, I would like to have one if someone else gets around to writing it first. If anyone does send one, let me know if I can publish it here.]

Issue number three will be out whenever I get enough material or in October, whichever comes first. Keep those letters coming and I could really use some articles and programs for publication.

Notes, just for you:

=====TF 6=====

Two Faces of Tomorrow
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TO: Xenogogic Trade
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First Class Mail

First Class Mail