

# GRAPHIC EXCHANGE

is published in Canada by  
Brill Communications Inc.  
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Graphic Exchange is published six times per year and is distributed free in Canada to 15,000 qualified professionals in the graphic communications and graphic arts fields.



General unqualified subscriptions in Canada:

1 year CDN\$39.00,

2 years CDN\$69.00 (GST inclusive).

Subscriptions to the U.S. and outside North America:

1 yr US\$49.00, 2 yrs US\$79.00.

Mailed in Canada under Canadian Publications Mail  
Product Sales Agreement No. 175374

## PRODUCTION NOTES

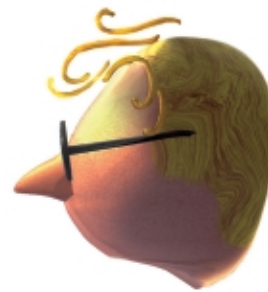
FILM OUTPUT  
The Lino Bureau

PRINTING  
Image Plus Graphics

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## PUBLISHER'S NOTES

# Technology stories your grandfather never told you



**J**OHNN PENNIE WAS A CANADIAN BOY WITH A DREAM. HE KNEW WITHOUT A SHADOW OF A DOUBT that there was a big, bright future in computer graphics, and he was determined to be part of the big boom when it happened.

In 1982 he started a company called Omnibus. By 1984, Pennie had Omnibus steam-rolling; slick annual reports and state-of-the-art computer animation studios in Toronto and Los Angeles made it easy for Pennie to dazzle heavyweight investors with high tech glitz and the promise of having a piece of the digital future. In Canada, Pennie could point at the whirling logos of CTV and CBC on any television set to demonstrate how his company was on the leading edge of the industry.

But Pennie still wasn't satisfied. His ultimate goal was to own the computer graphics industry — all of it. This was the 80s — the Me decade, the decade of big bucks, and bigger bucks always just around the corner.

In 1986, Pennie landed a *really* big sugar daddy, in the form of the Royal Bank. He had a megaplan, and now he was ready to go into action — south of the border.

The two largest computer graphics companies in the United States at that time were Digital Productions and Robert Abel & Associates Inc. In June, 1986, backed by various investors and \$6 million of the bank's money, Omnibus swallowed Digital. In October, it dropped \$7.3 million to take over Abel & Associates. Pennie could see his dream starting to unfold. Omnibus now controlled the North American computer graphics industry (and had a pair of \$13 million Cray supercomputers to prove it). Unfortunately, the founders and management of these two companies didn't share Pennie's grandiose vision, and they got out fast.

The dream didn't last long. By March, 1987, Omnibus was sinking under the weight of \$30 million in debt and in default on its loan agreements; in May it was in bankruptcy, leaving the American computer graphics industry in ruins. Omnibus was omnibust, and the cream of the continent's digital animators were out on the street.

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Such is the nature of influence. One individual's actions can alter the course of a whole industry. In the case of John Pennie, his overzealous attempt to dominate an industry wound up shattering it. Yet the demise of Omnibus spawned a host of smaller, more aggressive companies throughout the U.S. and Canada (one of which is Toronto's Side Effects Software) and the computer graphics industry successfully regenerated itself with new technologies and new visions to become what it is today.

For those of you who read this magazine regularly, this issue will be an obvious departure from our usual eclectic mix of technology-related articles and reviews on design, photography, publishing and printing.

Since it's a new century (I will abstain from using the word "millennium"), we thought it might be a good time to stop and take a look back at where we've been and who contributed to bringing us to where we are.

This certainly doesn't mean that the issue is devoid of current topics. Peter Dudar provides a lengthy review of Macromedia's new *Dreamweaver 3 Fireworks 3* web design package on page 13 which gives us a good idea how software is gravitating more and more toward fully integrated creative solutions. On page 18 Bob Connolly takes a quick look at *LiveStage*, Vancouver-based Totally Hip Software's new entry into the QuickTime authoring market, and on page 20 Shane Steinman runs the Tektronix Phase 840 Designer Edition color printer through its paces.

But starting on page 24, the rest of this issue is devoted to an examination of the people and events which shaped the graphics industry as we know it today.

CONTINUED



ABOUT THE COVER  
**IN THE FUTURE, HISTORY WILL BE  
A THING OF THE PAST**

by Ron Giddings

Forget about Rock 'n' Roll Heaven.

What about a big party in the sky for all those guys who basically created the graphics world we live in. Photography, halftone printing, painting, digital imaging?

When I started doing this issue's cover, I immediately thought of Raphael's "School of Athens" of 1509, with Plato and Socrates and other pagan heroes walking in some Renaissance Galleria. I imagined moving back further with my time camera and taking in the next gallery...the 1000's. Socrates and Plato are now in the background and we have entered the next millennium.

I recognized that the arches in Raphael's fresco were very much like those of the great painting gallery at Versailles. I dug out photos I had taken there and proceeded to include a giant fractal floor (courtesy KPT5) and some steps done in Ray Dream. Next, I had to find bodies.

We had already accumulated quite a group of head-shots for this issue, but full figures had to come from paintings. Rubens, Van Dyck, Watteau, David, Fantin-Latour, Boldini, Van Eyck and others had figures 'photographically' realistic enough to blend our head photos with. It took the next month, off and on, to arrange, resize, and blend these characters into a believable (read: NOT like Sergeant Pepper's) group. Reflections were created to make the floor look like shiny marble, and some figures had to be reshaded to match some imaginary room light. Heads were changed, people cut out, added and replaced. Magritte is represented solely by a painting; Escher, by a reflection. The last figure added to the group was that nice French gentleman, Monsieur Bézier, the creator of the Bézier curve that each and every one of us uses. Unfortunately M. Bézier just left us November 25, 1999.

Grouping became interesting, because it created some intimacy between the characters. My personal favorite little bit is Manet painting George Eastman's portrait.

I tried to get as many influential artists as possible into this crowded room (there are 22), and I know there are dozens more that you will feel are missing, but, you know, after all is said and done, will we ever really know how many people there are to honour?

RETROSPECTIVE: THE GRAPHICS INDUSTRY — EVOLUTION AND REVOLUTION catalogues our choices for The 100 Most Influential Graphics People of all time. It's an opportunity to acknowledge the individuals who created and enabled the technologies, machinery and business models which carry us forward into the 21st century. They're spread across the fields of printing, publishing, art, design, color science, and digital and desktop technologies.

And why should we care?

Let me simply say that by gaining a broader insight into the many faces of the graphics industry, maybe we can get a better understanding of how all those elements will be more tightly integrated in the digitally connected business world of tomorrow.

The graphics business is no longer a unidirectional linear process. It may start with a creative concept and proceed in a linear fashion to a press; it may begin with a printed piece and work back to the creation of a web page; or it may spread out from the middle, from a library of existing digital text and graphics which is converted to multiple media — print, the web, billboards, coffee mugs...the choices are endless.

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Back in the early 1980s, Sandy and Leonard were a happy couple, just married and in love.

Both were graduate students at Stanford University, both assigned to manage the computer labs full of computers used by the school's science and engineering students.

The hours were long. Working in separate buildings, they grew frustrated at their inability to send messages back and forth to each other. Although Stanford was connected to the ARPANET, these were the days when, in order to send to another network, individual local networks had to transmit up to the central net and through the interface message processor (IMP) for their region, which would distribute the data traffic.

Sandy and Leonard, though only buildings apart, were on separate local area networks. They decided this was crazy, and one day started figuring out how to adapt the idea of the expensive IMPs to their purposes: a small inexpensive local data traffic manager.

The idea worked. So Leonard Bosack and Sandy Loerner, with no business experience, gambling that they could market their invention, started a new company. They called the device a router.

And the name they picked for the company was Cisco Systems, now the largest supplier of routers and digital switching equipment in the world.

True story. My grandfather told me. \*