



Editor's note: This is the second installment of a two-part series examining the CD-ROM versions of major magazines. In the last issue, the author looked at TIME and Money magazines.

Two of the most popular print magazines are also likely to top the sales chart in the CD-ROM magazine league. They follow a different "CD-ROMization" strategy, but both may work out well.

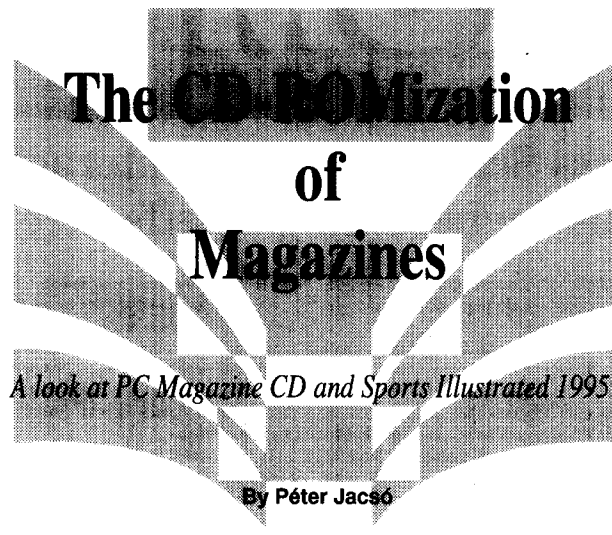
I can hardly imagine a better candidate for a CD-ROM magazine than *PC Magazine*, which is by far the most widely used and respected periodical of the microcomputer industry. By virtue of its subject coverage and readership, it is a natural for CD-ROM. *Sports Illustrated* also seems to be an easy-to-sell title on CD-ROM. Though it ranks only 14th on the list of magazines with the highest circulation, a much larger percentage of its readership is likely to own a personal computer equipped with a CD-ROM drive than that of *Modern Maturity*, *Good Housekeeping*, or *Ladies Home Journal*, to name a few of the top 10 print magazines.

PC Magazine CD

By the time you read this, the first issue of volume three will be available. It may be surprising, but the first issue was published in 1993 followed by four issues in 1994—without much advertisement and publicity. It was primarily pitched, sold, and given away at large computer shows.

Ziff-Davis, the publisher, was obviously testing the waters and launched a serious subscription campaign only in November, 1994 with an impressively rich issue. A casual look at the sleeve of that CD-ROM issue (Figure 1)—very similar to the cover page of the print issue that hit the newsstand simultaneously—may give you the impression that PC Magazine CD is the CD-ROM counterpart of a single issue of *PC Magazine*. But there is much more than meets the eye.

While the CD-ROM edition carried all the feature stories of that print issue, be-



ing a quarterly publication it also offered feature stories from other issues (*PC Magazine's* Guide to the Internet, Captivated Audience) and then some (Figure 2). While the articles are obviously easier to read and the pictures, charts, and tables are of far better quality in print than on the average monitor, the CD-ROM version offers three impressive extra features:

Programs for downloading:

There are valuable benchmark, utility, and communications programs that can be copied onto your hard disk for instant gratification. While some can be requested from Ziff-Davis for free and some can be downloaded from Ziffnet, the size of the benchmark programs (30 Mbytes for the hard disk installation of the lean version of *Winstone '95*, for example) rule out anything but CD-ROM distribution.

Enhanced software reviews:

The print editions carry excellent in-depth reviews of hardware and software products, but the software reviews begged

for a different kind of illustration. The CD-ROM edition fits the bill. It includes animated screen demos of the programs compared. Instead of one or two static screen shots, you can play back the dynamic series of actions that occur on the screen while listening to the comments of the reviewer. Ziff-Davis uses the impressively simple and inexpensive Lotus ScreenCam program that acts as a camera in capturing the mouse movements, the screen actions, and the narration.

These immensely functional and space-consuming animations make it even more annoying that the publisher wasted precious storage space for low quality and dysfunctional video clips. It makes no sense to use video to illustrate the enigmatic versus clear labeling of ports or the cable jungle within the box. Concerning the latter, it is not only unnecessary but amateurish when a video shows the hand of a user with a bracelet on her wrist poking around deep in the box to insert a circuit board in a slot. It reminded me of Evita Peron hugging ba-

bies yet terrified by the thought that they might soil her clothes any moment.

Past issues accessible:

PC Magazine CD also includes the full text of the issues of the magazine from the past 12 months as a fully searchable database. It is a goldmine of information, particularly as the search engine for this database is CD Answer, one of the best text retrieval programs.

PC Magazine CD also offers the underlying spreadsheets and/or databases for the superb comparative charts and tables of product evaluations so the user can download and customize them by adding the parameters for additional products and removing those that are of no interest.

The free utility programs of every issue of the past 12 months are also available both in compiled and source code form. This is a subset of the awesome Computer Library database that deserves its own in-depth review in an upcoming issue of *Link-Up*. Unfortunately, the database does not include the current issues covered by PC Magazine CD, whose own software capabilities are extremely limited. There are no search and print options let alone copying or downloading capabilities, so the spreadsheets for the 1995 Buyers' Guide and for the article about graphic accelerators can only be looked at but not searched, copied, or printed. Neither can the text be searched, printed, or copied. I think that implementation of these functions would not cannibalize the print editions.

Even with these limitations, this is an excellent CD-ROM product that is worth its \$50 yearly subscription price for four issues.

Sports Illustrated 1995

Sports Illustrated is not a newcomer to the CD-ROM market either. The first one was a disappointment in 1993, but StarPress took over the CD-ROM edition in 1994 and added a very good search interface to the much coveted content. The 1995 edition (which I previewed in its pre-release version) has yet another interface, but it is even easier and more intuitive than

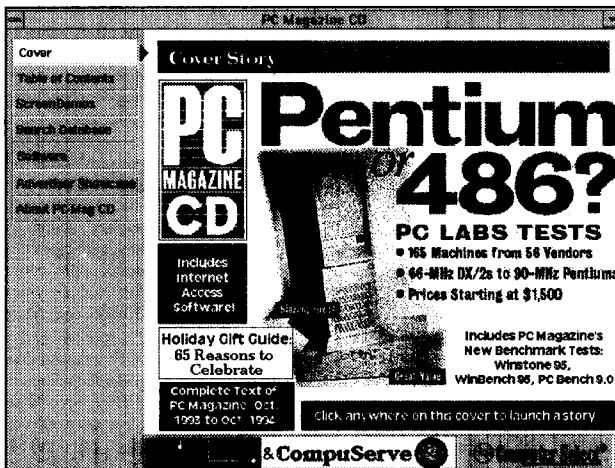


Figure 1

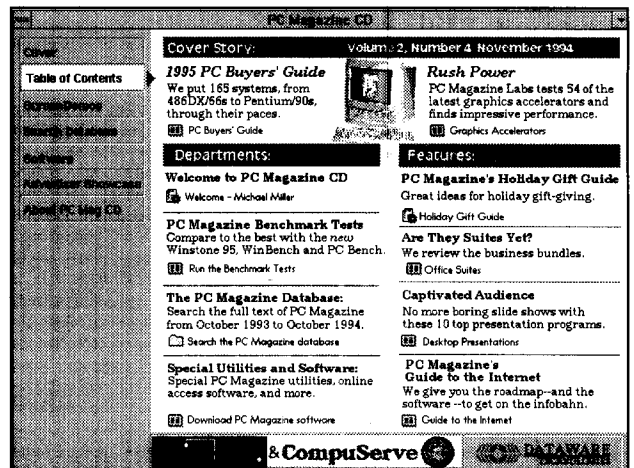


Figure 2



Driving in The West
by The Team

CD Charles and the Sam don't mind being overbooked in the early season. They're excited that the new going is what matters.

PREMIER SUN FURNITURE CEO BARTLEY says that he is, "completely happy to be in the middle of a hot market. My company has customers and they can't get up the stairs for their money. Added to explain why he had produced a perfect 13-point performance in a victory over the previous season's performance. Bartley replied, "You saw a 13-

Pro basketball is one of the 18 most popular sports—professional and amateur—covered in the new CD-ROM version of Sports Illustrated.

The Trivia Quiz is fun for a time to test your knowledge, and the summaries for the correct answers are informative. It is, however, a very imbalanced collection of trivia questions. For example, for tennis there is only a single quiz question while for basketball there are 100.

If the search capabilities are reinstated and the print anomalies are corrected, this database can remain an essential electronic reference source for sports fans.

We are likely to see many other magazines on CD-ROM in an even more sophisticated implementation. The 1994 is-

sues of *CD-ROM World* (except for the last two), for example, are available on CD-ROM in image format replicating the typography and the layout of the original and offering a search engine (very slow and simplistic) to find a particular word within a monthly issue. *PC Computing* has announced a quarterly CD-ROM version of the magazine likely to be out by the first quarter of 1995 for the same price as *PC Magazine CD*.

Others may not be far behind with CD-ROMization.

the one before.

You may choose one of the following components: the individual issues of *Sports Illustrated*, the Almanac, the Year in Review, the Media Gallery, or the Trivia Quiz.

The Almanac offers a choice of the 18 most popular sports. Within each of these there are further choices to look up individual and team statistics (if applicable), records by categories (e.g., highest career score, most steals, or rebounds in basketball), or chronology of major events, such as the Grand Slam tournaments in tennis from the quarter finals to the finals for the past 20-some years. Unmistakable menus lead you through the choices, clicking on the option button chosen. The charts are very well presented on the screen.


The Year in Review component is a series of screens to be read sequentially and where all the navigation needed is well served by the Next and Previous buttons. The flagship component of this title is the component that includes the almost 50 issues from October 1993 to September 1994 of *Sports Illustrated*. First you have to choose the month and then the issue, each of which is represented by the cover photo. Within a single issue the table of contents pages are shown. Clicking on a title will open the article on the right side, keeping the cover photo on the left. It would be nice if the user had an option to overlap the cover photo and display the text on the entire screen.

What is badly missing from the 1995 beta version is the ability to search for a word or a combination of words in any of the issues. This essential feature was available in the 1994 edition, and its omission is a big disservice. It is not possible to find, for example, all the articles that mention David Robinson or Pete Sampras, a feature that is taken for granted in such databases.

The photos are of very good quality and the typography of the text is pleasant on the screen. The Media Gallery is a nicely implemented tool to select one of the 50 videos or 600 pictures that are classified by the 18 sports categories. The pictures are of the quality that you would expect from the award-winning photographers of *Sports Illustrated*. The videos definitely require a double-speed drive for smooth playback of QuickTime videos. StarPress is commended for bundling version 2.0 of the runtime version of QuickTime, but on a single-speed drive even this version cannot help the jerkiness and audio drops of the video flicks.

AROUND AMERICA. AROUND THE WORLD.

THE MOST RELIABLE PUBLIC COMPANY INFORMATION.



WHEN THE NAME IS MOODY'S, YOU EXPECT THE BEST.

NOW, MOODY'S HELPS YOU NAVIGATE THE WORLD OF BUSINESS AND FINANCIAL INFORMATION MORE EFFECTIVELY WITH THE MOST COMPREHENSIVE AND ACCURATE DATABASES AVAILABLE ANYWHERE.

**Moody's
Company
Data™**

provides unparalleled insight into United States corporations, with authoritative details on over 10,000 NYSE, AMEX, Nasdaq-NMS, Nasdaq and OTC public companies.




**Moody's
Company
Data™
with
EDGAR**

offers you the comprehensive Moody's Company Data file with fully integrated access to complete SEC electronic documents in a value-based CD-ROM format.

**Moody's
International
Company
Data™**

brings you the world on disc with full descriptions and "as-reported" financials in native currencies on 8,000 non-U.S.-based companies in over 100 countries.


Now with Annual Reports and other Source Documents.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION & FREE DEMONSTRATION DISKS, CALL MOODY'S CUSTOMER SERVICE REPRESENTATIVES IN USA AT 1-800-342-5647, EXT. 0546 OR...

THE NEW MOODY'S INFO-FAX 24-HR. SERVICE: 1-800-771-7377 (OUTSIDE NORTH AMERICA 212-553-4800)	EXT. 300 COMPANY DATA/EDGAR INFO. EXT. 302 COMPANY DATA INFO. EXT. 310 INTL. COMPANY DATA INFO. EXT. 311 ALL DEMO. DISKS
--	---

PLUS EXT. NUMBER



Moody's Investors Service
99 CHURCH STREET, NEW YORK, NY 10007 212-553-0546

Windows is a trademark of Microsoft Corporation.

Introducing

Moody's®
Document
Retrieval &
Research
Services

SEC, Library and Online
Searches, Corporate
Alerts and more!