

August, 1999

ADVANTAGE

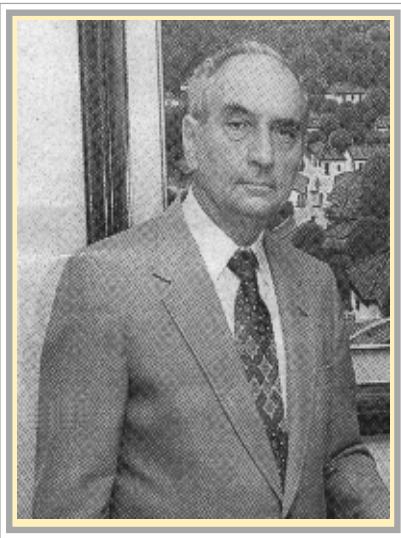
BUSINESS COMPUTER SYSTEMS

(903) 636-5200 Fax (903) 636-4674

featuring: *Larach & Cia.*

In 1948 Mr. Jorge J. Larach set a goal for himself; make Larach & Cia. the best hardware store in Honduras. In 1999 besides celebrating 51 years of service, they are celebrating the fact that they are now the Number One hardware store. To understand how risky and difficult it was to build the company that Mr. Jorge proposed, it is necessary to know that in 1948 Tegucigalpa was a city with hardly 100,000 inhabitants and had limited services in important areas like telephone lines, highways, and electric power.

Larach & Cia.
#1 EN FERRETERIA



Today Mr. Emilio Salomon Larach Chehade is the general manager of Larach & Cia. He succeeded Mr. Jorge in 1955. He has been responsible for developing the business policies and ethics that have enabled Larach & Cia. to become the leader in the hardware business in Honduras. Respect for their customers and vendors is one of their fundamental business principles.

Another notable part of the managerial philosophy of Larach & Cia. is their firm commitment to the community. Larach & Cia. has been and continues to be generous with its support of a wide variety of institutions for sports and social welfare .

The employees of Larach & Cia. have always been able to find personal support and solidarity in the company. Larach & Cia. now has around 400 employees and some have been employed for more than 25 years.

In 1997 after a hard search for a good business computer system designed for a hardware store, Larach & Cia. found the Advantage Business Computer System. Advantage allows them to do their everyday business in an efficient and productive manner and to make decisions instantly. The prompt service they can provide at Point-Of-Sale keeps both their customers and the company happy.

(cont.)

Newsletter

P O Box 421
Big Sandy, Tx 75755-0421

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In October, 1998 Honduras was devastated by hurricane Mitch, especially the capital, Tegucigalpa. While no one was prepared for the extensive damage, Larach & Cia., in spite of all the difficulties, was able to serve its customers. There are many who are still rebuilding and repairing the damage caused by Mitch. Larach & Cia. would like to thank everybody around the world that helped Honduras during that difficult time.

The products that Larach & Cia sells are presently in thousands of family homes and in countless industrial and commercial buildings. This is a result of their loyalty to the thousands of Larach & Cia. customers who know that they can always acquire quality products with reasonable prices.

Advantage

Is Your SCO Year 2000 Compliant?

Are you still on an old version of SCO? The Santa Cruz Operation, Inc. (SCO) has been testing and verifying whether or not their programs are year 2000 compliant. They have issued a "Year 2000 Date Processing Limited Warranty for Designated Software." The warranty part of this document is reproduced on the next page. To help you determine if you are susceptible to year 2000 date problems from your version of SCO, we have compiled a list of the various SCO versions that our customers are using. The chart below lists the different versions, whether they are covered by the warranty, if there are any patches and if an upgrade is recommended by SCO. Advantage has been loading SCO version 5.0.5 on customer's machines with the patches shown below. (See the SCO "Frequently Asked Questions" article on page 4 for instructions on how to determine your version of SCO.) **If you have questions, call the Advantage sales office, extensions 242, 216, 222, and 229.**

SCO maintains a web site, <http://www.sco.com/year2000/>, that you can access for the latest information. The warranty information is updated periodically and there is a Frequently Asked Questions section. The "SCO Year 2000 Whitepaper" gives an overview of the whole situation and what SCO is doing. This document is also updated periodically.

Information based on "Y2k Information For Your SCO Product" from the SCO web site

Release/Version	Product Warranted Per SCO Data Processing Limited Warranty	Patches and Supplements	Upgrade Recommended
SCO OpenServer Enterprise Release 5.0.5 SCO OpenServer Host Release 5.0.5	Yes	rs505a oss600a	None
SCO OpenServer Enterprise Release 5.0.4 SCO OpenServer Host Release 5.0.4	Yes	oss601a	Upgrade to Release 5.0.5
SCO OpenServer Enterprise Release 5.0.2 SCO OpenServer Host Release 5.0.2	Yes	oss601a	Upgrade to Release 5.0.5
SCO OpenServer Enterprise Release 5.0.0 SCO OpenServer Host Release 5.0.0	No	oss603a	Upgrade to Release 5.0.5
SCO UNIX System V Release 3.2 version 4.2	Yes	uod426d	Upgrade to Release 5.0.5
SCO UNIX System V Release 3.2 version 4.1	No	msv42 uod426d	Upgrade to Release 5.0.5
SCO UNIX System V Release 3.2 version 4.0	No	msv42 uod426d	Upgrade to Release 5.0.5
SCO UNIX System V Release 3.2 prior to 4.0	No	None	Upgrade to Release 5.0.5

THE SANTA CRUZ OPERATION, INC.
YEAR 2000 DATE PROCESSING LIMITED WARRANTY FOR DESIGNATED SOFTWARE
Revision 1.8.0 - May 1999

The Santa Cruz Operation, Inc. (hereinafter "SCO") offers a limited warranty that the Software listed below will adhere to the year 2000 date processing requirements stated in the following paragraphs (a) through (d), PROVIDED that the indicated Support Level Supplement (SLS) or Program Temporary Fix (PTF), if applicable, is installed:

- (a) the Software will not abnormally end or provide invalid or incorrect results as a result of date data, specifically including date data, which represents or references different centuries or more than one century.
- (b) the Software will recognize, calculate and process date information within the same century and in multiple century formulas and values.
- (c) the Software will support display- and user-interfaces requiring 4-digit year data. Four-Digit Year Format means a format that allows entry or processing of a four-digit year date: the first two digits designate the century and the second two digits designate the year within the century. As an example, 1996 means the 96th year of the 20th century.
- (d) the Software will calculate, process and display leap year information according to the following algorithm:
A leap year will have twenty-nine (29) days in the month of February. A leap year occurs in all years divisible by 400 or, evenly divisible by 4 and not evenly divisible by 100.

In the event that SCO Software listed below fails to meet such year 2000 date processing requirements at any time up to June 30, 2000, SCO will, at its sole option, 1) provide a SLS or PTF which corrects the failure; 2) replace the SCO Software with a version or upgrade which does conform to the specifications; or 3) accept the return of the SCO Software, with proof of purchase, and refund the price paid for the SCO Software. In the event of a fully documented, consistently reproducible failure to meet these requirements, SCO will not exercise options 2 or 3 above without having worked to provide a solution to the date processing problem. However, if SCO cannot resolve the problem within thirty (30) days from commencement of work, no further effort will be expended on the problem by SCO unless such effort is covered under the terms of a then-current SCO support contract.

This limited warranty shall not apply in respect of errors, interruptions or failures caused by hardware and software systems, applications or displays (not included in the list of supported products) due to 4-digit year format incompatibilities in those applications, systems or displays. This limited warranty states SCO's entire obligation and the customer's sole remedy in connection with the date-handling performance of any SCO Software listed below. This limited warranty is different from the warranty and exclusion of warranty contained in the SCO Software License Agreement which, in all other aspects, remain in effect. Customers should refer to their Software License Agreement for the complete SCO Product LIMITED WARRANTY and LIMITATION OF LIABILITY.

Important Notes:

1. There is no universally agreed definition of 'Year 2000 compliance' because year 2000 issues may arise from the interaction of components of computer systems from different suppliers. The definition for correct Year 2000 date processing performance as used in this document has been established by SCO. A detailed discussion is provided in SCO's Year 2000 Whitepaper at <http://www.sco.com/year2000/yr2000wp.html>, as is more general information on Year 2000 Date Processing, including information on Year 2038.
2. Products eligible under the SCO Year 2000 ("Y2K") Date processing Limited Warranty ("DPLW") must have been acquired while the specific Product was listed as warranted under the Y2K DPLW. The Y2K DPLW Product list current at any time is that in the then current Y2K DPLW available at <http://www.sco.com/year2000/yr2000wr.html>. On an ongoing basis, SCO issues new versions of its Products and removes old ones from its price list and hence will remove these from the list of warranted products. The absence of a Product from the list of Products to which this limited warranty applies does not mean that SCO knows of Y2K faults with the Product.
3. SCO ceases to provide technical support for Products at some time after they are removed from its price list. For some such unsupported Products, customers may, at SCO's sole option, but at the customer's sole risk, obtain unsupported corrections to certain Y2K non-conformities.
4. Because of the complex nature of the interaction of the components of any modern computer system, the Y2K DPLW should not be considered as an alternative to thorough testing. SCO strongly recommends that users perform or have performed tests such as those described in SCO's Year 2000 Whitepaper and report to their usual technical support provider, any problems they find during this testing.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

FROM THE SCO WEB SITE

3. How can I tell what version of SCO product I am using?

Answer:

SCO UNIX and OpenServer based Operating System versions can be determined by viewing the "Release=" value returned by running the following command:

```
uname -X
```

```
8 abcsdev:p36,abcsacct_$ uname -X
System = SCO_SV
Node = abcsdev
Release = 3.2v5.0.5 7
KernelID = 98/07/02
Machine = PentII(D)
BusType = ISA
Serial = 2EI082130
Users = 105-user
OEM# = 0
Origin# = 1
NumCPU = 1
```

8. What do you recommend I do to test my complete SCO Solution for accurate date processing?

Answer:

If you have the resources, test your SCO Solution on a non-production system in parallel with a production system. If you do not have such resource, we recommend that you create a backup of your system before testing, and restore your system from backup once testing is complete and the date on your system has been returned to normal.

When testing your SCO Solution for correct date processing, test on the following dates:

```
9th of September 1999
31st of December 1999 rolling
    over to 1st January 2000
on the 1st of January 2000
28th of February 2000 rolling
    over to February 29, 2000
on the 29th of February
```

We further recommend that you contact any suppliers of 3rd party software or hardware for your SCO solution and request their advice on how to test their products for correct date processing in the Year 2000.

22. Can I move the date forward to the Year 2000 on my system, perform testing, and then move the date back again?

Answer:

We recommend that you do not test in this way because it can lead to the creation of unreliable data and the storage of that unreliable data in system log files and application data files. It can also lead to the execution of undesirable cron and batch jobs, and it can result in file systems containing files with invalid time and date stamps.

To test your SCO solutions, we recommend that you either: Load a system with a similar configuration to your production machine and perform your normal daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly and yearly operations on that system to ensure that they function as expected.

Or: Backup your production system, perform your testing, and restore your system from backup once testing is complete.

25. My system has been tested in the year 2000 and has not failed. But I see that a patch is required to make my SCO product "Year 2000 ready." Should I apply this supplement to my system?

Answer:

We recommend that you apply a patch or supplement only if it is required to fix a problem affecting the way your system currently functions. Always check the cover letter of the patch or supplement to see if the fixes provided by the supplement are required by your system.

DOING A ROOT BACKUP

You should be doing a monthly root backup to keep your backups current. Since these backups are of your root drive and operating system, not your company data or programs, they do not have to be performed in conjunction with your month-end procedures. Mark a specific date on the calendar each month as a reminder to do the root backup.

Since part of this procedure involves rebooting your computer system and keeping it “down” for twenty to thirty minutes, you may wish to perform this at a time when your system is unavailable to other users, such as after hours, lunch time or weekends.

You will be creating two floppy disks, one for “Boot” and one for “Root,” and one tape for “Root.” These three pieces of media become a set which should be kept together. You should have at least two sets of media used in rotation. Always use the oldest set available for performing the backup. For instance, if you have two sets of “boot-n-root” media, you would alternate sets every month.

Root backup (Tape) creation:

1. Give your users a verbal warning that the system will be taken down. Confirm that all terminals are logged out by typing “whom” at the # prompt. All users and all console screens except tty01 must be logged out before taking the system down.
2. Type in the following at the # prompt:
`cd` [Enter]
`shutdown -g0` [Enter]
(this is zero, not the letter “O”)
3. When you see:
** Safe to Power Off **
-or-
** Press Any Key to Reboot **
Power off the computer (not the screen/monitor) for one minute.
4. After turning the power back on, at the Boot
:
prompt, press [Enter]. You must do this within 60 seconds of the “Boot:” prompt appearing on your screen.

5. When you see
Type CONTROL-d to proceed with normal startup (or give root password for system maintenance):
Type in your root password. This is the same password that you type when you are logging in as “root.” (Do not type “root” now, just the root password.)
6. You should now have a # prompt, meaning that you are in “system maintenance” or “single-user” mode.
Type
`rootbackup` [Enter]
You will see the message “Preparing to overwrite contents of tape...”
7. Be sure your tape is not write-protected and insert it in the tape drive. Wait for the amber light to go out and then press [Enter].
The operating system is now being backed up to your tape. This “write” phase, which is characterized by a single column of information on your screen, requires about 10-15 minutes. After the “write,” a “verify” will be done to ensure that the tape’s information can be read again. This phase is characterized by multi-column output on your screen. After the successful “verify,” remove the tape and label it.

Boot-n-Root (Floppy) Creation:

8. At the # prompt, type
`bootnroot` [Enter]
9. When asked which floppy drive, press [Enter] to use the default (Drive 0).
10. Insert the floppy disk into the drive. Most floppy drives have a button that pops out when the disk is fully inserted.
11. The system will prompt you for the second floppy when its ready and instruct you on how to label the disks.
12. You may now press [CTRL-d] to bring the system up normally into multi-user mode, which allows all users to log in. At the login prompt, log in normally. The system is now ready for other users to log in.
13. Make sure that your “root-n-boot” media is properly labeled and kept together as a set. For security, keep the oldest “root-n-boot” set stored off-site. You will need to remember to bring the set back before the next backup. The newest set can be kept with the daily backup tapes. That way if it is needed, it will be close to the computer.

Scheduling Hardware Installation Assistance

We are all busy and stressed so we don't need any more headaches than we already have. In an effort to curb some of those headaches, we would like to remind our customers about the allocated time slots that we have set for upgrading secondary Hard Drives, Expansion Digi Devices, and all the equipment that is not "Emergency Type" equipment. These devices require everyone's undivided attention. Our time frame for assisting you with the installation of these items is either on Wednesday or Thursday Nights. It's also possible that Saturday and Sunday we will occasionally be open to assist you. However, we cannot just drop previously scheduled assistance for these types of devices. So please be respectful of your fellow customers, and let's try to schedule these applications and stay with our schedules. In addition, remember when you purchase one of those devices that you intend on installing, contact the Hardware Department at that time to schedule our assistance. The more lead time we have the better! Thank You!

Y2K Upgrades

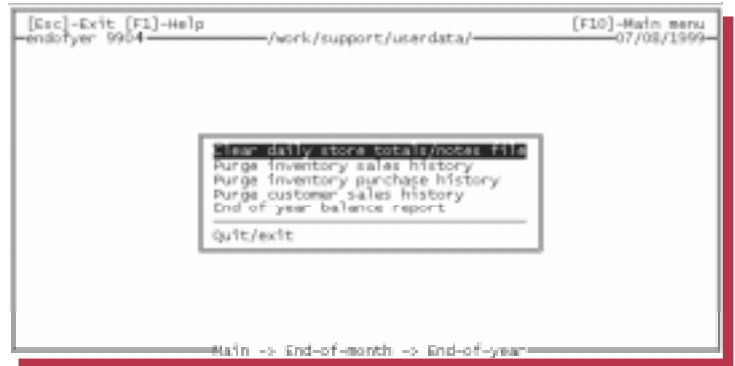
For those of you who are thinking about upgrading because your SCO or equipment is not "Year 2000 Compliant," or for whatever reason... we recommend that you start scheduling that timeslot NOW! Even now, we are being bombarded with calls about schedules, and we know it will only get worse. Those who call early will have a chance to choose a time; those who call late will have to take what is available. Remember that our software is ready for the change, but if you have old equipment, your equipment may not be ready! So, please start preparing for your event now.

BE PREPARED

Are you prepared for an equipment emergency. What are you going to do if your invoice printer quits, or you have liquid spilled into a keyboard. Depending on the size of your operation, you need to have at least one backup invoice printer, keyboard and monitor. Then when an equipment failure occurs, you can swap out the bad equipment quickly and continue normal operations. Advantage cannot accommodate requests to loan equipment while your's is being repaired or new hardware is being ordered. So prepare your business for the inevitable now.

Don't forget you
can reach
hardware
support directly
by pressing 2.

PURGING DATA OPTIONS



The Advantage software enables you to reclaim space on your hard drive by clearing old data from your system at any time during the year. Purge options are available on the End-of-month/year> End-of-year procedures menu. This menu contains options to clear daily store totals and notes, purge inventory sales history, inventory purchase history, and customer sales history. Because these databases can get quite large, they may need to be purged more often than at year-end. This can be done anytime, as long as all users are off the system and end-of-day has been completed successfully. The daily backup tape created the day of purging any of these databases, should be clearly labeled and kept as an archive backup. It is recommended that you keep the last two years.

If you have multiple company areas it is possible that your Customer Sales History is shared. If the Customer Sales History is common, purge it only in the main company dataset. (If you are unsure if

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK....

Training class time is approaching us again. For all of you new customers this needs to be a "must attend" session. For existing customers it should be a time to either further your own knowledge or consider getting that second line of defense trained within your business. Far too many times we see customers who have no cross-trained employees. This creates a situation where key people can't be away and losing one of those key employees results in a gap in knowledge about the computer system. Finding yourself in one of these situations is painful and particularly so when you stop and think how easily it can be avoided.

Other issues to consider when deciding to make the investment in attending class are:

- Are you getting all that you can from the investment you've made in your Advantage system?
- Is now a good time to get prepared to bring another application on line and reap the rewards of automation. Good examples of applications that might have gotten put off initially are: payroll with an integrated time clock, general ledger that can be auto-posted daily, or maybe it's time to learn how to write your own reports.

There is so much to learn and so many possibilities that you may find yourself planning for the next class before you even have a chance to attend the one coming up.

Please use the enclosed registration form and let us know in advance the number of people who will be attending. This will ensure a seat for everybody and help us in our preparations. We look forward to seeing you here in September.

Scott Stanford

Timely Connections

from Herb Matatall

Because of the many calls we receive from our customers regarding minor issues on the servicing of their equipment, we feel there may be a need for an equipment service plan. After reviewing our hardware support structure, we have decided to ask you, our customers, for your opinions about some of the fundamental services that are continuous needs at your business. Advantage would appreciate your comments! Please use the form below to fax your comments to 1-903-636-9605. We are trying to make sure that we meet your needs properly. Below are the areas about which we particularly want your opinions. If you have any other comments or suggestions, we would be glad to hear those also. We would like to hear from you as soon as possible so we can include your opinions in our future support plans.

- 1) **Yes** **No** If there were an ABCS technician in your area, would you want him to stop by and service your machine if the service charge was reasonable? (Within 50-75 miles)
- 2) What do you consider a "reasonable" service charge? _____
- 3) **Yes** **No** Would you be interested in the general services below provided by our technician?
 - a) Cleaning the interior components of your machine
 - b) Checking all cabling and connectors for wear and check for defects on your machine
 - c) Alert you to any potential problems that may exist on your system
(Example: processor fan has stopped working. This causes major overheating problems.)
 - d) Checking your battery backup for its effectiveness
 - e) Providing you with a general summary of your system and answering any questions that you may have regarding ABCS and/or our services
- 4) **Yes** **No** Would you want this service done during business hours?
- 5) **Yes** **No** If you wanted after-hours support, would you be willing to pay the expense for waiting?
- 6) Would you want ABCS to help you schedule this service on a monthly **C**, quarterly **C**, or yearly basis **C**?

Signed: _____ Company: _____ Date: _____

Battery Backup Testing

Do you know whether your battery backup can support your system long enough to shut it down during a power outage? When was the last time you tested it? During this season of thunder storms, it is wise to be confident in your battery backup.

Battery backups are not designed to power the system in case of a power outage, but merely to keep the system up while you properly shut it down. Batteries have a limited life span and must be tested regularly to establish their power output.

TO TEST:

- Verify that the system and monitor are plugged into the battery backup.
- Take the system down.
- Unplug the battery backup when you see the following message:
The System is Down
Safe to Power Off
- Do not bring the system up.
- Note how long the system stays on before shutting itself down.
- Turn the system off.
- Plug the battery backup back in.
- Turn the system on.
- Bring the system up.

Since you are testing the battery at the lowest demand level, up-times less than 10 minutes mean the battery should be replaced. A fully charged battery will only last 20-30 minutes, depending on the size of the system it is supporting. Life expectancy of a battery is approximately 30-36 months.

New batteries can be ordered from your area sales representative.

**CHECK
YOUR BATTERY
TODAY!**

Request your 9904 update tape

Have you requested a tape of the 9904 version of Advantage Software? You must request that a tape be sent to you. We are not sending them automatically. Enclosed is a request fax-back form for your use.

ADVANTAGE ACADEMY E FALL SEMESTER H

Monday -Thursday
September 20 - 23, 1999

*Free classes for all Basic and Database
Version Users*

To be held in
BIG SANDY, TEXAS

Classes begin at 8:00 AM daily.
Tape recorders are welcome.
Hands on computer work
will be done by all.

See the insert in this newsletter for
SESSION SCHEDULE
and
REGISTRATION FORM

For more information
call extension 242 or 216

