Editor: Chigusa Kita

Desktop Publishing Pioneer Meeting at Computer History Museum

On May 22–23, 2017, more than 15 pioneering participants in the creation of the desktop publishing (DTP) industry met at the Computer History Museum (CHM) to exchange and record their recollections. The first day of the meeting was focused on technology development and evolution, and the second day was primarily about the history of the companies that made the desktop publishing industry a success.

The organizers of the meeting were Burt Grad, cofounder of the CHM's Software Industry Special Interest Group (SI SIG), and David Brock, Director of the CHM's Center for Software History. Jonathan Seybold, cofounder of the Seybold Report and founder of the Seybold Seminars, which evangelized for desktop publishing, helped plan and guide the pioneer meeting.

The meeting schedule was divided into five hour-plus sessions a day for which Burt Grad or David Brock led the discussions among the participants. Session topics included Xerox PARC technology; Postscript and other page description language; laser printers and fonts; PageMaker, FrameMaker, and TeX; the Seybold publications and seminars; Adobe, Aldus, Ventura, and Apple's DTP business histories; and DTP pre-history at Rocappi and Atex. Participants included technology and business leaders of many of the activities and companies represented, including the founders of the companies listed above and principal technology contributors at Xerox PARC and Stanford University. Also in attendance were various members of the CHM's professional staff and several non-CHM professional historians and independent scholars who are DTP and computing history researchers. The sessions were videotaped, and the audio will be transcribed; the transcripts and the videos will be posted on the CHM website for future historical study.

The meeting discussions revealed a fascinating array of organizational and personal interconnections, with the organizations having quite differing visions and motivations and interleaved evolutions, such that as listed below.

» Digital single-user text layout systems and production newspaper systems developed on quite separate paths until they came together as desktop publishing became ubiquitous.
» A surprising number of the meeting participants had in their backgrounds some work funded by the Department of Defense's Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA).
» Xerox PARC developed key technologies and was also the source of many of the people who founded and built the successful businesses.
» Ad hoc collaborations spread DTP technology in some important cases: people from different companies met at and drew information from Seybold publications and seminars; Aldus (PageMaker on affordable machines), Adobe (Postscript interpreters for local laser printers and service bureau imagesetters), and a division of Apple (seeking finally to sell a lot of Macintoshes) worked together to develop what became a mainstream part of desktop publishing; Atex got its functional specifications for newspaper systems by having their early customers write them.
» Not surprisingly, companies had different approaches for working in the technology space that led to desktop publishing: Xerox PARC was working on the office of the future in its development of the laser printer and graphical user interface technology; Frame Technologies (FrameMaker) saw an opportunity to compete with InterLeaf in the work station domain; and Ventura Publishing saw an opportunity in producing desktop publishing software on the IBM PC rather than the Apple Mac.

It is clear that circa 1985 society and technology were ripe for easy interactive design and composition of written content of all types. Today, 30 years later, "desktop publishing" is perhaps too narrow a term; today, the DTP approach is ubiquitous and might simply be called publishing.

This pioneer meeting was the thirteenth such meeting organized by the Software Industry SIG since 2000 as part of the SIG's mission "to collect, preserve and communicate information about the companies, people and events that shaped the computer software and services industry."[1]

1058-6180/17/$33.00 ©2017 IEEE Published by the IEEE Computer Society

Coinciding with this pioneer meeting, oral history interviews of five of the attendees were conducted, adding to the 124 oral histories the SIG had collected previously. Additional oral history interviews may be done later with some of the other attendees.

Prior pioneer meetings and other Software Industry SIG activities have resulted in six special issues of the *IEEE Annals of the History of Computing* and another two dozen *Annals* articles, anecdotes, and biographies. Plans are in the works to submit content for another possible *Annals* special issue relating to the desktop publishing industry.

References and Notes

1. See https://sites.google.com/site/softwareindustrysig/.

David Walden. Contact at www.walden-family.com/ieee.

Attendees of the Desktop Publishing Pioneer Workshop, Computer History Museum, May 2017 (© Douglas Fairbairn Photography; courtesy of the Computer History Museum).

IPSJ 79th National Convention Report

The Information Processing Society of Japan (IPSJ) held its 79th National Convention at Nagoya University 16–18 March 2017. In the opening, the President Tatsuo Tomita addressed the audience: "Recently some fields of IT take special interest from the public, but we researchers should mind that these fields are supported by the wide range of fundamental researches, especially by the historical activities like we introduce in this ceremony." The society annually certifies information processing (IP) technology heritage artifacts selected by its Special Committee for the History of Computing.[1] This year we added eight artifacts to the list of IP technology heritage and handed the certification plaques to the owners.

» *Oki numerical teleprinter*. It could send, receive, and print the numeric figures and symbols for aeronautical communication, reporting the airplanes' approaching directions, times, and flight numbers. It also operated lamps to display the airplanes on a map. Oki Electric Industry has a long history