

From novice to expert: books about the net

by Peter H. Salus

For a long time there were few books on the net about addressing and protocols (in general and in specific). But a few years ago, Donnalyne Frey and Rick Adams published "!:@%:" (O'Reilly & Associates, 1989). And then John Quarterman wrote "The Matrix" (Digital Press, 1990). O'Reilly has also published a number of revisions of "Using UUCP and Usenet" and "Managing UUCP and Usenet," each of which first appeared in those endearing brown wrappers in 1986. But this year has brought us several new and improved volumes on internetworking, at every user level.

First and perhaps most important to the beginner is Brendan Kehoe's "Zen and the Art of the Internet" (Prentice Hall, 1992; ISBN 0-13-010778-6; \$22.00). This is a small solid book that will enable the neophyte to find his or her way through addressing, ftp, Usenet, telnet, etc. Kehoe — who has just joined Cygnus Support — has done a very fine job in a very small volume.

There are things I am unhappy about in it (SLIP goes undefined, for example; Usenix is called "a group of Unix enthusiasts" [p. 30]). But, by and large, this is a well-written, well-presented introduction. However, I must admit that a volume that appears in 1992 with a 1993 copyright date

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Ed Krol's "The Whole Internet Catalog & User's Guide" (O'Reilly & Associates, 1992; ISBN 1-56592-025-2; \$24.95) is nearly triple the size of Kehoe's book. It is also written in a far drier style. And it packs a tremendous amount of information.

If I match up some sections, Krol's chapters on "Finding Software," "Finding Someone" and "Finding Anything" are more detailed than Kehoe's brief discussions. Kehoe does fine onarchie, but Krol does better on gopher and WAIS. I think that I would recommend Kehoe to the beginner and Krol to the more advanced user. I also liked Krol's 25-page catalog of Internet resources (274-297; Aeronautics to Zymurgy).

For anyone interested in a more comprehensive view of networking, I can't recommend Carl Malamud's "Stacks" highly enough. (Prentice Hall, 1992; ISBN 0-13-484080-1; \$35).

Malamud's three volumes on analyzing networks and his many columns are well-known for their readability and his perceptiveness. "Stacks" — which was brought to

my attention by Mike O'Dell of Bellcore — is a fine survey of a variety of interoperability topics. As someone who has never liked OSI, I was especially taken by Malamud's revision of the seven layers: Religion, Politics, Finance, Environments, Stacks, Interfaces and Substrates — replacing Application, Presentation, Session, Transport, Network, Data, Link and Physical.

My personal feeling is that Bureaucracy should have a place here, but I'll leave that to someone else.

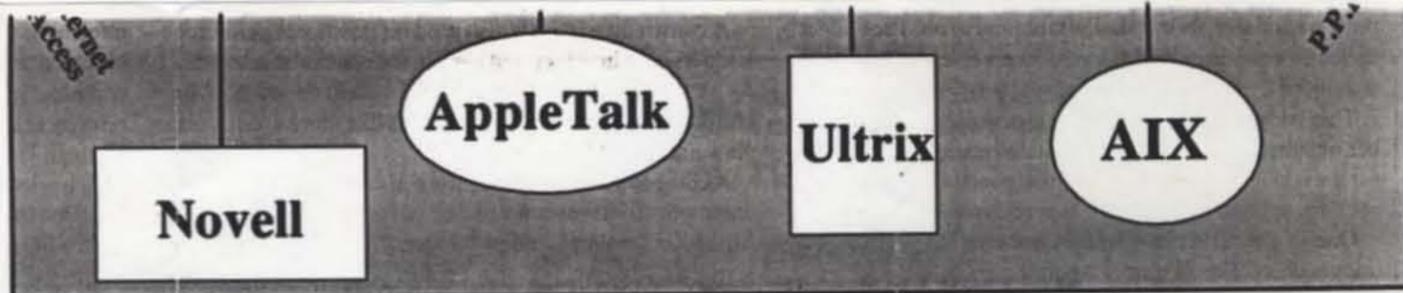
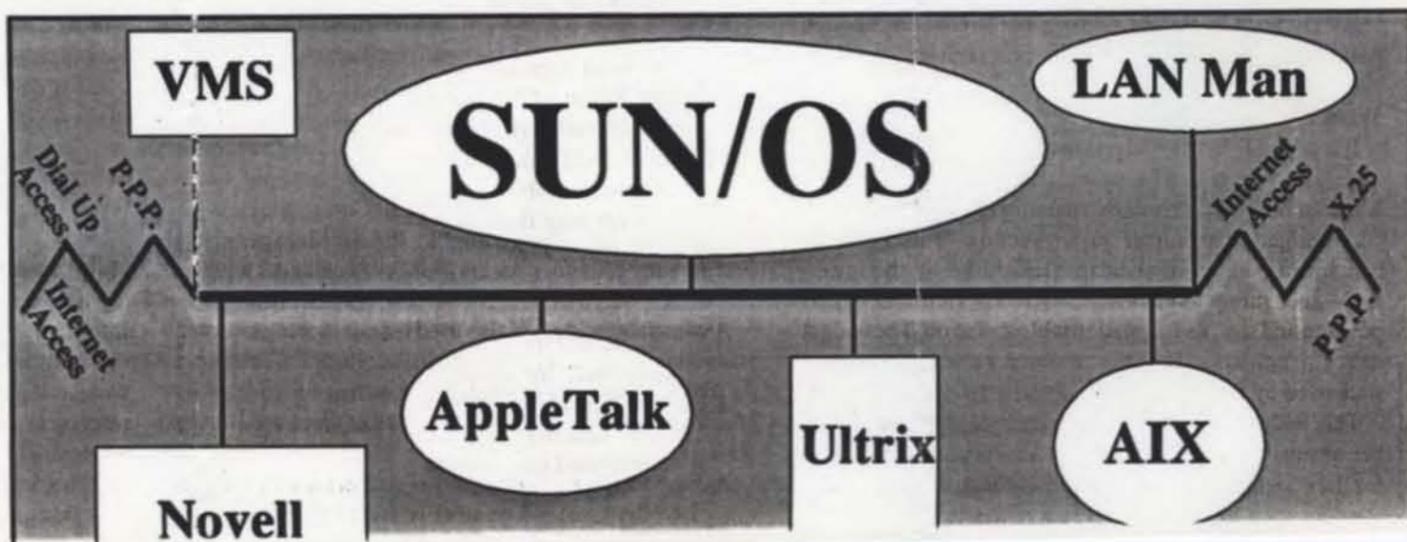
Well, if one really needs to know about it, Craig Hunt's "TCP/IP System Administration" (O'Reilly & Associates, 1992; ISBN 0-937175-82-X; \$29.95) has more than 450 pages literally crammed with valuable information. What the protocols are, name service, system configuration,

SLIP and PPP, routing and DNS/BIN are only a few of the topics covered in detail.

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Peter Salus is executive director of The Sun User Group.

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