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This book is dedicated to our readers. Time is against you, but year 2000 compliance is achievable. Work hard, be diligent, and may whatever higher power you believe in be with you.

Acknowledgments

Dan . . .
I want to thank my fellow teammates for their non-stop motivation. Over four hundred pages in 3½ months was total insanity. Thanks to my family friends and most importantly Jackie for standing by my side.

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A huge thanks to the team, John, Julie, Dan and Justin, for rising to the challenge, hanging in there and making the sacrifices necessary to achieve this goal! You're the greatest.

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To my family, friends and co-authors, thank you for your patience, support and understanding. I couldn't have done it without you.

Julie. . . .
Dan, thanks for making it through another one, your patience and understanding are qualities that mean a lot to me. Mom, Dan, John and Justin what can I say, "You guys are the best!"

A special thanks to all the software companies that responded so quickly and provided us with excellent year 2000 tools and testers, helping us make our book that much more useful to our readers.

About the Authors

Dan McGrail is an IT professional whose experience includes customer support, systems analysis and design, and project management. His hardware focus is in PC-based LANs and UNIX, while his software development focus is in PC-COBOL, Visual Basic, and various other languages. Dan's skills primarily serve the manufacturing and accounting industries. Dan is a "technology junky" who loves the Internet, GUI, and everything about computers. He is a partner of Coordinated Systems Inc., an East Hartford, Connecticut-based manufacturing and accounting software firm. He is also a partner of JD Consulting LLC, an East Hartford, Connecticut-based computer consulting firm specializing in the year 2000 problem.

Ellen Faucher holds a bachelor's degree in computer information science. She has worked in the field of information technology for over 25 years and understands the reality and challenges associated with identifying, chasing and resolving the impacts of the "Year 2000 Bug". As a senior level manager at a Florida based insurance company, she successfully initiated and headed their corporate wide Y2K project. During that effort Ellen recognized that the problem was not just limited to old mainframe coded systems. This lead to her collaboration with the principals of the East Hartford-based JD Consulting firm in authoring the *Year 2000 Personal Computer Fix-It Guide* and now to this latest project, which focuses on year 2000 solutions for Microsoft products. Ellen is currently working as a consultant for a company that is overseeing a nationwide Y2K project office initiative for a major insurance firm. She remains steadfast in her goal of enabling others to understand and effectively address this problem.

John Gasparini holds a bachelor's degree in Computer Engineering from Syracuse University. Upon graduation in 1987, he was employed by the State of Connecticut's Division of Special Revenue where he spent the majority of his career developing minicomputer and PC-based applications to accommodate the agency's distinct business needs. As well as being

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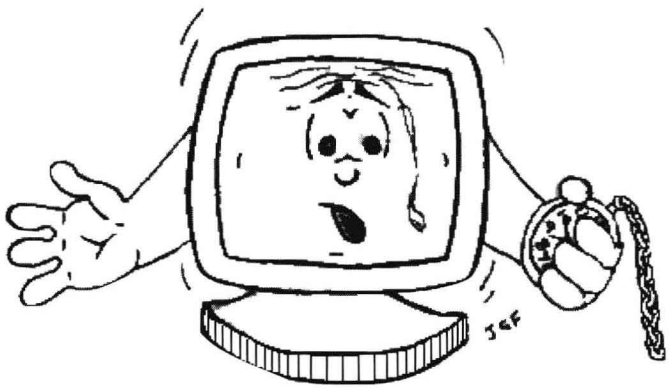
Julie Rozek is a senior desktop consultant at Lincoln Financial Group of Connecticut. Her 16 years of IT work experience have provided her with a strong understanding of all areas of LAN and desktop PC support. Julie is presently a principal of JD Consulting. At this time she is specializing in year 2000 seminars for small business owners. Julie's view of successful customer service is, "When you venture off to help a customer 'in need,' it is very important that you clear your mind of all other problems and issues. That customer deserves a welcoming smile and a positive attitude. Listen and be courteous. Don't expect your customers to understand your job, and make it your goal to help them understand how you can effectively work together."

Preface



The level of public awareness about the impending year 2000 technology crisis has increased dramatically during the past year. It's now mentioned in newscasts and articles daily. Many individuals who previously thought this problem only affected large corporations with antiquated mainframe computer systems are now realizing the need for concern. However, in spite of a growing recognition that even newer personal computers running some of the most popular shrink-wrapped software products are vulnerable to the Y2K bug, there are still millions of individuals and businesses world wide who have not yet addressed this problem.

What makes the situation even worse is that while some people have upgraded to newer software product versions, which are claimed by the vendor to be year 2000 compliant, they may fail to realize that they still need to apply product patches or fixes before product compliance is truly achieved. Furthermore, even if product patches aren't required, users may still have date handling problems if they fail to use these products in a compliant manner.

Personal computer owners who primarily use their PCs to access the Internet or to create simple spreadsheets and word processing documents

may not view the Y2K problem as a major issue. However, a growing number of people are using banking or personal finance software, or have developed programs with today's user-friendly tools that could pose date handling problems and could be troublesome to resolve. Also, many individuals are now operating small businesses out of their homes and are using their PCs to run more sophisticated software applications. For these individuals, the inaccurate processing of date information could cause major headaches. One truly alarming fact is that only 30-40 percent of all small business owners have started to address their year 2000 problem. If you consider the likelihood that those companies who haven't yet started are running personal computer-based software relying on dates and date-related calculations, then there is a strong possibility they are going to encounter problems if they fail to prepare now.

The objective of this book is to lend a helping hand to all personal computer owners and users who are interested in addressing their year 2000 date handling problems. It is designed to help you understand the various aspects of the problem, pinpoint your problem areas, and then fix them. As the title of the book implies, it has a Microsoft product focus. The reason for this is quite simple. The vast majority of the world's personal computer owners run Microsoft products, and our goal is to benefit as large an audience as possible. However, much of the material that is covered throughout the book has a great deal of general applicability in terms of problem determination and date usage techniques to help you pinpoint and correct problems with other commercial software products.

The book is direct—you won't find a lot of fluff. For example, it doesn't speculate on the potential economic or social impact that could occur if the world, or even some segments of the world, fails to fix its date handling problems in time. It is a nuts-and-bolts, solution-focused guide addressing all aspects of the problem. Some of the material was taken from our first book, the *Year 2000 Personal Computer Fix-It Guide*, because of its sound coverage of some of the key issues and problem determination fundamentals.

In easy-to-understand terms we begin by explaining the fundamental cause of the problems and we review how date information flows through the system. This is done to help you see how everything is interconnected and how a date handling error at one point can result in a problem or failure at another point. Next we provide step-by-step instructions to walk you through the execution of a complete system inventory process. We include worksheets in the appendices to the book for your use in documenting the inventory and for recording your compliance testing and research results.

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When the inventory is complete, you will have identified and gathered required information about each piece of your PC system, which then must be tested or reviewed for date handling compliance. You also will have identified all of the vendors and service providers on whom you rely for critical needs that may pose a risk to you if they haven't addressed their date issues. At that point, we take you through the hardware/firmware and operating system compliance testing process and then provide guidance on how to formulate and execute thorough software tests.

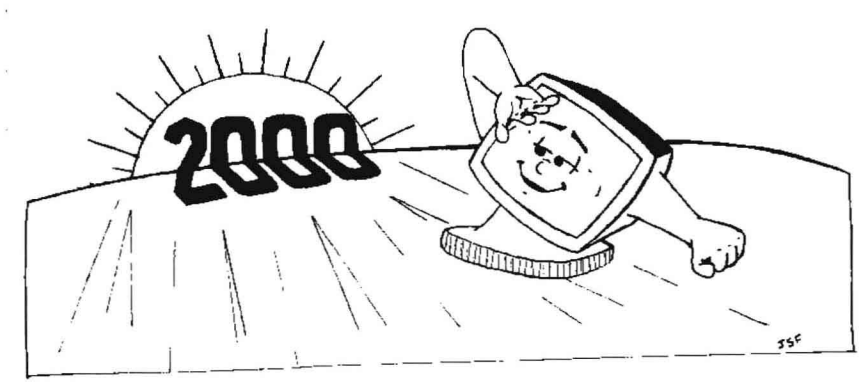
This then takes us to the core of the book, which deals with Microsoft product solutions. First we explain how the Microsoft product chapter is laid out. We then describe the type of information content it offers and how this information will help you identify and resolve your problems as well as ensure you are using the products in a truly compliant manner. Next we provide an overview of the Microsoft Year 2000 Website, focusing on those aspects of the site most beneficial to your product status and solution research efforts. We explain the various ways you can go about researching product compliance status information, how to locate fixes, and steps you must follow to download and implement those fixes safely. We also explain what to do if your product or version is not listed under the year 2000 product list. It is particularly important for you to have an understanding of how to use this Website because Microsoft is continually updating product status information as fixes for newly found bugs become available. Using a feature such as searching for new changes that have been posted for a specific product since a particular date provides a quick way of determining if earlier information you received about the product is still valid. In fact, we suggest you use it to check the product information provided in this book, since our research was completed in December 1998 and changes may have been posted by Microsoft since then. The product chapter is fairly lengthy. It covers 28 different products and multiple versions of each one. It provides extensive coverage of version compliance issues, explains all aspects of each product's date handling, storage, and interpretation limitations, tells you how to pinpoint problem areas, and identifies helpful Knowledge Base Articles that can be obtained from the Microsoft Website.

From there we move on to a discussion of legal issues and concerns related to your software licenses, as well as other service and insurance contracts. We discuss the need for a diligent review of your contracts and try to help you understand your rights and obligations. We also talk about the recently enacted Year 2000 Information and Readiness Disclosure Act and its significance to consumers. As in our first book, we outline other

sources of information to reference and contacts who may help you with your problem research and resolution work. We also provide detailed guidance on drafting information request letters so you can obtain compliance status input from all of your vendors as well as from service providers and other agencies who are important to your economic and physical well being.

Finally, a CD-ROM accompanies this book, which contains 30 different tools and testers. These products are designed to assist the personal computer user with various aspects of year 2000 problem determination and resolution. Several are fully functional products that are trial versions only. Others are demo versions that allow you to assess the tool before you make a purchase decision. We encourage you to take a look at what they have to offer. The last chapter of the book discusses each of these tools and explains how they may benefit you in your goal to become year 2000 compliant.

We hope this book serves as a useful guide and tool for ensuring your personal computer system is ready for the start of the next millennium. If it does, we will all have achieved our goal.



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