## The World Percussion Network: The Next Step
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THE AUGUST 1990 ISSUE OF *PERCUSSIVE Notes*, presented an article entitled "The World Percussion Network." The WPN is an electronic bulletin board where drummers the world over can meet to share ideas and information covering any aspect of percussion. During the 1990 PASIC in Philadelphia last November, many members asked why *Percussive Notes* didn't publish the phone number for accessing the Network. Well, the phone number wasn't included in the article because the Network doesn't exist…but it may soon.

During the convention, it was obvious that interest in the Network was extremely high. People from Maine to California visited about the Network, offered their ideas, and volunteered to help make the Network a reality. Members of the PAS Executive Committee, the Education Committee, and the Board of Directors expressed their interest and support for creating the Network.

Now that the World Percussion Network has been conceived, the next step is to nurture the Network into an entity that can grow, flourish, and serve the needs of the Percussive Arts Society membership. Several people have been sharing ideas about the network, and below are just a few of the basic concepts that have surfaced so far.

1. Use of the Network should be free to all members of PAS. However, certain files (such as copyrighted materials) would carry an additional cost if they are downloaded to a member's personal computer.
2. The Network should have multiple phone lines so that on-line conferences with several members can take place.
3. The Network's services and information should be available to all members, even if they don't own a personal computer and modem. A member could send a request for information to the Network office and the office would then send the member a paper copy of the file.
4. The costs of setting up and operating the Network should be the responsibility of PAS.
5. The Network could be physically located in the new PAS headquarters or at a major university where graduate assistantships could be offered to maintain the Network.
6. The interface to the Network should be easy to understand and easy to use. Graphic "front-ends" similar to HyperCard could be offered for many different types of computers.

In the world of computer networking and bulletin boards, there are two main configuration styles: linear BBS (an acronym for Bulletin Board System) and room BBS. Using a modified room BBS, one could envision the World Percussion Network as a city of information. In the "real world" you move from place to place depending on what task you wish to accomplish. When you do research, you go to the library. When you mail a letter, you take it to the post office.

One possible framework for the World Percussion Network is a series of "buildings." Each building could contain several "floors," and each floor could contain "rooms." Each room would house information that was of a similar nature. Figure #1 might be seen as a town map. Let's tour the World Percussion Network city and see what's there.



Figure 1
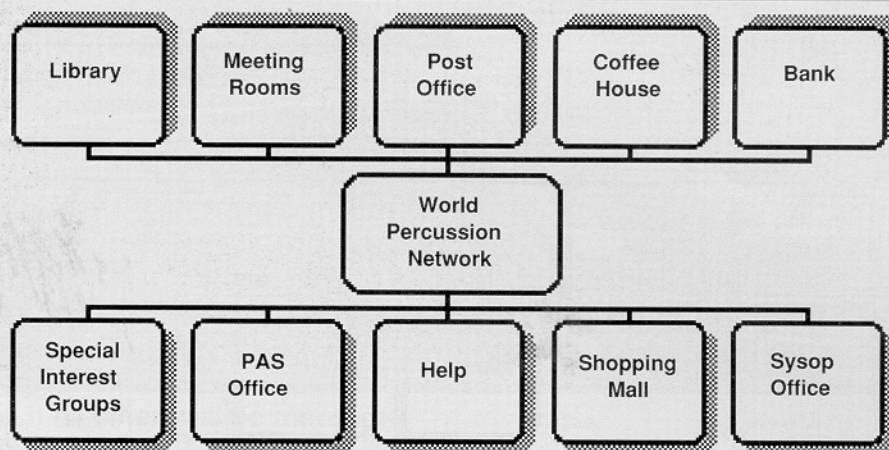
**Help**—If this is your first time on the Network, you'll want to stop by the Help building. The Help building is where you take care of sign-up procedures such as entering your name, selecting a password, setting display options for your computer, etc. This building would contain an on-line diagram of the Network and an index of available files that could be downloaded for home reference. It would include helpful information about using the Network, such as special commands, power-user tips, and hints for downloading and uploading files. This building also would house all the necessary rules and regulations concerning the legal aspects of the Network.

**Post Office**—After visiting the Help building, the next stop would be the post office. There are two different floors inside the Post Office (See Figure #2). The first floor houses the General Post Office where public announcements would be posted. Information available here would be open for all members of the Network to read. Rooms for concert information, classified ads from the PAS membership, job vacancies posted by various organizations, new product announcements posted by manufacturers, and even miscellaneous announcements posted by members concerning any topic, could be included on this floor. We'll stop off here to post your upcoming concert and let the membership know that you've got an old Radio King snare for sale.

The second floor is the Private Post Office. Each member of the Network would be assigned a private mailbox. Anyone could leave a message in any mailbox, but only the owner of the mailbox could read those messages by entering a special password. While we're here, read and answer your current messages and leave a note for an old drumming buddy in Australia.

**Special Interest Groups**—Next stop: the SIG building. This is a communication center for people who want to discuss specialized topics. Each floor would contain a general topic area such as World Percussion, Electronic Percussion, Symphonic Percussion, Education, etc. Hundreds of individual topics come to mind: Percussion Acoustics, Home Recording, Tabla Playing, New Ensemble Music, Homemade Instruments, Mallet Construction, CD Swapfest, Stravinsky's Percussion, My Favorite Recording, MIDI, Drum Machines, Software, Drum Tuning, Performance Anxiety, Censorship in Music, Great Books, and the list could go on forever. A member simply enters the SIG building, selects a topic "floor," then enters a group. You could read messages left by other members or leave your own message concerning that topic. Members could even create their own SIG by simply starting a new topic.

**Shopping Mall**—Upon entering the Shopping Mall, we're given a list of "shops" that are currently open for business. Each shop would offer on-line catalogues and on-screen "order desks" for instruments, accessories, and music. Find what you're looking for, place an order, charge it to your credit card, and wait for its arrival at your front door.

**Bank**—The Bank is where you settle any financial obligations to PAS. While you're here, you can pay your yearly dues and registration fees for this year's PASIC convention.

**Meeting Rooms**—Meeting Rooms would offer semi-private meeting areas for those members interested in hosting an on-line conference. An on-line conference could be free, or the conference host could charge a small admission fee. The editors of *Percussive Notes* could meet to discuss future articles and issues. The percussion section of a major symphony could hold a symposium on orchestral repertoire, or a manufacturer might hold a round-table discussion concerning future product development.

**Coffee House**—Get together with a group of friends to talk about anything and everything in the Coffee House. When you enter, you let everyone know that you've arrived, and become part of the current conversation.



Figure 2
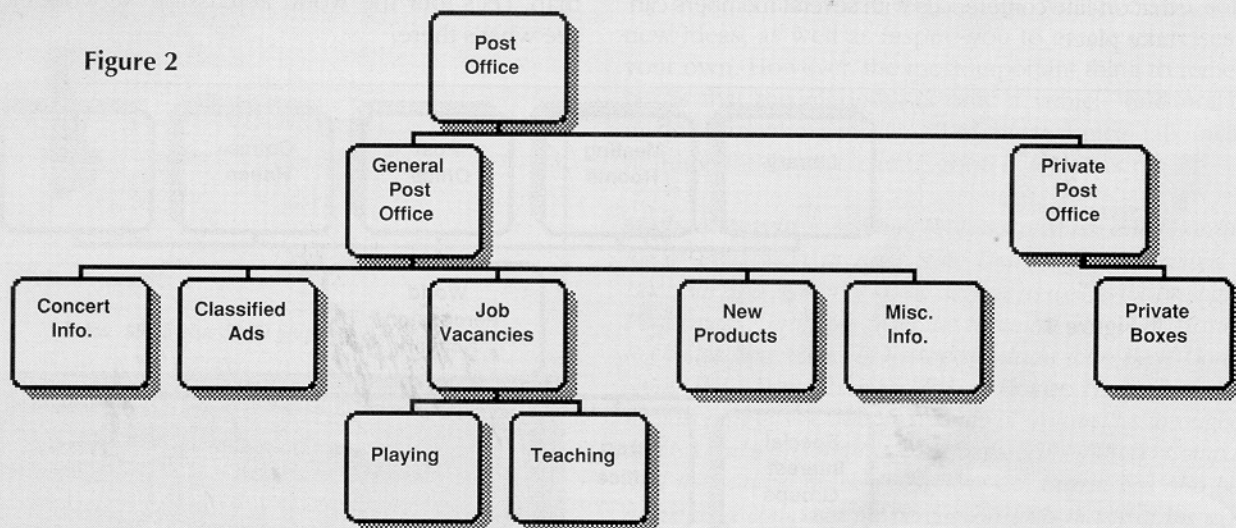
**Sysop Office**—The sysop (system operator) is the person who runs the World Percussion Network. Members could talk to the sysop while in this building, lodge compliments or complaints, or make suggestions. On this visit, we're going to stop by just to say hello, and tell the sysop how much we appreciate his/her efforts.

**Library**—Just like the library in your city, The World Percussion Network's Library would serve as a storehouse of information about any topic concerning percussion. Unlike the Post Office and the SIG building, information kept in the library would not be "interactive." Instead, members with information to share would upload data to the library. Members wanting information would download data from the library.

All files in the Library could be included in an extensive, cross-referenced on-line card catalogue. The card catalogue would include information about the file's name, location, size, and data format. In the library you would find every article ever published in *Percussive Notes* (including any accompanying graphics). Simply search the topic, find the article, and read it on your computer's screen or download the file to read later.

At times, articles are not published in *Percussive Notes* due to excess length, or highly esoteric content. Articles not selected for *Percussive Notes* could still be offered in the Library. Papers presented during the Research Forums of PASIC conventions may find larger audiences in the Library. Students and teachers could upload their term papers, dissertations, research results, class syllabi for methods courses, or informational handouts for the benefit of everyone. Do you have a great listing of contemporary marimba literature? Upload the list to the Library and share it with your colleague! Doing a term paper on the differences between matched and traditional grip? Simply search the card catalogue for the proper topic, and…Bingo!
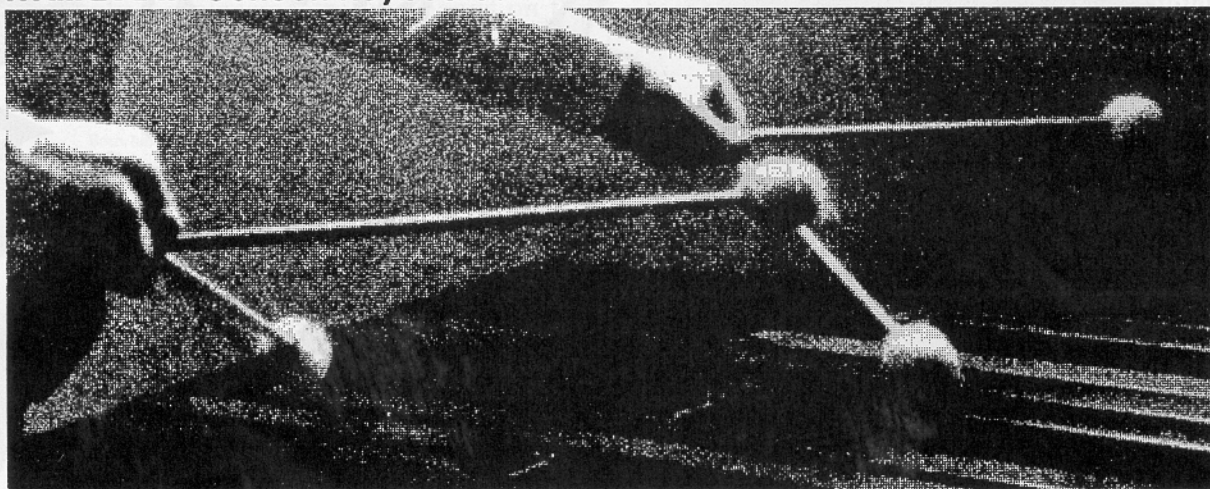
Composers could consider publishing their music in a "shareware" format. The composer would scan the score and upload it to the Network. The performer would then download the score and print it as a graphic file. It also would be possible to upload the score as a Standard MIDI File. After downloading, the performer could read the MIDI information with a computer notation program and print it out. If the performer is interested in keeping the score, he sends a payment to the composer. If not, then the score should be thrown away. It works (with some success) with software, why not with music?

The Library would hold sample files of digitized percussion sounds, and Standard MIDI Files of accompaniments, etudes, and other performance-based information. Looking for a computerized version of the flute part to Ingolf Dahl's *Duettino Concertante*? Search the Library!

So, what do you think? PAS is currently considering starting a committee whose responsibility would be to make the World Percussion Network a reality. The next step is gathering ideas from all interested members of PAS. The Network is now growing in the womb, and your ideas are essential to its future development.

If you would like to volunteer your time, talents, and energies, or if you have any input: ideas for materials that could be offered on-line, suggestions for new building, ideas concerning software or hardware requirements, legal matters, etc., please let us hear from you now. Help us take the next step. Any comments can be sent to Norm Weinberg, 4617 Sheffield, Corpus Christi, TX, 78411. ∎