



THE HARVEST INSTITUTE

REPORT

Summer 1999

A VISION BEYOND THE DREAM

SPECIAL Y2K ISSUE

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Y2K: What You Should Know

The Year 2000 problem, also known as Y2K or the millennium bug, may be one of the biggest problems facing our society as a result of our growing dependence on technology. Y2K related computer disruptions have already begun to occur and will likely increase as the year progresses. Experts predict that on January 1, 2000 the curtain will go up on a host of computer problems and flaws. The Y2K bug, although it is not a computer virus, will have an impact on Black America, whether the events forecast by some actually occur, or whether the predictions become self-fulfilling, or some combination of the two. Consequently, Black people need to fully understand the nature of the problem, as well as measures that they can take to insure the least amount of disruption and pain to their families, businesses, and communities.

What is this computer problem or bug? And, why can't we simply exterminate it before it causes damage? In the early days of computer programming when computer memory was scarce and expensive to install, programmers sought to save software space and memory by taking short-cuts. Instead of using a four-digit code for year dates, such as 1975, 1976, 1977, programmers chose to use only the last two digits of the year such as simply 75,76, and 77. The Y2K problem occurs because computers that use only two digits for the year will not be able to calculate the change from 1999 to the year 2000. Those computers will only see 00. As a result, they may freeze, shut down, or give incorrect data. This will occur in computer hardware and software with the problem as well as embedded chips that are mini-processors. *(Continued on page 6)*

The Harvest Institute Mission

The mission of The Harvest Institute is to foster economic and social self-sufficiency and competitiveness for Black America.

FAMILY IMPACT

How Should You Prepare for Your Family?

It is better to prepare and not need than not to prepare at all. The Red Cross has helped communities to prepare for and survive emergencies for years. The following are their suggestions for Y2K preparation. The Red Cross recommends stocking disaster supplies to last

from several days to a week. However, that recommendation is based upon the assumption that one would be able to get to one of their shelters for heat, food or other emergency assistance. Consider the likelihood of that probability in deciding the amount of supplies to stock. If there are Y2K problems, they

will be happening at many places at once. Emergency relief organizations may not be able to work as quickly as they would like. The Red Cross recommends that supplies include nonperishable foods, stored water and a supply of prescription and non-prescription medications that you regularly use. *(Continued on p. 2)*

Preparing Your Family

(Continued from p. 1)

Include ready-to-eat canned meats, fruits and vegetables, canned juices, milk, soup, staples like sugar, salt, and flour. Include vitamins, special foods for babies or the elderly or others on special diets. Store extra supplies of water. An active person needs to drink at least two quarts of water each day. You will also need water for cooking, sanitation, and pets.

Make arrangements with your doctors and insurance companies now so that you can have extra prescription medications on hand. Have physical and dental check-ups before the end of the year. If you have a serious or chronic medical problem, be sure to you have copies of your medical records. Find out who the health care professionals are in your neighborhood.

Get hard copies of all of your important personal business papers and keep close track of your business transactions this year, especially toward the end of the year. You may want a copy of your bank statements, retirement accounts, credit report, receipt of payment from all of your taxes, bills and mortgages in case of a dispute because of computer errors. Accurate recordkeeping will allow you to substantiate your claims.

Have extra cash or traveler's checks on hand in case electronic transactions involving ATM cards and credit cards cannot be processed. Plan to keep cash or traveler's

checks in a safe place. Pay off as many bills as you can.

Keep your car tank above half full.

In case the power fails, plan to use alternative cooking devices. Don't use open flames or charcoal grills indoors. Have extra blankets, coats, hats, and gloves to keep warm. If you purchase an alternative heating device, such as a wood stove, be sure that it is approved for use indoors. Be sure to install a battery powered carbon monoxide detector. Remember Kiddie carbon monoxide alarms were recently recalled. Have plenty of flashlights and extra batteries on hand. Avoid using candles for emergency lighting.

Have a battery powered radio or television to receive official information. If you use a portable generator, connect what you want to power directly to the generator; do not connect the generator to your home's electrical system. Keep your generator in a well ventilated area either outside or in a garage with the door open. Do not put a generator inside your home.

Check with manufactures of any essential computer-controlled electronic equipment in your home or business to see if that equipment is affected. This could include fire and security alarms, programmable thermostats, appliances, consumer electronics, garage door openers, electronic locks, or other electronic equipment that may be controlled by embedded chips.

USEFUL WEBSITES

It is ironic that the very technology that is at the root of the Y2K problem is the best source of information on how to prepare. Many in our communities do not have easy access to computers or to the Internet. In the spirit of a sense of community, those who have computer access, take the responsibility to find the information suggested and make it widely available to others in our community. If you do not have a computer, you can find assistance and computer access at a public library.

The following websites have useful information.

• **Red Cross** - www.redcross.org

This site includes information on how to treat water and food supplies for storage; and advice about using generators as replacement for electricity.

• Home page of Senate Special Committee on Y2K. Contains full report and latest news and press releases. www.senate.gov/bennett/y2k

• **Gifts-In-Kind** - www.giftsinkind.org

Gifts-In-Kind is an organization that has taken the lead in alerting non-profit organizations to the Y2K problems and helping them to prepare to minimize risk and disruption. This site has information about legal issues, check lists to assess and correct computer hardware and software problems. It also provides a list of supplies that a family and community will want to have available in case they are needed.

• **www.novay2k.org** The Northern Virginia Y2K group posts their experiences in working to prepare their community. On their website, they share information about their activities, the problems that

they encounter and research information.

This site links to sites that share information that one would want to consider for family preparations.

(Continued on p.3)

Not all Black people live in Black communities, but we all must have a "sense of community" or a recognition that, regardless of where we live our lives are connected. Share this information with those in the neighborhood where you live and with those with whom we share a 1/5-1/5 of community."

Is Your Business Y2K Ready?

Small and medium size businesses are at greatest risk of failure because of Y2K related problems according to the report of the Senate Special Committee and most experts. The majority of Black-owned businesses fall into these categories. Fixing the technological problems of Y2K is costly and time-consuming. Many small businesses have decided to risk the consequences. If you have not begun to prepare in your business, or the one that you work for, use the remaining time to assess your Y2K problem, make as many corrections as possible, test corrections, and make contingency plans. Be sure that your own equipment and software do not have a problem. Be sure that the companies on which you depend are making preparations.

Syntax is a consultant group that has been working to help both non-profits and for-profit groups prepare for business continuity and litigation that may result from Y2K.

This list of steps recommended by Syntax is targeted to businesses, but is helpful for family and community planning.

MORE USEFUL WEBSITES

Federal Emergency Management Agency (www.fema.gov) Issues updates on the activities of the federal agency that steps in when disasters, natural and man-made, strike. FEMA sponsors workshops for local emergency services managers, and provides sound insight into disaster planning around the U.S.

General Services Administration: www.gsa.gov. Click on 2000

Small Business Administration: www.sba.gov

National Association of Counties: www.naco.org/programs/

- 1** Set aside time to discuss “what if” scenarios. The awareness and problem solving skills that you develop in doing this exercise with your family, business and community, will be useful experience if it becomes necessary to respond to problems.
- 2** Assess your office operations to determine essential services and supplies. This may include: electricity, water, phone, food, water, cash, inventory and security systems. Walk through your office. Make a list of everything that is critical, that you cannot operate without, and plan ways to meet those needs.
- 3** Begin to assemble extra supplies for your business. For instance, when purchasing supplies make incremental increases, rather than buying extra large purchases later in the year when the demand and prices may be higher.
- 4** Conduct rehearsals. For example, if half of your workforce is unable to come to work on January 4, 2000 or their family needs them to be at home, what is the plan? Or if your main supplier cannot deliver products and your customer must have it, what do you do? Planning for the worst does not mean that you believe it will happen. It means that, you have a contingency plan to address adverse circumstances that may occur.
- 5** Keep back up and hard copies of critical information that is stored in your computers or those of your suppliers about your company.
- 6** Get to know your office neighbors and share information on preparedness with them.

For more information, check their website at Syntax@syntax.com.

Message from the President

Y2K and Black America

by Dr. Claud Anderson

When Black Americans assess their preparedness to survive the Y2K problems, they must look beyond the effects that will occur in the next century because of faulty microprocessor chips and computer systems. The bigger issue is that of technological dependence and there are clear racial implications.

*Those who do not control and own resources **in their own community** in the next century will be at peril*

Just as dominant white society is now at risk because it has become overly dependent upon computer-driven technology, Blacks are vulnerable because they have allowed themselves to become nearly totally dependent upon the dominant society and its ethnics for life's basics - food, water, energy.

Whether the inability to provide one's family with food, water and energy is caused by technological failures or ideological naivete, the results will be the same.

Those who do not control and own resources **in their own community** in the next century will be at peril.

The government spin-doctors assure us that Y2K corrections are progressing well. We hope so, but we see that the Treasury Department has printed \$55 billion in extra currency in anticipation of high demand for cash from banks. We see urban military practice maneuvers in Oakland, California and military tanks stationed in armories inside Detroit, Michigan. We see increased military visibility within other Black and economically marginal communities. We see an increase in the number of white police officers hired in majority Black cities. We see government preparing for problems, perhaps even civil unrest. History teaches us to be wary.

Our fates are all connected. In this race-based society, we have a responsibility to make our team strong so that we can take care of our own needs, compete, and enjoy the rewards of winning.

Some Black Americans have downplayed Y2K, charging that it is a "white problem", asserting that Black people do not have anything to lose. Nothing could be further from the truth. Black Americans are a dependent underclass and will be until they build their own communities. Even if the Y2K problem causes only a "glitch" in the dominant white society, it is predictable that when white society catches a cold, Black people will catch pneumonia.

Based on past experiences, Black people, if anybody, ought to be concerned. We have porous neighborhoods in which we simply eat and sleep. A residential neighborhood is a poor substitute for a community. White society

and its ethnic subcultures, have functional communities in which to store their cultural resources and group's security. Their communities are independent and operate on an alternative economic structure, and code of conduct. They have control of institutional resources. They can sustain themselves. They do not have to go to a Black neighborhood for essentials. It is just the opposite with Black people. Everything Black people need is within a competitive group's community and control.

We know from the past, that during a crisis other groups, businesses, or communities do not welcome Blacks looking for a place to go. The reality is that we do live in a race-based society. As a race, we have made many mis-

Y2K and Black America

(Continued from p.4)

takes that have weakened us. Let the coming problems move us to strengthen our communities and our sense of community, with the understanding that regardless of where we live, whatever our income or education, whether we want to be or not, all Blacks are on the same skin-color team.

Our fates are all connected. In this race-based society, we have a responsibility to make our team strong so that we can take care of our own needs, compete, and enjoy the rewards of winning.

Let Black America use whatever disruptions do occur during the next several years, to refocus our efforts, to reclaim their communities, to make them strong, fill them with essential resources and build them into our depositories for wealth and culture and sustainability.

The Harvest Institute's Empowerment & Justice Award

The Harvest Institute presented the first John Horse Awards at a fundraiser hosted by its Detroit affiliate, Hood Research in Detroit, Michigan on May 22. In the spirit of John Horse who stood up for and defended Black people for 50 years, the awards went to Charles Kelly, publisher of the Michigan Citizen Newspaper, Theo Broughton and Reggie Crawford, co-founders of Hood Research and Ernest Johnson President of the Community Coalition.

The Harvest Institute's Empowerment and Justice Award inscription:
 "In the fighting spirit of Chief John Horse, a Black runaway slave, who between the years of 1814 and 1854, with a band of slaves and Seminole Indians, fought white slave holders and the United States military across the South and into Mexico, and was the only Black person to ever force the United States government into negotiating a treaty with Black people, The Harvest Institute on this 22nd day of May, 1999 does hereby recognize (the recipient) for their dedicated effort to unite, advocate for, defend, and guide Black Detroiters toward empowerment and racial justice."

-Dr. Claud Anderson

PowerNomics Quote

The first thing every immigrant group does is to build a community of people who look, talk and behave alike. Black people have been conditioned to seek neighborhoods and integration and therefore do not have one single community in which to store its cultural values, wealth, businesses, income, unity sense of security, political power and other human resources.

-Dr. Claud Anderson

Y2K: What You Should Know (Continued from p. 1)

Now you can see the problem. Computers and embedded chips run or perform critical tasks in almost every automated function of our daily lives.

According to the Public Technology, Inc., there are an estimated 25 million microprocessing chips. While only one to two percent (or up to 500 million) are expected to fail, it is not possible to predict which ones are date sensitive and which ones are not. Computers and embedded chips run everything from coffee makers, utility company generators, bank automatic teller machines (ATM), airplane navigational instruments, airport luggage systems to many processes in our grocery food supply chain. With their fabricated intelligence, computer driven processes interlink with and “talk” to other technology all around. In many cases, we will not know which computers, and the functions they perform are affected until after 12:00 midnight on December 31, 1999.

Why can't the Y2K bug be corrected before New Year's Eve?

Numerous technological repairs exist to correct Y2K problems, however, human frailties make guaranteed solutions impossible. First, no human knows where all the 25 billion embedded microprocessor chips are. Second, we do not have the trained technicians or computer programmers to go out, find, and re-program every soda machine, elevator, security system, or medical device. Third, all computer programmers are not equal. Some programmers are putting in as many computer errors as they are taking out. Fourth, some essential microprocessors are in locations that are inaccessible or difficult to access such as satellites in orbit. And, fifth, there is simply not enough time to correct what computer programmers should have corrected during the last forty years.

Today, there is insufficient information to know for certain how widespread the computer failures will be or how long it will take to correct the problem. The problem could last a week or could take ten years or more. We will not know until the affected computers and embedded chips begin to shut off, miscalculate or give out erroneous data and information.

In assessing the nation's preparedness the report labeled the health care industry as one of the least prepared and that it "...carries a significant potential for harm."

What is being done about the problem?

Both the federal government and private corporations are taking Y2K seriously and are working to bring their systems into compliance.

Many have publicly announced that they have solved the problem. They are free of the bug. Others have admitted that they simply do not have the time, money or sufficient technical assistance to correct their systems. The United States Senate Special Committee on the Year 2000 Technology Problem, issued the most comprehensive assessment today and warned that “Y2K risks are widespread.” The report concluded that, “a number of foreign countries and U. S. economic sectors appeared at risk for technological failures and business disruptions.” In assessing the nation's preparedness the report labeled the health care industry as one of the least prepared and that it “...carries a significant potential for harm.” Rural and inner city hospitals are at special risk due to the lack of resources.

The Harvest Perspective: While various levels of government and major corporations are preparing, for what eventualities will occur internally, there is little evidence that they are making efforts to assist economically marginal communities, especially Black communities, to deal with the wide range of uncertainties they might face. Black communities must ask their utility companies, hospitals, federal, state and local governments, and Black elected officials what they have done to assure continuity in Black America.

Our churches and other community organizations must take the lead and help families and communities find out the local facts, then work together so that we all transition as smoothly into the next century.

What About Your Home Personal Computer?

If your personal computer was manufactured in 1997 or later, or is a Macintosh, your computer's system software is probably safe. Older computers manufactured as recently as 1995 that operate on Microsoft DOS or Windows system software will likely need a system upgrade or patch to function properly. A patch is a piece of software you can get from the company that made your computer and install yourself to fix Y2K-vulnerable code in the operating system. Contact the manufacturer of your PC for details. You can also log on to the Web site for the National Standards Testing Laboratories (www.nstl.com) for more information and test programs you can download. Lycos' Millennium Web Guide at www.lycos.com/computers/y2k offers downloads of y2k solutions, system checks and compliance texts.

You should also contact the company that published the software you use to determine whether date sensitive software such as scheduling or finances, is compliant. The company should also be able to provide help with patches or upgrades. As an extra precaution, make backup disks and hard copies of all your important files and continue to update them throughout the year.

Even if your system software is Y2K ready, take precautions to protect data files.

The FCC has urged consumers not to use their phones unless absolutely necessary on December 31, 1999 and for several days into the new year.



Even if your computer is Y2K compliant, take precautions and backup your files and keep hard copies of your important documents!

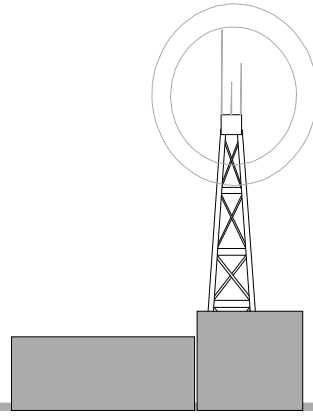
Y2K Status of Telecommunications

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) released a report on the status of Y2K remediation in the communications industry. The report covers five sectors - wireline telephones, wireless telephones, broadcast television and radio, and satellite, and emergency services.

The report concluded that the larger companies were making progress correcting Y2K problems. While they cannot guarantee that customers will have no Y2K-related problems, the FCC generally assessed that for most of the customers of large companies, service disruptions will be minor and remedied quickly. Many of the small and medium size companies have not addressed the problems in a way that satisfied the FCC.

The FCC urged consumers not to use their phones unless absolutely necessary on December 31, 1999 and for several days into the new year. Consumer cooperation will help prevent telephone equipment from becoming overwhelmed and breaking down.

Low Power Radio Service Proposed



On January 28, 1999, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) proposed to license new 1000 watt and 100 watt low power FM radio stations, and also sought comment on establishing a third microradio class at power levels from 1 - 10 watts. This new class of service would produce signals that covered approximately 8.8 miles to 3.5 miles. By way of comparison the range of signal strength in full service stations generally ranges anywhere from about 3,000 to 100,000 watts. The FCC intends for the proposed stations to be low-cost means of serving urban communities and neighborhoods, as well as populations living in smaller towns and communities.

Many questions remain for the FCC to answer. It must decide, for instance, whether these new stations will be commercial or non-commercial or whether educational institutions should be the best licensees. Cities, community groups, elementary schools and universities, immigrant groups, native American tribes, independent musicians, churches, entrepreneurs and many other groups and organizations support the new service and want licenses to serve their constituents. There are also many strong and vocal opponents.

The FCC will accept comments from the public until June 1, 1999. Although it is not possible to estimate when or whether this service will come into existence, the process has begun.

The Harvest Institute Perspective:

The Telecommunications Act of 1996 lifted caps on the number of radio stations a single entity could own nationwide from 18 to essentially as many as a company could afford. The result was a period of aggressive purchase and consolidation in the radio industry. Today, three years after the Telecom Act became law, there are entities that own over 600 radio stations, or more than 20% of the 12,000 stations in this country. In this acquisition frenzy, it is no surprise that Black ownership has declined. It is no surprise that white owners have canceled many radio programs that informed and communicated specifically with the Black community and offered insights about the Black community to others in the audience. After allowing the most valuable radio frequencies to be gobbled up by white moneyed interests, it is no surprise that the government would offer a consolation prize such as micro radio that is tentative, weak and has no clear purpose.

The issue of race cannot be avoided in a discussion of media ownership. There is an undisputed white monopoly by whites of media outlets. Control of the media, information, images and values that are promulgated, rest with those who have ownership and control. The media is a bold example of an industry that had its beginnings during a time when it was unthinkable that Blacks could own media outlets.

Even today, Blacks do not own more than 2% of the radio and television stations that are currently licensed by the United States government. The economic disparity between Blacks and whites is now structural and self-perpetuating.

The stark greed in the radio industry is an example of the structural systemic preferences for whites. Federal, state and local governments all passed and enforced the laws of slavery and Jim Crow that created today's legacy of Black economic circumstances. No other immigrant group, gender or native group was subjected to those legal parameters. No other group was prohibited by government policy from gaining assets and wealth. Government policies, then, should be held responsible to offer some corrective measures to Blacks.

So much policy has locked out Blacks permanently. Low-power radio is a minuscule offering, but we should not let it pass. Blacks should receive special corrective preferences based upon the economic rights guaranteed to Blacks in the 14th Amendment and the Civil Rights Law of 1867. Watch the development of low power radio and be prepared to file applications if the service is approved.



PowerNomics Corporation of America
Releases...

Black Labor, White Wealth: The Search for Power and Economic Justice

by Dr. Claud Anderson

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250 pages



This powerful book is a classic in Black America. It is the definitive analysis on race in America and tackles the hard issues and questions in a factual, useful and fascinating manner. It illuminates the problem but also offers solutions. It is a must read.

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