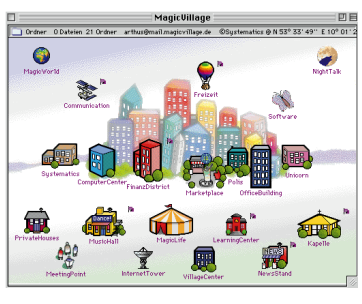# SOFTARC
The Messaging Company™

The Virtual Community "MagicVillage"

Based on FirstClass, MagicVillage is a communications platform for Macintosh and Windows users run by the company Systematics.

MagicVillage offers the 'citizens' of its virtual city online-chat as well as information on sport and hobbies. Navigation through the various parts of the city is facilitated through the provision of colourful icons, background pictures and sounds as well as signs such as "Computer Centre", "Finance District", "MagicLife", "Market Place" and "Music Hall". The MagicVillage is available to each registered user free of cost for thirty minutes daily. Coupled with this free usage is a worldwide Internet e-mail address. Those who wish to stay online for a longer period of time or who wish to take the leap into the Internet can purchase one of several different types of accounts on offer.

MagicVillage was established approximately four years ago by the Hamburg based Macintosh dealer, Systematics, which has branches throughout Germany. Systematics CEO, Fritz Borgstedt, attributes their decision to base MagicVillage on the communications software, FirstClass, to two essential factors.

FirstClass enabled computer users to be brought into the Online-World in as problem-free a manner as possible. They were not immediately confronted with the unstructured mass of the Internet but instead were presented with a user-friendly graphical interface which they were already familiar with.

Secondly, FirstClass allowed for a very easy connection to MagicVillage. Connection over modem is possible at the click of a mouse making it easier for less experienced users to also participate in the online experience. FirstClass was the only system in the market which satisfied both these demands. Dialing in with the pre-configured settings likewise presents

no hurdle for the 'computer layman'. The interface can be customized with pictures and icons and individual sounds contribute towards the creation of a unique atmosphere.

The MagicVillage also serves the purpose of a marketing instrument for both existing as well as aspiring Mac users. Users of other computer systems can also offer information relating to the Mac. From this perspective, it was important to find a cross-platform system which could be run as easily on a Mac as on a Windows machine. FirstClass came up trumps once again.
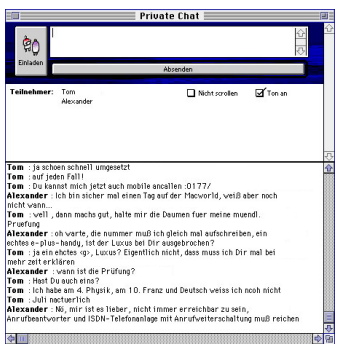
Approximately 6000 registered users regularly use the virtual city. 30 modems for direct dial-up as well as 30 modems and 30 ISDN lines for dial-up over the Internet are available for these 6000 users. In addition to that, each of the 12 Systematics Apple-Centres are equipped with 10 modems for connection to MagicVillage.

The FirstClass software runs on one Power Macintosh G3 266 MHZ. A further G3 computer handles all the FirstClass Internet services including on-the-fly HTML conversion which enables all conferences and user data to be accessed via a standard browser such as Netscape and Explorer as well as over the FirstClass client. An extensive offer of shareware, Software-Updates and important Mac news are made available to Users within MagicVillage. Online-Chat can be used for the speedy exchange of information.

Certainly the free accounts in MagicVillage play a role in the high number of users. Indeed for the younger generation, the 'customers of tomorrow', who often cannot afford expensive Internet access, MagicVillage offers an optimal introduction to the Online-World.

Many professional users, especially from the creative branch, are utilizing MagicVillage for information exchange with their colleagues. The goal of making the entry into the realm of electronic communication easy has undoubtedly been achieved with approximately 25% of users being over the age of 40.

Fritz Borgstedt is looking forward to providing his customers with the new functions of FirstClass Intranet Server 5.5. For him, FirstClass was and still is the only functional solution for a virtual community like MagicVillage. Systematics searched for a system which would provide its users with the familiar Macintosh interface, which would be easy to use

and could be dialed into at the click of a mouse. The FirstClass software from SoftArc proved to be the perfect solution, not only because it provided all this but because it could also be administered and configured remotely from the FirstClass client.

About SoftArc:

SoftArc Incorporated is a leading developer and manufacturer of enterprise-wide, cross-platform group communication software. The company's flagship product, FirstClass, integrates advanced email with online group collaboration, remote access, forms processing, enterprise database access and online information services. FirstClass Intanet Server and Firstclass Collaborative Classroom are based on the core FirstClass technology and offer the same ease of use, functionality and robust performance over network or modem and operates in Windows, Mac OS, DOS, OS/2 and terminal emulation environments. The product has been commercially available since 1989, and has developed an enthusiastic user-base of over seven million users in businesses, educational institutions, governments and private individuals at more than 25,000 sites in 55 countries. SoftArc is supported by a world-wide network of resellers. The company's headquarters are based in Markham, Ontario, Canada.

For more information visit SoftArc's education website at: www.softarc.com and www.education.softarc.com

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