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  11:16  03/07/09  database BBS
  Last On: 03/07/09  Node 1  Up 4 days 1
  FirstOn: 31/01/08  Calls 822 of 278

  List/Flag Files      File Area Selection      File Search
  L List files in dir  J Jump to new file area  F Find text in descrip
  N New file scan      * List directories      S Search for filename
  E Extended file info /* List libraries

  Upload/Download      { } # Select directory  Other Commands
  D Download file      [ ] /# Select library   & File scan config
  U Upload file        Go to                   R Remove/edit file
  /D Download from user Q Main/Message section  I Information
  /U Upload to user    C Chat section          U View file contents
  Z Upload to sysop   T Temp dir/Archive cmds /L Node activity
  B Batch/Bi-dir xfers

  Anytime | Ctrl-U Who's online Ctrl-P Send private msg Ctrl-C Abort cmd/text
  File 0:02:29 (2) Atari (13) utils: _
```

Once upon a time, a long time ago, in a Galaxy Far, Far away.....No wait...that's a different story, but it does seem appropriate. It seems forever ago that the Internet did not exist and early PC users were finding ways to communicate, exchange files, programs, data, and ideas. Before we had the internet we had phones and modems. I remember how excited I was to get my first 300 baud modem....yea that's right I said 300 baud. These Bulletin Board Systems or BBS systems were the cutting edge for PC users and if you were a Sysop (pronounced SIS OP) you were a man of power and influence. Girls would flock to your door, people would give you free meals at the best restaurants, you would have money to burn...oh wait...sorry that was in the Galaxy far away...not the one I lived in.

In any case if you were a Sysop you did get a certain amount of respect for taking the trouble in helping the user community by paying for an extra phone line (s) and dedicating a PC to the task of running the BBS. Yes I was a Sysop and it was rewarding to hear the phone ring and see users taking advantage of my system. There were online games (you took turns as you dialed in), a sort of early email which was rather interesting.

If you wanted to send an email to a friend far away you would log into the BBS and send it. Late at night the BBS would call the next BBS in the chain to relay the messages for that day, and then that one would call the next and so on and so on. Usually this chain would be local calls from BBS to BBS across the country but there were a few gaps and the Sysop's of the BBSs that were not close enough forked over the cost to pay for a long distance call...these were the heroes. It usually took a day or two for your email to get across the country, sometimes it never got there but usually it did.

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The Searchlight BBS
(516) 238-0100
Smithtown, NY

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| [-----] |
| TRS-80 | --- |
| MODEL III | --- |
| [-----] |
|-----|
|-----| Volksmodem
|-----| 1200
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|-----| Disk Drive
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## **BBS Beginning of the Internet?**

Sunday, 17 January 2010 21:19

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A BBS was also a great place to exchange programs and files, talk about computers etc. They were very much like Forums are today but much slower and more local. If you wanted you could usually go see someone you had messaged with as every one was within local calling distance. Today the BBS is almost unheard of but should be remembered. The BBS was the first main stream way for the average user to have what we all take for granted today, the internet. Granted it was more limited but the basic functionality was all there. Games were fun too....and by the way, all you former BBSers know you have to call right at midnight to be the first one to get a turn in on Space Empire. So set your alarms or I will log in before you and destroy your planets tonight!!!