comp Am

Y2K: Out of the Big Blue Sky

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To the tune of *Out of the Clear Blue Sky* by Dr. J. Robinson

Am G
Once in a darkened office cube
F E
A hacker peered into his tube
Am G
And saw a vision of despair
F G
Of bugs and crashes everywhere
C G
Followed by chaos and woe
F E Am
From arithmetic overflow.
Am C
The hacker put a message on the Net
Dm E
That said "you folks had better not forget:
That soon"

Am
The century is ending at last
Am
And when it does your systems will crash
G
When date fields overflow it will be long ago
Am
No way to be a hero
G Em E7 Am
And only printed paper will survive Year Zero

The CIO of one large bank
Said "customers have me to thank
For noticing that EBCDIC
In two-byte fields has 16 bits.
We'll update all our files in place
And not use up a bit more space."
The hacker said "I'm not completely sold–
I think I'll take my balance out in gold.
Because. . . "

A unix wizard said, "You know
We solved that problem long ago
Our date and time are binary
Seconds since 1970,
We'll recompile in time enough
Don't bother me with mainframe stuff."
The hacker said "I don't think you should wait–
You only have till 2038.
Meanwhile. . . "

A tycoon with huge market share
Said "Trust me, I control software
And I can say just what all fields
Contain and what a function yields;
So you can just sit back and wait—
It's fixed in Windows 98."
The hacker said "I'm sure you'll have it done
In time for Christmas in 2001."

At last the year changed, on the dot
From 99 to double-ought.
Just as the hacker had expected
For clocks cannot be write-protected.
On New Years' morning people woke to groan,
"Oh dreadful day—if only we had known
But now

The century has ended at last
And when it did our systems all crashed
Our date fields overflow; now our programs won't go.
No way to be a hero
And only printed paper has survived Year Zero."

Yes calendars on paper have survived. . . the programmers and hackers have survived. . . VMS and Unix have survived. . . the beta release of Windows Zero is expected on January 1st*, 1970. . .*

Those fortunate people who have not encountered the Extended Binary Coded Decimal Interchange Code will want to know that "EBCDIC" is pronounced "EBB-suh-dick."

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