Capsule summary of meeting with Quantum folk, October 7-8, 1985, at their
    offices in Vienna, VA.

On Monday morning I met with Mark Seriff, Ken Huntsman and Janet Hunter of
Quantum. Mark is VP for engineering and product development. Janet is one of
their programmers and is the person who will be doing the software at their
end for this project. Ken is another techie and will be acting as confidant
and backup for Janet.

First, they gave me a demo of the system. First impression: nothing fancy but
at least it's *cheap* to use. That's good. These things have in the past
always been too expensive to be a mass-market phenomenon.

We discussed the general form of the project before lunch. We talked mostly
generalities, each side just getting a feel for where the other was coming
from. I think we understand each other pretty well. Midmorning Mark had to
duck out for another meeting. Ken then gave an overview of their system
architecture. It is fairly complex but the details do not impinge
significantly on our design. I loaned them my copy of the current set of
complete technical documentation, which they set their secretary to copying
for them while we went to lunch.

Went to lunch with Janet and Ken. Usual techie smalltalk. They explained the
origin/organization of their business and where all the various names and so
on came from. Basically, there was a company called Control Video Corporation
that originally had some scheme to combine telecommunications with the Atari
2600 VCS for downloading video games. It was a bust, of course, owing to the
collapse of the video game industry. Quantum Computer Services is CVC reborn.
Commodore, when they decided they wanted to push this thing, felt that the
financial and legal entanglements which CVC had wrapped itself in were too
messy to do business with, so they formed a new corporation to shuck of the
debris associated with the old. They were not specific but apparently some of
this "debris" includes some of the original business people who were
associated with CVC but who were viewed as undesirable in the new business
deal.

Came back from lunch. We discussed technical details at some length. I gave
them a quick walk-through of the current set of documentation as well as an
explanation of where the holes in it were, and what parts of the design were
still open versus what parts had been designed but not yet written down.
Spent some time with Janet going over specifics of what would have to be
implemented at their end and how it would work, as well as going into some of
the specifics of what would be happening in the system at my end (the latter
so they could see where their piece fit into the big picture). Consensus was
that what we were asking their system to do was not at all unreasonable and in
fact was perhaps placing less of a burden on the host than do some of the
services which they are already offering. They also felt that the components
they would be responsible for were quite simple and would not pose any
particular implementation difficulties. Talked with Janet about potential
"gotchas" in the implementation and I think we managed to find and kill the
few that there were.

Mark rejoined us and we talked some more about things in general terms. They
provided me with a copy of the Commodore 64 software package for using their
system and encouraged me to get on the system, both to familiarize myself with
it in greater depth and to establish a stabile communications channel with
them. Meeting broke up around 3:30pm when we couldn't think of any more
unresolved issues to resolve or questions to ask each other.

Tuesday Steve Arnold had arrived. He and I met with the same set of Quantum

people for lunch, at which we briefed him on the events of the previous day. Midafternoon Steve and I went into a meeting with Mark Seriff, Clive Smith from Commodore, and several people whose names I forget: the president of Quantum, Quantum's software contracts lawyer, and another person whose role was vague.

Prez opened meeting by saying that he was real excited about doing this, that there was no question that they wanted it, and that his main concern was to come up with a temporary business arrangement that could let the technical types get to work right away while the permanent arrangement was being thrashed out. Talk then went on for a while about what this would involve. Steve says, basically, they have to give us a letter of intent and a check.

Then their lawyer gets into the act and starts messing things up by trying to mold the business arrangement into the model he is most familiar with: basically, they pay us money, we give them software, they own software. Much back-and-forth proceeds with Steve attempting to enlighten him as to the nature of creative work as opposed to engineering. Lawyer asks lots of questions, striving for position of superiority. We hold ground. No conclusive outcome.

I give Clive and associates presentation with storyboards explaining what system will be like. They ask lots of probing questions which we answer to their (apparent) satisfaction. Clive says he wants a proposal document which describes in specifics what we are going to do (mentioning particular deliverables and so on) which Quantum can take to investors to explain what the heck their money is buying them. This will probably be a re-packaged version of some of our current documents together with storyboards, screen mockups and some animation to give the presentation a little visual pizzazz.

More business discussion proceeds with lawyer continuing attempt to rip us off. Even prez seems a bit annoyed at this.

They talk some about what they want. They want all the possible features. They want the full system plus everything. They want an Amiga version. They want the avatar customization toolkit. They want the turf customization toolkit. They want packages for third party software development on the system. They don't want to pay for any of it.

Discussion ranges ever specifics of the experience that we are creating. We get everyone talking about philosophical and ethical ramifications of what they are doing. Very interesting conversation. Important Things are discussed but nothing is concluded other than that they realize that we have some Hard Problems to solve that are not just technical in nature. Another interesting observation is that they all start using the jargon which I proposed ("avatar", "turf", etc.) as if they had been speaking it all their lives. I always feel very self-conscious about introducing new terminology, but they took to it much more readily that I had ever imagined was possible. This may be a reflection of their desire to have the system.

A person named Chris (last name?) who is Quantum's customer service director (?) comes in and gives Steve a demo of their system in operation. Also, they give us a bunch of copies of their C64 system disk so that lots of us in Marin can get on Q-Link. Also also, Clive gets us copies of a bunch of Amiga software.

We go out to dinner with Clive, prez and are joined by Steve Chasen (name?) who is Quantum's marketing VP. Discussion is mostly about the nature of the experience itself and what it will do to people. Again, very interesting but abstract and philosphical rather than directly related to the business at

hand. At least they appear to understand what the important issues are, however.