Hack-Tic Light

Buying a country code?

Finland (country code 358), according to the newspaper de Volkskrant of Saturday, March 13, has made a multi-million bid on the country code of the former GDR because the country quite likes the status that comes with having a two-digit country code. In this case, our proposal is that we sell off our '31' [the Dutch country code] for a few million and make do with that extra digit.
4-digit area code
The PTT[1] will soon introduce a 4-digit area code somewhere in the Netherlands. They are being secretive about the location, but according to our source within the PTT, we should take a good look at the large commuter towns in the middle of the country.

Hole in a floppy

There are two types of three-and-a-half-inch floppies for sale: the Double-Density (on PC: 720 kB) and High Density (1.44 MB) variant. At first glance, they only differ by an extra hole on the top left of the latter. Hack-Tic put it to the test and has been experimenting for a while with double-density floppies from various brands in which a hole has been punched. The computer now thinks it's a High-Density floppy and writes 1.44 MB on it, and this works perfectly. So you pay at least double the price for not getting a piece of plastic. You must have a screw loose.[2]

Build a Bluebox yourself

For the DIY builders of blueboxes, Teltone has developed the M-993. This chip takes a binary input and then generates the MF tones that the international telephone network loves to hear. For more information (also about a whole stack of other cool telecom chips), request the Teltone databook from Klaasing Electronics, tel: 01620-81600, fax: 01620-56500.
NS-Telecom?
Following the example of the American telephone company Sprint, which also started by renting out its railway cable network to third parties, the NS[3] now also wants to open up its cable network (mainly along the railway) for voice and data traffic from third parties. Apparently, the NS is betting that with 1992 in sight, the PTT monopoly has had its day.

Fingerprint as a PIN code

Because the magnetic strip isn't secure enough, Joh. Enschedé[4] wants to take things further for us. The solution: store everyone's fingerprints in a large system and have everyone identify themselves by placing their hand on a reader. Of course, we are being overly paranoid again if we see in this a fast and clever way to get the fingerprints of the entire Netherlands into a computer. This is becoming increasingly important now that the police are running the new, superfast HAVANK system, which finds the 'crook' at lightning speed using fingerprints.

06-3 number for support center

As part of the new audacity that, for now, is only being directed at students in this country, the student finance support center in many cities has an 06-3 number[5] that only plays a tape on which the caller is informed that it is very busy and that he/she should call back at another time. If you do get someone on the line, you can only hope they help you a little bit quickly. In any case, the money earned this way is used to close the deficit in the education budget. 06-3212137, thousands calling at the same time!
1991

[1]PTT: The former state-owned postal and telecom company in the Netherlands.
[2]You must have a screw loose: A literal translation of the Dutch idiom "een gaatje in je hoofd hebben" (to have a little hole in your head), which is a pun on the "hole in the floppy."
[3]NS: Nederlandse Spoorwegen, the Dutch National Railways.
[4]Joh. Enschedé: A renowned Dutch printing company, famous for printing banknotes and stamps.
[5]06-3 number: A type of premium-rate number in the Netherlands at the time, often used for information services.