TECHNOLOGY : Computers Face 9/9/99 in a Warmup to Year 2000

By ASHLEY DUNN

Sept. 8, 1999 12 AM PT

TIMES STAFF WRITER

A possible preview of the millennium bug is set to strike Thursday when computers will reach an unusual date that could cause some programs to malfunction.

Thursday is the ninth day of the ninth month of the 99th year of the century--a date that is recorded on some computers as 9/9/99. Year 2000 experts have long warned about this date, since it was sometimes used in the early days of computer programming, back in the 1960s, to mark the end of a data file.

As with the Y2K problem, few computer programmers back then thought their programs would survive until 1999 and could someday cause problems.

DoDots Exhibit 2062
Samsung v. DoDots - IPR2023-00701

Y2K repair work has routinely looked at this issue and most experts predict there will be few problems Thursday.

“It’s not something that will bring the house down, by any stretch of the imagination,” said Kazim Isfahani, senior Y2K analyst for technology research and consulting firm Giga Information Group. “We don’t anticipate any problems.”

Several other critical dates have come and gone with few problems. These include the beginning of fiscal 2000 on July 1; the 99th day of the year on April 9; and, on Aug. 21, the rollover back to week zero for some receivers of the global positioning satellite system.

“With the passing of each successive critical date, the risk goes down of something happening on Jan. 1,” Isfahani said. “It’s certainly a positive sign that we are moving in the right direction.”

Beyond the well-publicized concerns related to the start of the year 2000, there are several other critical computer dates on the horizon. They include the beginning of the federal government’s fiscal 2000 on Oct. 1; the unusual leap year on Feb. 29, 2000; and the 366th day of the year on Dec. 31, 2000, which some programs may not be able to handle.

Ashley Dunn

DoDots Exhibit 2062
Samsung v. DoDots - IPR2023-00701

Ashley Dunn is the former weekend editor at the Los Angeles Times. He previously served as assistant managing editor in charge of California news. Dunn joined The Times in 1986 as a suburban reporter in the San Gabriel Valley and later moved to the Metro section, where he participated in coverage of the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake and the 1992 Los Angeles riots. After a stint at the New York Times, Dunn returned to Los Angeles in 1998 as a reporter and then editor in The Times' Business section. He later was named to run science coverage. He worked as deputy national editor from 2007 to 2011 and played a central role in the coverage of some of the biggest national stories of recent years, including the 2010 oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico and the 2008 election of President Obama. Prior to his career at The Times, Dunn worked at the South China Morning Post in Hong Kong, the Danbury News-Times in Connecticut and the Seattle Post-Intelligencer. Dunn is a California native who has worked as a dishwasher in Sacramento, a printer in San Francisco and a bicycle repairman in Walnut Creek. He has lived along the levees of the Sacramento Delta, the Powell-Hyde Street cable car line and the shaded streets of Pasadena. He is a graduate of UC Berkeley with a degree in English.

Copyright © 2024, Los Angeles Times | Terms of Service | Privacy Policy | CA Notice of Collection | Do Not Sell or Share My Personal Information