Perspectives

Y2K - Big Hoax or Threat of the Century?

Students Thoughts and Ideas

By Angie Seifert, Editor-in-Chief

Y2K, the year 2000 problem, is an issue that has caused one of the greatest levels of confusion the world has seen in recent history. Few people know what it is or have an exaggerated opinion of the issue. This makes it eminently important to gather viewpoints from several students and staff of Concordia. You will discover that

members of the Concordia community have a wide variety of beliefs surrounding Y2K. Is Y2K something to be concerned about, feared, or ignored? Maybe you have viewed the movie "Truman Show," where a man's life is centered around the media. Are we toys in the hands of the media, which uses its clever ploys to sell, sell, sell to its embarrassingly ignorant

audience? To some, Y2K is acting like a massive earthquake, causing the cults and self-ordained modern-day prophets to fear the wrath of God bringing destruction of the earth on 11:59:59 p.m., December 31, 1999. Acts 1:7a states, "It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority." Other individuals believe that the matter is under control, as

you will recognize in a few of the following quotes. Y2K is not an immediate issue and in some cases has received attention since the mid-80s. Perhaps Y2K is not the issue deserving the panic; maybe the panic itself should be our concern.

The following are perspectives of Concordia students and staff.

Rich Davenport, student

"I think it is all a conspiracy and the government is trying to use this as a scare tactic to control people. Okay, I am kidding. What I really think is it is going to be a lot of hoopla for nothing and is not going to have that big of an effect on society. I am pretty sure the U.S. government is going to take care of it."

Joel Knudsen, Network support staff

"The Y2K is an idea that the computer technology will somehow stop when the year 2000 hits due to that fact that the computers are geared to a certain year in the programming software utilized to operate the computer systems. The big fear is that when the year 2000 hits, a panic will occur because all technology that runs bank, traffic lights, security systems, hospitals, etc. will shut down. This is the theory. But others belief that nothing will really occur. The year 2000 is not the only date that can be considered a time to cause worry. There is a talk about September 9, 1999, because the number 9/9/99 is a shutdown code for certain protocols, not all."

Erin Johns, Information and Technology staff, student

"I don't think it is going to be a big deal. I think some smart computer person is going to have the whole thing fixed for us by that time. And nobody will even remember this whole thing. I think there are a lot of other major problems in the world and this is just another thing that the media is just trying to make a big deal about because it is just going to be the year 2000. Whenever there is a millennium thing coming up they have to come up with something to scare people with. I think that they are using computers because we depend on technology too much"

Michelle Dubois, student

"I don't think we have anything to worry about. I think that people are just blowing it out of proportion. It is just a change of numbers, no big deal. I think it is just going to be another day. The only thing we need to worry about is getting used to writing 2000, 19—.."

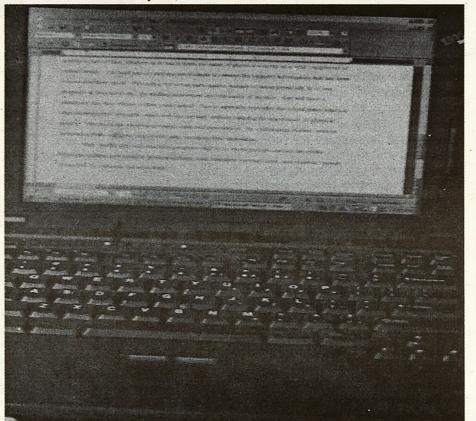
Eric Arundel, student

"The more people get worried and upset about it, the worse the problem is going to be, because people will take their money out of the bank, because they are worried it will get lost. The money in the bank is what keeps our economy going. Taking the money out of the bank could hurt the economy. From what I have read, the best

thing the government could have done was not say anything at all. But this is America and we would get in trouble if we did that."

Hallie Harris, student

"It has possibilities to affect airlines and the gauges on the planes. My parents refuse to travel on January 1st, because be anything to affect the daily life of the major part of the US and world citizens. I was concerned for a time, when I first heard of the problem, but that changed when I found out that the people in the computer industry have been working on it for a long time and it has only come to light because there are some people that like to cause a panic in the population.



there is the possibility that the computers on the plane won't function correctly. However, I think there is too much hype with the Y2K issue; it is just another way for people to make money. It is sad that a lot of cult groups say that the world is going to end. We don't know the time or the place. It is going to be all over the tabloids and overly exaggerated. They are saying on the news stock up for food, right. I understand why they are saying that, because the grocery stores computers could malfunction. In a way I understand, but in a way, I say if you know this is going to happen, do something about it ahead of time. Just recently I checked on deductions for tuition for my parents income tax and student accounts could not access the information. They did a Y2K update, but it crashed and they can't bring up anything for a few days. It is good to know that our school is doing something to plan ahead for the year 2000."

Robert Zellmer, Information and Technology staff, student

"In the year 2000 there might be minor problems with some of the minor systems in some homes but there will probably not There are some people that are blowing this problem way out of proportion to see what effect this will have on the people that hear it. It seems like a big social experiment meant to see the level of panic that can be reached by an unsupported theory about the changing of the millennia."

Mark Boehme, student

"The Y2K is something about computer crashes and something like the world is ending in a fiery crash; people getting killed by computers."

Laura Fisk, student

"I have some friends that have this plan for New Years Eve. They are going to get bottled water, food rations and stuff to keep them alive and also firearms and rifles. They are going to cause mass chaos and take over the world. My friends think that all law and order is going to be abandoned, so they will have firearms and they will be the law. I don't think my friends are really going to do this, but they say they are going to. They told me they are going to give some island in the Caribbean to me. Bill Gates is going to go down."

Rachel Swentko, student

"I think that people don't take it as seriously as they should. All the companies are saying that they are prepared. But I believe that there is much more involved than they say. All the third world countries are probably not preparing as well, so this might affect trading and world relations. In the conversations I have had with my parents, they say they are going to get food and water and possibly a generator. They say it might last a couple weeks. That is kind of a scary thought."

Kelly Bonk, student

"Y2K should be something that people should be concerned about and preparing for. The way I have heard it explained, it seems that some people will be affected. People need to be prepared for the panic that might happen worldwide, instead of just individually. More people need to be educated to the effects that it will possibly have on the community. So if there is a crisis, when you are prepared for some of the things that are about to happen, you can keep your head on your shoulders and help those that are going crazy. I read an article recently that said that Christians should use Y2K as an outreach opportunity. During times of tribulation, people are more receptive to the gospel."

Derek Woman, Coordinator of Computer Services

"Specifically, on campus a lot of the computers people are using are new, like the laptops, which are geared for the year 2000. The bigger systems that keep track of the grades did have some problems. We just finished an upgrade for that system. We have been working on this for a long time. It is not a new issue or not a surprise. It began to come up when we had prospective students that would graduate from here the year 2000 and beyond. A lot of information out there is really pessimistic. I have talked to other people that have been involved in this since the mid-80s. There will be problems but it won't be catastrophic. The biggest worry is that people could overreact. A lot of different organizations have plans, like the Federal Reserve will have extra money on hand in · case people will panic and take out more cash from the bank. The New York Stock exchange one weekend shut off the computers and reset the clocks pretending to trade in the year 2000. The real problem is not the big computer system, but the little self-contained chips. It will be things like a heater in a building built in the 70's will forget to turn on Jan. 1, 1999."