

**Y**ORB is an ongoing experiment in building an interactive virtual community. Viewers can reach YORB from their phone, computer, or television set. They can simply watch the neighborhood as it is displayed on cable, or they can participate by telephone. Up to four phone callers can be talking to each other live at the same time. One of these callers is designated as the pilot, who controls the journey through YORB by pushing touch-tone buttons on the phone.

Subscribers to Echo, a New York-based computer conferencing service, can also participate in YORB. When they enter the Echo chat area, everything they type appears live on the YORB TV screen. Sometimes they engage in conversations with the phone callers.

After they enter YORB, phone and computer participants can play music, games, or other cooperative activities. In Ritual Ground Zero, each participant controls nine different musical samples from the phone. In Daliwood, participants cooperate in unusual game activities. In the YorBar, participants can make cartoon characters "dance" to tunes they have selected. Viewers can also contribute to the virtual community by uploading graphics, sounds, or digital movies to the bulletin board system.

YORB uses off-the-shelf 3D and presentation software on the Macintosh to display a world model that is flexible, expand-

able, and easy for the average TV viewer to understand. The neighborhood is broadcast over normal cable TV lines, and a standard touch-tone phone serves as the set-top box. YORB's purpose is to help viewers feel that they can easily navigate and contribute to a virtual community in cyberspace.

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**Hardware/Software**

Macintosh Quadra  
 Full-screen Quicktime card  
 Touch-tone encoder  
 Two multimedia speakers  
 Macromedia Director  
 Strata Studio Pro  
 Touch-tone telephones

