TrackMan® Marble® FX Mouse
Logitech Inc.

Logitech, a well-established innovator and market leader of pointing devices — mice, trackballs, and joysticks — has delivered the answer to a trackball user's dreams: the TrackMan Marble FX ("Marble FX"). The Marble FX is constructed to efficiently perform virtually any pointing-related task under Windows 95. Similarly, the Marble FX is configured to ergonomically perform any such pointing-related task.

Unlike a conventional mouse which repositions a pointer or cursor on a computer display via hand movements across a flat surface, a trackball repositions the cursor via finger-controlled rotation of a ball. Most mice and trackballs internally relay this repositioning to the computer mechanically. The impact upon the user is that such mechanically operated devices tend to collect dirt and debris that ultimately causes pointer movements to become erratic; periodic dust removal and cleaning of internal contact points are prerequisite to proper continued operation. The Logitech TrackMan Marble, on the other hand, uses optical instead of mechanical internal components to deliver not only maintenance-free performance, but also superb reliability and accuracy. Indeed, the Marble detects trackball movements in a manner that emulates human eyeball-in-socket movements. The trackball portion of the Marble FX warmly receives a user's digits and palm, while the base portion comfortably snuggles onto a user's wrist; excellent ergonomics appears to be the rule.

But, there's more to the Marble FX story. Exploiting Logitech's novel optical sensing technology, it permits trackball access from either side, thereby enabling both finger operation for normal movements and finger-plus-thumb operation for precise movements. Also provided are four assignable buttons that minimize movements prerequisite to accomplishing virtually all functions under Windows 95 applications and Web browsers. For example, a suggested button assignment might be:

• Button 1 assigned to click/select, i.e., the normal left button activity.

• Button 2 assigned to "hyperjump," i.e., instant access to a 3 x 3 grid (each of 8 cells representing a Windows 95 function — the middle cell is empty) in which the user clicks an icon to jump to scroll vertically, scroll horizontally, open a window, close a window, resize a window, minimize a window, activate the Start applet, or access a full menu.

• Button 3 assigned to context-sensitive menu i.e., the normal right button activity.

• Button 4 assigned to "Cyberjump," i.e., instant access to a 3 x 3 grid (each of 8 cells representing a Web command — the middle cell is empty) in which the user clicks an icon to jump to scroll vertically, scroll horizontally, go back to the previous site, add a bookmark / favorite site, go to a bookmark / favorite site, or stop downloading.

As the icing on the cake, a button to which hyperjump and Cyberjump is assigned may also function as a frequently-needed double-click: to invoke a double-click, the user simply taps on the appropriate button, while to invoke hyperjump and Cyberjump a more deliberate finger-visit is required. Considering all of the mouse-oriented functions which are inherent under Windows environments, the cumulative savings of pointer movements is enormous. In short, the Marble FX should be seriously considered as a quintessential tool for activating the myriad functions available under Windows applications.