IRISH RESEARCH COUNCIL
An Chomhairle um Thaighde in Éirinn
This research is supported by the IRC Government of Ireland Postdoctoral Fellowship programme.

# Reanimating the CDLink platform: A challenge for the preservation of mid-1990s Web-based interactive media and net.art

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Department of Music
Trinity College Dublin

Engaging with Web Archives
#EWA20 Virtual
21 September 2020

http://www.xnet.com/~mkolmar/chaotic.html

INTERNET ARCHIVE WayBackMachine
http://www.xnet.com/~mkolmar/chaotic.html Go
24 captures
20 Dec 1996 - 15 Apr 2005
NOV DEC JUL
20
1995 1996 1999
About this capture

# CHAOTIC ENTERTAINMENT

You supply the CD, these will trash it for you.

Track: 1 Play

*The process of Sampling is here exposed for all to see.*

A CD which contains one long track is ideal. This process works well on "ambient" discs and CDs which are already chaotic played normally.

Track: 1 Play

*Dubious Motives for Unrepeatable Patterns*

This deconstructor operates on the track you specify and the track which follows, to create sparse sound structures. Any CD with at least two tracks should work well.

Track: 1 Play

*Spray of Miniature Excerpts*

This method breaks a section of the track you specify into tiny bits and throws them at you. Any CD should work fine.

CHAOTIC ENTERTAINMENT Interactive Sequencer

Please experiment with different discs. These methods will never play the same thing twice. You'll need to download and install a helper application called Voyager CD Link. An article about CD Link and Chaotic Entertainment appeared in *The Wire*.

---

You can look at a custom screen of RGB Noise.

---

If you are not seeing RGB Noise above, then download Netscape Navigator, which supports Java.

[ My Home Page | CCS Home Page ]

Mark Kolmar <mkolmar@xnet.com>

*Want to look sharp on the Web? I want to help you. HTML, CGI, sound design, etc....*

# Voyager CDLink

**<a href=”control.vcd”>**Track 1**</a>**

...browser downloads...

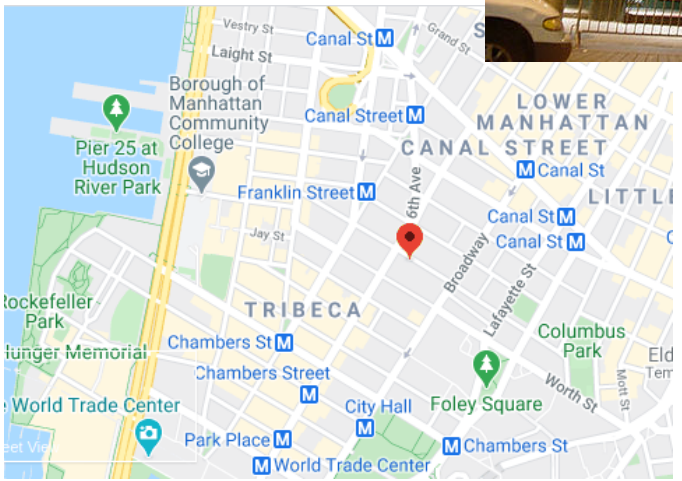
HTTP

audio CD controls

Interpreted by CDLink

**12 July 1995:**
CDLink Launched
@ Knitting Factory

Knitting Factory @ 74 Leonard St (c. 2006)
Photo: Gene Han
(CC BY-NC 2.0)

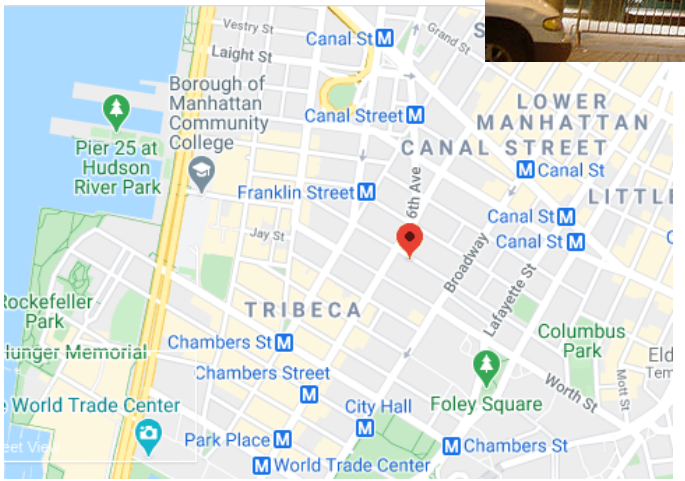



(Voyager Company press release, 1995)

“Voyager CDLink makes an end-run around the bandwidth bottleneck; that stack of discs gathering dust on the stereo represents a bundle of high-resolution digital media that's already been delivered to the user.”

**12 July 1995:**
CDLink Launched
@ Knitting Factory

Knitting Factory @ 74 Leonard St (c. 2006)
Photo: Gene Han
(CC BY-NC 2.0)

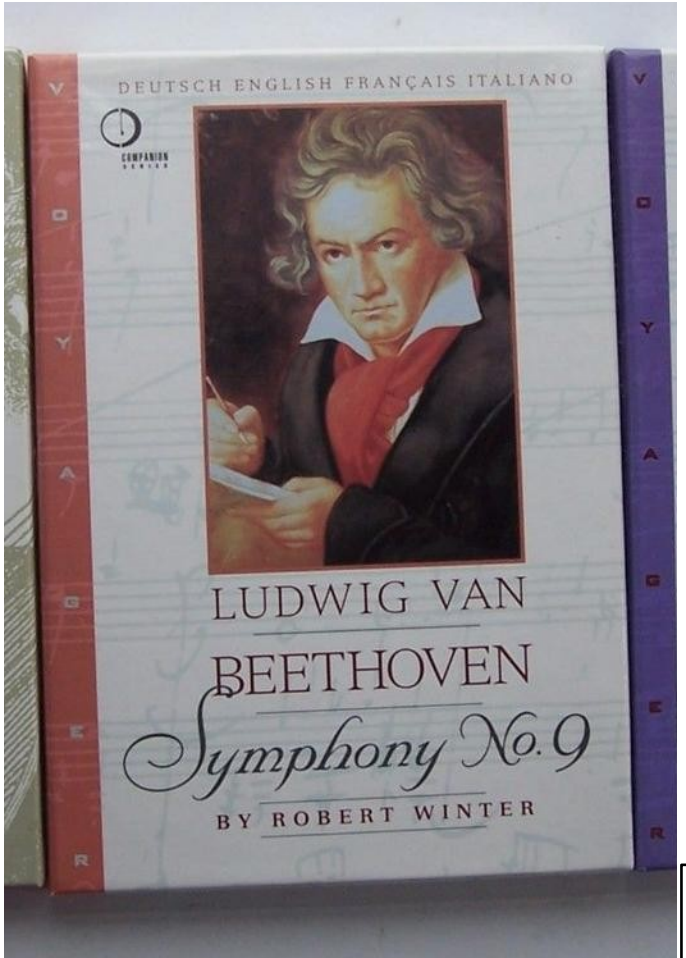



(Voyager Company press release, 1995)

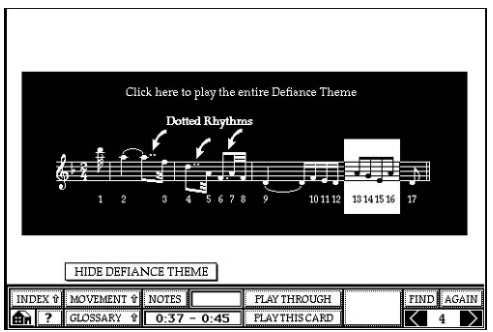
# The Voyager Company

Jon Turell, Bill Becker, Aleen Stein, and Robert Stein

1984 (CA → NY)

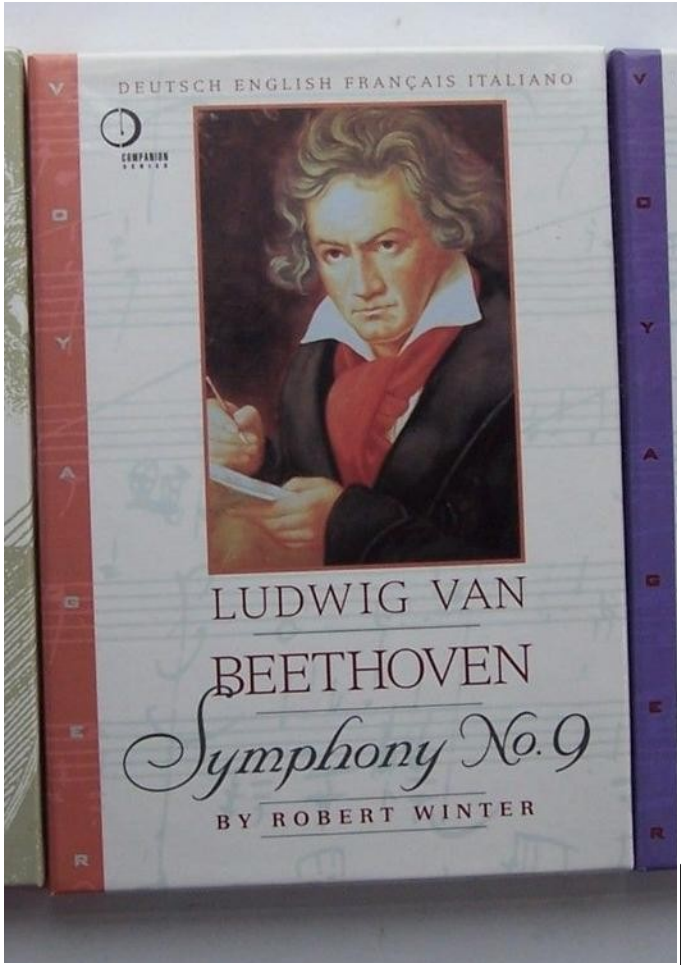


**HyperCard**



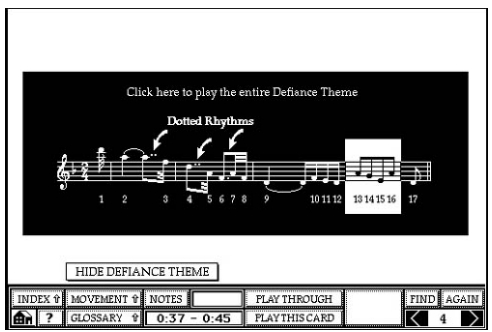

**1989**: floppy + audio CD
**1991**: mixed-mode CD

Product page (Wayback)
OCLC/Worldcat “all editions”




Product page (Wayback)
OCLC/Worldcat “all editions”

**HyperCard**




**1989**: floppy + audio CD
**1991**: mixed-mode CD

CD-ROM products (1996) (Wayback)

# *The Voyager CD AudioStack* (1990)

*MacUser*
January 1990, p. 294

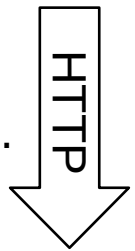
The Voyager CD AudioStack is a HyperCard tool kit for creating your own interactive CD-audio guides. The Event-Maker is one of the main tools. Once you've identified a particular passage of CD audio, you can automatically create a button that plays it from your stack.

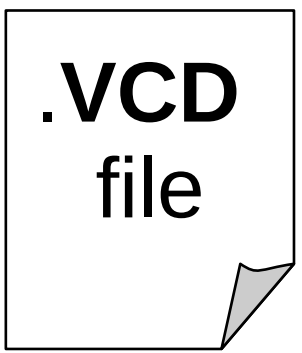
*MacUser*
November 1990, p. 88

# Voyager CDLink architecture

**<a href=”control.vcd”>**Track 1**</a>**

...browser downloads...

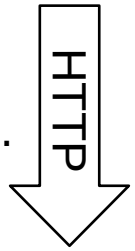


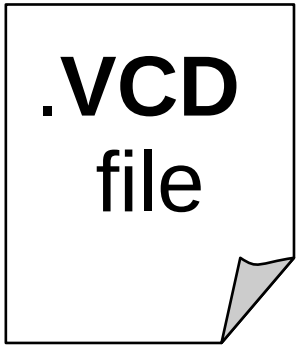



# Voyager CDLink architecture

**<a href=”control.vcd”>**Track 1**</a>**

...browser downloads...




Link to .VCD specification (Wayback)

**The VCD Control Language**

This section uses the following notation:

```
CAPITALIZED WORDS - A command or literal
Data in <>'s      - Required parameters
Data in {}'s      - Optional parameters
tmsf              - Track, Minute, Second, Frame (1/75th-second)
```

The "example usage" texts linked below represent the com
the linked text.

---

**PLAY {t,m,s,f}{,t,m,s,f}**

Example Usage:

```
[COMMANDS]
PLAY -- plays the CD from its current position, clearing any

[COMMANDS]
PLAY 03,01,00,00 -- plays from track 3, minute 1, second and

[COMMANDS]
PLAY 03,01,00,00,03,03,20,00 -- plays a 2-minute, 20-second
```

# Voyager CDLink architecture

**<a href=”control.vcd”>**Track 1**</a>**

...browser downloads...

HTTP

**.VCD** file

VCD lang

Windows 9x

CDLINK.EXE

ATAPI

VCD lang

Mac OS

Netscape Navigator

Extension

ATAPI

INTERNET ARCHIVE WayBackMachine
http://www.voyagerco.com/cdlink/registry/registry.html Go
18 captures
19 Dec 1996 - 16 Apr 2005
FEB JUN APR
1996 06 1997 1999

**THE CDLINK REGISTRY:**

Browse alphabetically by band name or artist's last name:

A | B | C | D | E | F | G | H | I | J | K | L | M | N | O | P | Q | R | S | T | U | V | W | X | Y | Z

---

Link to The CDLink Registry (Wayback Machine)

A

**ACADEMY OF ST. MARTIN-IN-THE-FIELDS** - **J. S. Bach's "Musical Offering"** by Tim Smith
**ALBITA** - **No Se Parece A Nada** by Mark Schone
**LAURIE ANDERSON** - **Bright Red** by Phil Zampino

B

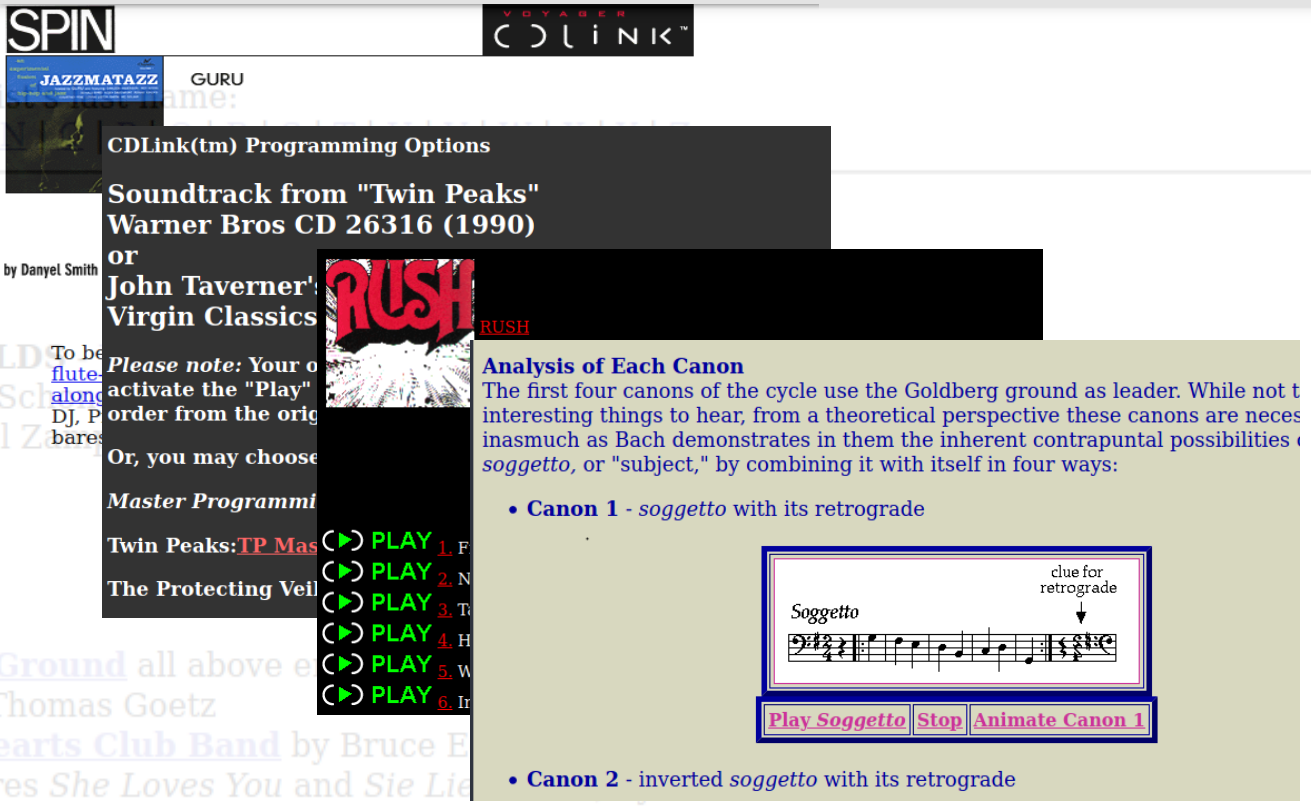
**J.S. BACH** - **Art of Fugue**
**Musical Offering**
**Fourteen Canons on the Goldberg Ground** all above entries by Tim Smith
**BEASTIE BOYS** -**Ill Communication** by Thomas Goetz
**THE BEATLES** - **Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band** by Bruce Eder
**Past Masters - Volume One** (compares *She Loves You* and *Sie Liebt Dich*) by Dave Haber
**BON JOVI** - **New Jersey** by Gavin Edwards
**BUSH** - **Sixteen Stone** by Dave Bonds
**DAVID BYRNE** - **David Byrne** by Alec Foege

Guru — Jazzmataz
by Danyel Smith
(Wayback Machine)

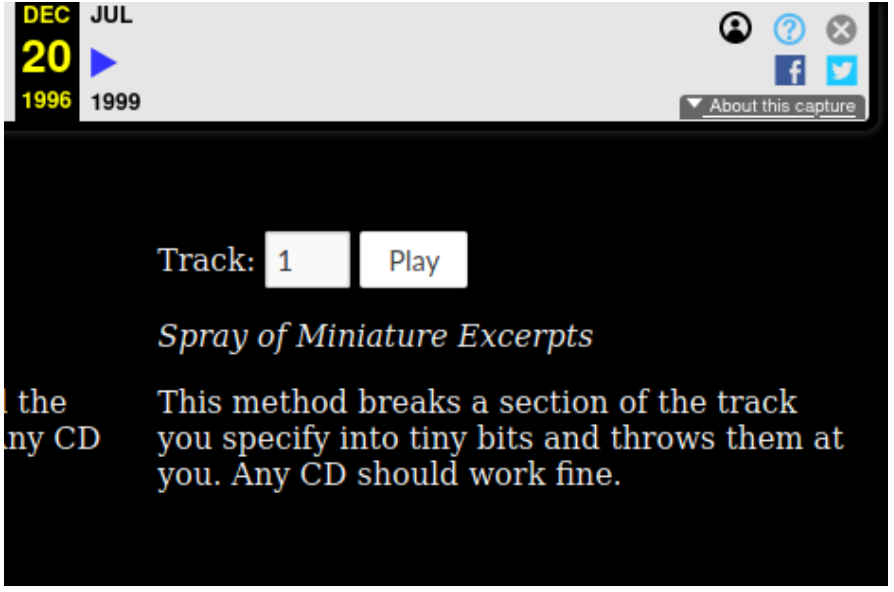
DeathNET background music
(Wayback Machine)

Rush fansite by J. Geoff Malta
(Wayback Machine)

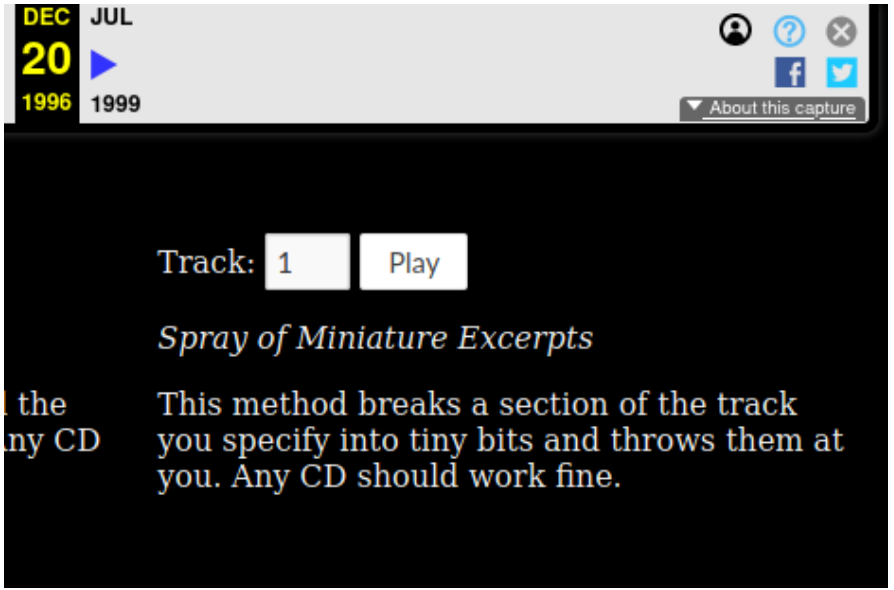
Fourteen Canons by Tim Smith
(Wayback Machine)



# Behind *Chaotic Entertainment*



# Behind *Chaotic Entertainment*




[excerpt from contents of .VCD file generated by *Chaotic Entertainment*’s “spray” feature]

```
play 1,4,35,58,1,4,35,63
play 1,4,34,51,1,4,34,55
play 1,4,34,63,1,4,34,67
play 1,4,34,68,1,4,34,72
play 1,4,34,74,1,4,35,3
```

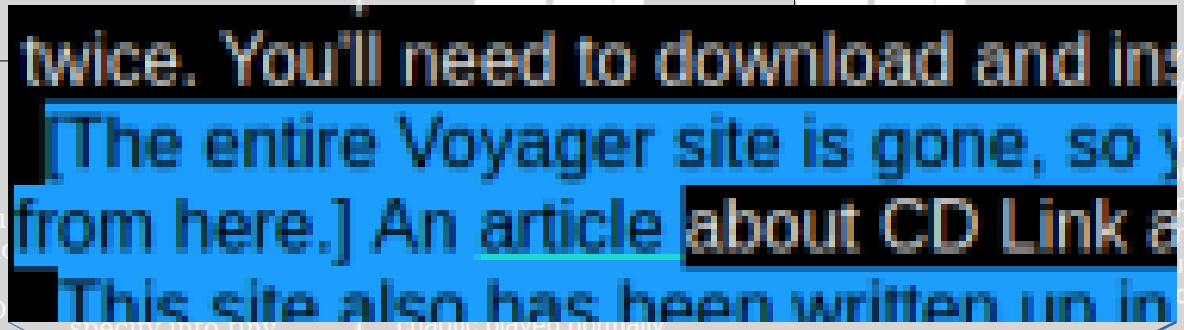
(Straebel 1997)

# Wayback Machine “diff” of Chaotic Entertainment

## 1996-12-20 vs 1999-02-10

Deleted text

New text




C HAOTIC E NTERTAINMENT Interactive Sequencer

Please experiment with different discs. These methods will never play the same thing twice. You'll need to download and install a helper application called Voyager CD Link . An article about CD Link and Chaotic Entertainment appeared in *The Wire* .

C HAOTIC E NTERTAINMENT Custom Sequencer

Please experiment with different discs. These methods will never play the same thing twice. You'll need to download and install a helper application called Voyager CD Link . [The entire Voyager site is gone, so you can download the PC version of the program from here.] An article about CD Link and Chaotic Entertainment appeared in *The Wire* . This site also has been written up in Tower Records' Pulse! magazine, while another article appears in the German music journal Positionen .

You can look at a custom screen of RGB Noise .

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t3217H8JppI
(Accessed 30 August 2020, 16:05 p.m.)

# Select bibliography

Gillen, Marilyn A. “Labels Link CDs, Web Sites via CDLink.” *Billboard*; New York 107, no. 29 (July 22, 1995): 58.

Straebel, Volker. “‘Chaotic Entertainment’: Mark Kolmars CD-Remix Im Internet.” Positionen 31 (May 1997): 31–33.

“Voyager: CDLink 12 July Press Release,” Captured June 6, 1997. https://web.archive.org/web/19970606172601/http://www.voyagerco.com/cdlink/getstarted/pressrel.html.

“Voyager CDLink (VCD) Control Language Reference,” Captured June 6, 1997. https://web.archive.org/web/19970606172542/http://www.voyagerco.com/cdlink/about/vcd_ref/cmdref.html.

**www.eamonnbell.com** for more or contact <belle2@tcd.ie>