

Origin of the CSC Julian Day Calendar

Our first programmable datalogger was the CR21, which was introduced in 1979. Given the limited memory and capability of processors back then, it was decided to program the date using the consecutive day of the year, sometimes referred to as Julian Day. The only consecutive day calendar available at that time was in poster format, printed by the Canadian Federal Government, and only available internally. Reproducing this large format would have been impractical for field purposes, so the idea to have a small field size calendar which would provide this extra date information was born. In order to make it more interesting it was decided to have a background image instead of just the numbers.

As my research had been focused on the Canadian Arctic Islands, we thought that a white background (an arctic animal on snow, for example) would provide a pale background for the darker calendar numbers. The art work was assigned to Frank Burman of Edmonton, Alberta who had just begun experimenting with the air brush technique, which he still uses today.

New variegated printing techniques introduced in 1997 meant the smaller font of the consecutive day calendar numbers could now be printed in both white and black, thus expanding our choices of animals that previously would have been too dark to use for the background image (muskoxen, eider duck etc.). Somewhat of a relief, since we would have run out of the “whiter” animals.

The calendar has taken on a life of its own. The newest generation of dataloggers does not use this format, so the calendars per se are not needed. However, given how long our equipment lasts, we will need to have the calendars around for a long time still. All the original art work is hanging in our offices in Edmonton and when you visit our offices, it is interesting to stroll down the hall and view the originals and see the evolution of the artist with this new and demanding technique. By comparison to the recent paintings, the first one now looks almost primitive. It is a testament to the ultra realism of the paintings that even today, I am asked about the photographer who took the picture! One of the most interesting features is that when you look at it from farther away, the calendar “disappears” and the art work is more prevalent.

The calendars are great travelling companions and work well as a bookmark; and if you have friends in the banking sector, they also appreciate the consecutive day format. If you are in our area, please drop by to view the artwork and pick up a calendar – we’d love to see you!

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