

News



Symantec has launched Windows CE versions of two of its most popular products, ACT and pcAnywhere. Now you can manage your contacts and remotely access other PCs from your hand-held computer. The prices are £116 and £93 respectively. A trial version of ACT can be downloaded from Symantec's Web site.
Symantec: 0171 616 5600
www.symantec.com

IE4 flaw leaves PCs open to virus attack

A serious bug in Microsoft's Internet Explorer 4.0 (IE4) could allow malicious Web site developers to transfer viruses to desktop computers.

The so-called Buffer Overflow bug was discovered by a member of Internet hacking group L0pht Heavy Industries. By making use of a special type of hyperlink, known as 'res://', programmers can overflow a PC's memory and make it crash.

In a worst-case scenario, machine code could be written to memory and executed. In this way, Web site hosts could have a dangerous level of control over a PC. The L0pht group has posted demonstrations of how the bug can be exploited on to its Web pages.

Although it affects only the Windows 95 version of IE4, the most worrying aspect of this latest bug discovery is that even users with the highest security-level settings are prone to downloading malignant code.

Playing down the seriousness of the Buffer



Overflow bug, Microsoft was quick to release a software patch for what it calls a 'potential problem'. The patch, which can be downloaded from the security pages of Microsoft's Web site, eradicates the problem.

Microsoft: 0345 002000

www.microsoft.com/ie/security

www.l0pht.com



The Hawk 3D Pro TV from **California Graphics** is a graphics adaptor with a twist. It can display images simultaneously on a monitor and a TV with individual adjustment of refresh rate and resolution for each image. PCI and AGP versions are available at £116.33 each.

Mentor Computer Systems:
01582 483381

A CD-R drive from **Sony** that can read ordinary CD-ROMs at 8-speed and write its own CDs at double-speed is available as an upgrade kit. The CDU928E-RP costs £252.62 and is supplied with caddy, screws, cables and full fitting instructions. You even get a blank CD-R disc.
Sony: 0990 424424

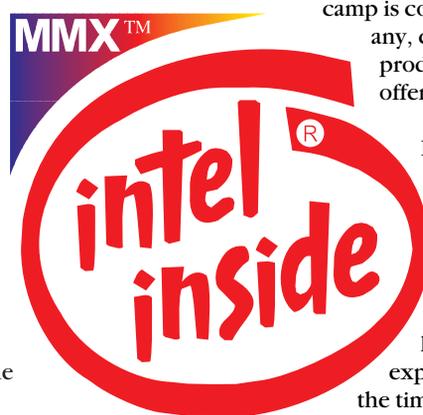
Brother's HL-730 Plus laser printer is available now for £316. With 1Mb of memory, it features 6ppm, 600dpi printing and runs under both Windows and DOS.
Brother: 0161 330 6531
www.brother.com

Intel admits Pentium bug

Intel joins Microsoft in the bughouse this month by admitting to the existence of a flaw in its Pentium and Pentium MMX processors.

Dubbed 'F0', after a troublesome opcode, the bug results in Pentium-based PCs locking up after executing a certain series of instructions. When this happens, the only way to regain control is to toggle the power switch because the traditional 'Ctrl-Alt-Delete' reset will not work.

The good news - at least as far as the Intel



camp is concerned - is that few, if any, commercial software products attempt to use the offending instruction string.

Just as we went to press, Intel informed us that it was aware of the bug and that an 'engineering taskforce' had been set into action to come up with a software patch or some other kind of workaround. It is expected to be available by the time you read this.

Intel Customer Support: 0800 163405

support.intel.com/support/processors/pentium/piie/index.htm

The latest stories and products

SHORT STORIES

Notebook giants go MMO



Citizen's diminutive PN60 printer, which weighs only 700g including its NiCad battery, has been joined by an even more portable stable-mate. The £386.58 PN60i offers the same laser-quality thermal fusion printing system plus cable-free infra-red communication with Psion 3c and Series 5, Windows CE and other portable computers. **Citizen: 01628 607300**

Videologic has expanded its popular Apocalypse range of graphics cards with the Apocalypse 5D Sonic. The PCI board acts as a Sound Blaster-compatible sound card with Wavetable MIDI capabilities, as well as a 2D and 3D graphics accelerator, providing an all-in-one multimedia solution. Bundled with five games and three audio applications, the 5D Sonic costs £205 (6Mb) or £225 (8Mb). **Videologic: 01923 260511**

Canon's MultiPass L90 is a multi-function device offering stand-alone faxing and copying plus printing and scanning when connected to a PC. Its laser printer engine, which outputs four pages per minute, is fed from a 250-sheet paper tray. It costs £1,527. **Canon: 0121 680 8062**

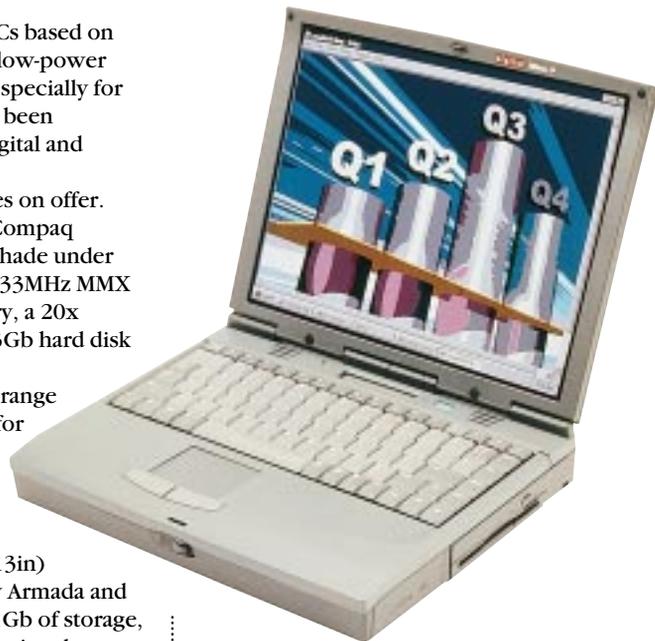
Genoa VideoMotion provides all the hardware and software you need for videoconferencing. For £187 you get a PCI video capture card, a CCD camera, a microphone and the CU-SeeMe conferencing software. You need a PC with a fast modem and a sound card. **MCI Networks: 0181 365 8100**

State-of-the-art notebook PCs based on Intel's MMO processor - a low-power Pentium MMX chip made especially for portable computers - have been announced by Compaq, Digital and Hewlett-Packard.

Prices reflect the features on offer. The new top-of-the-range Compaq Armada 7770DMT costs a shade under £4,700. For this you get a 233MHz MMX processor, 32Mb of memory, a 20x CD-ROM drive, a modem, 3Gb hard disk and a 12.1in TFT screen.

Digital's HiNote VP 700 range starts at £2,818, but this is for an entry-level model with a 166MHz processor. The most powerful machine in the range is the VP 735 at £4,576. It sports a bigger (13in) screen than Compaq's new Armada and the hard disk has an extra 1Gb of storage, but a CD-ROM drive is an optional extra and there's no modem.

The most generous screen on a 233MHz MMO notebook is the 13.3in TFT unit fitted to Hewlett-Packard's Omnibook 3000. The £4,089 machine has a 4Gb hard disk and a Universal Serial



Bus (USB) port. A CD-ROM drive and port replicator are available as options. Other models in the range start at £3,288.

Compaq: 0845 270 4000

Digital: 0345 227228

Hewlett-Packard: 0990 474747

Intel cuts Pentium II cost for home users

Intel is aiming its Pentium II processor at home users remarkably soon after its introduction. Dancing Intel engineers in the company's obligatory multi-coloured metallic spacesuits adorn our TV screens, and aggressive price cuts on the chips themselves mean you can choose from a selection of well-specified Pentium II systems at affordable prices.

Dell's Dimension XPS 233MT costs £1,679 (inc delivery and VAT), offers a 17in monitor, 6.4Gb hard disk, 64Mb of memory and Microsoft Office Small Business Edition. The same sort of money buys Mesh's Elite Pegasus, with a similar specification that includes a 56K modem.

Corporate buyers who want the support of Hewlett-Packard can get a basic Vectra VL PC with a 233MHz Pentium II and 15in monitor for £1,899, but for a budget buy it's hard to beat MJN's Office 233M at under £1,400.

Dell: 01344 724606

Mesh: 0181 452 1111

Hewlett-Packard: 0990 474747

MJN: 01282 777555

Xerox adds colour to communications

The Document WorkCentre 450c from Xerox is a multi-function device that can print, scan, copy and send and receive faxes - all for £586.

It uses inkjet technology and has four individually replaceable colour ink tanks.

A PC is required for scanning and printing, but faxing and copying can be performed from the WorkCentre. Xerox Pagis Pro 97, a clever piece of software that includes document management, scanning and optical character recognition tools, is bundled with the machine.

If you only need to scan occasionally, the new Canon BJC-4300 inkjet printer offers an unusual solution. Its print head can be replaced with a £104 scanner unit offering 360dpi full-

colour scanning facilities. The BJC-4300 costs £233.

Xerox:

0800 454197

Canon:

0121 680 8062



G3 gives Macs a kick up the backside

Apple has announced two new mid-range Macs based on Motorola's next-generation PowerPC G3 processor, and a Powerbook which it claims is the most powerful notebook in the world.

The PowerPC G3 is the first processor specially designed to run MacOS, Apple's graphical operating system. While developing it, engineers constantly tested the chip with Mac applications and optimised the design to ensure operations were handled as efficiently as possible.

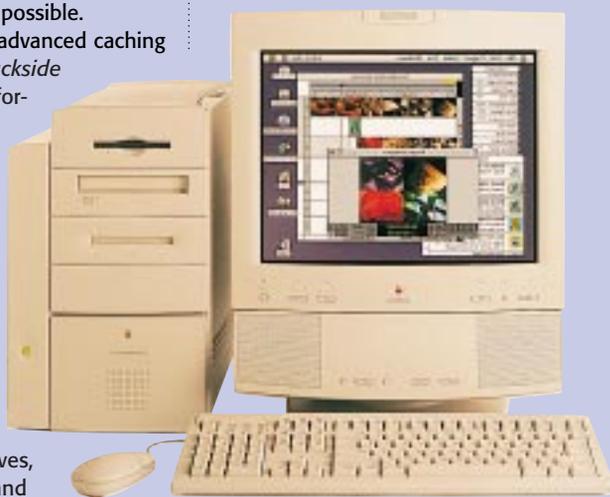
The G3 chip uses an advanced caching system, known as *backside caching*, to turn in a performance well beyond that of the PowerPC 603e chip used in Apple's existing main-stream models.

The new mid-range Macs are available in desktop and mini-tower configurations, running at either 233MHz or 266MHz. They feature 32Mb of RAM, 24x CD-ROM drives, integrated Zip drives, and

come with ATI's impressive 3D RAGE II graphics card. The mini-tower version also features additional NTSC and PAL video input and output capabilities.

Apple's new PowerBook is also based on the G3 design, running at 250MHz. It comes as standard with a 12.1in TFT screen, 32Mb of RAM, 5Gb hard disk and 20x CD-ROM.

Apple: 0800 127753



Packard Bell powers up Platinum towers

Packard Bell's new Platinum range of computers are aimed at second-time buyers who want more power, storage and advanced multimedia features.

The minimum specification is a 266MHz Pentium II processor with 64Mb of memory, a massive 7Gb Ultra DMA hard drive, 4Mb AGP graphics and a US Robotics 56Kbits/s modem.

Packard Bell's MediaControl keyboard is standard, and the most expensive models have DVD-ROM drives, MPEG II video and Dolby Prologic surround sound.

Prices range from £2,699 to £3,599.

Packard Bell: 01628 508200

LA Vision takes in the whole picture

LA Vision has just launched Dazzle - a moving-video capture device that plugs into a PC's printer port.

The 5x3in device plugs in to a parallel port and can accept input from a variety of video sources.

Unlike similar devices that can only grab single frames, Dazzle can capture full-screen video at 30 frames per second (fps) with audio, as well as providing a windowed preview at 8fps. Stills can be captured at resolutions up to 1,600x1,200.

Dazzle provides hardware MPEG I video compression in real time and can also create Video CD 2.0 format files. An internal PCI card version is also available, called Snazzi.

Both devices come with video-editing software and a bundle of other titles, including Kai's Power Goo, Adobe Photodeluxe 2.0 and CeQuadrat 3.0 for CD-ROM creation. Dazzle costs £269.08, Snazzi £351.33.

Imago Micro: 01635 294300

www.imagomicro.co.uk

SHORT STORIES

The latest stories and products

Morgan Computers has launched an online auction of surplus computer equipment. Its www.morgan-auctions.co.uk Web site began accepting bids for a variety of products from 1 December. Bidders will be kept informed about the progress of their offers by e-mail.

Quarterdeck is bundling three of its utilities in a budget package with a street price of around £40. Happy PC PAQ includes Clean-Sweep, MagnaRam and Fix-It, which between them can clean up a hard disk, optimise a PC's memory and correct hardware and software conflicts in Windows 95.

Quarterdeck: 01645 123521

Abbey National is willing to provide finance not just for the purchase of a PC but also for all the extras, such as printer, software, modem and even an Internet connection. Loans are repayable over one to eight years and can be arranged over the phone in 15 minutes.

Abbeyloan: 0345 575859

(quote reference 7294)

BlackoutBuster from **PK Electronics** is a £182.13 uninterruptible power supply that provides 15-20 minutes of power in the event of a mains power cut. PK Electronics: 0181 707 2200





SHORT STORIES

BBC puts news online



So simple it might actually be useful, Mouse Note from **Lasky Electronics** is a mouse mat that doubles as a notepad to keep your contact details and memos close at hand. Available from PC World and other leading computer stores, a pack of two costs £4.99.

Fujitsu has announced a range of slimline 2.5in hard disks for PCs and notebooks. The MHA20XX series should be available by the time you read this, offering storage capacities up to 3.2Gb. Fujitsu Europe: 0181 573 4444

Xerox's DocuPrint XJ4C is a colour inkjet printer for small office and home users. The £198.58 unit prints up to 4ppm (pages per minute) in monochrome and 1ppm in colour. Xerox: 0800 454197

Xircom's new CreditCard 10/100+Modem 56 combines a 100Mbits/s Ethernet network adaptor with K56Flex modem. It costs £296.10 and a standalone modem version is also available. Xircom: 01256 332552

The latest Internet search engine www.ebig.com is backed by the academic standards of the **Encyclopaedia Britannica**. It categorises sites by subject, and reviews and rates them.

BT has announced a West Midlands trial for a fast, digital Internet service for home users. Home Highway attains download speeds of up to 6Mbits/sec rather than the 56Kbits/sec possible with a modem. BT: 0800 800001

In a move marking a departure from its traditional news reporting methods, the BBC has launched a 24-hour news service on the World Wide Web.

The aptly named BBC News Online is a free-access site offering news stories that are gathered from around the world. The site is partly funded by licence fee revenues.

Features include streamed Real Audio news bulletins, courtesy of the BBC's World Service and Talking Point, an interactive and regularly updated reader survey.

With a little help from Progressive Networks' Real Player plug-in, anyone with a fast modem can watch live broadcasts of BBC Television's *Nine O'Clock*



News from anywhere in the world.

Ever conscious of accusations of elitism, the BBC has ensured that even those with the slowest Internet connections can make use of News Online by offering a text-only version of the site. news.bbc.co.uk

Microsoft tunes up music on the Web

Microsoft has joined forces with online music encryption specialist Liquid Audio to set standards for music commerce on the Internet.

The two companies are to collaborate on technology, marketing and standards initiatives to improve distribution of music on the World Wide Web.

The Liquid Audio system allows users to preview and buy digitally encrypted music tracks and CDs online. Once purchased, they can be downloaded to your hard disk at full CD quality.

George Michael's Aegean Records has become the first European record company to adopt the system, and its first Internet single, entitled *Chameleon*, is available for preview at www.aegean.net.

Other sites supporting the new music delivery system are constantly appearing. The Liquid Audio software plug-in needed to use the system can be downloaded at www.liquidaudio.com.



Dixons aims to end installation blues

Dixons Group - which includes the PC World computer superstores - is to run a pilot scheme offering installation with any PC bought at its stores for home use.

Currently, the service costs £29.99 and includes basic tuition in Windows 95. But a pilot in a limited area will offer installation free. Dixons will monitor the effect this has on the percentage of returned products and calls to its support line.

The group already employs 700 people in its Mastercare after-sales service division and with calls to its support line reportedly running at 5,000 per day there is scope to make large savings.

This service comes shortly after the launch of PC World Business Direct, a catalogue-based mail-order service.

