

question time

This month we answer queries about image-editing programs, and whether it is better to upgrade your PC or buy a new system. We also sort out a hard disk partitioning problem, and explain what Microsoft has done to fix security bugs in Internet Explorer

After reformatting my 1.2Gb hard drive in order to clean up all those 'spare' files that seem to accumulate over time, I decided to partition it into two logical drives.

As I don't possess the Microsoft Plus! pack that contains DriveSpace 3, my only option was to use FDISK in DOS.

However, I tried this while the disk was blank (after booting from a floppy) and then from the C:\ prompt after Windows 95 had been installed.

Each time, I was informed that the maximum space available for a partition was 2Mb. What am I doing wrong?

**Simon E Guest,
North Featherstone,
Pontefract**



Apart from the organisational benefits of having two virtual hard disks, the only real benefit of partitioning a 1.2Gb drive is to

minimise the wasted space created by the filing system, and even this is minimal. Unless you resort to a program like Partition Magic (reviewed in our April issue), the only way to partition a hard drive is to use FDISK.

Partitioning a drive using FDISK will destroy all the data it contains, so make sure that you've backed up anything you want to keep. The first thing you should do is create a boot disk for your PC that also loads the driver for your CD-ROM drive (use the appropriate lines from the CONFIG.SYS and AUTOEXEC.BAT/DOSSTART.BAT files). The disk should also contain the FDISK.EXE and FORMAT.COM files (usually found in the Windows\Command folder).

Once your PC has booted from the floppy disk, run the FDISK program. Before a new partition can be created, the active partition (your C: drive) must first be deleted. Then, you will need to create a primary partition that is smaller than the maximum space available. You can then create further partitions that use all or part of the remaining space until all of the space is taken up.

This done, you will need to restart your PC (with the boot disk still in the floppy drive) and format each partition separately.

Finally, you can install Windows 95. Incidentally, DriveSpace can only be used to compress a drive, not just partition it, although a new partition is created during the compression process.

(Partition Magic is available from POW! Distribution: 01202 716726.)

Is it cheaper to upgrade my Dell 425s/L 486 PC to a Pentium than to buy a new system? If it is cheaper, can I then add a CD-ROM drive? Since I am a relative novice to computers, where would be the best place to do this and what sort of prices should I be paying?
**Margaret Dawes,
Hounslow, Middlesex**

Dell has informed us that it is indeed possible to fit a Pentium OverDrive processor to the 425s/L but the performance increase this would bring hardly makes it worthwhile.

Unfortunately, that particular model won't support a CD-ROM directly but it is possible to connect one via a sound card's IDE interface.

With this in mind, it's probably simpler (though not cheaper) to buy a new system. Decent systems can be had for around £1,000, for which you'll get a Pentium 133 processor, 16Mb of RAM and a 1Gb hard drive. Our March issue contained a group test of PCs suitable for first-time buyers – it's worth taking a look at this to see our recommendations.

Recently my PC crashed when I was using Windows 3.1. This resulted in me having to reinstall Windows because the C:\WINDOWS directory had been corrupted.

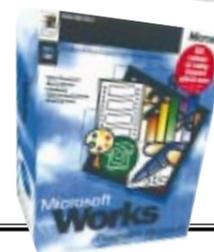
Once Windows was back up and running, the video driver

defaulted to the standard 16-colour VGA, 640x480 resolution. The Paradise graphics card in my machine came with a driver that allowed it to run at 256 colours at this same resolution, but unfortunately this seems to have disappeared after my reinstallation efforts.



We regret that we cannot provide readers with individual replies but, if you have a question or problem you want to share with other readers, write to us at: Question Time, *What PC?* Editorial, VNU House, 32-34 Broadwick St, London W1A 2HG.

If possible, please include details of your hardware and preferably copies of your AUTOEXEC.BAT and CONFIG.SYS files – and for Windows problems, your SYSTEM.INI and WIN.INI files. **The writer of every published letter will receive a FREE COPY of either Microsoft Works 95 or Microsoft Publisher 95. Please state which you would prefer.**

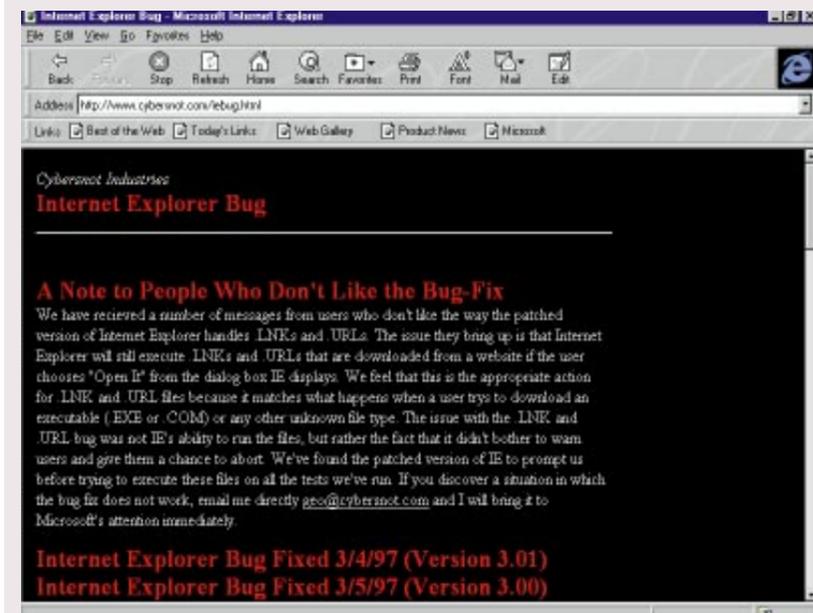


I've heard about a bug in Internet Explorer 3.0 that allows so-called 'hackers' to erase files from your hard disk, or even wipe it completely. Is this true, and if so what is Microsoft going to do about it?
K Stonham, Inverness, Scotland

This bug does indeed exist, but Microsoft has been very quick to fix it and a 'patch' is now available for download on the Internet Explorer Web site (www.microsoft.com/ie).

The bug – which was uncovered by a bunch of clued-up students from Worcester Polytechnic – allows unscrupulous Web site hosts to create potentially damaging Internet hyperlinks. Hyperlinks are stored as a special file type on the computer that hosts the Web site and Internet Explorer 3.0 automatically 'opens' these link files to find out where it has to go next. However, the Worcester students worked out that link files could carry special codes which can copy almost any type of program to your hard disk and then run it – without you knowing anything about it.

If you want to check whether your version of Internet Explorer is affected, the students have set up a useful Web site at www.cybersnot.com/iebug.html that holds a few harmless examples of how this bug can be exploited.



My husband is very interested in local history and wants to take scanned images of old maps, scale them to a comparable size and then overlay them to produce a combined map. Is it possible to use a CAD program to do this? I have noted from recent advertisements that some can overlay layers in diagrams, which is exactly what he wants to do.

Jane Dole, Bexley, Kent

Almost any serious image-editing application allows images to be overlaid with some degree of transparency. Using Micrografix Picture Publisher, for example, an image can be copied and pasted into another image, resized and then made transparent. Depending on the size of the maps, resizing the scanned images may result in some loss of quality but this shouldn't be a problem if the scans are of a high enough resolution.

Although it's possible to do the same thing with a CAD program, the process is much more long-winded. Before they could be arranged in layers, the images would have to be converted from bitmaps (the original format of the scans) to vectors (the format used by a CAD program). With detailed images, this would result in a marked loss of quality – undesirable for a map.



I realise I need to contact Paradise to obtain a replacement driver, but I have been unable to locate a telephone number or an address for the company. Can you point me in the right direction?

**John Skillbeck,
Huddersfield, West Yorkshire**

The Paradise brand is now owned by Philips Electronics, having also been through the hands of Western Digital. The company still offers limited telephone support for older Paradise products and maintains a database of downloadable drivers on a dedicated Web site on the Internet. You can call Philips' European support line free of charge on 0800 966185, or if you have Internet access, point your browser to look at www.paradisemmp.com.