Java good time?

From the JavaOne conference, Terence Green foresees a change from the Windows-centric world. He takes a look at Corel Office for Java and new IBM Clients. Plus, how to fight FAT32.

At the JavaOne conference last April, Sun announced the adoption of the Lotus InfoBus as the standard method for sharing data between JavaBeans. The InfoBus is part of the Java-enabling technology in the Lotus Kona Desktop, and JavaBeans is a component architecture enabling Java applets to be assembled into applications.
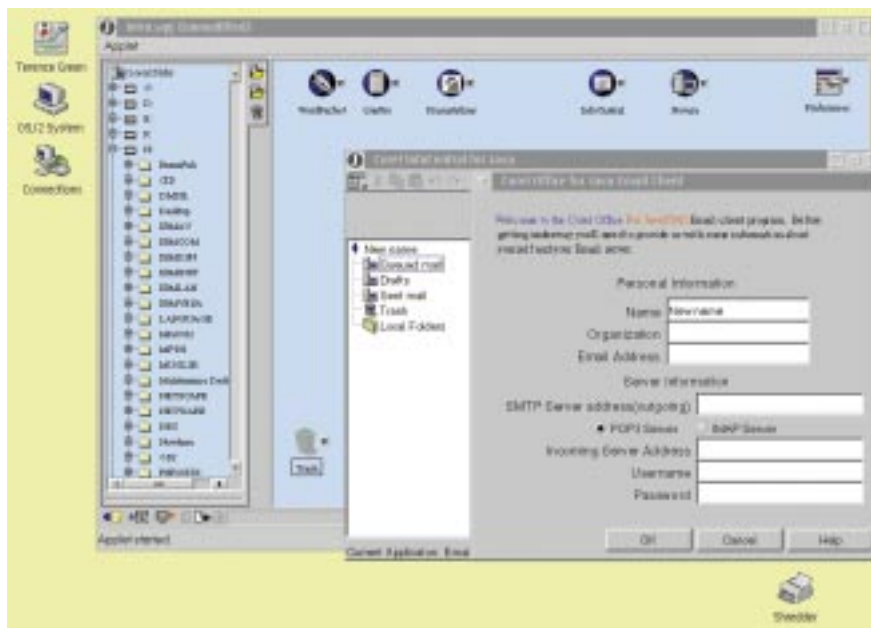
Since the Lotus InfoBus enables Java applications to exchange data dynamically, it becomes possible for internet/intranet applications to be assembled from JavaBeans components without the need for programming. Thus, the more developers who incorporate the InfoBus, the easier it will become to create truly distributed applications.

At the time of writing, the InfoBus APIs were due to be published for review in May or June and incorporated in a future release of the Java Developer's Kit. It's amazing how quickly Java has established itself. It is barely two years since it first surfaced.

Further news confirms the shift from a Windows-centric world: just a few days after the JavaOne conference it was reported that Microsoft is porting significant sections of the Win32 to Java classes. The Microsoft plan will assist Windows developers in porting their Windows-only applications to the more open Java environment. But the really useful Java applications are more likely to come from the new work being carried out by Lotus with the Kona Desktop, for instance.

Corel Office for Java
Somewhere in between new Java applications and ports of Windows applications, sits Corel Office for Java. I mentioned the pre-alpha version a while

Corel Office for Java is still in beta, and needs lots more work and a fast PC. Nevertheless, it is evidence that Java is more than a web animation tool
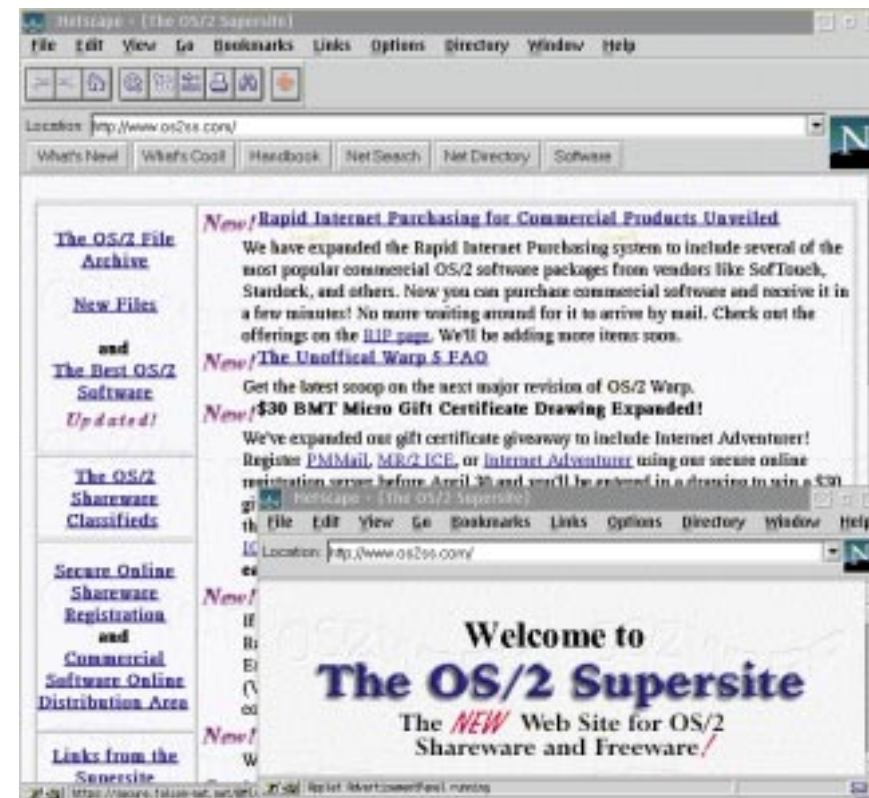
ago: that version could only be used by connecting over the internet to Corel, but now a real beta has become available for download and local testing in an OS/2 version. It's also available in Windows 95/NT and Unix flavours from the www.corel.com web site. As far as I can tell from the licence, I can't put this on the *PCW* cover disc — but at least the OS/2 version is a not-too-large 7.5Mb download. To save files locally, it needs the Java Development Kit 1.02 which featured on the June edition of our *PCW* CD. JDK 1.02 is required for the security extensions which enable files to be saved on the local hard disk.

A Netscape for OS/2 update is another bulky new item that cannot be included on our cover disc because of licence restrictions. Since it weighs in at nearly 5Mb

for the basic package and almost 10Mb if the plug-in support is added, it's a big download for those of us with 28.8K (or slower) modems.

So is it worth downloading? Netscape says it "encourages" all existing users to take the upgrade and generally this seems like good advice. It will install directly over the original December 1996 US version. If you use Netscape for OS/2 infrequently and you're happy with the US English version, you might want to wait for Netscape 4.0 for OS/2 which will be based on the Netscape 4.0 Communicator now available as a Windows beta.

The major change in the new version is that it now fully supports international languages including Arabic and Hebrew (but not Chinese). The changes also affect

The OS/2 SuperSite at www.os2ss.com is relatively new but growing quickly. It is worth a visit for OS/2 information and software, including shareware and freeware

Mail and News which now support Document Encoding. Bug fixes include those affecting newsgroup handling and page layout.

Biting the bullet
I suppose it had to happen, but the new version includes a document encoding bug which messes up bullets. You can correct this by selecting a different font for the default Latin1 character set. If this doesn't solve the problem, close Netscape for OS/2 and delete the NETSCAPE.INI file. You'll have to reconfigure your settings, so make a note of any changes from the defaults before deleting the NETSCAPE.INI file.

There are also some installation problems which can be avoided. These are common to the IBM installation program which Netscape uses. Don't unpack archived files into a temporary directory with a space in its name and don't install the product to the same directory in which you unpacked its install files. Also remember to use an OS/2 decompressor rather than a DOS version in order to preserve long filenames present in the archive.
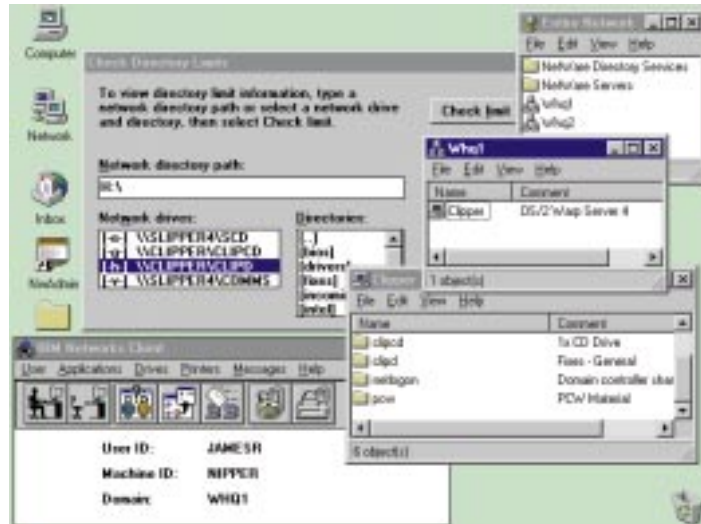
IBM Clients
If you're running Warp Server you might want to download the new IBM Clients for

Windows 95 and Windows NT along with the Browser Enabler. The clients allow users easy access to all the Warp Server facilities including connection to home directories, aliases and logon assignments, running network applications and checking disk quotas on HPFS386 drives.

The IBM Windows 95 Client *(see page 274)* installs easily and replaces the Microsoft login window. As there's still no way of booting a diskless Windows 95 workstation, the added security and built-in ability to set limits on each client's use of disk space afforded by Warp Server makes it a useful server for Windows 95 clients.

The IBM Neighbourhood Browser Enabler is an extra component which, when installed on Warp Server, enables Warp Server domains to show up in the Microsoft NetWork Neighbourhood. You can do this, after a fashion, without installing IBM's browser enabler by adding IBM domain names to the search list in Windows, but it's not ideal. The enabler automates the process, speeds up browsing and makes it generally easier to connect to Warp Server.

Another tip, for Windows 95 and NT users who have difficulty connecting to Warp Server domains, is to use the Find/Computer utility: type in the name of the server and Windows will find it.

Supporting Windows 95 and Windows NT clients with Warp Server is easier now with new IBM clients and the Network Neighbourhood Browser Enabler

All this talk of Windows reminds me that each time I mention Windows in this column, someone asks me to save the space for OS/2. Heaven knows what they'll think of the Windows 95 screenshot showing the IBM Client, but OS/2 has always appealed to me as an integration platform for a variety of applications. I like Windows and there's a lot in it that Warp could copy. But I like Warp a lot more because it doesn't dictate what applications I should run, and there are fewer restraints on some of the older DOS and 16-bit apps that many of us still use.

FAT is an unfriendly issue
One of the least friendly attributes of Windows is the way it tramples all over standards to suit itself. The latest example is the new FAT32 file system which you'll come across on new machines pre-loaded with Windows 95. Tony Jackson stumbled on this when he purchased a new Gateway PC with Windows 95.

The FAT32 file system enables Windows to make better use of large hard drives than the old DOS FAT system. Unfortunately, it is incompatible with other file systems including Microsoft DOS, Microsoft Windows NT and IBM OS/2 Warp.

Windows 95 was sprawled all over the 5Gb hard disk when Tony received his system so he decided to repartition and install OS/2 Warp and the Boot Manager. But OS/2 refused to look at the drive, claiming it had faulty partition information. Tony managed to resolve his situation by using a DOS 5.0 boot disk and running FDISK/MBR to recreate the DOS partition data. The undocumented command line switch /MBR for DOS FDISK writes a clean Master Boot Record in the partition table

without altering the existing DOS data. The OS/2 equivalent is FDISK /NEWMBR. Its main use is as part of the process of cleaning up a boot sector virus because a DOS 5.0 FDISK /MBR will clean out any oddities that have been put into unused parts of the partition table.

Operating systems which do this include Dual Boot OS/2 (but not the Boot Manager, which is safe), the original release of Win95 to support long filenames, and NT to support its multiboot option, to which you can now add the Windows 95 update with FAT32. Do *not* run FDISK/MBR against a hard disk with any of these operating systems installed if you value your data.

Having deleted all partitions and run an FDISK/MBR against the hard disk, Tony managed to install Boot Manager, Warp and Windows 95 on his new 5Gb hard disk.

There's a rider to this story, though. There may be a bug in the Warp 4 disk driver which causes large drives with more than a certain number of translated cylinders to register negative values. If you hit this problem, it may help to specify the exact drive details in CONFIG.SYS against the BASEDEV=IBM-1S506.ADD line. Go to an OS/2 command prompt and enter HELP IBM1S506.ADD to see the help screens — you're looking for the /GEO (Geometry Override) switches.

■ **On the** *PCW* **cover disc:** FixPack 1 for Warp 4, the UK English version in diskette format. Use the "LOADDSK filename.dsk a:" command to create the diskettes.

PCW Contact

Terence Green can be contacted by post via the *PCW* office or at **os2@pcw.co.uk**.