

question time

This month we include guidance on how to uninstall unwanted Windows 95 programs, free up hard disk space on your PC, ensure your documents open in the right application, and advice on the pros and cons of accessing bulletin boards

I use Word for Windows 2.0 but due to the limitations of the package I refer to a printed dictionary (2,515 pages) and a thesaurus (1,309 pages). I notice that these works are now available on CDs and, as I'm thinking of upgrading to a Pentium 100 and Windows 95, I wonder what would be the quickest way of accessing either volume on CD while working on a document:

- 1) Use two CD drives?
- 2) Use a disk changer such as an NEC CDR251?

I assume either method would require a number of key-strokes and wonder whether I could transfer the CD information directly into Word or any other word processor package for quick reference. If this is feasible, what sort of hardware would I need?

Brian Sexton, Poole, Dorset

You don't name your preferred dictionary and thesaurus, so we can't answer specifically. However, be aware that many dictionaries and thesauruses supplied on CD can be downloaded to a hard disk, and few of them require much more than 20Mb or 30Mb of disk space. The *Concise Oxford Dictionary* and *Oxford Thesaurus*, for example, can both be run from a hard disk, and they share a common search engine which allows you to find words in either volume from the same command screen.

A macro, which appears as an icon on the Word toolbar, allows you to highlight a word in your current document and jump straight to the appropriate reference work.

Other dictionaries and thesauruses adopt similar procedures. We recommend talking to the CD publisher of your favourite printed volumes and asking whether its programs can be installed to a hard disk and whether Microsoft Word is supported by the macros supplied with the products.

We recently purchased a multimedia PC with a fax modem and have tried to access one of the widely advertised bulletin board services. The exercise was totally unsuccessful and very expensive. The main problem was that the BBS kept crashing. Having managed to get something loaded onto our computer we couldn't get the program to run. Requests of help from the firm, Strangers Bulletin Board, have been ignored. We feel conned. Is there any redress? Have you any advice on using bulletin boards?

Paul Swain and family, Wilmslow, Cheshire

Most bulletin boards are run by enthusiasts and are free. Pay-as-you-go bulletin boards on BT premium-rate numbers are setting

themselves up in competition with established on-line services such as CompuServe and America Online. Their advantages are that you don't have to give a credit card number or make a long-term commitment to download a file or program you are after. They do not try to compete on service, choice or efficiency.

Unfortunately, you chose to use such a bulletin board service for your first experiments with your modem. We don't know if there were connection problems on the days you used the service. If there were, you would have to prove that these were the fault of the bulletin board service and not the telephone system or your own lack of expertise. This would be very difficult, and we would advise you to write the cost of your calls off to experience.

Our general advice on using bulletin boards – don't! Subscribe

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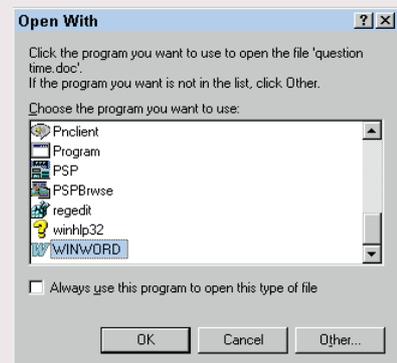
I have a Pentium 75 PC with 8Mb of Ram, running Windows 95 and MS Word for Windows 95. My problem is that when I save a document in Word, it saves it in Wordpad format – when I want to open the document, it opens it using Wordpad rather than Word. What is wrong? Is there any way I can alter this? Before you say it, when I saved the document, I specified 'Word document' in the 'Save As' dialog box.

Kevin Bolton, Bury

A

Wordpad doesn't have a file format of its own but instead saves documents in

Word for Windows 6 format, with a .doc extension. It sounds as though you have associated .doc files with Wordpad rather than Word, which means that when you double-click on a file to open it, it gets opened in Wordpad, not Word. To remedy this, start Windows Explorer and find a file with a .doc extension. Hold down a Shift key and right-click the mouse on the file. Select 'Open with' from the menu that appears and a window will pop up listing various applications. Find 'Word' in the list, select it and then click the box for 'Always use this program to open this type of file'. Click the 'OK' button and then the file, and all .doc files will then be opened in Word whenever you double-click them.



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to a proper on-line service or sign up with an Internet provider. This will cost you around £15 a month plus standard BT call charges.

Is there a program available for the PC that emulates the Psion 3a? The one that interests me most is World, which gives the time in different countries.
Peter De'ath, Hornchurch

We included a shareware Psion emulation program on our June cover CD. Unfortunately, it isn't designed to run under Windows and causes problems if it is. If you're interested in world time zones, a much better alternative is the shareware program WinZones. This allows multiple clocks for different cities to be displayed in a variety of formats and new cities can be added at will. It is available for both Windows 3.1 and Windows 95 from Extend Inc, 4897 Hopyard Road, Suite 3218, Pleasanton, CA 94588. Telephone: 00 1 510 484 0395; fax: 00 1 510 484 0153; e-mail: 74024.3574@compuserve.com Alternatively, the Windows 95 version is in the Utilities sub-section of the Resources section on this month's cover CD.

In your January issue, Julian Prokaza writes: 'Using Drive Space to compress your disk drive will mean that you can no longer uninstall Windows 95 and restore your Windows 3.1 files (if you opted to save them, that is). Using Drivespace commits you to using Windows 95 permanently.'

Why is this so? Could one not decompress, then uninstall? Or delete the complete Windows folder and reinstall Windows 3.1 from the program disks. True, it would take some time, but it would be possible, wouldn't it?
N Fixsen, Bath



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.

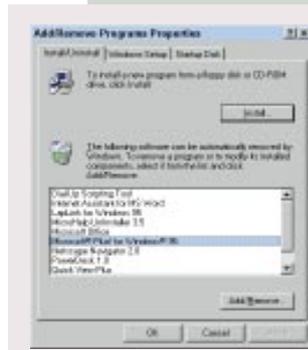
The writer of every published letter will receive a FREE COPY of either *Microsoft Works* or *Microsoft Publisher*. Please state which you would prefer.

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On your November CD there is a program called McAfee Virus Checker. I installed this program and opted to have a shortcut to it placed on my right-hand mouse button menu. Later, I unthinkingly deleted the program and found that the option was still on the menu.

I later realised McAfee Virus Checker had a separate uninstall program but when I tried to use it, it wouldn't work. This was probably my own fault for deleting the files, but now how do I remove the shortcut from the right-hand mouse button menu?

William T Luke, Maidenhead



A

All Windows 95 applications should have a separate uninstall routine, accessible through the Control Panel's Add/Remove Programs option.

Such routines do more than simply delete the files from your hard disk; they also update the Registry and remove such things as shortcuts on the context (right-hand mouse button) menu. Should an application be removed by some other means, then the simplest way to eradicate it properly is to reinstall it and then uninstall it using Control Panel.

It's possible to dig the foundations of a house with a teaspoon, but would you want to do so?

In any case, deleting the Windows directories would not delete the Win 95 system or boot files, so you'd have to reinstall an old version of Dos and then Windows 3.1.

Once you'd done this you'd have to reinstall all your applications software because you'd have deleted essential files from the Windows\System directory.

How far are you prepared to go to prove a point?

I've recently bought a Pentium PC fitted with a 1Gb hard disk and running Windows 95. My problem is that I seem to have around 160Mb of occupied hard disk space for which I cannot account.

I've read that Windows 95 doesn't cope well with large hard disks, so could this be the cause?

T A Moody, Solihull

We think that this is a combination of two conditions conspiring to form one problem.



When Windows 95 is first installed on your PC it assigns a portion of your hard disk space for use by the Recycle Bin, usually around 10 percent. On a 1Gb hard disk this translates to about 100Mb. Initially the Recycle Bin is empty, so the entire 100Mb is available for you to use. Over time, however, it gradually fills with files you have deleted. When the Recycle Bin is full you will have 'lost' 100Mb of hard disk space. You can easily recover this space by right-clicking the Recycle Bin icon and selecting the Empty Recycle Bin option.

The other contributor to the problem is indeed connected to large hard disks, but it is not caused by Windows 95. Hard disks are divided into thousands of sectors, organised into clusters, onto which your files are written. On a 1Gb hard disk the minimum cluster size is 32Kb; this means even the smallest files (for example, a text file containing a single character) hog 32Kb of your hard disk space. It is likely you have many dozens of small files littering your hard disk, and this could account for a good chunk of the missing space.

By partitioning your hard disk you can reduce the amount of space each cluster requires (for example, a 256Mb partition uses 8Kb sectors), but this is not a process we could recommend to beginners.

