



What a Warper

Terence Green reports on how Warp 4.0 (in beta) has fared on his system. With its new components and three new CDs, he recommends it as a must-have upgrade.

I have been running Warp 4.0, the product formerly known as Merlin, during its beta phase and I have to recommend it as a must-have upgrade for anyone running Warp or OS/2 as their desktop operating system. It's a superb network client and an excellent choice for the connected end user.

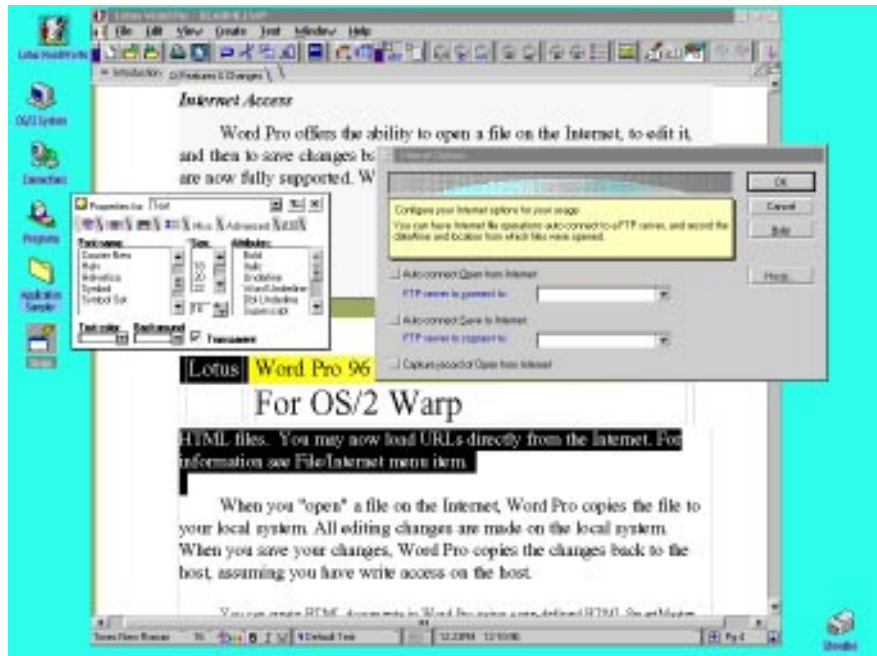
Warp 4.0 includes great internet connectivity with Java support in the operating system. A native OS/2 version of Netscape Navigator didn't make it into the box, but will follow shortly as a free download.

As the US Warp 4.0 code I'm using now has a speech model designed for US accents, I've not yet installed the VoiceType navigation and dictation support. I'll do that when UK Warp 4.0 has become available (due, at the time of writing, by the end of October) and report in my next column if my deadline permits.

What is apparent from the US shrinkwrap is that simply upgrading an existing Warp 3.0 system to Warp 4.0, without adding any of the new bundled components, has very little effect on memory and hard disk space, yet improves both performance and usability. The proviso is that your existing system is a 486 or better with at least 16Mb RAM if you're running a connected desktop, whether you're connected directly to the network or on a dialup connection.

New CDs and BonusPak

In addition to the new components of Warp there are three, new, bundled CDs and an updated BonusPak. The new CDs are NotesMail, the Device Driver CD and the Application Sampler. The Sampler contains around 80 trial versions of OS/2



A word processor for Warp. Lotus WordPro 96 for OS/2, still pre-release, emerges slowly

applications including StarDivision's StarOffice 3.1, an office productivity suite with word processor, spreadsheet, graphics, multimedia and internet capabilities.

The Sampler CD also contains MGI PhotoSuite for OS/2 imaging software. MGI used the Open32 developer extensions to port their application from Windows 95 to OS/2 Warp. Lotus helped develop Open32 which they're using to develop SmartSuite 97 for OS/2. At the beginning of October, Lotus put pre-release versions of WordPro and Freelance Graphics up for free download from www.lotus.com on the SmartSuite product page. So finally, a Lotus OS/2 suite is in prospect, and one based on a quite different approach than the original

idea of a parity release floated by Lotus some years ago. What a long, strange, trip it has been.

The BonusPak CD contains native OS/2 applications (updated from Warp 3.0 versions) including IBM Works, HyperAccess Lite, and FaxWorks. There's also a new Remote Support for the OS/2 Warp package which enables IBM technical support, or company support, teams to offer remote support, maintenance and upgrade for Warp 4.0 users.

WarpCentre

Without doubt, Warp 4.0's user interface is the most user-friendly and functional graphical interface in a desktop operating system today. It precisely reflects desktop

and drive structures, and does so automatically. Thanks to the new Lotus-inspired WarpCentre action bar you can have one-click access to all your programs and files without having to clutter up the desktop with lots of pointers.

As you can see from the screenshot on page 286, the desktop and hierarchical folder structure is presented on the WarpCentre menu exactly as you arranged it. Furthermore, there's no need to worry when you move things around or re-arrange the desktop, because Warp keeps track of this for you.

The user interface is visually pleasing, with new, coloured, tabs in the properties (formerly settings) notebooks, and the new Warp Sans system font. And, of course, all the existing usability features remain. Every folder can be individually configured with details such as its own background image or pattern, which can be a useful way of identifying different projects.

To further speed up access, WarpCentre (actually WarpCenter in the US spelling) also allows you to stack up "trays" of program and folder objects on the taskbar. Using Trays is like having multiple task bars. And, if

On this month's cover-mounted CD

Netscape Navigator 2.021 for OS/2 beta 1

Although it is incomplete and the shipping version should be out by the time you read this, I've nevertheless popped it onto the cover CD as a taster.

Adobe Acrobat beta 3 for OS/2

This beta is not time limited, as was the case with the prior version. Adobe's licence permits me to pass it on, but the web site from where I downloaded it does request registration of interest. So if you like the beta and want Adobe to know, do visit www.adobe.com and register your interest.



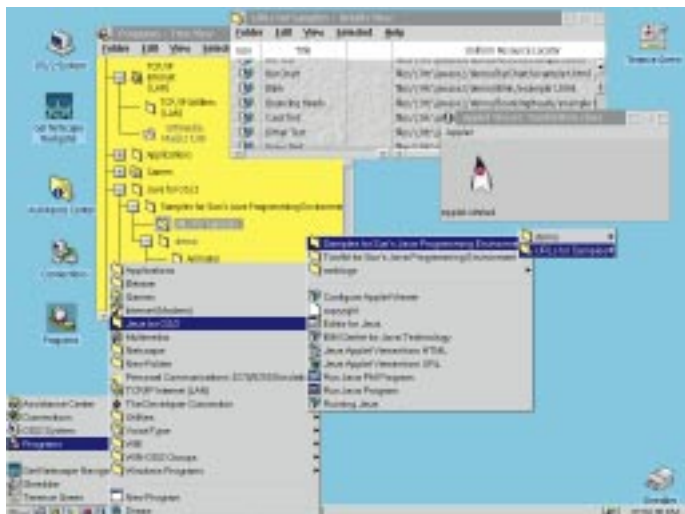
The fully-functional shipping version of Netscape Navigator 2.021 for OS/2 should be available now from Netscape and IBM's web sites (<http://home.netscape.com>)

WBI (Web Browser Intelligence) or "Webby"

Terrible name, but it's one of several really interesting demonstrations of upcoming technology from IBM that can be found at www.alphaworks.ibm.com. Other Alphaworks demos include a Java applet development kit for Windows 3.1 and the NetRexx scripting language for Java.



This technology demonstration of an intelligent agent from IBM is available for OS/2 and Windows 95. It tracks your internet usage, and creates a sorted and indexed audit trail (www.alphaworks.ibm.com)



Of all the graphical user interfaces for PCs, Warp 4.0's truly object-orientated WorkPlace Shell with WarpCentre is the most user-friendly and functional desktop

you have become used to the LaunchPad, it's still there but now called the Toolbar.

Install

Another aspect of usability is the ease with which Warp 4.0 can be installed and maintained. For large installations there is a remote network install facility which can be

used to automate batch or new user installs and upgrades. Incidentally, Warp 4.0 will install over any previous OS/2 system and it now includes Microsoft Windows applications support as standard. There's no longer a separate Red Box for Windows version.

One of the main problems with Warp 3.0

A brief Warp 4.0 contents list

We're running out of space again and haven't begun to explore Warp 4.0 behind the scenes, so here's a quick rundown of what's in it. (Coverage will continue in next month's column unless the editor requests a full review. His email address is in the front of the magazine if you should feel the urge to let him know how much you appreciate his support for OS/2 coverage.)

- VoiceType for OS/2 Warp
- File and print client for OS/2 and Windows (3.x, 95 and NT)
- Novell NetWare client
- Remote Access Client
- Java (runtime and developer tools)
- Internet connectivity
- Web Explorer browser
- Plug and Play
- Power Management
- Multimedia
- TrueType
- Systems Management (client and agent)

Dear Santa...

Last year, I wanted internet access for schools, a ThinkPad on which to run Warp, and a new home PC. Shortly thereafter, an IBM PC company person wondered why I wanted to run OS/2 when Windows 95 ran so well on the ThinkPad. I used a Toshiba to test Warp mobility instead.

On the home PC front, I eventually built my own thanks to the plummeting price of RAM and Pentiums. I purchased a TMC Pentium/Triton 2 motherboard from Simply Computers for £99 and two 16Mb SIMMs for under £150. The rest of it came from a PC whose disk drive had died in June, and the motivation was the motherboard which died in August. It has worked like a dream, with Warp 3.0, and Warp 4.0 shrinkwrap installed without a hitch, and now runs perfectly.

Three wishes for 1997

The internet story rumbles on, so this year my three wishes are:

1. A return to common sense in internet reportage.
2. Better ISDN support in Warp.
3. Britain to stop frustrating a worldwide ban on landmines. These weapons kill civilians, in the main, and a disproportionate number of kids who think the landmines are toys and pick them up.

The whole idea of the internet as a global information resource is being perverted by trash journalism. For a better perspective on the subject, read *Bandits on the Information Highway* by Daniel J. Barrett, published by O'Reilly & Associates and distributed through International Thompson (www.thomson.com) in the UK. A good point Barrett makes is that it is far easier to spend time with your kids directing them to the good things on the internet, than it is for anyone, governments included, to exert control over computers which may be running in another country with different laws.

The internet is a global forum. It contains nothing that you can't find elsewhere, but it does provide a simple way of discovering information of all types. Parents shouldn't let their kids venture out into the street without offering them guidance on road safety.



and earlier versions was the way the install would bog down and fail on some systems. Usually, these were systems with IDE CD-ROM drives, specific IBM PC models, systems with dodgy memory, or PCs with IRQ clashes which weren't apparent under Windows or DOS.

Support for plug-and-play

Warp 4.0 includes support for plug and play, a graphical Hardware Manager (essentially a graphical version of the RMVIEW command), and a bunch of more device drivers including a separate CD with hundreds of drivers and links to the internet sites of hardware vendors where the latest drivers can be found.

Warp 4.0 plug-and-play support autodetects hardware during the installation process, but this can be turned off if required. If you've ever played with plug and play you might have discovered that it can sometimes go wrong, particularly if there's a mix of plug-and-play and legacy adaptors in the PC. By pressing Alt-F1 and selecting the new F6 option from the ensuing menu, you can disable the auto-detect feature and manually install drivers for problematic hardware.

PCW Contacts

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