Users of Windows 3.1 Quickly Become More Productive Using Windows 95 According to Independent Usability Test

Users Twice as Fast Performing Common Computing Tasks With Windows 95

REDMOND, Wash. — Nov. 29, 1994 — Users of Microsoft® Windows™ operating system version 3.1 software will quickly become more productive on the forthcoming Windows 95, according to usability tests by an independent research firm. The study, by Usability Sciences Corp., concluded that both novice and experienced users will find Microsoft's new operating system software fast and easy to learn, resulting in rapid increases in productivity. For organizations migrating to Windows 95, the results indicate that retraining should be minimal and, once users have moved to Windows 95, they will be almost twice as fast as they were under Windows 3.1.

The study found that users of Windows 3.1 with only 20 minutes of exposure to Windows 95 were nearly as productive on the new system the first time they performed a set of common tasks. After just 90 minutes of using Windows 95, these users were twice as fast performing common tasks under Windows 95, compared with their performance of the same types of tasks under Windows 3.1.

"We found conclusively that Windows 95 satisfies users across the spectrum of experience. Newcomers as well as experienced users of Windows find that Windows 95 is even easier to use and that it boosts their productivity," said Jeff Schueler, president of Usability Sciences Corp. "Based on our extensive experience in comparative product testing and our

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in-depth knowledge of users of Windows, we are confident that the results of this study can be projected to the overall population of users of Windows."

"This independent study proves that we've met a crucial goal for Windows 95 — it is powerful yet easily discoverable, so it meets the expectations and needs of both new and experienced users," said Brad Chase, general manager of the personal operating systems division at Microsoft. "While migration can be a major headache for MIS managers, the high marks for Windows 95 for ease of use and overall usability will likely reduce training and support costs."

The study found that after minimal exposure to Windows 95, not only were users of Windows 3.1 faster, they were able to complete more tasks. For example, beginning users of Windows 3.1 completed over 20 percent more tasks successfully using Windows 95.

About the Study

The study was conducted during October 1994 using Windows 3.1 and beta versions of Windows 95, scheduled to be released in final form in the first half of 1995. Usability Sciences selected 75 users of different skill levels from the adult population. Users were asked to perform a series of common computing tasks on Windows 3.1, and their total time and completion rates were measured. They were then given a 20-minute "play period," which included a 10-minute self-guided tutorial on Windows 95, and asked to repeat isomorphic versions of the tasks three times. The completion rates and times for each repetition were then compared to the benchmarks for Windows 3.1.

Common tasks tested included locating and opening files, finding Help topics, saving a file, creating folders, copying files to different drives and directories, and switching between programs without exiting.

Interested parties can obtain more information on the survey "Competitive Testing of Windows 95 vs. Windows 3.1" and other topics on Windows 95 through the following online services: On America Online®, choose key word WINNEWS; on CompuServe®, type GO WINNEWS; on GEnie™, access WinNews in File Area 24 of the Windows Roundtable; on the Internet, select ftp.microsoft.com in the /Peropsys/Win_News directory; on Prodigy™, choose jump word WINNEWS.

Usability Sciences Corp. is the industry leader in software usability testing. Founded in 1989, Usability Sciences has contributed to the success of hardware and software products throughout the microcomputer industry through independent usability and comparative testing services.

Founded in 1975, Microsoft (NASDAQ "MSFT") is the worldwide leader in software for personal computers. The company offers a range of products and services for business and personal use, each designed with the mission of making it easier and more enjoyable for people to take advantage of the full power of personal computing every day.

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