Windows To The Word:
The Windows Users Column

By: David Stellmack

This month is going to take a little different format. I have been talking to a lot of people lately about some of the problems they have been having using Windows. Since, Windows is more of an operating environment than just a program it is natural than question are going to arise. This month I have decided to answer some of the many questions about Windows and I will also try to offer some solutions that I have found to work.

* Question 1

If you are still running a 8088 or 8086 based machine what versions of Windows will run on my system?

* Answer 1 *

Of course running Windows on anything less than a 286 processor would mean long waits and lots of patience on the owners part. As an ice breaker or introduction to Windows running on a 8088 or 8086 system than runs at 10mgz or better can be a good way to learn about windows. I have found that Windows versions 1.03 and 2.03 will run on 8088 and 8086 systems. Windows 286 version 2.1 will run on all 8088 or 8086 systems since the 286 means nothing more than the fact that to take full advantage and get best performance out of Windows you will need a 80286 processor. Windows 286 version 2.2 is available now and I really don't know weather or not it will run on 8088 or 8086 systems. The version 2.2 of Windows that was in my Microsoft Mouse Kit came on low density 3 1/2 disks and high density 5 1/4 disks. Since the XT I have does not have either of these drives I have not yet gotten around to testing it. I know for sure that Windows 386 which taps the 386 specific instruction set will not run on any 8088, 8086, or 80286 based systems.

* Question 2

If a windows based product states that a 286 or 386 processor is required for use with the program will it work on a 8088 or 8086 based system?

* Answer 2 *

At this time I have found no Windows based product that would not run on a 8088 or 8086 system running Windows 2.03 or higher. Some of the more popular programs on this list include: Presents, Ami, Pagemaker, Presents, The Illustrator, Designer, and more. Of course the performance of these programs was rather questionable due to the fact they when running on a slow system.

* Question 3

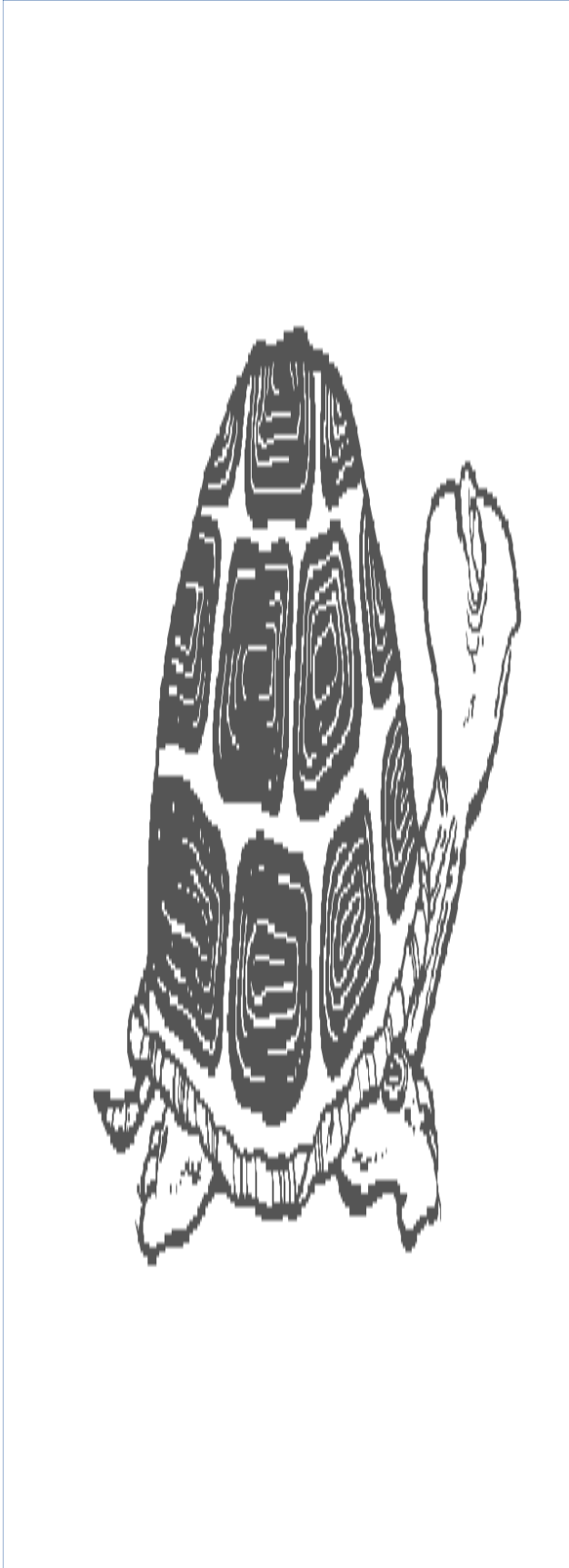Do you know of any way to save memory?

* Answer 3 *

In Windows memory is very valuable and hard to come by. Of course adding more memory would be the best answer since chip prices are falling. Getting rid of any TSR programs that are able to survive during Windows would be the first good way. (Frieze from Z-Soft is a good example of a program that can stay in memory while Windows is running.) Under the file menu you will find a command named RUN if you select this and change the option to Minimize Ms-Dos Executive will save a little more memory. Closing all unnecessary programs also is an obvious choice. If you are using conventual memory for a hard drive cache then getting rid it would also be a help.

* Question 4

I have found that the <u>About Ms-Dos Executive</u> option under the file menu is not able to keep track of the amount of free memory. Is there any way to get an accurate free memory count?

* Answer 4 *

Yes, I believe that a program published in an issue of the Microsoft Programmers Journal had such a program that ran as a Minimized Icon. I have not been able to find a copy of this program, but I believe it is available on the Microsoft Dial system for download. Other than that I have no idea other than to use as many memory conversation techniques as you can find.

* Question 5

Will Microsoft Excel run on my XT?

* Answer 5 *

Yes, but do to the speed of the XT, I would suggest you stay with Lotus or something non-Windows based. Microsoft Works 1.05 would be a good choice and you even get a Word Processor, Terminal Emulator, and Database. (Good prices can be found for this program around town. I only paid $42.30 for my copy.) Microsoft Works on the PC has a Windows type set up and supports full mouse interaction. Microsoft also has an excellent number of printer drivers available for Works, although some of the more rare ones are only available by either calling Microsoft or downloading them from CompuServe.

* Question 6

Is it possible to Export Word Perfect Version 5.0 data containing graphics into Pagemaker 3.0 with out losing the graphics and the formatting of the text?

* Answer 6 *

Yes, a filter exists and it is available by either contacting Aldus on their toll free number and asking for a copy or by down loading it from the Word Perfect Support Group on CompuServe. I also believe that it can be downloaded from the Word Perfect Corp BBS.

* Question 7

If I am going to upgrade from an old version of Windows to a new version can I just run the set up program from the setup disk or should I clear out the old version Windows directory first?

* Answer 7 *

I would suggest that you copy all Windows based files from your application programs and also make a copy of your Windows fonts from the old version. The precede to both copy and print your old version WIN.INI file. This can save you time by helping you modify your new version WIN.INI file. Remember that your new WIN.INI file will not contain some of the custom modification you made if any. I had a problem copying straight over an old version, with a new version and a call to Microsoft confirmed the fact that old version should be deleted before a new version is installed.

* Question 8

If I'm using a cache program with Windows which one works best? Some cache programs seem to make Windows crash.

* Answer 8 *

I have found by doing some bench mark tests that PC-Kwik does in fact run faster than Smart Drive from Microsoft. You should not however mix both the PC-Power-Pak RAM DISK and the Microsoft Smart Drive. You should not also use the PC-Kwik Cache and the Microsoft Ramdrive. I found the PC-Power-Pak from Multisoft to work best with Windows and take up the least amount memory.

* Question 9

Why doesn't Microsoft Paint use color if I have a EGA or VGA system?

* Answer 9 *

Microsoft Paint was not designed to run in color. If you also have the PC Paintbrush for Windows and are using a CGA adaptor you will find that it also runs in back and white. This is due to the fact that Windows running in CGA runs in 2 color graphics mode.

* Question 10

If I have an old PIF file from an older version of Windows for a program that does not have a PIF file in a newer version of Windows is it OK to use the old PIF file?

* Answer 10 *

I was only able to try this with 2 programs and I encountered no problems. In a conversation with a Microsoft Technical Support rep I was advised against using old version PIF files. I suggest you use old PIF files at your own risk.
* Question 11

I heard that is possible to send my Post Script output from Page Maker to the hard disk so I can send it out via modem to be typeset. How do I get Page Maker and Windows to do this?

* Answer 11 *

The best way I have found to do this is to modify the WIN.INI file as described on page 213 of your Microsoft Windows users guide. You will also have to modify the Control Panel to let Windows know that you intend to use the Post Script printer saved to a disk file instead of your regular default printer. Be warned however that Post Script code containing graphics and text will take up a lot of hard disk space and 1 page can take up to 1.5MB or more.

* Question 12

Do you know if it possible to take my Microsoft Windows Write files and convert them into another format?

* Answer 12 *

Yes, you can check the box in the save in Microsoft Word format in the dialog box, but if you have any graphics contained in your Write file they will not be transferred into Microsoft Word format. You could also export Write text to the Clipboard and then paste it in to the Notepad and then save it as a text file.

* Question 13

I seem to get a lot of Out Of Memory and Not Enough Memory Errors when using the PC Paintbrush for Windows. Is there a bug in this program?

* Answer 13 *

When working with any graphics program you are going to need a lot of memory. Since you loose a lot of memory when you load Windows some of the most routine tasks using the PC Paintbrush for Windows will generate errors due to low memory problems. Of course the best way to resolve this would be to add some LIMs compatible memory. Since chip prices have been so high, I have been taking advantage of the fact the old version 2.0 of the Pc Paintbrush 2.0 will accept PCX files generated using the Pc Paintbrush for Windows. Pc Paintbrush 2.0 was originally packaged with the Microsoft Mouse and if you have had your Microsoft mouse for a while chances are you have a copy of this lying around. The Pc Paintbrush Plus will only leave you with about the same amount of memory as using the regular Pc Paintbrush for Windows. Remember that you have to make sure that the Pc Paintbrush or the Pc Paintbrush Plus is configured to the same graphics screen mode as you are using in Windows.

* Question 14

The Fill Tool in the Pc Paintbrush for Windows seems not work correctly. Why does this happen?

* Answer 14 *

Yes, using the fill tool in the Pc Paintbrush for Windows is quite tricky. Bleeding over into areas that you do not want to fill seems to be a problem that is caused my not "closing" off the fill area. Remember that only one pixel has to be missing to cause a bleed. I have found that the fill tool in other versions of the Pc Paintbrush seem to be a lot easier to work with and due to PCX format you can move pictures created with the Pc Paintbrush for Windows into other versions of the Pc Paintbrush.

* Question 15

Why don't some of the Pc Paintbrush for Windows's tools like the Cut Out Tools work in Show Screen mode?

* Answer 15 *

If you upgrade to the Pc Paintbrush Plus for Windows you will find that mode of the tools are able to be used in the Show Screen mode. I believe that only the Pc Publishers Paintbrush which does <u>NOT</u> run under Windows is the only version in the Pc Paintbrush that supports all tools in Show Screen mode.

        Well, I hope you enjoyed this edition of Windows To The World and if you have any questions about Windows or you need help with a Windows application please feel free to use figure 1 to write me at the address below.

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                    c/o Word Processing People
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                    Coming to Windows To The World Next Month:

                        The Long Overdue Review Of Ami!!