



Up, up and away

Stephen Rodda was well pleased with his new SCSI adaptor; under NT it made his machine fly... Under Windows '95 it barely cleared the runway. Plus, why you shouldn't let the good times roll.

I'm a fan of SCSI peripherals, as opposed to IDE and EIDE. I recently installed an Adaptec 2940 PCI SCSI adaptor, which allows the direct addressing of the drives through the PCI bus: I expected a speed increase, but at first sight, the results were rather peculiar.

Having installed the drivers under NT before removing the drives from the old card, I turned the machine off and installed the card in my machine. I replaced the SCSI drive cable from the Adaptec 1542 onto the PCI card and switched the machine back on. I thought I'd see how the card behaved under Windows 95, so I selected that on the initial boot screen.

Windows 95 took a moment or two to recognise the card but then, bingo; the card was installed and running. I had expected a significant speed increase; but I noticed nothing.

"Well, let's see what happens under NT," I thought. So I rebooted the machine into NT and even on the blue startup screen I noticed that things were going to be different; my computer positively flew.

Apart from upgrading processors and RAM in large quantities, I have seen nothing which breathed life into an installation in quite the way this card did. A couple of months ago I mentioned that NT was definitely faster than Windows 95 and now it's come up trumps.

Why should this happen; that Windows 95 scarcely shows a difference whereas the acceleration under NT is so noticeable? I put it down to the fact that although Windows 95 is certainly better-protected than Windows 3.x, its drivers aren't quite as intelligently-multitasking as the NT's.

Installation of the card, by the way, wasn't quite as straightforward as it might

have been, although I ascribe this to the fact that my machine has a few other adaptors cluttering it up. I ended up by assigning an interrupt (14 seemed as good as any other, since I don't use the built-in IDE controller) to the PCI board myself, whereas it should have done that all by itself.

Having worked out that this was the problem, I found everything else working just as it should be. Note that in the screenshot below, the IDE adaptor is shown as conflicting and therefore unavailable, and this is because I used IRQ 14.

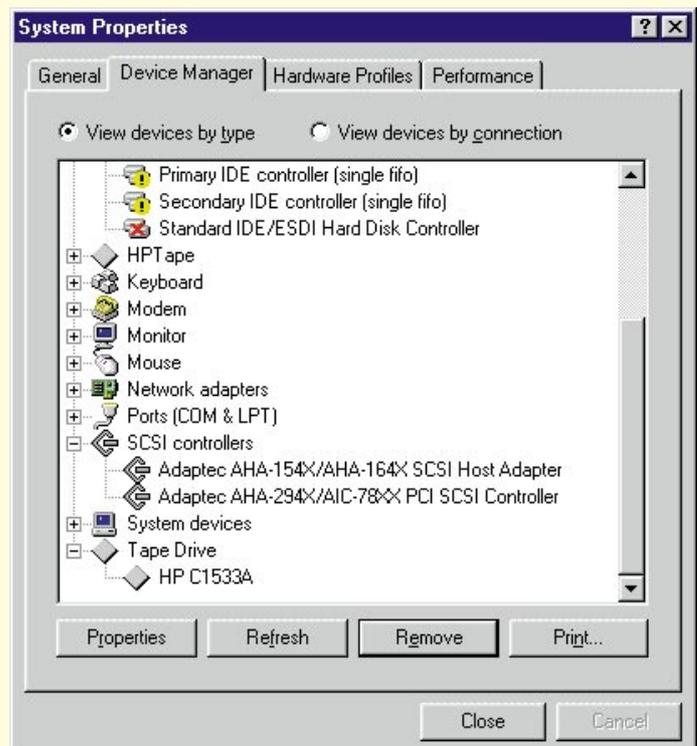
Remember, unless you're going to be running your machine under DOS or Unix, the chances are you won't need to buy the Adaptec EZ-SCSI any longer, since most operating systems (OS/2, Windows 95, NetWare and NT included) come with drivers for almost every SCSI adaptor card available.

Windows 95, showing the Adaptec adaptor installed

Good times, bad times

For those of you with an Email network connected to the outside, it seems that the pseudo-virus called "Good Times" is doing the rounds again. This is probably because educational establishments have gained a new intake of students who have become just about literate enough on the Internet to propagate messages which they think are real, honest-to-goodness warnings for their fellow man.

Most of us have been there before. The most famous is the Christmas Tree virus which propagated over the Internet automatically, taking advantage of a small security hole in the SENDMAIL command,





where it read the address books of the addressees and forwarded itself to the next set of unwitting recipients. Now that hole has been plugged, these sort of scams rely on public-spirited people to reproduce. Hence their reproduction is all up to the addressees.

The big bad three

There are three basic species. One is the "Send postcards to this boy in hospital suffering from terminal cancer" (if you're reading this, Craig, I'm glad you've been better for quite some time now).

Then there is the "I was ripped off by a cookie shop which charged me \$250 for a copy of its cookie recipe, please give all your friends copies of the recipe for free." Now I was born, bred and dragged up in a hotel and I know a bit about cooking; it's a simple shortbread recipe and not worth bandying about on the Internet.

The other variety, "Look out for this mail message entitled 'Good Times' because it'll format your hard disk", keeps rearing its ugly head.

It is probably worthwhile putting these three in an introductory mail message to new subscribers, telling them that they are all hoaxes which only slow down the Internet (or your local LAN).

The "Good Times" pseudo-virus seems

to have taken many people unawares. This is simply because it's written in good, easily-understood, non-technical language which those in ultimate authority (who may know little about computers) can disseminate throughout a corporate structure.

Unfortunately (or fortunately, really) it is just so much totally inaccurate drivel — it's virtually impossible for a mail message to format your hard disk. And it certainly isn't in a non-existent mail message with the heading of "Good Times".

A trojan task

The best defence against this would be to remove ANSI.SYS from the CONFIG.SYS file. Such hard-disk trojans work simply by issuing the correct ANSI commands to program (perhaps) a function key and then to issue the ANSI command which equates to this keystroke. Without ANSI.SYS, the command cannot work.

If you do need ANSI.SYS, then the other method of defence is to make sure that all versions of DOS which you run are 3.3 or above, and to give each hard disk a label. With a label on the hard disk, when the FORMAT C: command is issued, you have to specify the correct label for the hard disk before the formatting operation can commence.



Messages received and understood

PC link-up

I need some advice on linking two PCs together. At home we have two Mitac 486DX/2 50MHz PCs with 8Mb RAM and 250Mb hard drives; one machine (which I use) has a double-speed CD-ROM and the other (which my father uses) has a modem.

We are considering linking the two machines together because I would like to use the modem while my father does his work, and he would like to access the CD-ROM drive (as some of the data and software for his work comes in on CD-ROM). My father will be getting a 1Gb hard drive, and I would like access to that, too.

We have access to Windows for Workgroups and a cable to link the computers up, but I am unsure as to whether this would work, or even if it would be worthwhile.

Could you advise me?

Elliot, Kuwait

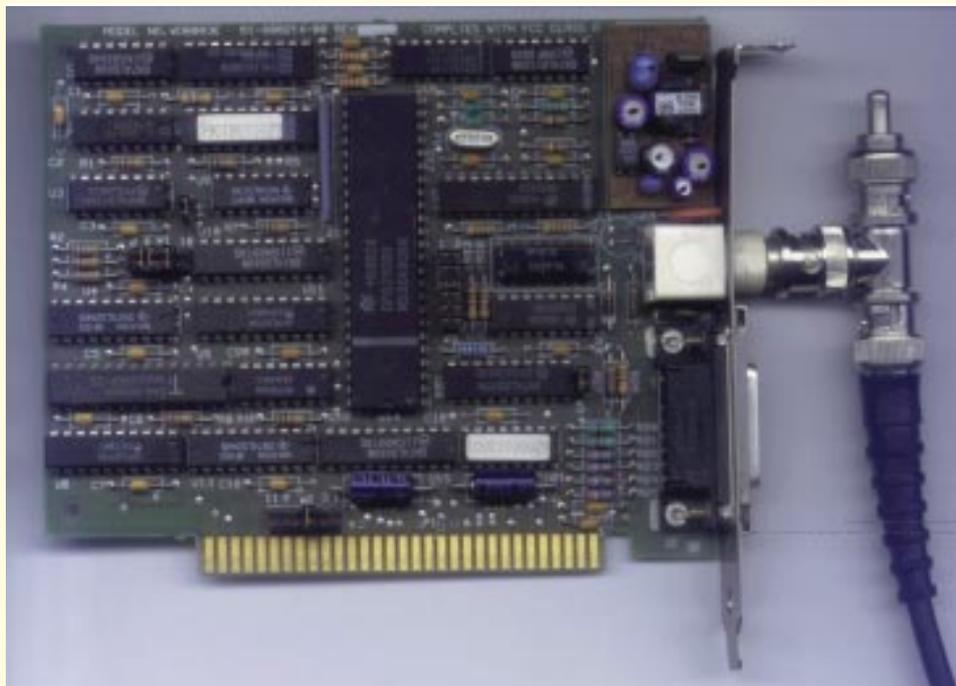
You don't specify, Elliot, whether your cable for linking the machines together is a network cable or a null-modem cable. Let's assume it's a null-modem cable. Don't worry about what I'm going to say about the cable, though.

Windows for Workgroups doesn't support null-modem links as a means of networking, although Windows 95 does. The disadvantage in any case would be that the speed of the network link would, in all probability, be unacceptably slow.

I suggest you get hold of a couple of NE2000 clone boards with a length of Ethernet cable, a couple of "T" pieces (sometimes included with the adaptors) and two terminators.

The photograph above is of an 8-bit network card with "T" piece, cable and terminator, but since I get many queries about this arrangement I have included the picture for you and for others to see how the end card of a network is connected. Of course, if you were to add a machine between the two machines, then instead of a terminator you would have another cable attached.

A network is not expensive to set up. You should be able to get hold of a pair of network cards, cable, "T" pieces and terminators for around £50. At these prices, since you already have Windows for Workgroups, the price of a \$25 network which would allow you to network using the serial ports (£25 in the UK) is not really



Network card with terminator, cable and "T" piece

worth considering.

Now all you have to do is to install Windows for Workgroups to take account of the new hardware and of the network. Start Windows Setup (in Windows, not in DOS) and you can install and configure your

"A network is not expensive to set up ... you can get [the components] for around £50"

network adaptor card driver.

As far as sharing the modem is concerned, you make no mention of whether the modem is internal or external. If it's an external modem, you can, of course, change the wiring of the null-modem cable to an ordinary modem cable and use a switch box. If it's an internal modem, you'll have to use a modem-sharing package.

You don't say exactly what you want to use the modem for. If it is intended for use as a fax modem, then Windows for Workgroups allows fax sharing through Microsoft Mail. If it's merely to be a general-purpose modem (perhaps for surfing the Net) then it's probably cheaper to buy another (perhaps faster) modem for yourself than to buy a modem-sharing package

which, at around £100, is pretty near the price of a new, fast, modem.

New name

Is it possible to rename our Novell Server (3.12)? If so, how can I do it and what are the implications?

mn@cix

Look in Autoexec.ncf and you'll find the old server name there. The possible implications are that if some machine or other has a shell setting for the preferred server it may not find it. But if there's only the one server then it's likely there's no problem lurking around the corner.

Another point worth considering is that Windows-type clients remember their connections by using the //servername/directory notation in the WIN.INI file, so the connection paths on any such machines will have to be changed and re-remembered.

Something you might find it useful to look for is a full path reference to the machine name in the login script. It's a good plan to refer to the server name in the mapping procedure of a login script so that if, and when, a new server is added to the network, your users will still have the same mappings defined. They can then have other machines expressly added to the script, too.

Of course, in a multi-server setup there may well be problems (other than those detailed above) in changing the server's name, which you could well do without. These will include the login script problem

This year, I'm going to...

Now that the seemingly endless round of Yuletide and New Year parties is over and one's liver is at least part way back up the steep hill from cirrhosis, we should look at some New Year computer resolutions.

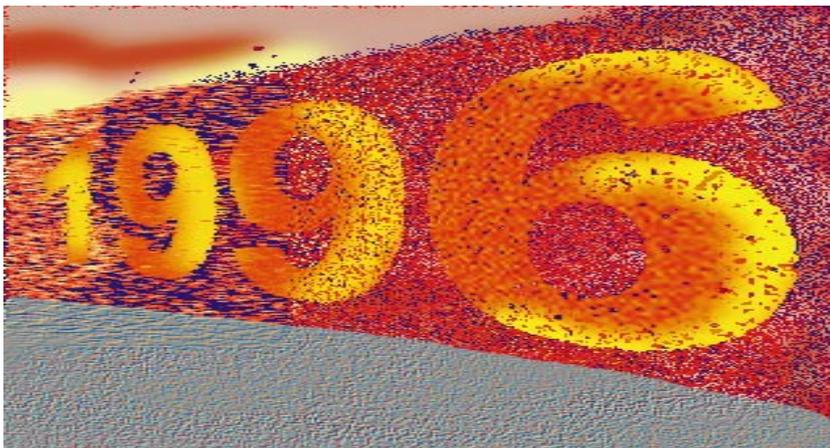
How about slimming? No, I don't mean going to a gymnasium to get rid of the excess Yule goose; I mean hard-disk purging. During the course of normal use a network can accumulate a good deal of "shrapnel". This is the term I use for those temporary files we all create on the spur of the moment when we save what we think is a nifty macro, for our own use as a separate file. Once it's been merged with our current templates we no longer need it, yet somehow it's remained, just sitting there on the hard disk eating up space.

Backup files, too, are terrible culprits, as are intermediate files produced, say, when scanning a page ready for an OCR or DTP package (the resultant file may be long gone, but the intermediate files still take up their megabyte of space each). I know I keep on about backup, but it can't be repeated too often. Perhaps it's time to look at your backup tapes. Do some of them need to be retired?

Have you been good recently and cleaned your tape heads? With some drives, by the time they warn that they need cleaning, it may already be too late!

If you haven't backed up at all (*and you know who you are!*) please back up now. If you haven't got a backup system, whatever you do, don't turn your machine on again until you've installed one.

Next month I'll be looking at Arcada Backup Exec for NetWare 3 and 4, which has just landed on my desk.



mentioned above and the possibility of wrong ATTACH commands appearing in the login script. Personally, I would not change a server's name unless the old name was rude.

The glorious 12

I've got a 12Mb machine and I want to run NT Workstation on it. Will this work? I don't really want to spend money on lots of memory at the moment.

Mb@cix

Yes, it will. It won't break any records for speed, and I'd suggest you really should consider putting in another 4Mb as a minimum (or better still, 8Mb).

The machine will run NT Workstation — in fact, I've run Server on 12Mb, but wouldn't want to again — and, I suppose, at a reasonable rate; it just won't fly.

At your service

I've just bought NT Workstation 3.51, and I've read about the service packs available for it. Surely I don't have to add these to a new product?

AS@cix

Yes, you do. Microsoft supplies the NT CD in precisely the same state as when it was first released. You should use Service Pack 2 (which includes Service Pack 1) right away. This is available from all the usual places: Microsoft Network, ftp.microsoft.com, CompuServe and CIX.

PCW Contacts

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