

question time

Answering queries from this month's postbag, we include advice on the security of notebook PCs in the office environment, using a microphone to make recordings with a sound card, the Windows 95 taskbar, and sharing a telephone line between voice and computer

I need a modem that is able to differentiate between voice and data input (such as faxes), on calls made over a single telephone line. As I won't have my computer connected all of the time, it must also be capable of storing faxes received until I download them later. Is there one or more pieces of equipment that will allow me to do this?

Ken Stoner, Basingstoke

We've had several letters this month on the topic of sharing single telephone lines, so we've decided to use this letter as an excuse to look at all of the available options. The simplest way to share a telephone line between voice and computer calls is to use a device such as the Frontier Duo-line. For £35 plus VAT, it will intercept a call, decide whether it is voice or data and send it to the appropriate piece of equipment. Contact Electronic Frontier on 01734 810600.

For a more integrated solution, voice-capable fax modems come to the rescue. They can store both voice and fax messages in one of several 'mailboxes', provided the PC is switched on. These modems are either external devices or expansion cards that fit inside a desktop PC. As far as we know, there are no PCMCIA models available, but the external models can be connected to notebooks using the standard serial port. US Robotics (0800 225252) makes one called the Sportster 28000 VI, costing £199.

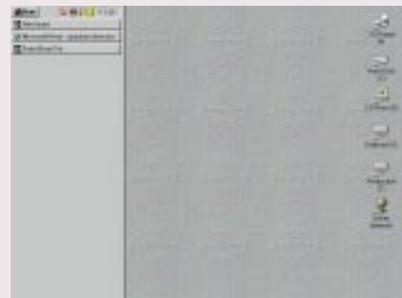
When you need to be able to receive and store faxes without leaving your computer switched on, the choices dwindle alarmingly. In fact, unless you are prepared to order direct from a foreign company, you'll need to turn once again to Electronic Frontier, the modem and communications specialists (see above). Their Microfax 144 fax modem can receive up to 15 pages of text when the computer

Q I'm having a bit of a problem with Windows 95 – my taskbar seems to be jammed. I've set the taskbar so that it pops up when the mouse pointer is moved to the bottom of the screen but, when I do this, the taskbar only pops up a little bit. It used to be okay. Is there a problem with my Windows 95 setup, or perhaps my display driver?

L R Whitney, Telford, Shropshire

A There's nothing wrong with your Windows 95 setup; it sounds as though you've simply shrunk your taskbar to a size that's too small to show its contents. To remedy this, pop up the taskbar and hold the mouse pointer over its edge, so that it changes to a two-pointed black arrow. Press the left mouse button and drag the taskbar to a larger size.

Incidentally, if you click on an unoccupied part of the taskbar, you can drag it to any side of the screen.



is switched off. As a modem, it operates at 14.4kbps, and you can even power it from an optional clip-on battery pack if you need comms on the move.

I seem to recall reading somewhere that it's possible to get Windows 95 to display a thumbnail image of a graphics file as the icon for that file, instead of using the generic icon of the program that created it. Unfortunately, I can't remember where I read it, or how to do it. Can you help?

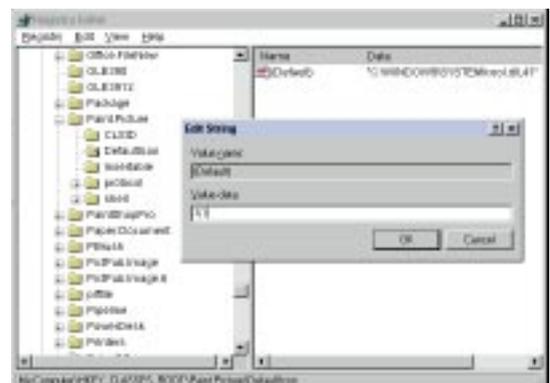
Lynn Hardman, Talaton, Devon

It is possible to get Windows 95 to do what you want by editing the Windows Registry, though we can't honestly recommend doing it unless you are very confident using Windows.

- 1 Select 'Run' from the Start Menu and type in 'regedit'. Click OK.
- 2 Click the '+' sign next to HKEY_CLASSES_ROOT to expand it.
- 3 Scroll down the list to the Paint.Picture entry.
- 4 Click the '+' sign next to Paint.Picture to expand it.

- 5 Select the entry DefaultIcon by clicking it once.
- 6 Double-click on 'Default' in the right-hand window pane.
- 7 Delete the entry for 'Value data' and replace it with '%1'.
- 8 Click OK.
- 9 Exit RegEdit.

In Explorer, if you choose 'Large Icons' from the 'View' menu, all .BMP files will have a thumbnail view of their contents as their icon. Unfortunately, this only works for .BMP files and it will also take longer to show the contents of a folder that contains .BMP files. The time penalty will be acceptable on a Pentium, but not on a 486.



Question time

I use my PC without a mouse, preferring to use the keyboard shortcuts instead. This was straightforward with Windows 3.1, but as soon as I upgraded to Windows 95, I ran into problems. How do I simulate the right-hand mouse button with the keyboard?

S. Calvin, Cleveland

Pressing Shift and F10 together has the same effect as pressing the right-hand mouse button.

I own a notebook computer and I wish to bring it and my monitor into my workplace. Are there any companies that manufacture cabinets or safes that can be used to secure this equipment?

Tom Newson, Bath

Depending on whether or not you want to use your notebook while it is secured, there are several options available.

The simplest (and possibly the cheapest) is to lock it in a drawer when it is not being used. A more sturdy alternative would be to use a specially-designed lockable computer cabinet, such as those available from Ergoflex UK (0181 571 5005). Alternatively, there are several systems that rely on strong cables to fix equipment in place. The cheapest use adhesive-backed metal plates that stick to the desk and the equipment itself, through which the cables pass. A less permanent system uses a plate that locks into the floppy disk drive of a PC. HCS Global stock a wide range of such systems: contact them on 0181 560 8585.

I recently upgraded my Pentium PC to Windows 95 and noticed some problems with the mouse. When I looked in Device Manager, I saw that there were two mice listed – a standard serial mouse (the one I'm using) and a PS/2-compatible one. The PS/2 mouse had an exclamation mark next to it, so I removed it.

When I restarted the computer, Windows 95 detected new hardware and reinstalled the PS/2 mouse, complete with exclamation mark. Why is my computer detecting two mice when I only have one connected?

Marvin Gibson, Worcester

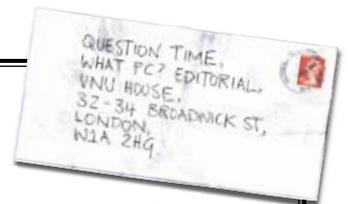
Take a look at the back of your computer and you should find a small circular port labelled either as 'mouse' or with a symbol that looks like a figure '8' – this is a

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.

Questions may be on any hardware or software-related topic, but bear in mind that those of general interest to other readers are more likely to get printed.

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



PS/2 port. You are using a mouse plugged into a serial port but Windows 95 is detecting the presence of the PS/2 port, even though there is no mouse connected to it.

This won't affect the operation of your PC, but you can solve the problem by using a PS/2 mouse instead of a serial one. This will, incidentally, free up an extra serial port.

After using Windows 95 for several months, I switched on my PC and instead of the usual desktop, taskbar and Start button, the PC launched into Program Manager. My PC has the look and feel of Windows 95 but operates as Windows 3.1, which I originally chose not to remove until a later date. Can I put this right without reinstalling Windows 95?

Ian Wriglesworth, Darlington

There are two possible solutions to this. The most likely one is that Explorer.exe is no longer being used as your Windows 95 shell. To check this, select Run from the File menu in Program Manager, type in 'Sysedit' and click on OK. Once Sysedit has started, select

the window for SYSTEM.INI and find the [boot] section. There should be an entry starting with 'shell='. If the line reads: shell=Progman.exe, change it to: shell=Explorer.exe. Then exit Sysedit, save your changes and restart your computer. Windows 95 should then reappear.

Alternatively, you may have an entry for Progman (Windows 3.1 Program Manager) in your Startup folder. To remove it, run File Manager and look in the following directory:

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c:\windows\startm~1\programs\startup
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(File Manager does not support long filenames, hence 'startm~1'). If it contains a file PROGMAN.INK or PROGRAM.EXE, delete it and restart your computer.

Please could you tell me where to get the full registered version of Netscape 2.0 for Windows 95.

Karen Holmes, via e-mail

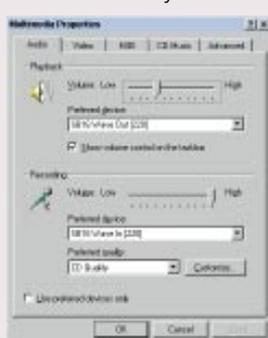
Unipalm Pipex are the UK distributors for all Netscape products. A registered version of Netscape 2.0 can be ordered from Pipex's Web site at: <http://www.unipalm.pipex.com/netscape>, or by calling 0500 474739. Prices start from £44.06 (incl VAT).

Q

I'm having problems using a microphone to make recordings with my sound card. I've tried several different types but to no avail – I just get silence when I make a recording. Is there a problem with the sound card, or do I need a special microphone?

Mark Kramer, via e-mail

If you're getting no sound at all from your microphone recordings, it could be that your recording level is not set high enough. Select



Multimedia from the Windows Control Panel and click the Audio tab. Try setting the recording volume slider to maximum and then make a microphone recording. If necessary, you can make later adjustments to select exactly the right volume.

Having said this, experience has taught us that many sound cards are extremely fussy about what type of microphone they will work with. If your microphone came with the sound card, our suggestion should fix the problem but, if you bought it separately, we strongly recommend you contact the maker of your sound card and ask exactly which type of microphone will work best.

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