

question time

This month we sort out some Windows 95 problems, including setting the clock and backing up the Registry. We advise on compressing data on a hard drive, creating wallpaper on a PC, and recommend a painting package to an artist

I recently purchased a Pentium 133MHz PC with Windows 95, and fitted with a 1.6Gb hard disk drive. Though I believed this would be a more than adequate capacity, I am already running short of storage space. I know that deleting programs would free up some space but I don't want to do that.

Given that I am a complete computer novice, what are my options? Is it possible for me to upgrade the disk in any way? **Sulhail Rashid, Crosland Moor, Huddersfield**

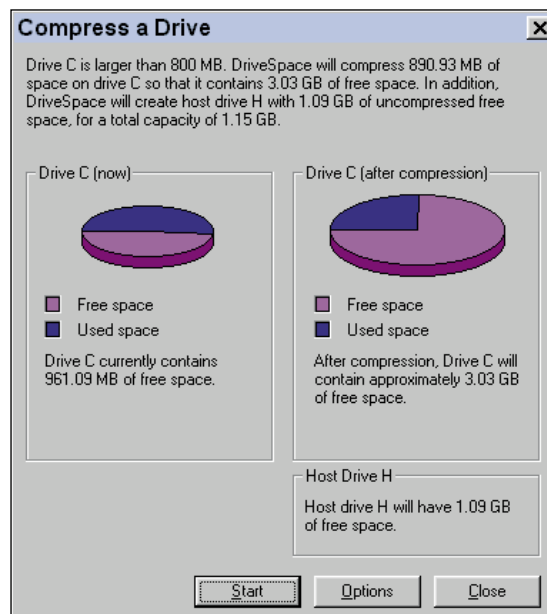
There are a couple of options available to you. The first, and by far the simplest, is to use the Windows 95 DriveSpace program to compress your hard disk.

This will free up a large portion of your hard disk by reducing the amount of space that your programs and data files take up. The disadvantage is that the performance of your PC can be affected – albeit marginally with a Pentium 133 processor – because it has to compress and decompress files in 'real time' as and when they're needed. Also, as your hard disk is nearly full, it will probably take several hours to compress everything, though you can leave it to run overnight or while you're at work.

To run the DriveSpace program, go to Start/Programs/Accessories/System Tools. The program is relatively straightforward to use and we've found compressed drives to be perfectly reliable. It goes without saying, however, that you should back up your important files before doing anything to the data on your hard disk.

Alternatively, you could fit a second hard drive to your PC. This obviously requires you to open up your PC and you might consider investing in the November 1996 issue of *What PC?* in which we published a step-by-step guide to upgrading your hard disk. To

order a copy, call our back issues department on 01483 733874.



A friend of mine has told me that I should back up the Windows 95 Registry. Unfortunately, he neglected to tell me why I should do this or how it is done, (although he did say that there was a program on the Windows 95 CD-ROM). Can you enlighten me?

Derek G Thow, Magor, Monmouthshire

The Registry holds a great deal of important information about your system and everything connected to it, and without it Windows 95 could not operate. For this reason, it is important that you do not attempt to edit or change it in any way. Making backups, however, is a good idea – particularly before installing new hardware or software. Should anything go wrong during the installation, you can then restore the Registry to its original state. ►

Q I have an IBM PC with a Pentium processor running Windows 95. My question is simple: is it possible to make Windows 95 switch between 12- and 24-hour time formats? **D Precious, Stevenage, Herts**

A By default, Windows 95's British regional settings are set to display the time in 24-hour format only. However, defining your own display template is quite straightforward.

First of all you need to open up Control Panel (Start/Settings) and double-click on the Regional Settings icon. Click the Time tab and you can then customise the way in which the time is displayed. At this point, you can type in a display template for the 12-hour clock in the Time style box. The accompanying screen shot shows the full range of options but to display a 12-hour display, type in: hh:mm:ss.

You can also get Windows 95 to suffix the time with an AM or PM symbol. To do this, the Time style should be hh:mm:ss tt – although, annoyingly, you must also define AM and PM in the two entry boxes provided.



Question time

The program to which your friend refers is called Configuration Backup (the file-name is CFGBACK.EXE), and it is stored in the OTHER\MISC\CFG-BACK folder on the Windows 95 CD-ROM. You can run this either directly from the CD or copy it across to your hard drive first and run it from there.

To back up the Registry, type in a backup name and then click the 'Backup' button. The process will take a minute or two, after which the backup will appear in the 'List of Previous Backups'. To restore the Registry, simply reverse the process – choose a name from the list and then choose restore.



On a visit to some friends, my 10-year-old daughter saw a painting that had been drawn by her friend being used as wallpaper on her mother's PC. My daughter now has her own collection of paintings waiting to be turned into PC wallpaper. Being a computer numpty, I have no idea how to turn a saved PC painting into wallpaper. Do I need to buy special software, or is there an easy solution? I have Windows 95.

**Mr L Gilmour,
Bellshill, Lanarkshire**

Any image can be turned into background wallpaper but there are two things to consider. Firstly, only images in BMP format can be

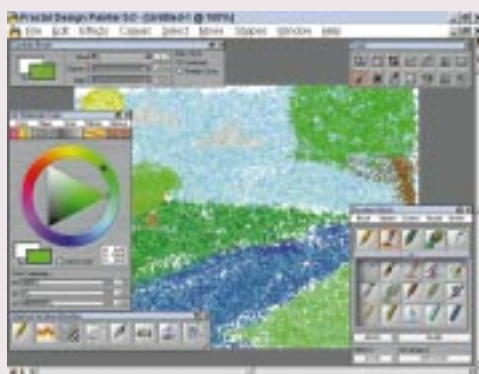
Q

I am a fine artist who is awaiting delivery of his first ever PC. Naturally, I am going to be interested in a painting program that simulates the action of painting with a brush on canvas and is capable of producing very many tones of a single colour.

I appreciate that no program can produce the effects of say, an impressionist painting but I wonder if you could suggest any software that would have the sophisticated features I need. I imagine that painting with a mouse is quite awkward and I believe that I can connect an A4 pad and stylus to a PC for drawing. Would this be a less costly solution than scanning original drawings made on paper?

Roy Bennett, Louth, Lincs

A



You will no doubt be pleased to hear that there is a product which meets your needs exactly. Painter, from Fractal Design, is designed to closely mimic the act of drawing and painting on paper and other media. Painter is too large a program to go into much detail about here but it can reproduce pretty much anything that you can achieve with pen, pencil, paintbrush and much, much more.

Painter makes great demands on the PC used to run it but the specification you give in your letter should be more than adequate. Painter 5 (£351.33) is due for release shortly – expect to see a review in *What PC?* as soon as it becomes available. Anyone buying Painter 4 will qualify for a free upgrade to version 5.

As far as creating pictures goes, a graphics tablet (consisting of stylus and tablet) is a much more natural combination than mouse and mat. Graphics tablets needn't be expensive – Wacom has models starting from £135.12. A4 colour scanners can be had just as cheaply and are a perfect way to get existing pictures onto your PC (though you could always trace line drawings using a graphics tablet). Once you've scanned a picture though, you'll presumably want to manipulate it on your PC, something that is far easier with a graphics tablet.

Principal Distribution (Painter): 01756 704000

Wacom (graphics tablets): via distributor Technomatic: 0990 246222

used. If you have a non-BMP file, you will have to load it into a paint program and then use the Save As option in order to save it as a BMP file.

Secondly, if you're using a large image, unless the size of the image perfectly matches the resolution of your screen, the wallpaper will have a border around it. Smaller images, however, can be tiled to fill the whole screen.

To make an image into wallpaper, double-click the display icon Display in the Control Panel.



Click the Background tab and then choose 'Browse' from the 'Wallpaper' part of the window. Find the image file you want to use, click it, then click OK. You should then see a preview of your wallpaper, at which point you can decide whether you want it tiled or in the middle of the screen. When you're happy with it, click 'OK' to put it in place.



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.

The writer of every published letter will receive a FREE COPY of either *Microsoft Works 95* or *Microsoft Publisher 95*. Please state which you would prefer.

