

# Fact

Encyclopaedias, atlases, dictionaries and other reference material available on CD-ROM provide a mine of information accessible via your PC. We give some pointers as to what you can hope to discover

It's a mark of how much reference material is now available on CD-ROMs that we've had to expand last year's four categories to six for this roundup, and with prices as low as £12.99 we hope we've found something for everyone.

The categories we chose are: encyclopaedias; English dictionaries; art and media; assorted language reference works (a mixed bag including thesauruses, quotations, foreign dictionaries and the like); atlases and route-finding maps.

Best of all we found that the presentation and content of CD reference works is improving just as fast as the range of subjects covered – so there are no winners and losers, just best buy and recommended titles after each section.

## Encyclopaedias

The forerunner of all modern encyclopaedias is *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, so we'll start this roundup by looking at the current CD-ROM version – available at the staggering price of £755. For this you get a swish presentation box containing an instructional video, a manual and a security dongle that you have to plug into a parallel printer socket before you can use the CD.

Unusually, the search and display features of the encyclopaedia are provided by version 2.0 of Netscape, instead of being specially designed for Britannica. This works better than you'd expect, and if you're used to the Netscape Web browser you'll be straight into find-

ing and viewing encyclopaedia articles without even opening the manual. If you're not, you'll spend a few hours getting the hang of it.

In terms of depth and content, Britannica is unbeatably authoritative, and it's fairly up to date with references to events that took place in early 1995. On the down side it's expensive and, apart from the maps and some illustrations, it makes no use of multimedia. The graphics are inconveniently displayed separately from the descriptive text unless you manually open a second window to

see the picture at the same time.

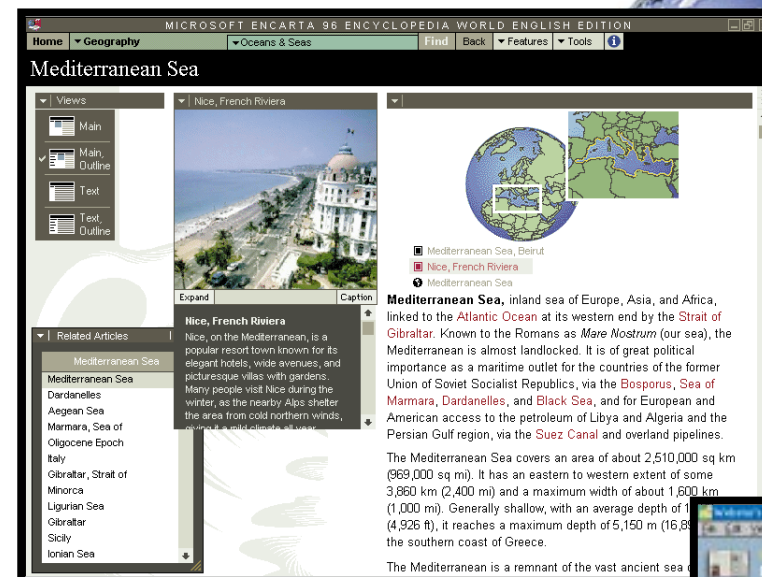
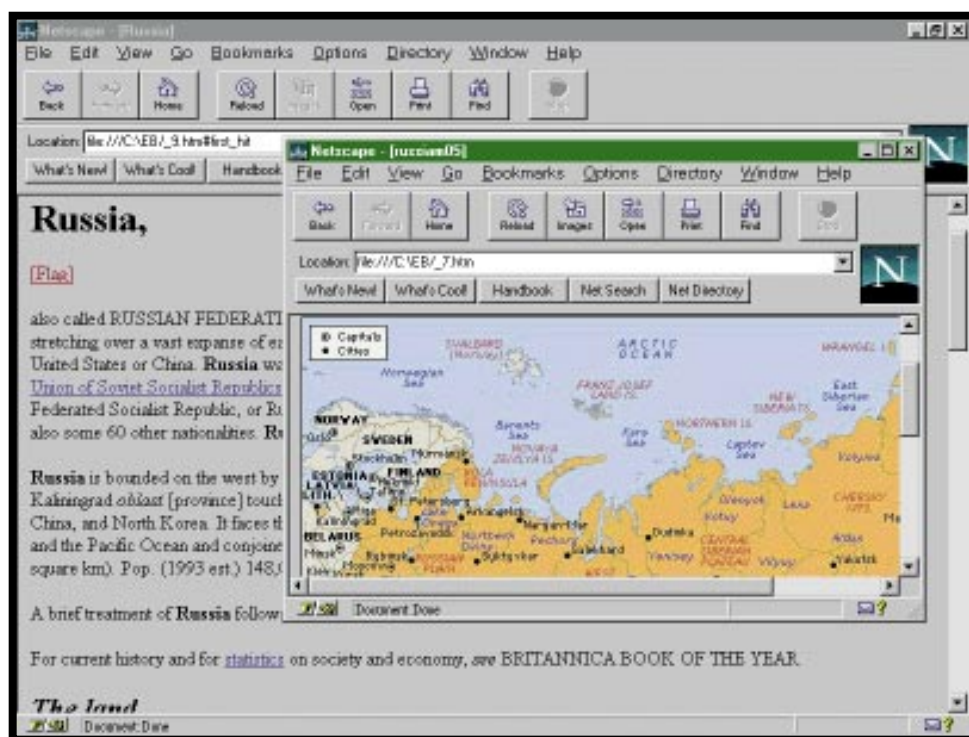
*Encarta 96* (World English Edition) is quite the opposite of Britannica, featuring a multimedia extravaganza of pictures, illustrations, sound and video clips, interactive adventures, charts and maps. It runs quite happily at normal 640x480 screen size but is even better at higher resolutions when all the overlapping windows can be viewed and managed more easily.

Searching can be done by word through the entire encyclopaedia or just into individual subject areas or categories of interest. You can,



# finders

**Encyclopaedia Britannica**



**Left: Encarta 96  
Below:  
Webster's  
Concise  
Encyclopaedia**

if you wish, browse just those articles accompanied by multimedia effects. There are guided tours through subject areas, a timeline of events and a basic atlas.

Encarta's contents are detailed enough to aid study at secondary school level but the 'edutainment' factor is always to the fore. One unique selling point of Encarta is that if you're a member of the Microsoft Network or have access to the Internet's Web pages you can download monthly updates to keep your encyclopaedia up to date – if your hard disk can take the strain.

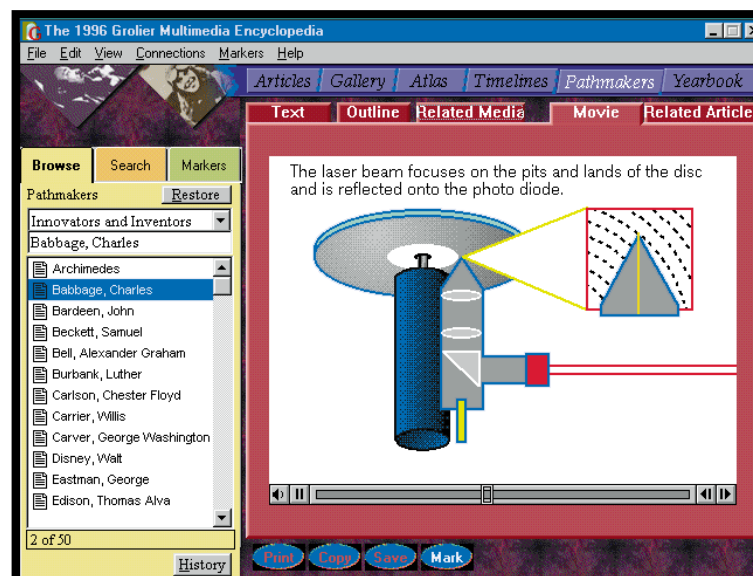
The 1996 version of the *Grolier International Encyclopaedia* differs greatly from the 1995 version we nominated as best buy last year. It has now adopted a system of buttons and tabbed dividers to let you switch quickly between related articles or themes. For example, you could read a text article on Berlin, open a picture of the Berlin airlift in the Gallery, see a Berlin city centre map in the Atlas section, select World War II in the Timeline and read about Adolf Hitler in the Pathmakers (biography) section.

Grolier is great fun to use. Its main defect is technical in that the display is optimised for 640x480 resolution. At higher resolutions, such as the popular 800 x 600, Grolier appears in a reduced-size box on the screen. The depth and coverage within the articles is about the same as Encarta 96.

*Webster's Concise International Encyclopaedia* has the best interactive atlas of all the encyclopaedias we looked at and it features an 'on this day' feature which displays events that took place on the current date in earlier years.

The main screen looks interesting but it's not particularly easy to use because switching between the various modes of operation (search for a word, search for a topic, display random articles) takes up the whole screen and wipes out what you were looking at before.

Sound and video clips play well and the pictures are excellent: frac-



**Left: The  
Grolier  
Encyclopaedia**

tal compression techniques ensure they look as good when zoomed in as when they are minimised. Text is displayed clearly, though many of the entries are simple dictionary definitions. Webster's is fun for browsing but not as effective for research.

*Compton's Interactive Encyclopaedia 1996* adopts a much more structured approach to screen layout than Webster's, by dividing it into three sections. The right half of the screen is used to display articles and multimedia clips; pictures and text appear at the top left and searching tools and maps at the bottom left. Any of

these can be expanded to full screen at the click of a button, which makes Compton's the easiest to use of all the products we looked at. The content is eminently suitable for secondary school project work and family reference, though the video clips are rather diminutive. Articles are interestingly written and easy to read and the maps are clear, though short on detail. (A separate CD called *The Real Picture World Atlas* is bundled with the encyclopaedia).

Compton's provides the usual interactive timeline and browsing features and also has its Editing Room, where you can assemble presentations on any theme by bolting together articles and multimedia clips from the rest of the encyclopaedia.

If you like the sound of Compton's but want a budget buy, Softkey sells the 1995 version in its Platinum cut-price range. It's almost identical to the current version but sold without a printed manual and the separate atlas software.

*Hutchinson's Multimedia Encyclopaedia 1996* has the distinction of being the only one compiled in the UK so it's particularly good on things like UK social matters and political biographies. Hutchinson is similar to Encarta in that it uses a slick, bright-







## Encyclopaedias compared

|                          | Articles | Photos and illustrations | Animations and videos | Sounds    |
|--------------------------|----------|--------------------------|-----------------------|-----------|
| British Encyclopaedia    | 34,000   | 3,500                    | 30 mins               | 180 clips |
| Compton's 1995           | 35,000   | 8,000                    | 100                   | 15 hrs    |
| Compton's 1996           | 35,000   | 8,000                    | 100                   | 15 hrs    |
| Encarta 96               | 27,000   | 8,000                    | 125                   | 9 hrs     |
| Encyclopaedia Britannica | 65,500   | 2,500                    | 0                     | 0         |
| Grolier                  | 32,731   | 6,363                    | 61 clips              | 617 clips |
| Hutchinson 1996          | 36,000   | 3,632                    | 45 clips              | 1.5 hrs   |
| Webster's                | 34,000   | 3,500                    | 30 mins               | 150 clips |

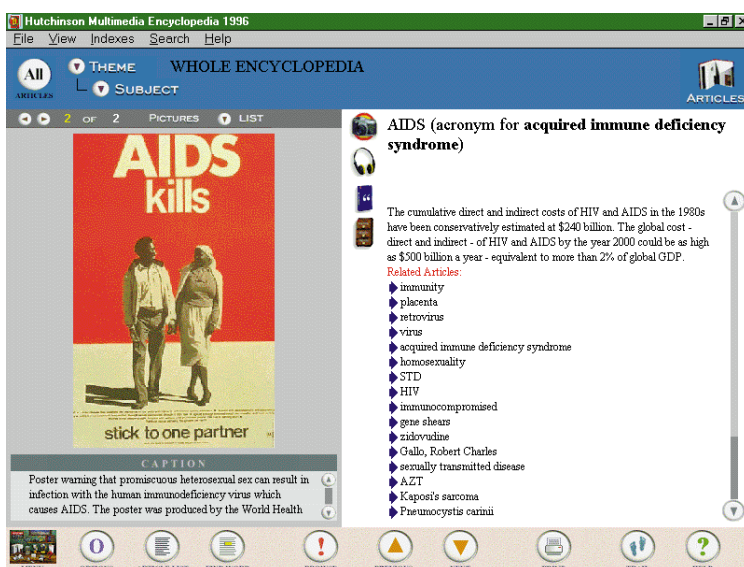
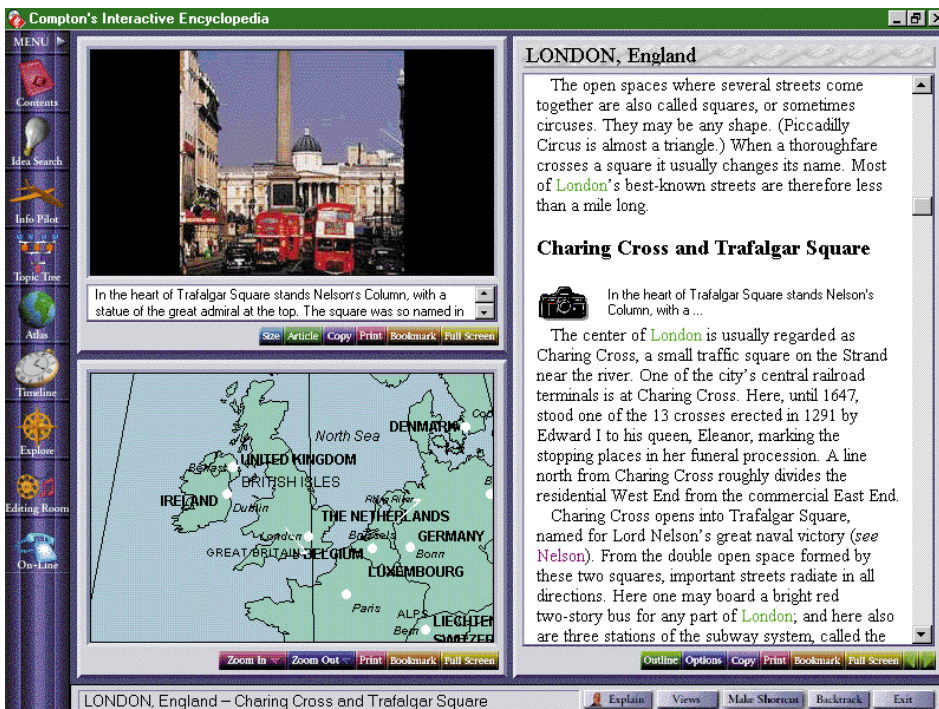
*media Encyclopaedia*. It has the same strengths and weaknesses, with slightly fewer articles and is remarkable value at £19.95



**You won't be disappointed with any of these encyclopaedias but Best Buy goes to Compton's Interactive Encyclopaedia for its combination of ease of use, value for money and strong British content.**



**Encarta 96 and Hutchinson's Multimedia Encyclopaedia were strong contenders for Best Buy but were beaten mainly on price. Encyclopaedia Britannica is our recommended buy for schools, libraries or individuals with more academic research in mind.**



**Above:** Compton's Encyclopaedia  
**Left:** Hutchinson's Encyclopaedia

ly coloured interface with sound effects when selecting options, but it doesn't get as cluttered with overlapping boxes.

It has the broadest content of the multimedia encyclopaedias, though not the depth, and it includes almost all the features of the others: timeline, multiple indexes, topic and word searching, 'on

this day', a quiz and an atlas. In addition it contains 150 feature essays, 6,000 quotations and a separate bibliography. Like Webster's, it's a good browsing reference but less well-suited to serious research.

Just as Softkey sells an older budget version of Compton's, last year's Hutchinson is available from GSP – renamed as *The British Multi-*

## English dictionaries

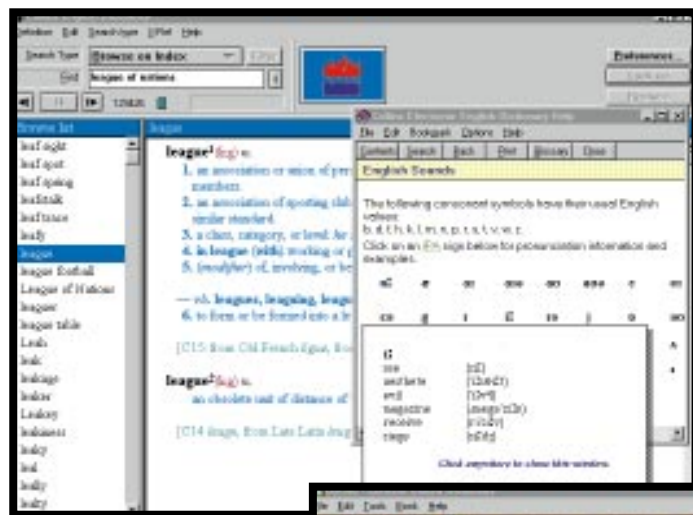
Electronic dictionaries are a big advance on their printed equivalents: not because they've got more words in them, but because they offer different ways of finding the information you need. Some of the dictionaries included with word processing software feature rudimentary definitions, but they can't replace a 'proper' dictionary like the electronic versions reviewed here.

The just-released *Collins Electronic Dictionary and Thesaurus* version 2.0 has a slicker interface than its predecessor but uses the same definitions. You can search for dictionary headwords or for words within a definition. For example, if you can't remember the word 'antimony' but you know that it's a metallic element, you can search for the words 'metallic' and 'element' instead. You can also use the dictionary by highlighting a word in your word processor and pressing a hot-key combination.

All the headwords have their pronunciation indicated using the International Phonetic Alphabet and there's a guide to this system on the help menu. Crossword aficionados will love the anagram finder which has been improved so that if you type in a long word it can now find all the shorter anagrams within it as well as any anagrams of the complete word.

*The Concise Oxford Dictionary* is part of the *Oxford Compendium*, which bundles a thesaurus and two books of quotations on a single CD-ROM, but it doesn't ►





search the dictionary from the Microsoft Word toolbar and once inside a definition you can click on hypertext links to jump to related words. There's also a wildcard facility for crossword addicts, but no anagram finder.

**Oxford's English Dictionary** on CD-ROM is a long way removed from the products described so far. Just like its multi-volume printed counterpart it offers a descriptive survey of the English language and is

dictionary, and despite a recent price reduction it's still very expensive. On the other hand, if you're a regular user of the printed work, you'll find the electronic version with its multiple search tools even more useful.

**WHAT PC?** **The Collins Electronic Dictionary and Thesaurus is the best buy on price, ease of use and the range of features it provides. It's also a useful source of general knowledge, many of its entries stretching beyond simple definitions.**

**WHAT PC?** **The new Chambers Dictionary is rather too large for convenient hard disk installation and has no thesaurus, but it contains 180,000 definitions and for habitual bad spellers the 'sounds-like' searches will appeal.**

## Art and media

Competing for the attention of film buffs are **Microsoft's Cinemania 96** and **Corel's All-Movie Guide**. While Cinemania is very strong on multimedia elements and includes movie clips, stills, dialogue and music within the major entries, it's no good for looking up information about minor actors or half-remembered movies. The All-Movie Guide features 90,000 films and 156,000 people against Cinemania's 25,000 films and 5,000 people.

Both products are easy to use and feature hypertext links that enable you to jump through the entries following an interesting trail. Like the Encarta encyclopaedia, Cinemania can be kept up to date by logging onto the Internet and downloading details of recent films. Each product has its strengths – Corel's for research and Microsoft's for multimedia – the real film buff will want both of them.

Another Microsoft product, **Music Central**, also features on-line updates to its massive database of facts and figures about popular music. Around 120 sound and video clips are provided together with credits, album reviews, biographies and the fascinating 'Music Central Suggests', which offers other music you might like to listen to based on your current selection.

Also from Microsoft, but without on-line updates – not least because it's been around since before the Internet explosion – is **Art**

packed with information on roots and derivations as well as straightforward definitions. There are thousands of examples spanning the centuries to illustrate the changing meanings of words, but because of the amount of information contained in the OED, there's no question of installing this one onto a hard disk, so the CD must be in the drive whenever you want to use it.

The OED is a reference work for academics and wordsmiths, not an everyday

**Left: Corel's All-Movie Guide**  
**Below left: Music Central**

**WHAT PC?** **It's hard to choose between the All-Movie Guide, Cinemania 96 and Music Central, but the accolade goes to the All-Movie Guide due to its low cost.**

**WHAT PC?** **If you're interested in both the Shakespeare and All-Movie titles you should buy the Corel SuperTen Entertainment and Reference Pack instead. It contains both of these and eight other CDs, including 3,500 classic books, the Complete Bible Reference and a photographic biography of Marilyn Monroe.**

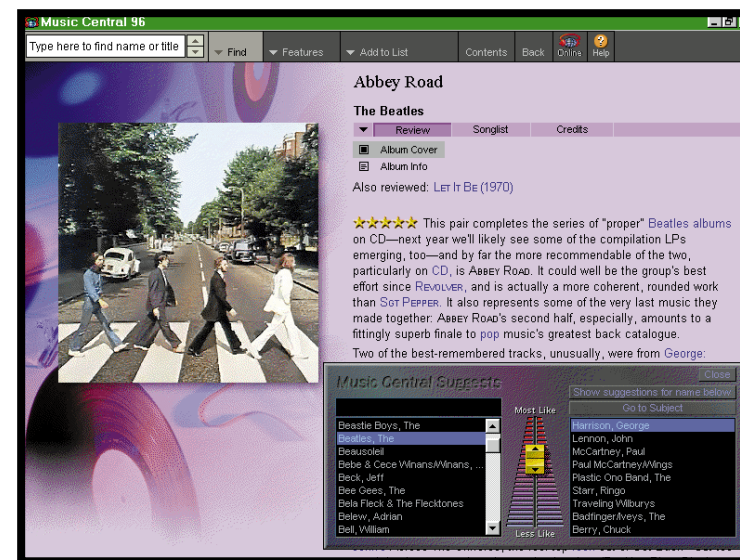
## Assorted language reference

Most word processors come equipped with thesauruses to help you find the right word when it eludes you, and they work pretty well on the whole. However, if you're a confirmed thesaurus browser you'll prefer the one supplied with the **Collins** dictionary. It has a hot-key combination to pick up words from other Windows programs but you can also start it as a separate program – or simply jump from looking up a word in the dictionary to looking up the same word in the thesaurus. The synonym list is split into parts of speech with distinct meanings for each, and it also shows antonyms.

The **Oxford Thesaurus** uses the same Complex search screen as the **Concise Oxford Dictionary** and doesn't suggest antonyms, but we preferred its choice of synonyms. It's also possible to search the dictionary and thesaurus simultaneously, or to jump between the two using the same word.

Finding a suitable quotation to brighten up your work can be murder when you've only got an index of first lines. The **Oxford Compendium's** two books of quotations (one general, the other modern) can be searched concurrently with the dictionary and thesaurus. There's some duplication between the two books but not enough to be irritating. Searches can be made for specific text or for particular authors. There's also an index of the books from which many of the quotations are taken.

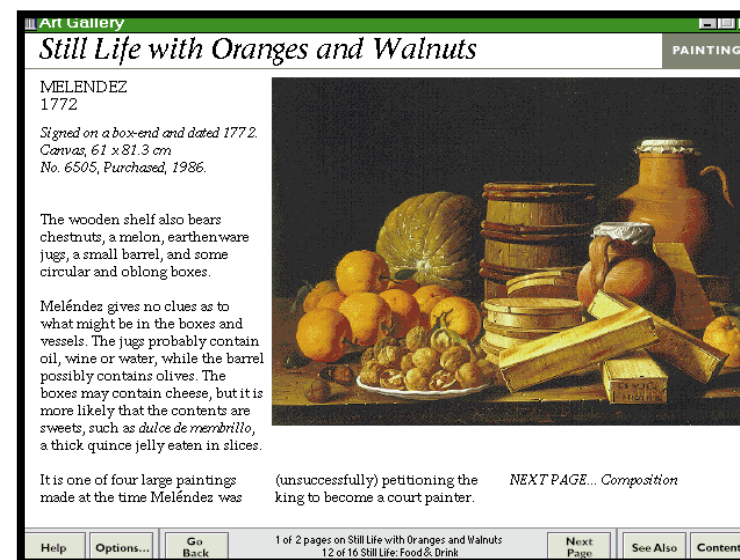
There's a quotation finder from **Collins** too, but it doesn't use the same search system as the dictionary and thesaurus – in fact it's sold by a



**Gallery**, a virtual tour of 2,000 pictures in London's National Gallery. With artists' biographies, descriptions of the pictures and fifty animations illustrating topics like the art of composition, it's an interesting computer version of a coffee-table book.

If you're into written rather than

graphical art, the **Complete Shakespeare Collection** offers not only the text of the plays but also background information, study notes, photographs and illustrations. You can search for character names or any sequence of words, so it's a great way of finding out which play quotations come from.



**Art Gallery**

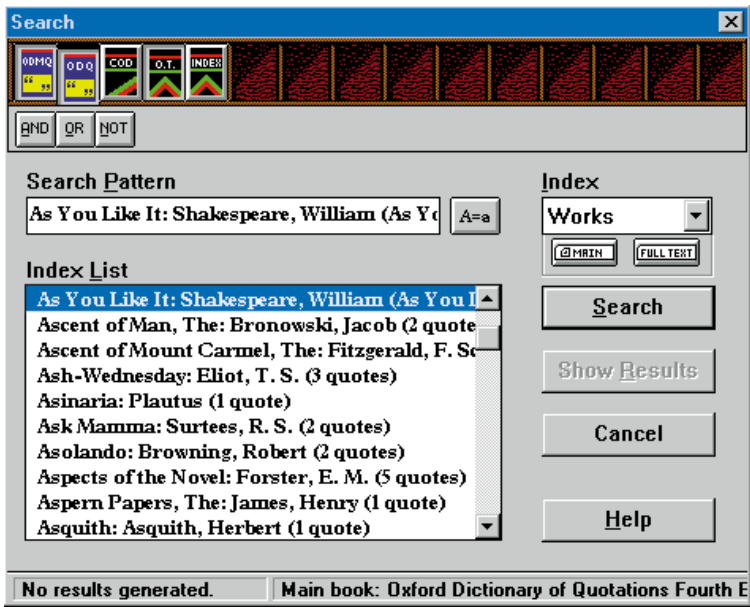


different company, GSP. However, at £19.95 it's excellent value, offering several refinements to simple word searching. There's topic indexing for example, so you can search for quotations on a theme without them having to include a specific word: so the first quotation in the topic of Art doesn't mention the word 'art' at all. You can customise the 15,000 quotations by adding your own and by flagging existing ones as particular favourites – and if you find something you particularly like you can print it out as a poster.

**Chambers Encyclopaedic English Dictionary**, due for release in October, is suitable for school projects rather than serious study. It's very easy to use and a good one-stop shop for general knowledge reference. As well as individual word searches you can look up more than 450 subject areas, but the encyclopaedic part of the program does not bear comparison with stand-alone examples of the genre – there are no pictures or sounds, maps or interactive elements. It uses the same searching and presentation system as the Chambers English Dictionary and the program is small enough to be fully installed on a hard disk.

If you're looking for breadth rather than depth in an electronic

**The Oxford Compendium's dictionary of quotations**



reference work, the **Oxford Reference Shelf** will interest you. This is a collection of no fewer than sixteen books on a single CD-ROM, yet it can be fully installed onto a hard disk so that it's always available. There are French, German, Italian and Spanish mini-dictionaries, the **Pocket Oxford Dictionary**, a compact encyclopaedia, and reference books covering science, computing, law, abbreviations, business and even a mini-dictionary of quotations. They're all accessed through a single menu system and given that each book takes up an average of only 1Mb of disk space, they're brief in tone, but they do provide a useful source of fast facts.

**Collins COBUILD** is an amalgamation of a dictionary and two other books: **Collins English Grammar** and **Collins English Usage**. Underlying these there's a data bank of five million words of examples illustrating the use of words in context, the examples being taken from a range of publications. Look up a simple word like 'effect' for example, and COBUILD will find thirteen dictionary entries, two screens of usage information describing the confusion between 'affect' and 'effect', seven screens of grammar notes and 720 examples of how the word 'effect' can be used. As all these contextual examples are without notes, it's up to you to work out how the word 'effect' is being used in each case. This makes COBUILD far more useful to teachers and researchers seeking source material

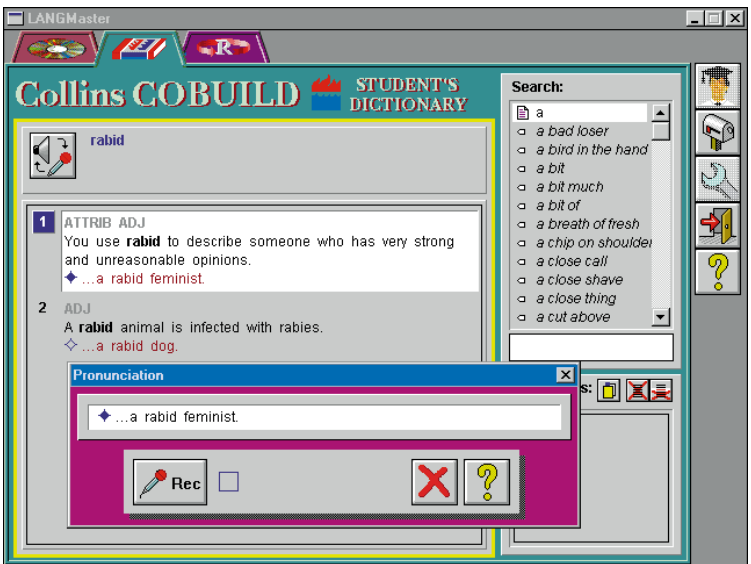
than to users looking for answers.

A companion product, the **COBUILD Student's Dictionary** makes better use of the CD medium than any of the other dictionaries we looked at, and this one is aimed primarily at non-native English speakers, though it would be nice to see its techniques used in standard English dictionaries. It has a bright, welcoming design and an easy-to-use search facility. The definitions are given in simple English (eg, Rabbits are small furry animals with long ears. They live in holes in the ground) and example phrases are included where appropriate. Users can grab hold of a word in the definition and drop it onto an icon and instantly hear it pronounced. Then, if a microphone is attached to the PC's sound card, users can practise their pronunciation until they can imitate the example perfectly.

For English speakers learning foreign languages there's **Harrap's Shorter English-French** and **Collins English-French** dictionaries. Both are slick, easy-to-use Windows programs, though the Collins product has the edge in terms of a greater range of search tools and the ability to customise the screen display. One criticism of these two dictionaries is that you have to load the French-English and English-French components separately, although they can be tiled onto a single screen in Windows.

Collins **On-Line v.2.5** works in either DOS or Windows. In DOS it can be installed on even the most primitive PC as a memory-resident program that can be popped open on top of your word processor. We looked at the German version but it's also available in Spanish, French and Italian and you can add your own words or annotations to the simple definitions the dictionaries provide.

**Collins COBUILD Student's Dictionary**



**If you know somebody learning English, the COBUILD Student's Dictionary is the best present you could buy them.**

**The Collins Dictionary of Quotations from GSP is a bit slow on anything less than a Pentium but it's bright, colourful and a great source of inspiration.**

countries, areas, towns and important places within them. You can move around maps by pointing and clicking or go straight to a place using the search facility. City maps even have street finders.

**3D Atlas** from Electronic Arts is not really about maps at all and you can't zoom in much closer than to an entire country with the cities highlighted. On the other hand, it's a fascinating interactive documentary about world geography. It's full of video clips and animations and 'fly-bys' concerned primarily with

environmental, physical and political themes. Major cities have satellite maps and picture slideshows connected to them. Statistical information can be viewed graphically or in the form of comparison tables, with the most recent data falling between 1991 and 1995.

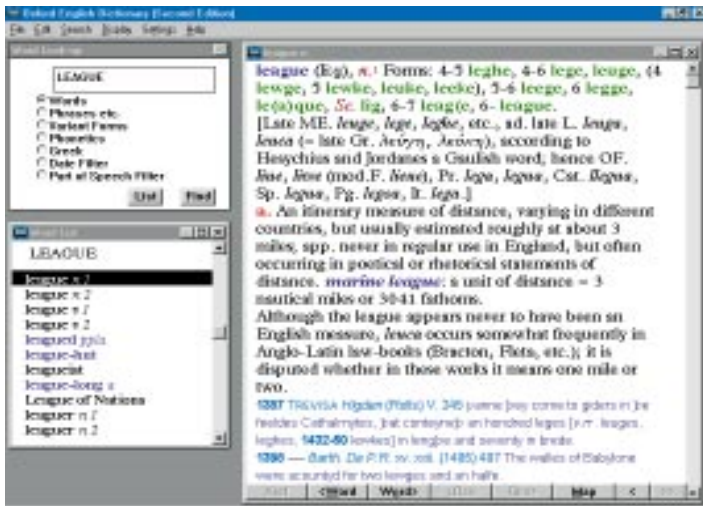
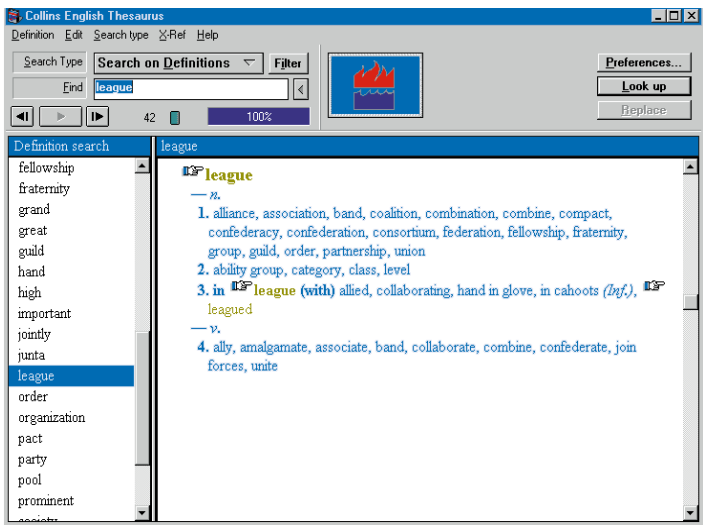
**Mindscape's World Atlas and Almanac** takes the same approach as 3D Atlas, though we didn't like the interface, which is far from intuitive. The statistics are up to date but it's far less easy to compare details between countries. Video sequences are limited to thirty city tours which are predictably touristic in tone and the other multimedia elements such as sound clips of national anthems and foreign phrases are of little interest once their novelty value has waned. The political, relief and satellite maps are coarse overviews but there are more detailed maps of major cities.

You can forget about multimedia with the **Times World Map and Database** because it comes on four floppy disks and there just isn't room. The main strength of this program is the ease with which it can display statistical information using colour-coded maps and comparative tables. Over fifty categories of information can be mapped, such as birth and death rates, literacy, number of nurses, life expectancy and so forth. There's also a card-index type database of more detailed information for each country and comparative charts of the sizes of oceans, rivers, lakes, mountains and populations.

**ITN's European Video Atlas** has very pretty maps mainly showing major towns and cities. The best detail you can get shows about half the UK on a single screen. The main purpose of the maps is to locate the countries and cities featured on 30 minutes of video clips assembled from ITN news broadcasts. There's also a bank of still images with several pictures of each of the 47 countries featured in the

program. A simple text data bank of information relating to each country is available but much of the information it contains is out of date.

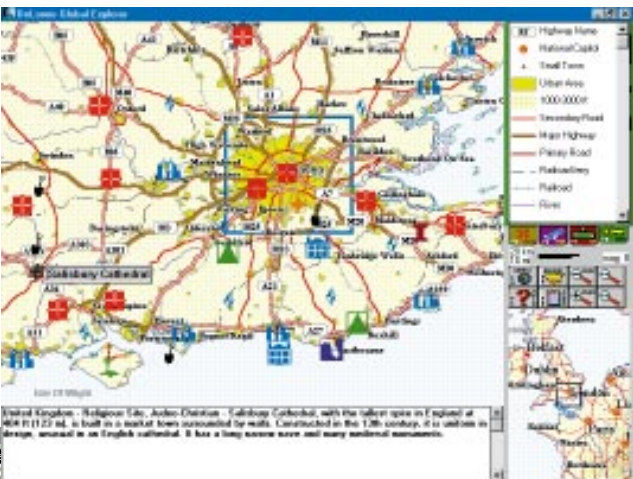
Not so the facts in **Microsoft's Encarta 96 World Atlas**. Statistics in over 450 categories are available from 1965 to 1995, and there's an ingenious way of viewing them too: just choose the statistic you want and as you move the cursor over each country the appropriate figure appears in a small box. Encarta World Atlas maps are topographic and can be zoomed in and out by choosing the height from which you wish to view them: at maximum height (50,000km) you see the



### Atlases

**Global Explorer** is expensive compared with the other atlases, but it's still the only one to give you detail right down to street level – at least in the case of large towns and cities.

The maximum detail on most maps is about two miles to the inch and contour lines, spot heights, landmarks, towns and roads are all shown. In addition, there's a wealth of textual information relating to



**Above: Global Explorer Left: Encarta 96 World Atlas**



whole globe, while at full zoom (200km) you can see an area as small as an English county. Once you've located a place you can read about its geography in the GeoLibrary, or its cultural and social background by calling up the dreadfully-named but fascinating Culturgrams. Encarta 96 is liberally sprinkled with pictures, satellite views, video and music clips – all controlled by a highly interactive point-and-click interface which can be used completely without menu options if you wish. In terms of interactive multimedia, Encarta Atlas is currently as good as it gets.



**Encarta 96 World Atlas is unbeatable value and just as good for casual browsing as it is to search for specific information.**



**3D Atlas is a worthy runner-up; not as graphically sophisticated as Encarta but it has thematic video displays and the**

**ability to display non-topographical information on its maps.**

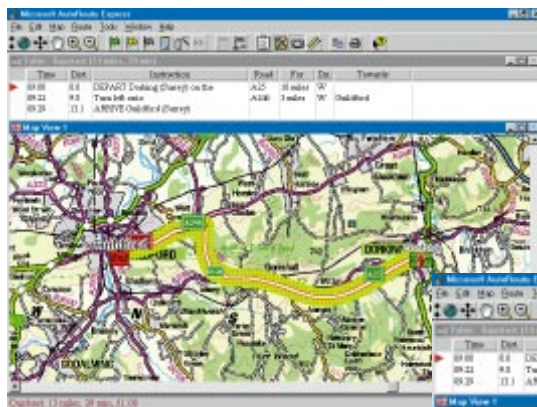
## Route finders

Most route-finding software can display and print maps to take with you on your journey, but these are a poor substitute for the convenience and quality of conventional folding maps. What's more useful is being able to print some form of itinerary – a description of the journey in words – telling you which roads to take, when to turn and what to look out for along the way.

Best known of the group is **AutoRoute Express**, from Microsoft, based on digital maps provided by Ordnance Survey. Although it comes on a CD-ROM, you can install it on a hard disk in about 4.5Mb of disk space. However, you'll need to keep the CD-ROM handy if you want to take advantage of its unique feature, which is that as well as displaying vector-based maps created on-the-fly from digital mapping information it can also use images of very detailed maps stored on the CD. Our screen shots show the same journey displayed using both types of map.

Another AutoRoute feature dependent on the CD being in the drive is being able to click on the camera icons shown on some maps. Doing so displays photographs of interesting landmarks or tourist attractions close by.

The most useful distinguishing



**Above and right: AutoRoute Express**

feature of **Route 66** is its ability to store addresses that can be added to a personal database. Route 66 can then be asked to find the closest address to a chosen location: for example, a company with four depots

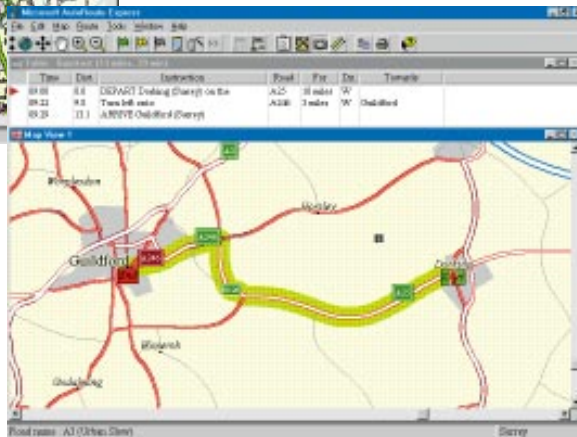
could enter their locations in the address database and ask Route 66 to automatically decide which depot is closest to a customer, then get it to plot a route from the appropriate depot to the customer's premises.

However, a weakness in Route 66 is that when you define a journey you can only include one intermediate point, which means you can plot a route from London to Birmingham calling at Coventry on the way, but you can't ask Route 66 to plan any other stop-offs. AutoRoute allows you to define up to 25 intermediate points, and to specify how long you want to stop at each one.

If 25 stops aren't enough, you need **MileMaster2**, which allows 98 of them! It has another useful trick up its sleeve – MileMaster2 will re-order up to 18 stops into an optimum route that represents the shortest possible round trip. It can create isochronous maps, showing all the places within a given distance or driving time of a central location. In addition, it can produce distance charts like the ones in the front of books of maps, showing distances between up to a hundred different

locations in the form of a grid. It's the most capable of all the programs we looked at, but visually it's far from exciting and not the easiest to use because it runs under DOS instead of Windows.

There's a cheaper, cut-down version called **MileMaster2 Home**, which also runs under DOS. Lacking



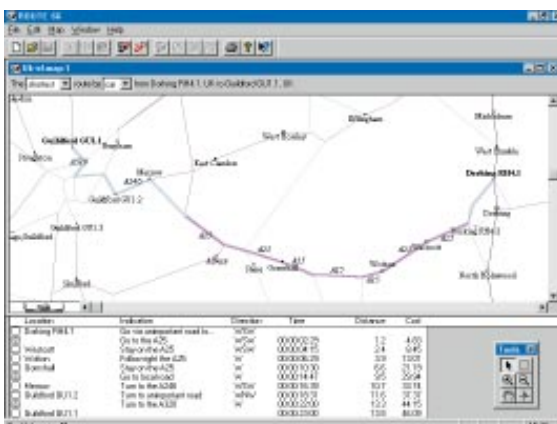
the features mentioned above, it nevertheless works from the same map data and produces equally good itineraries. Both MileMaster2 products can do something neither of the Windows programs can do, which is to calculate return routes.

**A to B** is a bit of an oddity. Again from the AA, but this time written for Windows, it comes on a single floppy disk and can't draw maps. You type in a start, finish and one intermediate stop-off, press OK and you get a simple list of distances and the road numbers to follow. The only frill is that you can type in your expenses and A to B will work out the cost of your trip. On the plus side, it fits on even the most disk-starved notebook PC and only costs £15.

If your travel takes you further afield there's **AutoRoute Europe**. This includes the UK, but not in the same depth as the standalone UK product. Route 66 has add-on maps at £35 each for European countries, and you can buy a less-detailed one covering the whole of Europe. MileMaster2 comes with separate databases for Europe and the UK so you can plot a route between two continental European countries, but not between Europe and the UK.

AutoRoute's maps are by far the best, but its itineraries are not up to the same standard, being limited to road numbers and turnings. The best route descriptions are in the MileMaster2 products. These point out bridges and other landmarks to keep you on the right track – and the AA tells us that all the roads have been driven to confirm mileages. In contrast, Route 66's itineraries are extremely terse and are made more difficult to follow by placing European 'E' designations before the national road names.

**Route 66**





**Joint best buys in this section are MileMaster2 and AutoRoute Express. MileMaster2 generates the best routes/itineraries and is capable of many advanced**

**map-making functions, but the DOS interface lets it down. Business users should buy it anyway, but AutoRoute's multimedia features and ease of use make it more suitable for family and recreational purposes.**



**MileMaster2 Home edition is a cheap and powerful package, and at only £25 you can forgive the rather clunky DOS-based presentation.**

Paul Wardley

## Reference software compared

|  | Type of program    | Distributor      | Telephone     | DOS or Windows based? | Minimum PC required | Minimum RAM | CD | Price inc. VAT | Rating |
|--|--------------------|------------------|---------------|-----------------------|---------------------|-------------|----|----------------|--------|
| 3D Atlas                                   | Atlas              | Electronic Arts  | 01753 549442  | Windows 3.1 or later  | 486SX               | 8Mb         | ●  | £64.63         | ★★★★★  |
| A to B                                     | Route finder       | AA               | 01256 494692  | Windows 3.1 or later  | 386SX               | 3Mb         | ○  | £15.00         | ★★★★★  |
| All-Movie Guide                            | Movies             | Corel            | 0800 581028   | Windows 3.1 or later  | 486DX/33            | 8Mb         | ●  | £23.49         | ★★★★★  |
| Art Gallery                                | Paintings          | Microsoft        | 0345 002000   | Windows 3.1 or later  | 386SX               | 4Mb         | ●  | £29.99         | ★★★★★  |
| AutoRoute Europe                           | Route finder       | Microsoft        | 0345 002000   | Windows 3.1 or later  | 386SX/25            | 4Mb         | ●  | £49.99         | ★★★★★  |
| AutoRoute UK & Ireland                     | Route finder       | Microsoft        | 0345 002000   | Windows 3.1 or later  | 386SX/25            | 4Mb         | ●  | £49.99         | ★★★★★  |
| British Multimedia Encyclopaedia           | Encyclopaedia      | GSP              | 01480 496575  | Windows 3.1 or later  | 486SX25             | 4Mb         | ●  | £19.99         | ★★★★★  |
| Chambers Dictionary                        | English Dictionary | Larousse         | 0171 631 0878 | Windows 3.1 or later  | 486SX               | 4Mb         | ●  | £35.24         | ★★★★★  |
| Chambers Encycl Eng Dict                   | Language reference | Larousse         | 0171 631 0878 | Windows 3.1 or later  | 386SX               | 4Mb         | ●  | £35.24         | ★★★★★  |
| CineMania 96                               | Movies             | Microsoft        | 0345 002000   | Windows 3.1 or later  | 386SX               | 4Mb         | ●  | £39.99         | ★★★★★  |
| Collins COBUILD on CD-Rom                  | Language reference | HarperCollins    | 01903 873555  | Windows 3.1 or later  | 386SX               | 4Mb         | ●  | £151.58        | ★★★★★  |
| Collins COBUILD Student's Dictionary       | Language reference | HarperCollins    | 01903 873555  | Windows 3.1 or later  | 386SX               | 4Mb         | ●  | £88.13         | ★★★★★  |
| Collins Dictionary of Quotations           | Quotations         | GSP              | 01480 496575  | Windows 3.1 or later  | 486SX               | 8Mb         | ●  | £19.95         | ★★★★★  |
| Collins Electronic Dictionary & Thesaurus  | English Dictionary | HarperCollins    | 01903 873555  | Windows 3.1 or later  | 386SX               | 4Mb         | ●  | £58.74         | ★★★★★  |
| Collins French Dictionary                  | Foreign Dictionary | HarperCollins    | 01903 873555  | Windows 3.1 or later  | 386SX               | 4Mb         | ●  | £57.58         | ★★★★★  |
| Collins On-Line v.2.5                      | Foreign Dictionary | HarperCollins    | 01903 873555  | Both                  | 386SX               | 2Mb         | ○  | £69.33         | ★★★★★  |
| Compton's Interactive Encyclopaedia (1995) | Encyclopaedia      | Softkey          | 0181 246 4000 | Windows 3.1 or later  | 485SX25             | 4Mb         | ●  | £19.99         | ★★★★★  |
| Compton's Interactive Encyclopaedia (1996) | Encyclopaedia      | Softkey          | 0181 246 4000 | Windows 3.1 or later  | 485SX25             | 4Mb         | ●  | £29.99         | ★★★★★  |
| Corel Super Ten Reference Pack             | Assorted reference | Corel            | 0800 581028   | Windows 3.1 or later  | 486DX/35            | 8Mb         | ●  | £46.99         | ★★★★★  |
| Encarta 96 (World English edition)         | Encyclopaedia      | Microsoft        | 0345 002000   | Windows 3.1 or later  | 486SX               | 8Mb         | ●  | £49.99         | ★★★★★  |
| Encarta World Atlas 96                     | Atlas              | Microsoft        | 0345 002000   | Windows 95 only       | 486DX/33            | 8Mb         | ●  | £49.99         | ★★★★★  |
| Encyclopaedia Britannica                   | Encyclopaedia      | Enc Brit         | 0181 669 4355 | Windows 3.1 or later  | 386SX/25            | 4Mb         | ●  | £755.00        | ★★★★★  |
| Global Explorer                            | Atlas              | Logix            | 0181 763 2888 | Windows 3.1 or later  | 386SX               | 4Mb         | ●  | £106.93        | ★★★★★  |
| Grolier Multimedia Encyclopaedia 1996      | Encyclopaedia      | Grolier          | 01865 245770  | Windows 3.1 or later  | 486DX33             | 4Mb         | ●  | £54.99         | ★★★★★  |
| Harrap's Shorter English-French Dictionary | Foreign Dictionary | Larousse         | 0171 631 0878 | Windows 3.1 or later  | 486SX               | 4Mb         | ●  | £46.99         | ★★★★★  |
| Hutchinson Encyclopaedia 1996              | Encyclopaedia      | Attica           | 01908 570113  | Windows 3.1 or later  | 486SX25             | 4Mb         | ●  | £69.33         | ★★★★★  |
| ITN European Video Atlas                   | Atlas              | Attica           | 01908 570113  | Windows 3.1 or later  | 386SX               | 4Mb         | ●  | £29.99         | ★★★★★  |
| Milemaster2                                | Route finder       | AA               | 01256 494692  | DOS                   | 386SX               | 2Mb         | ○  | £75.00         | ★★★★★  |
| Milemaster2 Home                           | Route finder       | AA               | 01256 494692  | DOS                   | 386SX               | 2Mb         | ○  | £25.00         | ★★★★★  |
| Music Central                              | Music              | Microsoft        | 0345 002000   | Windows 95 only       | 386DX               | 8Mb         | ●  | £39.99         | ★★★★★  |
| Oxford Compendium                          | Language reference | OUP              | 01865 267979  | Windows 3.1 or later  | 386SX               | 4Mb         | ●  | £79.99         | ★★★★★  |
| Oxford Concise English Dictionary          | English Dictionary | OUP              | 01865 267979  | Windows 3.1 or later  | 386SX               | 4Mb         | ●  | *              | ★★★★★  |
| Oxford English Dictionary                  | English Dictionary | OUP              | 01865 267979  | Windows 3.1 or later  | 386SX               | 4Mb         | ●  | £293.73        | ★★★★★  |
| Oxford Modern Quotations                   | Language reference | OUP              | 01865 267979  | Windows 3.1 or later  | 386SX               | 4Mb         | ●  | *              | ★★★★★  |
| Oxford Quotations                          | Language reference | OUP              | 01865 267979  | Windows 3.1 or later  | 386SX               | 4Mb         | ●  | *              | ★★★★★  |
| Oxford Reference Shelf                     | Language reference | OUP              | 01865 267979  | Windows 3.1 or later  | 386SX               | 4Mb         | ●  | £79.99         | ★★★★★  |
| Oxford Thesaurus                           | Language reference | OUP              | 01865 267979  | Windows 3.1 or later  | 386SX               | 4Mb         | ●  | *              | ★★★★★  |
| Route 66 (Europe and US)                   | Route finder       | Ingram Micro     | 01908 260160  | Windows 3.1 or later  | 386SX/25            | 4Mb         | ●  | £116.33        | ★★★★★  |
| Route 66 (single country)                  | Route finder       | Ingram Micro     | 01908 260160  | Windows 3.1 or later  | 386SX/25            | 4Mb         | ●  | £45.83         | ★★★★★  |
| Shakespeare Reference Collection           | Literature         | Corel            | 0800 581028   | Windows 3.1 or later  | 486DX/34            | 8Mb         | ●  | £23.49         | ★★★★★  |
| Times World Map/Database                   | Atlas              | HarperCollins CT | 0181 741 7070 | Windows 3.1 or later  | 386SX               | 4Mb         | ○  | £45.00         | ★★★★★  |
| Webster's Concise Encyclopaedia            | Encyclopaedia      | Softkey          | 0181 246 4000 | Windows 3.1 or later  | 486SX25             | 4Mb         | ●  | £12.99         | ★★★★★  |
| World Atlas and Almanac                    | Atlas              | Mindscape        | 01444 246333  | Windows 3.1 or later  | 486SX               | 8Mb         | ●  | £59.99         | ★★★★★  |

Key: \* Available as part of the Oxford Compendium, though a new stand-alone dictionary at £19.99 is due before Christmas ● = Yes ○ = No