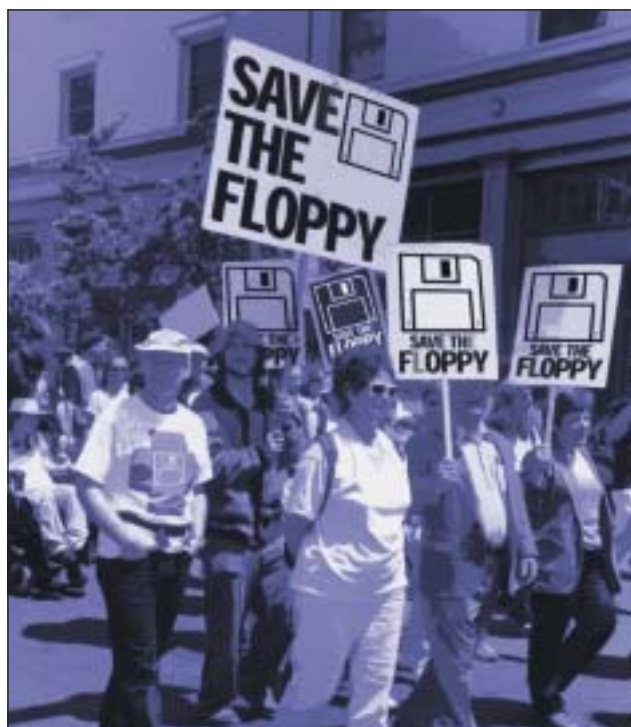# byteback

Small but perfectly formed

Storage is so cheap these days, many PCs are awash with superfluous capacity. Thank goodness, then, for the modest proportions of the floppy disk says Emma Northam

Now we at *PC Advisor* are all in favour of new technology – after all, it keeps us in a job – but sometimes, in the relentless pursuit of the cutting edge, the baby is thrown out with the bathwater. And I think a case in point is Dell's decision to follow Apple's dubious lead and ditch the trusty floppy disk.

Call me old fashioned but we think there is still a real need for floppies – and our readers think so too if a recent poll on our website (www.pcadvisor.co.uk) is anything to go by. Only 10 percent of respondents thought that Dell was right to consign the floppy disk to the dust-heap of history, with a whopping 61 percent using their drive regularly and a full 90 percent wanting to hang on to their floppy disks.

In this fast-paced business the floppy disk is one of the most enduring pieces of technology. There is a reason for its longevity and the affection with which it is clearly regarded – it provides a useful, simple and cheap means of storing and transferring small files.

Sure, I admit that 1.44MB ain't a lot of space. But it's more than enough to take a document home to work on, which is a lot less wasteful (and less costly) than burning a whole 650MB CD-R just for a 45K file. It's also easier to slip a floppy disk in your pocket; a CD case would surely ruin the line of your suit.

I really don't think PC manufacturers have thought this one through. Not only will storage cost us more and make us greedy for capacity we don't really need, we will also miss out on vital tools like the boot floppy disk. The restore CD you get with a new system is the last resort to revive a malfunctioning PC. But you don't want factory defaults reinstalled on the machine you've lovingly customised with countless critical Windows updates and utilities, not to mention that indispensable Kylie wallpaper.

I reckon there is plenty of life in the old floppy yet and there seems to be a lot of people who agree. Hmmm, perhaps I should start up a petition to save the floppy… ■

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With the release of Office 11.0, we take a tour of its new features, outline whether it's worth upgrading and show you how to get the most from your existing suite.

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