

Norton SystemWorks 2002

Utilities software

For decades, PC users all over the world have relied on Symantec to produce the kind of software that loves the jobs you hate. It seems as if the company has been making its Norton-branded antivirus and utilities software for almost as long as there have been bugs to catch, lost data to find and other such problems to get around.

The face of no-nonsense computer whiz, Peter Norton, may no longer adorn the packaging for Symantec's utility software range – indeed he's been replaced here by an even more no-nonsense set of cogs – but the company's products are still extremely useful, efficient and, above all, dependable. It's perhaps not the most exciting software and, with any luck, you won't even have to use it that often, but you'll be very grateful for it when it comes to the crunch.

Full to the brim

We regularly witness the rebirth of utility suites, with a slight re-working of the previous embodiment's code usually being enough to warrant the manufacturers issuing an annual 'upgrade'. In the case of Norton SystemWorks, it's pretty difficult to see how much more you could cram into the yellow box. But that's exactly what Symantec has managed to do with SystemWorks 2002.

The package is effectively a 'best of' compilation that includes Norton staples AntiVirus, Utilities and CleanSweep along

with a few other enticing goodies. Apart from support for Windows XP, there aren't any earth-shattering revelations to be found within the three big Norton applications.

Utilities is a massive suite of tools that deserves a review of its own. With an array of useful applications to diagnose problems, tweak resources and monitor your system, Utilities can be run from a central control panel or from the CD.

CleanSweep makes sure that you tidy up after yourself, since continuous use of your PC will eventually result in a cluttered and disorganised hard disk. A little spring-cleaning can get rid of those orphan files and unwanted rubbish to free up a considerable amount of disk space.

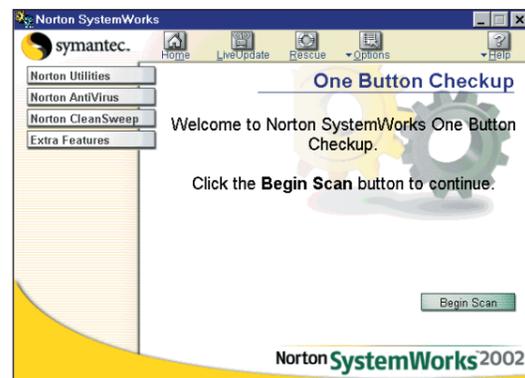
Back to the beginning

The big addition to this release of SystemWorks, however, is Roxio's GoBack 3.0 Personal Edition utility. This system recovery program allows you to return an errant PC to a state when it was working properly. This is a miraculous bonus and one that, by and large, works very well. Sadly, GoBack is marred by a slightly over-complicated installation procedure.

The only gaping hole in SystemWorks' defence of your PC is in the firewall department. Norton Personal Firewall is available as a separate product, but with broadband access creeping into more and more homes, it's a shame that the company decided not to include it alongside AntiVirus as a united front against online nasties.

Also very much absent is Norton Ghost, which would have made a useful addition for power users

← GoBack 3.0 is an excellent addition to SystemWorks that restores your hard drive to its previously untroubled state



↑ Norton SystemWorks 2002 is an excellent all-round package

with vital data to back up or move to other locations. Ghost is included in SystemWorks 2002 Pro Edition, but you'll have to pay an extra £20 for the benefit.

Those who already own a previous copy of SystemWorks might find that the addition of GoBack and the other minor tweaks to the interface and feature set aren't quite enough to entice them to upgrade. Those who still don't own any software to keep their PCs in check should certainly investigate this excellent package.

Verdict Norton's awesome utility suite has just got better. The latest versions of AntiVirus, Utilities and CleanSweep would have been worth the price on their own but with Roxio's powerful GoBack rounding things off, you're going to want SystemWorks 2002 on your side. ■

Jonathan Parkyn

Norton SystemWorks 2002

System requirements: 150MHz Pentium; Windows 98/2000/Me/NT 4.0/XP; 64MB RAM; 90MB hard disk space. (XP requires 233MHz Pentium; 128MB RAM; 85MB hard disk space.)

Symantec: 01628 592 222
Website: www.symantec.co.uk

Price: £51

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| | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Ease of use | | | | | | | | | 8 | | |
| Features | | | | | | | | | | 10 | |
| Value for money | | | | | | | | | | 9 | |
| Overall | | | | | | | | | | 9 | |

PhotoImpact 7.0

Design and web graphics software



↑ Apply real-media effects by dragging with paintbrush tools over your photos

and newcomers such as Adobe Photoshop Elements.

The photo-editing features have been boosted with a range of new effects from zoom blurs to special treatments which simulate viewing through various glass surfaces. The program now preserves Exif data when importing from digital cameras, and building categorised image libraries is fast and versatile with the bundled copy of PhotoImpact Album 7.0. New image correction tools include lens distortion correction, which, though difficult to get right, should go down well with amateur photographers.

Like Paint Shop Pro, the program provides vector art tools alongside the bitmap brushes for all-round graphic design. But it goes further with convincing 3D effects and a difficult Z-Merge tool, which lets you manipulate objects in 3D space as well as in layers. This isn't the only tool that's tricky to understand, but a multitasking program is inevitably going to be complex.

Web designers will appreciate the hoard of style effects, JavaScript rollover and image map creation and full support for slicing. Also included is Ulead's surprisingly powerful GIF Animator 5.0, which includes strong animation design features and puts even professional packages like Macromedia Fireworks and Adobe ImageReady to shame. It's possible to output straight to HTML complete with embedded movies and Flash and is the first program to support the new Jpeg 2000 format.

Verdict Despite many improvements, PhotoImpact 7.0 can still be complex to learn and use, but you'd be hard pushed to get a better digital photo, animation and web-friendly graphics package for your money. ■

Alistair Dabbs

PhotoImpact 7.0

System requirements: Pentium; Windows 98/2000/Me/NT 4.0/XP; 64MB RAM; 280MB hard disk space.

Computers Unlimited: 020 8200 8282

Website: www.ulead.co.uk

Price: £76, upgrade £38

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| Ease of use | | | | | | | | | 6 | | |
| Features | | | | | | | | | | 9 | |
| Value for money | | | | | | | | | | 9 | |
| Overall | | | | | | | | | | 9 | |

3D & Animate Graphics Effects Studio

3D modelling software

Inexpensive and intuitive are adjectives rarely applied to 3D modelling tools, but Serif's new 3D & Animate Graphics Effects Studio might just break the mould. This budget-priced bundle



↑ The wizards make 3D easy for beginners

consists of two CDs, with a host of objects, backgrounds, textures and tutorials.

The package is aimed at those who want to create 3D animations or web banner text, but don't have the time or money to invest in high-end applications. In common with other Serif products, the application at the heart of Studio, 3DPlus, is easy to use, driven by wizards that can guide you through the creation of 3D text or modelling effects. Even creating your own masterpiece hardly amounts to rocket science. The main workspace is dominated by an intuitive palette that provides drag-and-drop access and storage for 3D models, bevels, lighting schemes (from ambient to spot) and backgrounds, which now include an impressive fog effect.

3DPlus veterans might not recognise the latest incarnation – even multiple camera angles are a recent addition. One important new feature is the Workspace Manager, which allows users to create scenes extruded from freehand Bézier paths, built-in shapes or imported WMF (Windows metafile) images. Thanks to refreshingly undemanding processor and memory requirements, generating 3D models in this way is surprisingly speedy.

3DPlus also boasts workmanlike animation tools. Animated camera views and pre-built animation effects have been added to support keyframes. If export options are still limited, at least you can now export to AVI format as well as the popular but restrictive animated GIF format.

Verdict With the bundled high-quality extras on CD, 3D & Animate Graphic Effects Studio is a vital upgrade for existing users, and a great package for new 3D modellers. ■

Tom Gorham

Serif 3D and Animate Graphics Effects Studio

System requirements: Pentium PC; Windows 9x/Me/2000; 32MB RAM (64MB for Windows 2000); 70MB hard disk space.

Serif: 0800 376 7070

Website: www.serif.co.uk

Price: £52

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|-----------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|
| | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| Ease of use | | | | | | | | | | 9 | |
| Features | | | | | | | | | | 8 | |
| Value for money | | | | | | | | | | 9 | |
| Overall | | | | | | | | | | 9 | |

Drive Image 5.0 and Ghost 2002

Hard drive imaging software

Cloning a hard drive means making an exact copy of it, including the operating system, hidden files and every last bit and byte of data. The result is called an image file. Cloning goes beyond the scope of an everyday data backup, the point being that should a virus wreak havoc or Windows itself refuses to boot, you can make a full system recovery by restoring the image. You can also use an image file to set up another computer exactly like the first, applications and all. So how do these contenders stack up?

Drive Image 5.0

This version of Drive Image builds on earlier success by including XP support and a new Windows interface. You fire up the QuickImage utility, tell it which drive or partition you wish to clone, specify a location for the image file – most likely a separate partition or a Zip or CD-R drive – and let the program reboot into DOS. To restore an image, just reverse the procedure. The ‘virtual floppy’ approach eliminates the need for boot disks (although we’d recommend you make emergency floppies, just in case).

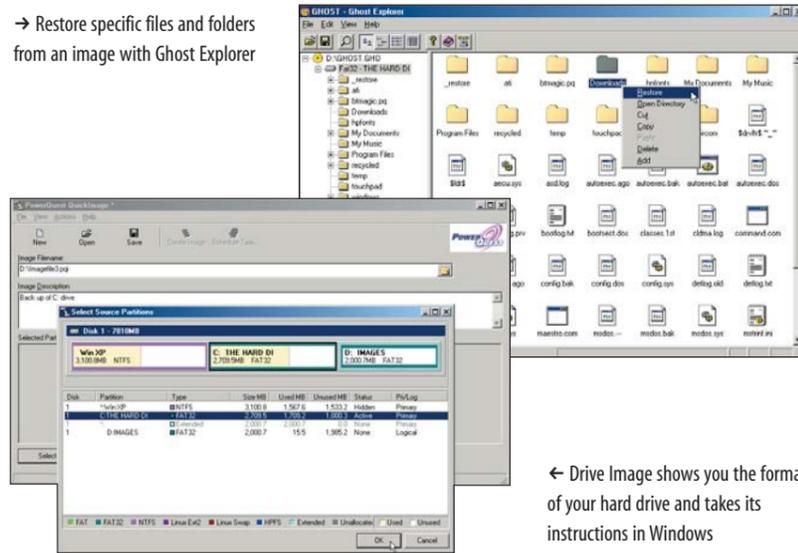
To speed matters up, Drive Image uses SmartSector technology to ensure that only the areas of a drive containing ‘live’ data are copied. Optional file compression shrinks the size of an image file by up to 50 percent, and it’s possible to schedule imaging to run automatically at set times. We also liked ImageExplorer, a utility that lets you browse images and restore files and folders from within Windows.

Drive Image includes basic but useful partitioning tools and also supports many, but not all, CD-R/RW drives. For the first time, you can now burn images directly to CD-R media at the drive’s top speed. Unfortunately, there’s no support for external USB or FireWire drives.

Ghost 2002

The first thing you must do after installing Ghost is run the Boot Wizard utility to make a bootable floppy disk. It’s a minor

→ Restore specific files and folders from an image with Ghost Explorer



← Drive Image shows you the format of your hard drive and takes its instructions in Windows

hassle but one that reinforces the attraction of Drive Image’s floppy-less approach. Upon rebooting, Ghost launches in DOS – and at this point you reach for the manual. Ghost sports about as Spartan an interface as you could imagine. When we finally figured out how to make it work, we found that cloning took longer than with Drive Image but the compression rate was higher.

Back in Windows, Ghost Explorer mimics Drive Image by letting you browse, edit and add to image files. For a full restore, it’s back to DOS. However, before you can restore from an image, you must enter Ghost’s serial number. This is only displayed when the program launches so be sure to write it down.

Ghost ships with Gdisk, a partitioning utility billed as a replacement for Fdisk. Bizarrely, it works at the command-line level, devoid of graphics and guidance.

As with Drive Image, there’s no support for USB or FireWire CD-R/RW drives, but Ghost does support peer-to-peer cloning over a direct connection.

Verdict Without doubt, Drive Image 5.0 is the superior product, much easier to use than Ghost 2002 and let down only by its lack of support for home networking (neither product is suitable for cloning across a server-based network). A little more recognition of external CD drives from both would be welcome next time. ■

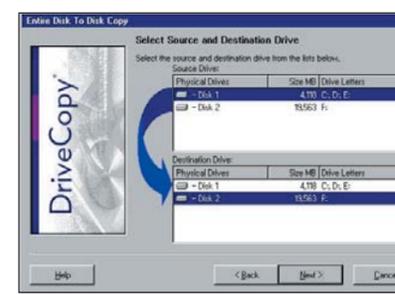
Kyle MacRae

| Ghost 2002 | |
|---|----------|
| System requirements: 486 processor; Windows 98/Me/2000/NT 4.0/XP; 16MB RAM (64MB for XP); 5MB hard disk space. | |
| Symantec: 020 7616 5600 | |
| Website: www.symantec.com | |
| Price: £34 | |
| Ease of use | 5 |
| Features | 7 |
| Value for money | 7 |
| Overall | 6 |

| Drive Image 5.0 | |
|--|----------|
| System requirements: 233MHz Pentium; Windows 9x/2000/Me/NT 4.0/XP; 32MB RAM (128MB for XP); 50MB hard disk space. | |
| PowerQuest: 0118 945 0200 | |
| Website: www.powerquest.com | |
| Price: £34 | |
| Ease of use | 8 |
| Features | 8 |
| Value for money | 7 |
| Overall | 8 |

DriveCopy 4.0

Hard drive duplication software



↑ DriveCopy 4.0 runs in DOS-mode but has a Windows-style interface

Huge hard drives are relatively cheap these days and you may be considering an upgrade. Actually installing a new hard drive is straightforward enough, involving little more than fiddling with

jumpers and perhaps a Bios tweak, but having to reinstall an operating system and all your applications is a definite drag. And then you have to copy across all your files, reconfigure your personal preferences and spend the next few months getting everything working just the way you like it.

Or you could get hold of DriveCopy 4.0. Because it works in DOS, this program copies the entire contents of one drive to another, including the operating system (something that’s not otherwise easily achievable). Simply install DriveCopy on the original drive, plug in the new drive, set it as Slave, reboot and let DriveCopy do the work. The new drive now exactly mirrors the original. Make it the Master and next time the computer boots it takes over as C and launches Windows (or Linux, if you’re that way inclined).

As if by magic, your computer looks and behaves exactly as it did before, except that now everything is running on the new, presumably much larger hard drive. The original drive can be removed, cleaned or kept as a backup.

Do bear in mind, however, that DriveCopy is a warts-and-all application. If your current setup keeps crashing or has a virus infection, copying it in its entirety to a new drive does nothing to address these problems. A clean installation of Windows is actually a better bet.

Verdict Copying the contents of one drive to another, Windows and all, is a smart trick, and one that DriveCopy 4.0 handles with proficient ease. But it’s hardly a daily duty and this package comes at quite a hefty price. ■

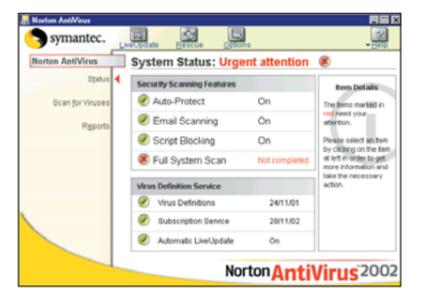
Kyle MacRae

| DriveCopy 4.0 | |
|--|----------|
| System requirements: 486 processor; Windows 9x/2000/Me/NT 4.0/Linux; 32MB RAM; 8MB hard disk space. | |
| PowerQuest: 0118 945 0200 | |
| Website: www.powerquest.com | |
| Price: £34 | |
| Ease of use | 8 |
| Features | 7 |
| Value for money | 6 |
| Overall | 7 |

Norton AntiVirus 2002

Antivirus software

Nobody likes the hassle of using an antivirus package, yet we all know just how important a role it plays in keeping us from PC meltdown. It’s best to look for antivirus software that takes the hard work out of setting up scans and



↑ The main program window has been greatly simplified

keeping your virus definition files up to date. Luckily this is exactly what Norton had in mind when it started work on the upgrade to its latest antivirus package.

Norton has pretty much gone back to the drawing board with the 2002 user interface. The main program window has been streamlined to list a column of indicator lights showing you the status of various aspects of the software, such as background scanning, script blocking and email scanning. In fact, most users won’t even have to bother reconfiguring the software as the out-of-the-box settings cover pretty much all the basics, including a weekly system scan, script blocking and email scanning.

Norton AntiVirus 2002 now supports Windows XP Home Edition and Professional and scans outgoing email attachments, as well as incoming ones, to make sure you don’t spread viruses to friends or colleagues. There’s even a new script-blocking feature to protect you against script-based viruses such as the infamous Lovebug virus. However, the software still can’t scan the contents of Zip files until you actually open them. We would have preferred if Norton AntiVirus could nuke viruses within Zip files before they got extracted to your hard drive.

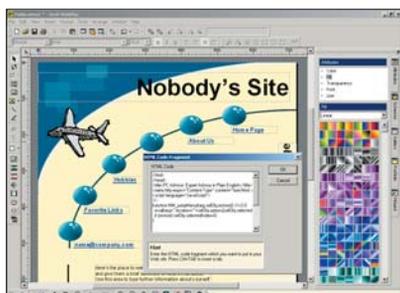
Verdict If you’re looking for an easy-to-use antivirus package that gives strong virus protection straight out of the box, then Norton AntiVirus 2002 is one of the best. If you’re a 2001 user and you don’t need the XP support, you should opt for another year of virus definition file updates rather than shelling out for the upgrade. ■

Niall Magennis

| Norton AntiVirus 2002 | |
|---|----------|
| System requirements: 133MHz Pentium; Windows 9x/2000/Me/NT 4.0/XP; 32MB RAM; 50MB hard disk space. | |
| Symantec: 020 7616 5600 | |
| Website: www.symantec.com | |
| Price: £39.99 | |
| Ease of use | 9 |
| Features | 8 |
| Value for money | 8 |
| Overall | 9 |

Web Page Maker with WebPlus 7.0

Web design software



↑ The HTML popup dialog is the only way you can enter an HTML code fragment into a web page

Few web-authoring packages are as cheap as Serif's Web Page Maker at a modest £34. For the money, you get WebPlus 7.0, a CD containing extra design wizards and 20,000 web-ready elements. These consist of pictures, animated GIFs and

simple graphics, albeit disappointingly tacky in nature.

That aside, creating your first page is straightforward. Initially you can start from scratch or use a wizard based on a themed template, where you simply fill in your details and choose the colour scheme. The templates are pleasantly designed and come with pre-linked pages. WebPlus' desktop publishing heritage also helps when laying out your page from scratch.

Either way, the interface is simple. To the right is the studio bar for dragging and dropping items into a publication, manipulating attributes, such as colours, fonts and transparency effects, and keeping your files in a handy portfolio. Customisable toolbars frame the workspace providing quick access for inserting hyperlinks, animated GIFs, sound and video files, hotspots and scrolling marquees. There's even a popup dialog for embedding Java and inserting HTML code, though you can't edit the entire page in HTML or adjust image compression and colour depth.

Nevertheless, the revamped word processor is slicker and now offers useful proofing tools. You can create logos, apply standard text effects, add adjustable shapes, sketch freehand lines and curves, and insert basic tables and calendars. There's also a layout checker that looks for spurious code and long download times, and an integrated FTP client for publishing to a local folder or remote server.

Verdict

There are some niggles, but this is a decent choice for the HTML-shy and budget-conscious novice. With a little imagination, Serif's Web Page Maker can quickly produce satisfactory websites at little cost. ■

Jalal Werfalli

Web Page Maker with WebPlus 7.0

System requirements: Pentium PC; Windows 9x/Me/2000/NT 4.0; 64MB RAM; 90MB hard disk space.

Serif: 0800 376 7070

Website: www.serif.com

Price: £34

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| Ease of use | | | | | | | | | | 9 | |
| Features | | | | | | 6 | | | | | |
| Value for money | | | | | | | | | | 9 | |
| Overall | | | | | | | | | | 8 | |

The Big Box of Art

Image library

If you're doing any multimedia project – be it a web page, CD-ROM or presentation – it's more than likely that at some point you're going to need some pictures.

Unless you've got your own illustrator, photographer and a studio at your disposal then finding suitable images can be a daunting (and expensive) task.

This is where The Big Box of Art comes in. Inside you'll find a total of 350,000 images, all categorised and indexed, so finding the right image should be a breeze. More importantly, the licence allows you to use the images without paying an additional fee.

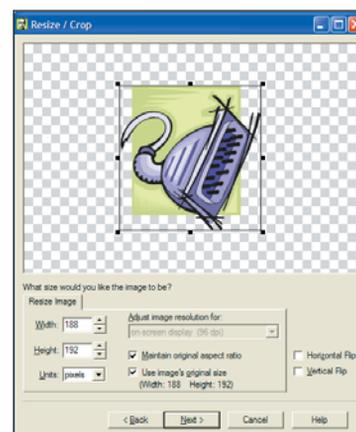
The collection covers vector clip art, both colour and monochrome photographs, web graphics, animations and Photo-Objects (Hemera's term for photos of objects without a background). Topping off the package, there's also PhotoFont maker, which allows you to create text filled out with an image, a utility to make CD labels and a greeting card creator.

All in all, the image collection fills 22 CDs – and if there was ever an application crying out for a DVD distribution, this is it. Once you've chosen your image through the browser, which allows you to search by keyword or browse by category or image type, then you have to export it. A wizard will guide you through the process, allowing you to select the most appropriate format and resolution for the task at hand.

Verdict

Unless you are very picky, or producing a specialised project, then The Big Box of Art should have a picture or two for you somewhere. Although some of the clip art is tacky, the package covers a good range of bases with good-quality artwork. At £28, it's ideal for the amateur or home user in need of images to brighten up their output. ■

Will Head



↑ Once you've chosen your image, the wizard will guide you through exporting it

The Big Box of Art

System requirements: 233MHz Pentium; 64MB RAM; Windows 9x/Me/NT 4.0/2000/XP; 80MB hard disk space.

Software Paradise: 0292 088 7521

Website: www.hemera.com

Price: £28

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| Ease of use | | | | | | | | | | 8 | |
| Features | | | | | | | | | | 8 | |
| Value for money | | | | | | | | | | 9 | |
| Overall | | | | | | | | | | 8 | |