Where's the Waste ?

Where's the waste is an application that provides you with detailed information on the amount of disk space that your folders occupy. Its purpose is to allow you to find folders that consume more than their fair share of harddisk space. Often such folders can be compressed (stuffed) to less than a quarter of their original size.
Where's the Waste has an interface similar to Apple's “Find File”. It supports drag-and-drop for easy interfacing with other applications.

The problem with big harddisks.

Below is a short explanation of the problems caused by the Macintosh file system on big harddisks.

•Harddisk blocks

From the point of view of the Operating System, harddisks or harddisk partitions are divided into 65536 equal size blocks. The files on your harddisk can not share a block, they occupy 1 or more blocks for each file. A files last (or only) block will have unused bytes; these are simply marked as 'unused', and cannot be used by another file.
Modern harddisks are big, and have correspondingly large blocks. On a 1 Gigabyte harddisk for instance, the blocksize will be 16 kilobytes (1000MB / 65536). Every single file on your hardisk will consume at least 16 kilobytes, even though it might be a lot smaller than that. Some 30 to 50 % of all files on my harddisks seem to be only about 1 kB, which makes for a tremendous loss percentage. Some programs install lots of small files on your harddisk, and the total loss can become staggering. My “CodeWarrior” folder for example has some 35 megabytes of wasted space in it; it eats 185 MB of my harddisk for some 150 MB of files. If you use Java (with Netscape or Internet Explorer for instance), you'll also find hundreds of small files on your harddisk.

•Compression

The solution to this problem is compression. Compression of lots of files/folders into a single archive, creates one large file, whose loss percentage is fairly low, due to it's big size. The gain is tremendous, due to the deletion of all those little files with a high loss percentage. Just combining all those files in my “CodeWarrior” folder into a single file will gain me 35 megabytes of harddisk space. However, since compression programs also compress the files themselves by typically a factor of 2, I'd gain another 75 megabyte. The total harddisk space that I would gain by compressing this folder would therefore be approximately 110 megabytes.
For compressing your files or folders I'd recommend DropStuff™ or Stuffit Deluxe™ by Aladdin Systems, Inc <http://www.aladdinsys.com/consumer/>. I'm not affiliated with them, but they make excellent products, that are pretty much the standard in the Mac world.

•Smaller Partitions

Harddisk partitioning is another really useful strategy. Smaller partitions have smaller blocksizes, so the problem becomes less severe. My System partition of 100 megabytes is almost full, and has a total loss percentage of only 2%, which is peanuts compared to the 5 to 10 % you'd find on big partitions.

•What folders to compress?

When your harddisk has become full, it's often fairly impossible to find the folders with a lot of wasted diskspace. Mostly you wouldn't know where to start, among thousands of files and folders. Often a deeply nested folder will contain a couple of dozen helpfiles, or unused modem settings, or old mail, or 500 Java files, or whatever...

This is where Where's the Waste? comes in handy.

Where's the Waste?

Where's the Waste? gives you a list of all folders on your harddisk(s). The folders are shown in a table, with the following columns:

• name the name of the folder.

• %waste the percentage of harddisk space wasted in this folder and its nested folders: (allocation-size)/size

• waste the actual number of wasted bytes in this folder and its

nested folders: allocation - size

• allocation the number of bytes occupied on your harddisk by this folder

and its nested folders

• size the number of bytes actually used by files in this folder and

its nested folders

- #files — the total number of files in this folder and its nested folders, including invisible files, excluding folders or aliases. This number is therefore different from the 'number of items' in a Finder "Get Info" window.

You can sort the table by clicking on one of the column titles.

Menu's

The menu's are similar to those of "Find File". Under the menu is a registration item, that I hope you will use, because that would mean you have paid me :-) You have already discovered the About or Help menu, I think.

- Open — Opens the folder(s) you have selected.
- Open Enclosing — Opens the folder(s) that enclose the folder(s) you have selected, also called their 'parent' folders.
- Get Info — Tells the Finder to show the info windows of the folders you have selected.

- Start Scanning — Starts scanning the drives that you have selected in the "Where's the Waste Control" window.
- Pause/Resume — Pauses and Resumes the scanning. When scanning, the result table is gray. Clicking on the result table will also pause the scanning process.

Drag and Drop

Where's the Waste supports drag and drop. Dragging onto "DropStuff™" or "Stuffit Deluxe™" windows is highly recommended. If you drag onto the Finder, the effect is identical to having dragged the actual folder.
Dragging onto an application that understands text, such as wordprocessors or spreadsheets, will put the folder information into that application as one line of text for each folder that was dragged.

Shareware

Where's the Waste? is shareware. I ask US$10 if you use it and like it. You can pay me via the Kagi shareware application that came with Where's the Waste (it’s called “Register”). Upon reception of Kagi’s e-mail, confirming that you have paid, I'll mail you a registration code, which will register the program to your name, and will get rid of the shareware messages.

The Where's the Waste home page

The latest versions of Where's the Waste?, and other info can be found on the net at <http://www.xs4all.nl/~bvdeenen/wtw/>.

I hope you enjoy using Where's the Waste?, and if you need to reach me, please mail to <mailto:bvdeenen@kagi.com>.

Amsterdam 1997, Bart van Deenen

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