Sorry, it was an **accident**

Terence Green's pic of Netscape and Web Explorer side by side in blissful harmony has prompted readers to ask how it was done. Well, it was like this...

I might as well start with another darned apology. It was a mistake to include the screenshot with a snap of Netscape 2.0 and Web Explorer running side by side (*PCW* March). Ever since, I've received emails asking me how I did it. It was an accident, okay? I discovered this not long after my original copy had disappeared into the editorial department where they turn my rough-hewn phrases into finely polished prose. Ensuing versions of the Netscape 2.0 beta crashed and burned when faced with running under OS/2 Warp.

Several people sent emails detailing their preferred methods and no doubt many of them worked just fine but the quick answer at the time, an update to the virtual DOS TCP/IP protocol stack, was hidden on an IBM FTP server in Colorado. Along with some other stuff I'll detail below I've uploaded the fix, IC11173.ZIP, to the *PCW* editorial team which I hope will manage to squeeze it onto the *PCW* cover-mounted CD-ROM disc. If any of this stuff doesn't make it onto the CD, you can find it online.

As you will have noticed if you looked at the May issue cover CD, some OS/2 information has already made its way onto the CD. This is a direct consequence of a reader querying whether Just Add Warp (JAOW), mentioned in the March column, might be included as it's normally a 3Mb-plus download. Wheels ground into motion and *voilà*! Unfortunately, there seems to have been a slight hiccup in its passage as the cover CD highlights the Interactive Warp Guide — an interesting demo but hardly the fact-packed JAOW we were expecting.

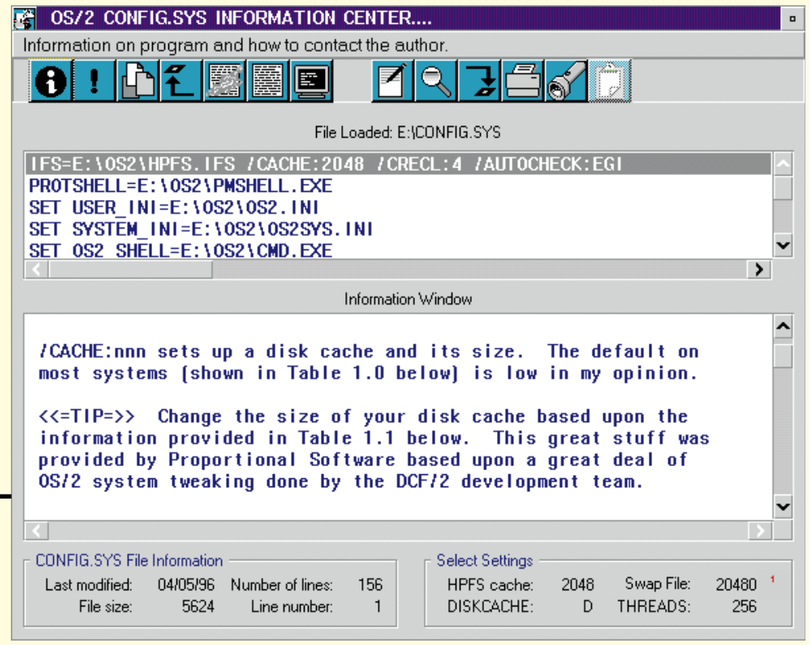


Fig 1 *The OS/2 CONFIG.SYS Information Centre is one of the many useful OS/2 Warp tuning utilities that are available as freeware or shareware*

Just add a bit of Warp

A little investigation revealed a slight discrepancy between the 3Mb Just Add Warp files, downloadable from the Internet, and those on the *PCW* cover CD. The missing bits are mostly the interesting ones, namely OS/2 Warp Frequently Asked Questions, Stupid OS/2 Tricks, OS/2 Warp Connect Questions and Answers, and the IBM Worldwide Electronic Resource Guide. No doubt it's a copyright thing. Publishers are well known for the care they take to establish electronic re-publishing rights. I'll check the situation and upload the missing bits if possible.

Accentuating the positive, the good news is that IBM hasn't excised the OS/2 Hardware Compatibility List information in this shrunken version of Just Add Warp. If you're at all interested in running Warp you really should try and use hardware that's on this list, the latest version of which may be found at http://www.austin.ibm.com/pspinfo/os2hw.html, because an OS/2 system running on solid hardware is miles more fun than one running on marginal kit.

Readers often ask which is the best system on which to run OS/2 and the answer is: one that supports it. So if you're thinking of buying a new machine for OS/2 and you're not particularly keen on all this propellor-head stuff, find a vendor who has an OS/2 OEM agreement with IBM. In the UK these include Adams Technology, Atomstyle, Aztec, CTX, Dell, Electrowide, Elonex, Escom, ICL, Osborne, Racal, and Viglen.

That darned Web Explorer again

Some OS/2 Warp utilities I've uploaded deserve longer descriptions. The Web Explorer 1.03b update is a useful fix but the information in the Readme is even more helpful. If you've been caught, as I have, by the exploding swapper file while using Web Explorer then try this: open the Configure pull-down menu, choose Loading and ensure the second box (Display images while loading) is not ticked.

The OS/2 Config.sys Information Centre (CFGINFO4.ZIP) is one of those essential utilities for users who like tweaking their systems and it's also a great introduction to the CONFIG.SYS file (see *Fig 1*). It loads your CONFIG.SYS into the top window and a detailed explanation of the CONFIG.SYS, complete with hints and tips, in the lower window. You can step through your configuration files and make sure they're as they should be for your system.

WorkPlace Shell Tools (WPTOOL18.ZIP) are for the slightly more advanced user. This set will work its way through your OS2.INI and OS2SYS.INI files tracing all the redundant links and offering to remove them. The reason you might want to use such a tool is that the WorkPlace Shell remembers everything you ever did with it, so that network drive you briefly visited a year ago and all those programs you installed and then removed, still have references to them in the INI files. There's a reason for this behaviour: it's they way OS/2 keeps track of WorkPlace Shell objects that puts it a cut above operating systems that rely on absolute file paths. As a result, the WPS can keep track of stuff when you move it around.

But one of the niggling omissions in Warp is a simple way of cleaning up redundant links. The WPS only knows that I visited that file server directory; it doesn't

News Focus: OpenDoc

If the advance information is on the ball by the time you read this, IBM will have started shipping beta versions of OpenDoc for Windows NT and Windows 95. This is good news for developers who are intending to develop cross-platform applications. Microsoft Windows covers a lot of desktops and some servers but it doesn't account for all the computers out there.

OpenDoc is a cross-platform development tool for the development of small, mostly specialised, object-orientated applications. It is based on a system object model (SOM) which enables OpenDoc applications (sometimes called parts) running on multiple platforms to communicate with one another. Because SOM is language-independent it will be possible to use any programming language to code OpenDoc parts.

By coincidence, the Internet has been picking up a lot of coverage lately, in particular because of a cross-platform language called Java. This raises the possibility that OpenDoc could be the integrating tool for applications composed of Java applets.

IBM has licensed Java and has it ported to OS/2 and AIX already, and is preparing a Windows 3.1 port, too. They've also noticed the neat match between OpenDoc and Java. They recently demonstrated an Internet application in which Java applets were linked into an OpenDoc application running on OS/2, Windows NT and AIX.

OpenDoc for OS/2 and OpenDoc for Apple Macintosh are ready now. OpenDoc for AIX is also in beta. OpenDoc support for the AS/400 (OS/400) and IBM mainframes (MVS) is coming.

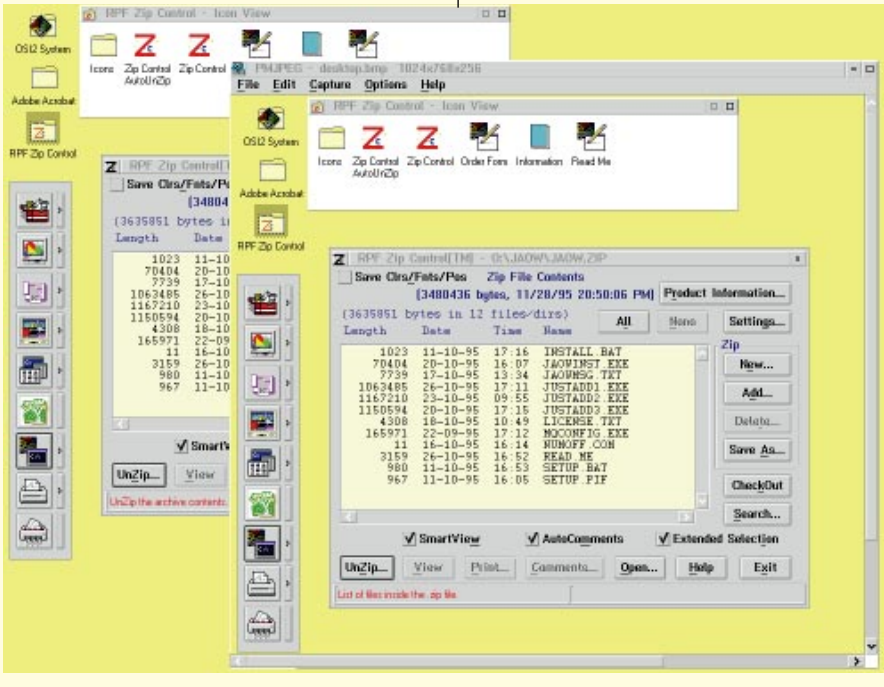
For more OpenDoc information, try the Club OpenDoc home page at http://www.software.ibm.com/club-opendoc

know that I'm not going back there again so it keeps the reference. And it doesn't include an uninstall function that removes program references when we delete programs, which is where WorkPlace Shell Tools comes in. Just remember to use it with care, to have a backup ready and to make an archive if possible before starting to prune your INI files.

I've been playing with the latest IBM AntiVirus tool. It's nice and it works very well, but it costs money. You may suspect you have a virus but just want to run a quick scan for peace of mind. To this end, I've added the McAfee scanner. It's shareware, and as with all shareware should be registered if you plan to use it regularly. But before you decide on the IBM or McAfee anti-virus products consider Dr Solly's Anti-Virus for OS/2 instead. In a list of three, I'd put Dr Solly's product first.

I'm often asked how one contacts IBM for problem support via email. There *are* email addresses for support but they like to see a structured problem report. The Problem Report Generator (OS2PROB.ZIP) is what you need. It helps you to create a detailed problem report and stores it as a file which you can email to IBM.

Fig 2 *PMJPEG seen capturing an OS/2 screen showing RPF Zip Control being used to unpack the Just Add Warp file downloaded from the Internet*



Shareware/Freeware utilities

I've sent the editor a bunch of useful OS/2 utilities for our free, cover-mounted CD-ROM. Most of these are in response to reader emails. **BootOS2 (BOOTOS2.ZIP)** is a useful tool for creating bootable OS/2 diskettes and partitions. **OS/2 PM Commander (EFCOMM.ZIP)** is a neat Norton Commander file manager clone. **RPF Zip Control (ZIPCT228.ZIP)** is a front-end for OS/2 file ZIP file compression/decompression utilities, and **ZOC 2.13 (ZOC213.ZIP)** is a well-regarded terminal application for OS/2. I like the ZOC licence which states, "ZOC must not be used in an army environment or for purposes that are related to military or arms production".

The illustration of Zip Control (*Fig 2*) shows an example of **PMJPEG (PMJPG173.ZIP)** in action, capturing a screenshot in OS/2. PMJPEG is just one of a gazillion screen capture and image manipulation utilities for OS/2. You can find tons of OS/2 shareware and freeware on CompuServe (GO OS2SHARE), and on the two Internet sites mentioned in a previous column; LEO in Germany and Hobbes.

Another site worth looking into is **OS/2 "Must-Have" Utilities and FTP Links** at http://www.os2.hammer.org/uhtml/Warp/h3/h3index.html, as they seem to keep their site up to date. If you would like to be on top of OS/2 developments but don't fancy wading through the comp.os.os2.* newsgroups, you might want to subscribe to comp.os.os2.announce only as this is a moderated newsgroup.

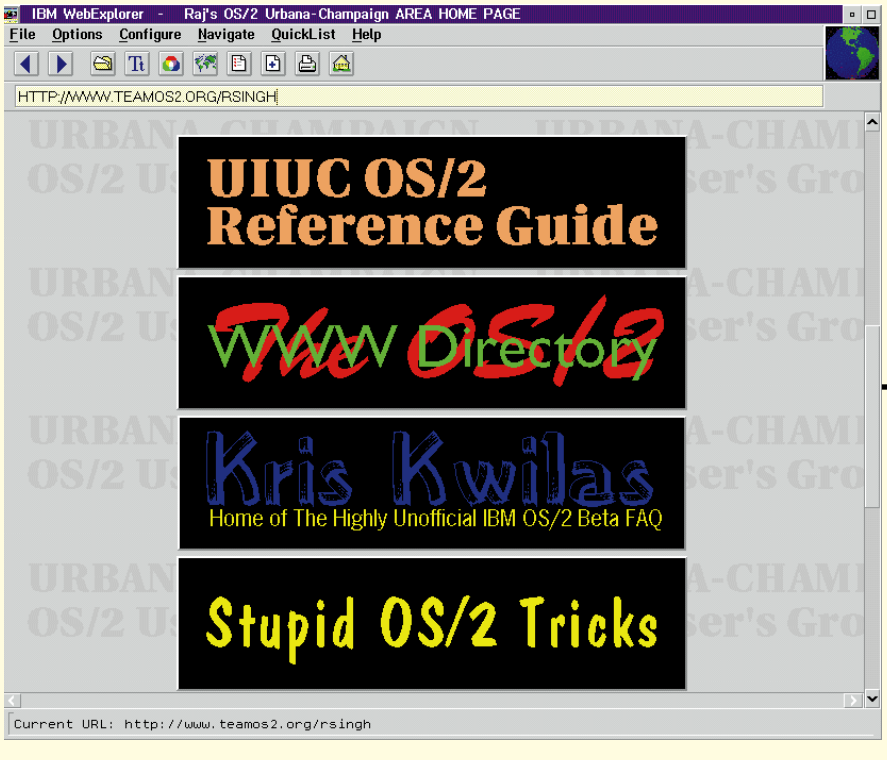


Fig 3 *Raj Singh's home page is an excellent starting point for unofficial OS/2 information on the Internet*

PCW Contacts

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