Windows 95 Logo Update, February 1995: Q&A

Questions 1-3 relate to the date changes

Questions 3-17 relate to the testing process

Questions 19-27 relate to the overall program

1   Is there a new schedule for phasing out usage of the old Windows Logo?

Yes. We will temporarily re-open licensing of today's Windows Logo(s). You may request a licensing application kit beginning February 1, 1995*. The completed kit must be received by Microsoft by September 1, 1995. Any product which becomes licensed before 9/1/95 [including those that are already licensed] can continue to use the Logo for as long as that version of the product is sold, or 12/31/99 , whichever is sooner. After that date, neither new products nor upgrades can license or use the Logo.

Once the Logo is legitimately on your product, you are not required to physically remove it from that product version before 12/31/99. Note however that product upgrades do not have automatic permission to use the Logo. The version that is part of the Logo program as of 9/1/95 is the last version of the product that can use the old Logo. New versions are encouraged to apply to the Windows 95 Logo program if applicable.

Since all existing Logo licenses were closed as of 10/1/94, those former licensees who wish to re-open their licenses to take advantage of these new usage dates, need to sign and return the enclosed Logo License Amendment. You are welcome to choose not to execute the Logo License Anendment. However, only signatories to the Amendment will be licensed for the extended Logo usage permission described herein. Others are bound by the previously announced license terms.

* Fax your request to (206) 936-7329 Attn: Windows Logo department, including your full mailing address, and an application kit will be mailed to you within 2 weeks.

2   If my company is already a Logo licensee, and I'm releasing new products, do those new products automatically get the Logo?

No, these products are not automatically licensed. The Logo is licensed on a per-product basis, instead of per-company. Please submit an application for each product for which you'd like to use the Logo.

3   Are Microsoft applications subject to all the same usage restrictions on the old Logo, as well as the requirements and testing for the new Logo?

Yes, absolutely.

4   Why is Microsoft creating a testing process for products to complete prior to being awarded the Logo?

The Windows 95 Logo represents a new minimum standard for what makes a software product a "good citizen" in the Windows environment. Testing adds substance to the Logo program, allowing customers to use the Logo as a tool to aid them in their purchase decision.

5   How does this affect customers?

Standardized testing is great news for customers. Customers want to know what the Logo means, in solid terms. A standard testing process helps customers be confident that the standards they expect have been met by a particular product. They will not need to remember details of what makes a product work great with their Windows 95 operating system. They simply need to "Look for the Logo", and they'll know that the important elements are there.

6   Who will complete the testing, and is this a change?

- For software, testing will be completed by VeriTest, Inc., of Santa Monica, CA. Previously, software was tested by the developer submitting the Logo application. So, the existence of a test lab and corresponding fee is new.
- For hardware peripheral devices, testing will be completed by Microsoft Compatibility Labs [MCL], which has always been the hardware testing agent for the Windows Logo program. So, the existence of a test lab and fee for peripherals is not new.
- For PC systems, Microsoft supplies a Systems Compatibility Test [SCT] for the PC vendor to run themselves. Encrypted results are returned to MCL for evalution. This is not a change from the old Logo program.

7   Why isn't Microsoft testing software products in-house?

We want to dispel any potential awkwardness a software vendor might feel in sending pre-release software to another software developer.

8   How much does it cost?

- For software, please see the price list attached to the letter for details.
- For hardware peripheral devices and their drivers, prices range from $1000 - $5000, depending on the device type.
- For PC systems, there is no cost to submit an SCT.

9   What does VeriTest do, and how long have they been in business?

VeriTest has been in the business of compatibility testing since 1987, and has served many large and small companies in the computer industry. It is a private company, completely independent of any other industry entity.

10   What about Office Compatible Logo testing?

VeriTest will be performing Logo Validation testing on software products for both the Windows 95 and Office Compatible testing programs. The fee structure is the same for each program, and VeriTest offers a special price for products that complete testing for both Logo programs simultaneously. Please see the price list attached to the letter for details.

11   Will I be able to send pre-release software through the Logo licensing process?

Yes, assuming your product can pass Logo testing in its pre-released state, beta software will be accepted for Logo testing. Logo customers will be entitled to non-disclosure commitments from, and will send (pre-released) software directly to, VeriTest. VeriTest will communicate directly with you, the Logo customer, about problems they encounter with your product, and will help you through the process of Logo validation. You will be able to specify at what point you are ready for your product information to be released to Microsoft.

12   Is any portion of VeriTest's fee received by Microsoft?

None whatsoever. The fee represents payment for testing services rendered by VeriTest to the vendor. No portion of the fee is channeled to Microsoft for royalty or any other licensing fee.

13   Won't this result in more bureaucracy for vendors?

On the contrary, we expect that VeriTest will improve the efficiency of the Logo program. VeriTest has guaranteed a turnaround of 6 business days [starting the day after a completed application is received] for the completion of testing. [Some non-English languages may require 3-5 additional days].

14   What will a vendor need to provide in order to apply for the Logo?

The customer will complete a Pre-Testing Kit, and submit to VeriTest at least the following: copy of the product, product, testing and contact information, payment, Logo license agreement from Microsoft, VeriTest's testing agreement.

15   How can a Logo customer acquire this Pre-Testing Kit?

The kit is not yet available, however, we expect it to be available in approximately March. When the kits are complete, they will be available by mail, Phone-Fax service, and on-line.

16   Will you also have test labs internationally?

VeriTest is equipped to handle the testing demands of our international clients, and will test products targeted at International Language editions of Windows 95, from their location in Santa Monica, California, USA. Testing will be performed on the localized version of Windows 95 specified by the applicant. Any language to which Windows 95 is localized will be supported by this testing program.

17   How can we contact VeriTest?

VeriTest is currently hard at work preparing test plans for the Logo program. They are not available to respond to the general public for information on Logo testing at this time. As noted above, we will be ready to publicize the procedure for applying to use the Logo in approximately March. To be sure you are on the mailing list, please note the instructions below under "18) What is the application procedure for the Logo?" *Press inquiries only may be directed to Marc Abrams at VeriTest, at 310-450-0062.*

18   What is the application procedure for the Logo?

We will publicize the procedure for applying to use the Logo in approximately March. We will send out a mailing to all of our Logo customers, explaining the procedure, and where to acquire a kit. If you are not sure that you are in our Logo database, please email "winlogo@microsoft.com" with complete contact information. Please wait until March before requesting a kit.

19   When can vendors actually begin using the Logo?

We expect the Logo to be fully licensable and usable by April or May. Details are currently being worked out.

20 Do vendors have to participate in the Logo program?

No, the Logo program is completely optional. If a vendor chooses to participte in the Logo program and wishes to license the Logo, the testing procedures described in this document are required.

21 Will a new version of a product require another round of testing?

Maintenance releases will not require another round of testing, but regular feature releases will.

22 Where can I get more information?

General information on the Logo program is available through the Microsoft Developer Solutions Phone-Fax service. Dial (206) 635-2222. Relevant documents are numbered in the 130s range. Information is also available electronically in the WinNews forums at:

On the Internet use ftp or the World-Wide-Web
(ftp://ftp.microsoft.com/PerOpSys/Win_News,
http://www.microsoft.com).

On The Microsoft Network, open Computers and Software,
Software Companies, Microsoft, Windows 95, WinNews.

On CompuServe, type GO WINNEWS.

On Prodigy JUMP WINNEWS.

On America Online, use keyword WINNEWS.

On GEnie, download files from the WinNews area under the Windows RTC.

23 When does testing and licensing start, and what can I do in the interim.

Testing and licensing will begin in approximately April. In the interim, you should make sure you have thoroughly reviewed your products' Logo criteria and be sure that your product implements them. The criteria are available in the locations listed in the preceding question, "22) Where can I get more information?".

24 How do I get on the Windows 95 beta?

Microsoft will be offering a Preview Program of Windows 95, in March of 1995. This program is designed to facilitate early-evaluation of Windows 95, and as a final wide-scale beta of the product. Ordering information will be provided in the WinNews electronic newsletter. To subscribe to the Electronic Newsletter, send Internet e-mail to "enews@microsoft.nwnet.com" with the words SUBSCRIBE WINNEWS as the only text in your message.

The same final beta, including its SDK, will also be available in the same timeframe, as part of the Microsoft Developer Network CD [MSDN], Level 2. MSDN is a subscription-based service, and is the only way Microsoft SDKs can be obtained. To subscribe, call 1-800-759-5474.

25 I've heard rumors that Microsoft has removed or eased up on the requirement that software products be tested on Windows NT in order to receive the Logo. What's the true story?

The reason that Microsoft architected Windows 95 and Windows NT to be able to run a common set of applications, and the reason that it makes business sense for applications to be tested to run on both platforms, is that both systems will get used together in heterogeneous computer environments. For example, an engineering department may want to run Windows NT, while an administrative department in the same company wants to run Windows 95. Both of these departments will want to run the same e.g. word-processing application for efficiency in sharing documents.

Since Windows NT's debut in August, 1993, Microsoft has required testing on Windows NT for software products to receive the Windows Logo. Windows NT was designed to be able to run the vast majority of Windows-based applications, and customers expect this to be the case. Microsoft has always been flexible in this regard — if a product couldn't run on Windows NT because of architectural differences between the 2 operating systems, then our policy is not to withhold the Logo. If the developer codes something incorrectly however, then the problem needs to be corrected before the Logo is issued. This is simply a question of meeting customer expectations with respect to support between the 2 operating systems.

Windows 95 and Windows NT have even more in common — an important and fundamental commonality is the Win32® API. In general, a properly-written Win32-based application will run natively both on Windows 95 and Windows NT. Microsoft has put a lot of effort into ensuring that it is straightforward for ISVs to create a single application that will run on both Windows 95 and Windows NT. For example, Windows NT 3.51 (to be released Spring 95) will include the new Windows Help and new controls (tree view, list view, rich text edit, tabs, etc.) also found on Windows 95. It is still the case however that a handful of APIs are supported on one platform that are not available in the other. An example of this are the Unimodem APIs on Windows 95, that are not supported by Windows NT. Here, the idea is that if an application uses Windows 95-specific application programming interfaces (APIs), then the Windows 95-only functionality must degrade gracefully [meaning, just "stub" that functionality, as opposed to allowing the system to crash] on Windows NT 3.5 or later. Conversely, if it uses Windows NT-specific APIs, then the Windows NT-only functionality must degrade gracefully on Windows 95. The bottom line is that the product must run successfully on both Windows 95 and Windows NT, *unless* architectural differences between the 2 OSs prevents it. If you think your product cannot run on both platforms due to architectural differences, we will work with you to solve the problem [email "winlogo@microsoft.com"].

26 When will the Hardware Design Guide for Windows 95 be finalized?

The Hardware Design Guide for Windows 95 is now available through Microsoft Press. Please call Microsoft Press, at 1-800-677-7377.

27 Is it true that MS will require OLE 2.0 compatibility, before an ISV can get the Windows 95 Logo to use on their products? What if I use OpenDoc to fulfill this requirement?

OLE support is one of a number of requirements, for "file-based" applications to be able to receive the "Designed for Microsoft Windows 95" Logo.

The Logo requirements for Windows 95 have evolved, so that users will be able to use the Logo to identify applications that have gone the extra mile to provide certain benefits to users of Windows 95.   An application which in the future provides OpenDoc support will not be excluded from the ability to license the Windows Logo on that basis. We will simply evaluate whether all requirements for licensing the Logo have been satisfactorily met.

As we understand it, plans for OpenDoc are to actually call (at least) some OLE APIs. If this turns out to be true, it could be possible to use OpenDoc as a tool to generate certain aspects of OLE support. However, we cannot make any commitments about OpenDoc vis a vis Logo requirements.

You are of course free to use whatever technology produces the results you desire. And, of course you are not obligated to use the Windows 95 Logo -- it is a completely voluntary program, in which we provide the Windows Logo as a marketing tool for products that meet a predefined set of features which add value to users of Windows 95.