

Microsoft is significantly changing the way we will purchase upgrades in the future, see TekQuestions, so it is time we revolt and find less expensive products. Also, products that are not Microsoft do not seem to be as vulnerable to virus attacks, so we might just make our systems safer while we are at it.

I have previously mentioned alternate browsers to Internet Explorer, even beyond Netscape. For some time I have been using Mozilla <http://www.mozilla.org/> and I have found it to be a great alternative to Microsoft. It is a lot like Netscape, and some things may not be as friendly as Internet Explorer, but it is not Microsoft.

Mozilla also has a built in mail client that allows the importing of all information from other mail clients. The one nice feature is each mail account has it's own set of folders which makes sorting and storage of mail much easier. Other free mail clients include: Eudora version 5.1 <http://www.eudora.com/> is now Free!; ePrompter version 2.0 <http://www.eprompter.com/>; Pegasus Mail is a fairly recent entry that is gaining in popularity <http://www.pmail.com/downloads.htm>

Refer to Surf's up for alternative Office software...

## BITS, BYTES, AND NIBBLES

In a deal which is expected to close by year end, eBay has purchased PayPal for the sum of \$ 1.5bn in stock. It is a very quick sale since PayPal only went public in February 2002.

Windows 2000 has been given nine months to live, as far as OEMs are concerned, and Microsoft is pressuring the PC companies to stop offering dual install Win2k/WinXP systems immediately.

The rise of Web site-based intrusions has risen over the last year, with aggressive cookies and pop-up-spawned spyware leading the charge. Products like the Gator password manager utility are reported to include a Web-user monitoring component, which may even cause Web browsers to crash or behave erratically. Hackers also can take advantage of poorly coded Web site software—including unencrypted cookies, shopping carts, or vulnerable CGI scripts—to invade users' computers. Over the horizon, peer-to-peer sharing products like Kazaa are looking to hijack users' CPUs.

## TEKQUESTIONS

**I have heard that Microsoft is implementing a new upgrade scheme for it's software products. How will it affect me and/or my business?**

Beginning August 1, 2002, the only way to get a newer version of a Microsoft product without paying list price, is to have bought a 2 year upgrade subscription - for approximately 30% of the cost of the list price. During the period of the subscription, you can get all newer versions without further cost. If no new versions come out - tough luck! Before the end of the subscription, you must renew it. If you let the subscription lapse, the only way to get the new version is to pay full price. It is your responsibility to keep your subscription(s) current. If you purchased a computer with the Microsoft operating system supplied by the manufacturer, you can purchase an upgrade subscription for that operating system to be used on that computer only. Manufacturer supplied Microsoft operating systems cannot be moved to another computer. If you purchased a computer with a version of Microsoft Office on it, you can by an upgrade subscription for it. Manufacturer-supplied versions of Office may be moved to one other computer only. If you buy a copy of an operating system, you can buy an upgrade subscription for it and move it from one computer to another so long as you do not install it on more than one computer at a time. If you obtain a new copy of a Microsoft product after July 31, 2002, - on a standalone or manufacturer-supplied basis - you have only 60 days in which to purchase an upgrade subscription for it. If you do not buy the subscription within that period, you must pay full price for a newer version.

Looking at the current Microsoft web site for the sale of it's products, the Upgrade price for Windows XP Pro is \$ 199 US or approximately \$ 318 CDN. The retail price is \$ 299 USD or approximately \$ 450.00 CDN. We all

know that no-one pays retail, especially in Winnipeg, but that is the value on which subscriptions will be based. Effective August 1, the upgrade is unavailable and the subscription will cost approximately \$ 95.00 CDN. Comparing \$95 to the current upgrade cost of \$ 318 we are about to save a lot of money if we act in time. However, when we purchase the subscription service we are saying that we want to buy the new product even if we don't like it. I personally don't like Office XP, at least the Outlook segment of it. I much prefer Outlook 2000. However I feel somewhat obligated to use Office XP because I bought it.

### **I keep seeing PayPal on different web sites. What is it?**

PayPal describes itself as a "payment network" designed to facilitate transactions between buyers and sellers or small businesses. It is not an escrow service, which holds the funds until the customers have received, inspected, and accepted the merchandise they ordered before passing the money along to the sellers. If you want to sell something and have PayPal accept payment on your behalf, you must first establish an account with PayPal. Potential buyers then go to PayPal's site and, rather than paying the seller directly, instead pay PayPal, either via credit card or bank account. PayPal then forwards the money to the seller, minus a fee ranging between .7 percent and 2.9 percent, plus 30 cents per transaction. The service is free for buyers.

## **SURF'S UP**

There are alternatives to Microsoft Office, Corel Office, and the like, and the price is right, Free! It may be that you get what you pay for, but free office productivity software is beginning to challenge the major vendors. Open source products are becoming more popular and more mature. Software 602 Inc. offers such a product - 602 Pro PC Suite which includes a powerful word processor compatible with Microsoft Word and other file types, a spreadsheet program compatible with Microsoft Excel and has over 150 built in functions, a graphics editor for digital photographs and scanned images, and a digital photo organizer. Check out this Microsoft alternative at <http://www.software602.com/products/pcs/>

Now that we have shown you an alternative browser and several mail clients, you may be wondering about other productivity software that is also free. <http://freeware.intrastar.net/> is a site that offers only freeware covering such topics as answering machines, fax software, organizers, and privacy and security to name just a few. Setting up your office for a new business venture does not have to be costly when it comes to software.

## **TIPS & TWEAKS**

### **Screen capture (Win 9x)**

The easiest way to create a full-screen capture in Win95, 98 or NT 4.0 is still by pressing the Print Screen key. That action sends a copy of the screen to the Clipboard. To view the capture, select Start/Run, type MS Paint and press Enter. Once Paint opens, select Edit/Paste to paste the image from the Clipboard into the Paint window. Choose File/Save As to name and save it as a BMP file. (If Paint isn't installed on your PC, you can use another image program, or install Paint from the Add/Remove Programs applet. Open the Windows Setup tab, double-click on Accessories, select Paint and click on OK.)

### **What Scandisk Creates**

If your PC doesn't shut down properly, Windows will run ScanDisk the next time you boot. If it finds lost fragments, it will delete them for you. Before doing that, however, it asks if you want to save them as files. Unfortunately, it doesn't say where it puts them or what the new files are called. Here's how to find them. Open Tools/Find/Files or Folders and search the root directory for file\*.CHK. Typically, the files are named FILE0000.CHK, FILE0001.CHK, FILE0002.CHK and so on. If you're looking to free up disk space, you can delete any old files you find. If you suspect one of these files contains critical data, open it in a text editor. If you see anything that looks important, copy and paste into a new document for safekeeping.

### **Turn off the file name display when viewing thumbnails (Win XP)**

Find that you need more space for thumbnails and would like to turn the file names off? Hold down shift when you open a folder or when you switch into thumbnail view. This will turn off the file names, giving more space for the thumbnails. Doing it again turns them back on.

\* MicroByte TekSolutions takes no responsibility in the operation of your system should you implement any of these suggested Tips and/or Tweaks. Editing the Registry can adversely affect the operation of your system. Always make backups prior to changing any portion of the registry so that changes may be undone.

## VIRUS ALERTZ

Surfing the Internet without proper Antivirus protection is like driving a race car without a seat belt and helmet. Viruses get everyone eventually, it's just a matter of time. Here are the latest threats to watch out for courtesy of Symantec.

**W32.Liac.A@mm** is a mass-mailing worm that is written in Visual Basic. When the worm is executed, it attempts to use Microsoft Outlook to send E-mail to all contacts in the Windows Address Book (.wab). This is currently a level 3 virus discovered July 8, 2002.

**Liquid.Trojan** comes in the form of the executable file Mp3 Liquid Burn.exe. When it is executed, it fills the \Program Files folder and the root folder of drive C with text files and then reboots the computer. Discovered July 8, 2002

**VBS.Slip.C@mm** is a mass-mailing worm that uses Microsoft Outlook to send itself to all contacts in the Microsoft Outlook Address Book. Discovered July 5, 2002

**Backdoor.Assasin** is a Trojan horse that allows unauthorized access to the infected computer. This Trojan also attempts to terminate the processes of many executables, including various firewall and antivirus programs. Discovered July 3, 2002

**W32.Kitro.C.Worm** is an Internet worm that can arrive as an E-mail attachment with a .cpl file extension. It copies itself to the windows directory and attempts to spread to the MSN messenger contacts of the user by E-mail. Also known as **W32.Duni.Worm** discovered July 2, 2002

If your system has become infected with a virus, please call MicroByte TekSolutions immediately for on site service to remove the threat. Unless you have the proper tools, you may damage your system further by performing these procedures yourself. We also supply Norton AntiVirus 2002 for \$ 40.00 plus PST & GST

## SYSTEM COMPONENT SPECIALS

Each issue we offer savings on selected components which have been made available to us from our distributors. All products are brand new and in the original manufacturers packaging. Each component carries the full manufacturers warranty from 30 days to 5 years depending on the product. Periodically we will also offer new custom built computer systems at excellent savings which were built for an existing client and not delivered. All specials covered in this newsletter are valid for a period of two weeks from the date of publication and are available only to existing MicroByte TekSolutions clients.



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**\*\* NOTE** Due to a family emergency out of province, items offered in this publication will be extended for a period of two weeks beginning July 22, 2002. Should you want something listed here please forward an E-Mail to us at [tekjournal@mbts.mb.ca](mailto:tekjournal@mbts.mb.ca) identifying the product(s), quantities, your name, address, and phone number. We will contact you after July 22 to arrange delivery.

PST & GST are extra on all products listed above. All products are new and carry full warranty as determined by manufacturer. Systems are sold without an operating system. Each system has been fully tested with an unlicensed copy of Windows 98SE which has been left on hard drive. All systems have a limited 1 year warranty. Some components may carry extended manufacturers warranty.