ROM

Newsletter of the Guildford PC User Group

Editor's Bit

ROM is issued six-times a year to members of the Guildford PC User Group All Contributions to the Editor Tony Hawes (details on page 2)

Well Christmas has been and gone and we are now well into the New Year — so what's really new?

Vista — One Year On

Firstly, Vista is now a year old and it's worth recording that even now there are varying views as to whether Vista is a good or bad thing. As I've said at our monthly meetings my own experience of Vista is positive and I don't think I would ever envisage going back to XP — although to be on the safe side I keep a spare drive for my notebook loaded with XP just in case!

Vista is not the disaster some people make it out to be, but given the time it took to ship, one really expected more from Microsoft when they launched Vista on 30th January 2007 after a lengthy five-years' gestation — even an elephant doesn't need that long to get it right!

Unfortunately Vista is still affected by many of the foibles that were present in XP and ME (and earlier) versions of Windows. It's still necessary to wait through prolonged program installs and uninstalls and hope against hope that it doesn't go tits-up in the process and all the time praying that you don't have to invoke the ancient DOS 'Regedit' command to fix some deep-seated registry system ailment. Vista is a better Windows — or at least is on its way to becoming one.

With the imminent launch of Vista SP1 some parts of Vista will be improved. If you look at the ads for new PCs with all their installed bells and whistles of more storage, faster processors and new graphics cards most of the complaints about Vista's performance issues will fade away. However, at the end of the day Vista is still Windows, but personally, with a year's experience under my belt, albeit with a fairly powerful PC, I have no complaints and will not return to XP.

Vista SP1

When you come to read this Vista SP1 will be imminent — the rumour mill is that 27th February is the official day of release.

Microsoft says the goal of Windows Vista SP1 is to address key feedback Microsoft has received from its customers without regressing application compatibility. Windows Vista SP1 will deliver improvements and enhancements to existing features that significantly impact customers, but it does not deliver substantial new operating system features. For example, the service pack improves the performance of the desktop shell, but does not include a new version of Windows Media Center.

The updates in Windows Vista SP1 fall into three categories, which the following sections describe in detail:

1. Quality improvements, including all previously released updates, which address reliability, security,

---

ROM is now only available as a full-colour .pdf download from the Group web page at:
www.guildfordpcusergroup.co.uk

NEXT MEETING — Monday
11th February 2008 at 7.45 p.m.

Film & Transparency Scanning with Plustek

Over the years most keen photographers will have accumulated a collection of 35-mm transparencies and 35-mm negative strips which contain irreplaceable family memories that many would like to transfer to a digital format. One way of doing this is by scanning your slides and negatives using a flat-bed scanner, or alternatively by using a dedicated transparency and negative film-strip scanner. So tonight we'll be looking at a Plustek's new high-end OpticFilm 7500i Film Scanner, comparing its performance with an Epson flat-bed scanner that also scans transparencies and film strips.

Please bring a friend — Chocolate biscuits, coffee & tea are free.

Meetings are held on the 2nd Monday of each month at 7.45pm at the Stoughton Youth Club and Community Centre (opposite "The Royal" — Pub) Worplesdon Road (A322), Guildford.

Forthcoming Meetings

Monday 10th March 2008
     Microsoft Live OneCare
Monday 14th April 2008
     AGM & New AeroSoft add-ons
     for Microsoft Flight Simulator X
Monday 12th May 2008
     To be announced

CONTACT DETAILS

If you have any queries or questions about the Guildford PC User Group and its activities please contact the following members of the committee:

Chairman
(Position Currently Vacant — contact Tony Hawes for info)

Secretary & Public Relations
Bryce McCrirrick
Surrey Place,
5 Coach House Gardens,
FLEET, GU51 4QX
Tel: 01252 623422
e-mail: b.mccrirrick@ntlworld.com

Treasurer
Francis Jacques
"Sampford", Elmstead Road,
WEST BYFLEET, KT14 6BJ
Tel: 01932 341888
e-mail: francis.jacques@virgin.net

Web Master
Laurence Fenn
84 St George's Road,
ALDERSHOT, GU12 4LJ
Tel: 01252 330408
e-mail: laurence@orchardoo.com

Laurence's Web Page:
http://www.orchardoo.com
(this site contains many of the reviews that have appeared in ROM)

Group Web Page:
www.guildfordpcusergroup.co.uk

Meeting Room Key Holder
Tony Hawes
Details below

EDITOR
Tony Hawes
25 Folly Close, FLEET, GU52 7LN
Tel: 01252 617962
Fax: 01252 664756
Mobile: 07941 778007
e-mail: thawes@ntlworld.com

and performance.

2. Improvements to the administration experience, including BitLocker Drive Encryption (BDE).

3. Support for emerging hardware and standards, such as an Extensible Firmware Interface (EFI) and an Extended File Allocation Table (exFAT).

Quality Improvements

Quality improvements have the broadest impact on all customers. It is the foundation of Windows Vista SP1 and is about improving the overall Windows Vista experience.

First, Windows Vista SP1 will include all previously released updates for Windows Vista. It also will include security, reliability, and performance improvements. These improvements target some of the issues Microsoft has identified as the most common causes of operating system crashes and hangs, giving customers a more reliable experience. These updates also improve performance in key scenarios-for example, when copying files or shutting down the computer.

Security

Security improvements in Windows Vista SP1 include:

- Provides security software vendors a more secure way to communicate with Windows Security Center.

- Includes application programming interfaces (APIs) by which third-party security and malicious software detection applications can work with kernel patch protection on x64 versions of Windows Vista. These APIs help ISVs develop software that extends the functionality of the Windows kernel on x64 computers without disabling or weakening the protection offered by kernel patch protection.

- Improves the security of running RemoteApp programs and desktops by allowing Remote Desktop Protocol (RDP) files to be signed. Customers can differentiate user experiences based on publisher identity.

- Adds an Elliptical Curve Cryptography (ECC) pseudo-random number generator (PRNG) to the list of available PRNGs in Windows Vista.

- Enhances BitLocker Drive Encryption (BDE) to offer an additional multifactor authentication method that combines a key protected by the Trusted Platform Module (TPM) with a Start-up key stored on a USB storage device and a user-generated personal identification number (PIN).

Reliability

Improvements will target some of the most common causes of crashes and hangs, giving users a more consistent experience. Many of these improvements will specifically address issues identified from the Windows Error Reporting tool. The following list describes some of the reliability improvements that Windows Vista SP1 will include:

- Improved reliability and compatibility of Windows Vista when used with newer graphics cards in several specific scenarios and configurations.

- Improved reliability when working with external displays on a laptop.

- Improved Windows Vista reliability in networking configuration scenarios.

- Improved reliability of systems that were upgraded from Windows XP to Windows Vista.

- Increased compatibility with many printer drivers.

- Increased reliability and performance of Windows Vista when entering sleep and resuming from sleep.

Performance

Performance improvements that Windows Vista SP1 include:

- Improves the speed of copying and extracting files.

- Improves the time to become active from Hibernate and Resume modes.

- Improves the performance of domain-joined PCs when operating off the domain; in the current release version of Windows Vista, users would experience long delays when opening the File dialog box.

- Improves performance of Windows Internet Explorer 7 in Windows Vista, reducing CPU utilization and speeding JavaScript parsing.

- Improves battery life by reducing CPU utilization by not redrawing the screen as frequently, on certain computers.

- Improves the logon experience by removing the occasional 10-second delay between pressing CTRL-ALT-DEL and the password prompt displaying.

- Addresses an issue in the current version of Windows Vista that makes browsing network file shares consume significant bandwidth and not perform as fast as expected.

Administration Experience

There are improvements to the deployment, management, and functions for Windows Vista customers. These enhancements include:

- BitLocker Drive Encryption encrypts extra local volumes. For example, instead of encrypting only drive C, customers can also encrypt drive D, E, and so on.

- Addresses problems with printing to local printers from a Windows Terminal Services session.

- The Network Diagnostics tool will help customers solve the most common file sharing problems, in addition to the basic problems that it already diagnoses.

- Administrators can control the volumes on which to run Disk Defragmenter.

In addition to these changes, Windows Vista SP1 will change the tools that customers use to manage Group Policy. Administrators requested features in Group Policy that simplify policy management. To do this, the service pack will uninstall the Group Policy Management Console (GPMC) and GPEdit.msc will edit local Group Policy by default. In the SP1 timeframe, administrators can download an out-of-band release that will give them the ability to add comments

to Group Policy Objects (GPOs) or individual settings and search for specific settings.

Secretary's Notes

10th December 2007 Meeting — Annual Christmas Quiz. The Christmas quiz was once again a big success with a good turnout. Congratulations to Ric Evans who got the most questions right and had 1st choice of the many prizes on offer.

14th January 2008 Meeting — Windows Movie Maker. At our first meeting of the New Year on 14th January we had a practical demonstration of how to use Windows Movie Maker, a free application that comes as part of Microsoft's Windows XP and Windows Vista operating systems. The demo on a 64-bit Notebook used the latest Windows Vista version of Movie Maker, but there is not too much difference between this and the version that comes with Windows XP (SP2).

Windows Movie Maker introduced an easy and intuitive new interface to help users turn their video memories into winning videos. The improved effects and multiple transition options in Windows Movie Maker, together with the high-end graphics power of today's PCs, can help turn just about anyone into a movie director.

With his JVC Camcorder connected to the computer via the Firewire port your Editor showed how easy it is using Windows Movie Maker to import video from a Camcorder, to Edit and trim video footage, add Music and narrations, create titles and end credits etc.

Having opened Windows Movie Maker, selected "Create a new project" and downloaded the footage to be demonstrated, we were shown how the unedited clips could be dragged to the Storyboard for editing. Next we were shown how to use the Timeline to edit these clips by trimming (cutting) unwanted footage and how to 'split' clips into two or more sections to make for easier editing. We were then shown a selection of the various transitions that could be inserted between clips to make for smooth scene changes. Our Editor also gave advice as to what to what transitions to avoid and what to use if one wants to wind up with a 'professional-looking' edited video. Following this we were shown how to select and add still photos into the Storyboard as part of the edited video, how to create and add titles, add music to the audio tracks and 'stretching' the audio tracks to fit and match the video footage.

Finally we saw a six-minute edited home video created with Windows Movie Maker which was ready for burning to DVD using Windows DVD Maker. Windows DVD Maker is only available in Windows Vista Home Premium and Windows Vista Ultimate, (not with Windows XP). With it the user can create professional-looking video DVDs that can be viewed on home DVD players as well as on a PC and regardless of geographical region codes.

Although Windows Movie Maker doesn't have all the bells and whistles of 'full' consumer video editing programs, for those on a tight budget or just wanting to experiment with video editing, Microsoft Movie Maker is surprisingly capable (and free) when it comes to editing your Camcorder home video footage.

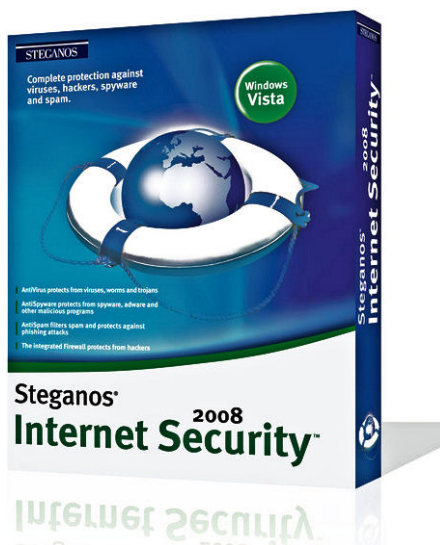# Steganos Internet Security 2008 Reviewed by Tony Hawes

According to Steganos's publicity, Steganos Internet Security 2008 offers fast and comprehensive, value-for-money protection against viruses, hackers, spyware, spam and online threats.

The integrated AntiSpyware application recognises spyware and adware. Potentially unwanted programs, adware, Trojans, worms and keyloggers are all detected using the latest analysis techniques. The integrated firewall controls the network connections and blocks attacks from hackers or Trojans. The resident protection deactivates viruses by supervising the copying, opening and storage of files. As soon as a virus is discovered, Steganos AntiVirus 2008 stops the current process and stops the virus from activating. Automatic virus removal eliminates or disinfects virus-infected files and other threats such as Trojans or worms.

The email scanner examines incoming and outgoing emails and is compatible with all SMTP/POP3 based email clients, including Microsoft Outlook, Outlook Express and Eudora. The email scanner is compatible with encrypted connections that use SSL.

Steganos's technology uses a combination of virus scan, heuristic matching and generic detection to ensure that no virus goes undiscovered. Suspicious files are quarantined to prevent an infection and the virus data bank is regularly updated to ensure that the software can always detect the latest threats.

There are two user modes: the basic mode offers maximum protection for minimal work and the professional mode provides maximum flexibility for more advanced users who would like to configure as much as they can themselves. The intelligent scan function in Steganos AntiVirus 2008 can be used to determine which data should be permitted or blocked, so that users can compile their own black list and white list.

Both Steganos AntiVirus 2008 and Steganos Internet Security 2008 include a year of automatic updates to ensure that the software is always up to date. If a new version of the software is released within that year, users can update to the next version of the software for free.

The review copy came as a downloadable file from the Steganos web site which I saved to my HD.

Installation

My routine before installing new review software is to create a System Restore point so that should anything go wrong I can quickly revert the computer back to its original configuration, so having done this I went ahead and installed the program. The install routine also checked and suggested that my current AntiVirus and Firewall application should be replaced by theirs — which I agreed to.

In Use

Once installed it went online to update the virus definitions/signatures and then suggested I do a full scan of my computer, again I said yes, and let it get on with the job.

Surprisingly, because I knew from previous scans with competitor's Security Suites that my computer was reported as 'clean', Steganos flagged up a number of files that it identified as infected and moved to the Virus Vault. Intrigued I investigated further and they were rather ancient downloads with an .rar extension that I had not to my knowledge opened or run. It could be that Steganos examined and identified a Virus/Trojan within the .rar archive that other AV programs had failed to detect.

After this, updated definitions are downloaded daily, with no apparent impact on speed or performance with updates being done in the background, should you wish it's possible to download updates at your convenience.

File Scanning

Steganos Anti-virus (AV) and Spyware detection scans files on access and on demand,

the latter is useful if you want to check a particular source such as a CD etc for infected files.

Anti-Virus Routine Scans

To maintain a good AV routine, scans can be scheduled to run daily, weekly, or monthly. Incoming and outgoing e-mails are scanned automatically for viruses just in case something nasty has targeted you without your knowledge.

Trojan.

As a test I have a known and nasty Trojan on a CD that I always put into my CD drive to see whether a security / anti-virus program identifies it. Steganos Internet Security 2008 identified it immediately, see screen shots.

The AntiVirus element of the previous (2007 version) of Steganos's Suite was based on Kaspersky's Personal Edition AntiVirus. Having heard that Steganos had a new AV engine supplier for their 2008 version I was interested to know who was behind it. This was quickly resolved as during installation it loaded a variety of

AVG .dll's, which together with icons on the Taskbar as security scans took place, clearly indicated that the 2008 version is now based on Grisoft's very highly respected AVG AntiVirus program (see screenshots below).

Conclusion

Steganos Internet Security 2008 seems to do all that's necessary to keep your computer and its contents secure and away from prying eyes. The interface is logical and easy to use. Unlike its rivals that come with a 3-user licence such as Symantec Norton Internet Security Suite 2008, McAfee's Total Protection 2008 and F-Secure Internet Security Suite 2008, Steganos Security Suite 2008 comes with but a single licence, which seems a bit mean. However, its price is considerably less than either of its main rivals, so its a case of what you gain on the swings you loose on the roundabouts.

Pricing and Availability

Downloadable from: www.steganos.com/uk/products/home-office.

Steganos Internet Security 2008

- Download £19.95 (Normal price: £29.95)
- Upgrade: £17.95

A free 30-day try before you buy trial version is also available so if interested why not download the trial version to see whether it suits your purposes.

If you don't need all the features of the 2008 Security Suite, Steganos AntiVirus 2008 is cheaper and available separately and protects the computer from script, macro, file and boot sector viruses in real time.

System Requirements

- Windows XP Home Edition (with Service Pack 2), Windows XP Professional (with Service Pack 2), Windows XP 64 bit and Windows Vista 32/64 bit
- Screen resolution of at least 800x600, at least high colour (16 bit)
- At least Pentium or comparable CPU
- Mouse or other pointing device
- 70MB free hard disk space for installation
- At least 256MB RAM
- Internet access
- Microsoft Internet Explorer 5.5 or higher
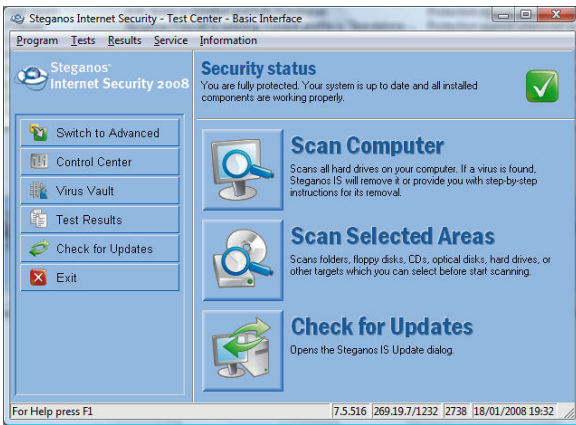
The Master Screen

Self Explanatory — Trojan Detected
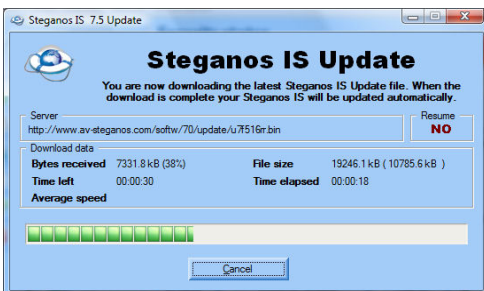
Internet Security Update being Downloaded

AVG Logo Shown in the Task Bar when Steganos Anti-Virus is scanning
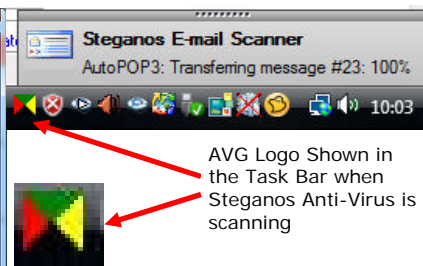
Security Status — All OK
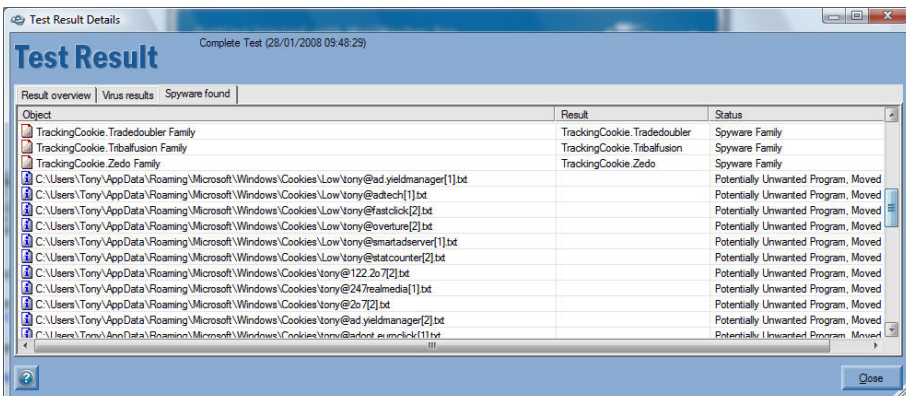
Left

Spyware / Tracking Cookies found during a routine scan.

Worth investigating, but most turn out to be harmless Tracking Cookies.

Plustek Upgrades its Film Scanner Range — Plustek OpticFilm 7500i AI Review by Tony Hawes

Plustek upgrades its top-end film scanner range with the launch of the OpticFilm 7500i AI and SE, the first Plustek Mac compatible scanners.

Background

The OpticFilm 7500i AI and 7500i SE, high-resolution film scanners are dedicated to the scanning of 35mm slides and negatives and offer a high optical 7,200dpi resolution featuring multi-exposure function for negative film as well as a multi-sampling feature that reduces noise. Each model comes with specialist software to further enhance the scan quality and speed. The OpticFilm 7500i AI and 7500i SE are priced at £395 and £223 excluding VAT, respectively.

The scanners are ideal for digital imaging enthusiasts, photographers, and home office users for tasks such as enlarging photographs, converting slides into high-quality images for magazines and other printed material, digitising collections of slides to create digital libraries, as well as posting and sharing images on the internet.

The OpticFilm 7500i SE includes a new multi-exposure scanning function for negative film. Producing a high quality, detailed scan, multi-exposure accentuates fine details found in highlights and shadows, such as reflections and textured surfaces and also helps to eliminate noise.

The OpticFilm 7500i AI comes with a SilverFast 35mm IT8 Target calibration slide, which can generate ICC profiles enabling the scanner to be calibrated using a standard colour target. SilverFast also generates its own internal calibration, enhancing colour accuracy.

The multi-sampling function on both scanners enhances scan quality by minimising noise found in the image caused by varying factors such as low-level lighting or low resolution images. In operation, the unit quickly scans the slide four times with each scan generating four separate readings of the noise level on the image. These are then automatically averaged out to produce the final high-quality scan.

Providing a 48-bit scanning capability, both scanners support recognition of literally trillions of different colours. The result is a highly accurate colour repetition when compared to the original with even subtle details such as shadows and highlights being picked-up.

Two film holders are also provided for mounting slides and filmstrips.

Bundled software. The OpticFilm 7500i SE includes the following software:

- SilverFastSEPlus 6.5 iSRD ME – world class professional scan software The

SilverFast6.5 SEPlus (MultiExposure) software provides enhanced powerful function such as Multi-Exposure, Auto Adjust, USM, SilverFast Basic, NegaFix, Selective Colour Correction, iSRD, plus many more.

- NewSoftPresto! PageManager 7.10 – award-winning photo/image management software, which supports over 100 popular applications, including colour optimal character recognition and full-text indexing functions
- NewSoftPresto! ImageFolio 4.5 - comprehensive multimedia image-processing software which creates new images or enhances existing ones using ImageFolio's powerful image-editing tools
- Plustek Quickscan

The OpticFilm 7500i AI includes the following software:

- SilverFastAi IT8 Studio V6.5 iSRD ME – targets for more professional

users. TheSilverFast 6.5 AI Studio (MultiExposure) iSRD software provides enhanced powerful function such as Multi-Exposure, IT8 Target, Auto Adjust, USM, NegaFix, Selective Colour Correction, iSRD, SoftPrint, and many more

- NewSoftPresto! PageManager 7.10
- NewSoftPresto! ImageFolio 4.5
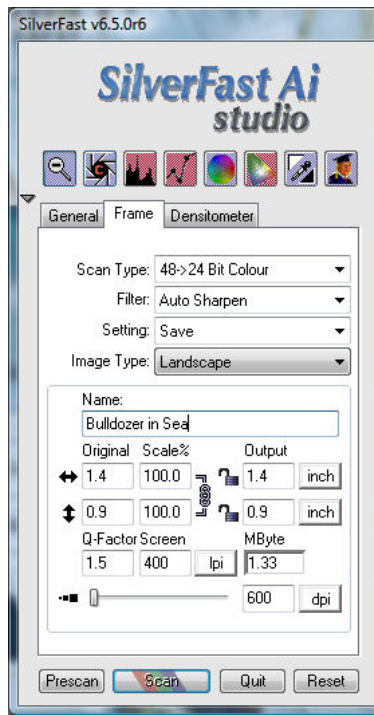
The initial scan screen. Clicking the icons along the top gives access to various parameters such as histogram, colours, shadow and mid-tone effects etc.

Other scan options can be selected from the menu including the scan dpi with the slider at the bottom.
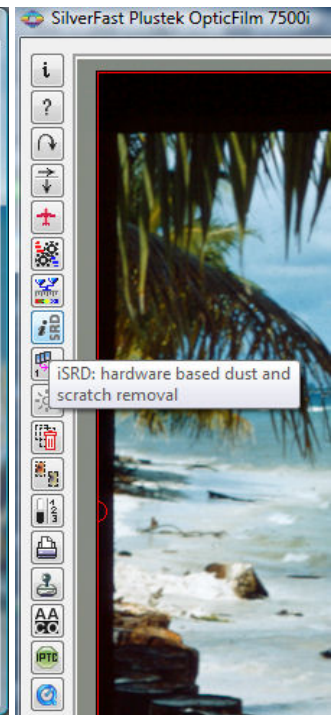
With the pre-scan done the pre-scanned image is shown. Along the left are a series of icons which when clicked give access to further options to be used during the final scan. As an example the iSRD dust and scratch removal tool has been selected. Many other options are available.

- Plustek Quickscan

The scanners run on Windows 2000, XP or XP 64bit, Vista and MacOS 10.3.9 or later.

In Use — Plustek OpticFilm 7500i AI

The driver software and SilverFast AiStudio 6.5 come on two CDs. There is no manual however there are three multi-lingual printed "Quick Guides": A Read Me First guide for the unpacking, connection and software installation, A 'SilverFast AiStudio' quick guide and a 'Scanner Buttons' quick guide. Full documentation is on the CDs.

Unlike most hardware installations where the software is installed before connecting the scanner, Plustek asks for the scanner to be plugged in to the USB port first, with the software installation following.

Having powered up the scanner and plugged the USB cable into the computer it installed the driver software and the optional NewSoft Presto! and Presto Folio Image management software. Following this the SilverFast software install options are given; to install either the SilverFast PhotoShop / Stand Alone plug-in and / or the SilverFast TWAIN plug-in for Windows.

With the software installed and after a re-boot it was time to explore the capabilities of the scanner.

With transparencies in the slide holder it was only necessary to press a button on the front to open the SilverFast menu. As can be seen from the screen grabs on page 5 there are two windows:

1. The initial screen where a Prescan and Final Scan can be invoked.
2. After a Prescan the second window shows the scanned slide with SilverFast processing options in the form of mini icons on the left-hand side. Clicking on

Box contents and software. It also comes with a SilverFast 35-mm IT8 Target colour calibration slide and an attractive carry case.

these icons fine-tunes the final scan to one's requirements.

Scan Features

Multiple sampling. For most users the most important feature is the capability of being able to automatically remove digital 'noise', blemishes and dust. To minimize noise, the Plustek 7500i has a multiple sampling function that makes four scans during scan time, since the noise patterns changes each scans, the image is averaged together and noise cancel out if inconsistencies are present.

iSRD. iSRD stands for Infrared Smart Removal of Defect, which is a combination hardware and software solution to automatically eliminate minor flaws, such as dust and scratches, using infrared channels.

Two modes, automatic and manual, are available. In automatic mode, SilverFast iSRD operates completely on its own and applies the corrected result to the entire scan frame. In manual mode, the user can select certain areas to work on, and leave the rest untouched.

With defects removed, SilverFast iSRD does not soften or blur the scanned file and it provides the user with an enhanced genuine image.

Scan Results

I have a large number of 35-mm slides dating back over many years and a sizeable collection of 35-mm negative film strips and archiving these into a digital photo library either to an external hard disk or onto DVDs is something I have considered for a long time, but never got around to doing, so the Plustek 7500 Ai seemed just the sort of scan-

ner that would make this task relatively easy, but sadly my experience of scanning my sample slides left me very disappointed and wondering where I had gone wrong, because the scanner and SilverFast software just wouldn't cut the ice with me.

Thinking that I was doing something silly and stupid I consulted the on-line manual and help videos and found I was doing everything by the book, so am puzzled by the abysmal results.

I'll have the 7500Ai set up to demonstrate its capabilities at our February meeting where you can form your own judgment. Meanwhile I'll persevere with more tests and let you know how I get on.

Another fact. When scans are done at a relatively high resolution of say 2400 or 3600dpi (the maximum is 7200), they can take an age. With SilverFast's blemish, dust and scratch remover options turned on it takes the best part of six minutes to scan and process just one 35-mm slide into a saveable image. Add to this the chore of having to re-position each slide manually after each scan, the time taken to scan a collection into digital format will be excessively time consuming. If Plustek should ever get around to designing their next model with an automatic slide feeder they could be on to a winner as an automatic slide-fed scanner would be very attractive to those with a large negative or slide collection that needs digitising.

Availability and Pricing

The 7500i Ai and lower spec 7500i SE are priced at £395 and £223 respectively, excluding VAT and are available now from Jessops.

One of my original colour transparencies dating from August 1957 of the arrival of a Royal Flight in Ceylon (Sri Lanka). Note the pronounced pinkish colour cast and horizontal scratches. Scanned with Plustek 7500 using SilverFast 6.5 with all the blemish, scratch, and dust removers invoked.

The same transparency scanned using a bog standard, but very good, Epson Perfection 4990 Photo flat-bed scanner with Epson Scan software colour restorer and Digital Ice scratch and dust remover software turned on — the difference is astonishing.

AeroSoft — New Add-ons for Microsoft FSX

One of my favourite suppliers / designers of add-ons for Microsoft's Flight Simulator X (FSX) flight sim program is German company AeroSoft who have just released three FSX compatible add-ons. Aerosoft's PR details below. No time for a review in this issue but one will follow later, before that a hands-on flying demo will take place at one of our club-meets.

Mega Airport London Heathrow

The first large airport that does not slow FSX down to a crawl without skimping on features and number of objects happens to be one of the largest and most complex airports, London Heathrow. By a time consuming process of optimizing SimWings was able to deliver Heathrow to FSX almost as fast as it is on FS2004 (using multi core CPU's of course).

- Airport layout based on official maps representing Heathrow in 2008
- New T 5 buildings, taxiway layout as at October 2008
- Hundreds of taxiway signs and runway details
- AI-Traffic compatible. AFCAD file contains every possible gate. Gates are assigned to specific airlines.
- All docking guidance systems of the real Heathrow airport are rebuilt
- Dynamic scenery. Some static aircraft (low polygon models) as an option
- High resolution ground and object textures (and normal textures as an installer option for older graphics cards)

All current users of the FS2004 version will find a complementary download link to the FSX version on their order history page.

Online Price: Amazon.co.uk £14.98 inc VAT.

Product page: http://www.aerosoft-shop2.com/products/heathrowx/heathrowx.html

Austria Professional X

This is a complete reworking of the original Austria Professional 2004 to make it compatible with FSX and Vista. It includes a highly detailed mesh terrain of the Austrian Alps combined with all important landmarks and four cities in high detail. Mountains.

This unique Add-On includes the whole of Austria with all its mountains, valleys and typical landmarks. The Austria scenery covers 175.000 km² with the larger rivers, lakes, roads, cities, villages and landmarks. An extremely detailed elevation model and the new made ground textures make the mountains and the Austrian Alps seem as real as never before in Microsoft Flight Simulator X.

Flying along green valleys, over snow covered mountain peaks and glaciers in over 3000m; this add-on is a real adventure for the user. Real pilots use it as training for visual flying using Visual Flight Rules (VFR) because of the many accurate landmarks and objects included in the scenery. Highlights are four detailed renditions of the cities of Vienna, Graz, Linz and Salzburg. Based on high resolution aerial images with many 3D objects placed in this scenery this combination gives a very realistic impression of the Austrian flair.

Developed by the Austrian company 'Flugwerk' with input from local design specialists, it comes with an extensive printed manual listing details of various flying areas and with suggestions of sightseeing trips that should be made to appreciate the scenery.

Features include:

- Extremely detailed mesh of the alps
- Realistic and adjusted ground textures
- Important VFR reference points in the whole scenery area
- Detailed scenery of Vienna, Graz, Linz and Salzburg
- Many sightseeing objects
- Printed charts and printed English manual
- The box also includes a printed English manual and an ICAO chart of Austria.

No UK pricing yet. But a boxed version from Aerosoft in Germany will cost €49.99.
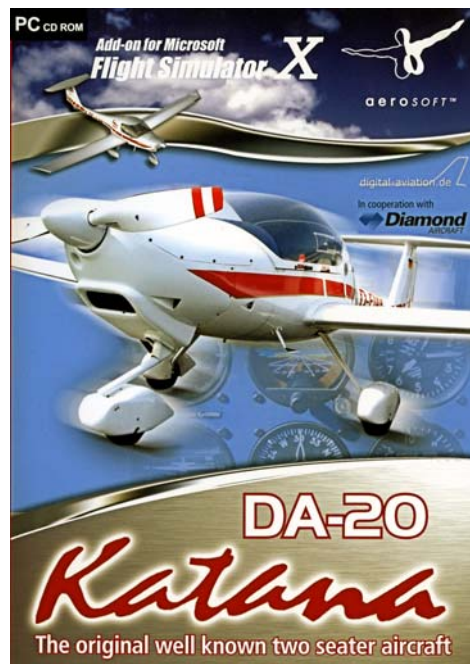
Katana DA-20 X

This add-on features the single engine, two-seater GA aircraft, the Katana DA-20.

The Diamond DA20 Katana is a light, 2-seat aircraft and although intended for flight training it is a great airplane for sightseeing (*especially recommended for sightseeing with the Austria Professional X scenery — Ed*). The Katana features are safety, easy handling, performance; it is quiet and good value at a reasonable price. The software simulates the DA20-80 with a Rotax 912 F3 engine, and the DA20-100 powered by the Rotax 912 S3. Designers directed their attention to realism and the character of this special airplane. So get into the pilots seat, fly it, feel it, and experience features you have never seen before!

The realistic flight models have the following features:

- Realistic flight dynamics (climb rates, air speed, fuel consumption and handling)
- Realistic sound sets taken from recordings on the real aircraft
- GMAX model

- Exact animations of the cowling, gear and flaps
- Five different aircraft liveries
- Accurate panel with pilots-and co-pilots view
- Large, and very readable instruments
- Complete simulated Avionics
- Highly detailed virtual cockpit
- Knee board with extensive documentation

No UK pricing yet but its available from Aerosoft as a boxed CD version for €29.99 or as a downloadable version for €20.00 (both prices include VAT). Download is around 59Mb in size.

Mega Airport London Heathrow — almost real!

Austria Professional X Scenery. Stunningly realistic and accurate scenery

Katana DA-20 X — The ideal light touring aircraft to explore Aerosoft's outstanding Austria Professional X Scenery

New High-Spec Samsung Digital SLR Camera

Late last month Samsung announced the launch of a 14.6 mega-pixel digital SLR. The Samsung GX-20 is aimed firmly at the discerning enthusiast photographer who wants comprehensive functions, stunning design, ease of use and real value for money — all in one camera. Samsung also announces the launch of two new lenses, giving both GX-20 and GX-10 series users even more freedom to express their creativity.

Robert King, Commercial Director of Samsung Cameras says, "With the launch of the GX-20 digital SLR, Samsung has a full digital camera line-up ranging from convergent compact digital cameras through to high-end fully-featured digital SLRs. This product is the start of an exciting DSLR range for Samsung as it is our first DSLR with our own manufactured CMOS sensor. This is a very important step for Samsung which is set to support our expansion in this competitive product sector.

"The GX-10 is the next step in Sam-

sung's continued growth in the SLR market – the new GX-20 offers cutting-edge functions as well as outstanding picture quality to satisfy users of all abilities."

GX-20 — Intelligent Design

The GX20 boasts a 14.6 mega-pixel image sensor, offering a sharper image. Taking photos is made easier with the Enhanced Digital Filter which allows a greater dynamic range of exposures and can also be used to add various effects or compensate for missing pixels after taking a picture. The GX-20 is equipped with a wide view 2.7" TFT LCD (230k pixels) and live view through the optical viewfinder or LCD display.

With a powerful built-in Optical Picture Stabilisation (OPS), the GX-20 prevents blurred pictures by shifting the CCD to counter any movement of the camera's body. This function is designed to minimize shake by oscillating the image sensor vertically and horizontally – eliminating the need for additional anti-shake lenses.

The GX-20 is robust being capable of taking quality pictures in wet, sandy or dusty conditions. The special water-resistant and anti-dusting body sealing protects 72 different parts and the advanced Dual Dust Removal System removes problematic particles from the sensor, resulting in perfect, blemish-free pictures with minimum effort on the part of the photographer.

With the one-touch RAW button, RAW file

shooting is made simple and instantly available to users even during general JPEG shooting. The RAW files can be checked on the LCD and then be directly converted to JPEG format via the built-in converter.

With the GX-20, continuous shooting at 3 fps (frames per second) is possible; up to 9 fps; giving the user the best chance to get a great picture.

Comprehensive Lens Offering

Samsung also announced the launch of two new lenses for the GX-20. These lenses have been designed to enable real freedom in the creative process and include:

- 18-55mm II F3.5~F5.6
- 18-250mm F3.5~F6.3.

These lenses are also compatible with Samsung's GX-10 DSLR.

Pricing and Availability

Available in March the Samsung GX20 Digital SLR is listed at Amazon.co.uk for £668. From the same site the GX20 with a Twin Lens Kit, (18-55mm + 50-200mm Lens) can be had for £716.

The Compact L210 Digital Camera

Samsung 'Next Generation' L210 Compact

If your pockets are not deep enough for the GX-20 perhaps you'd be interested in the 10.1 mega pixel L210, a digital compact 'next generation' camera from Samsung's L-series. This camera combines Samsung's Digital Image Stabilization and Intelligent Face Recognition Technology in a compact aluminium body.

Samsung's Intelligent Face Recognition Technology detects the subject's face and automatically adjusts auto focus and auto exposure to ensure better composition and image quality for portraits. The AF function instantaneously recognises the faces of subjects and accurately focuses on them before the AE function takes over, setting appropriate exposure to ensure the highest image quality.

The L210 features a 3x optical zoom, a bright 2.5" LCD display and a suite of advanced video and editing features including:

- MPEG-4 Movie Recording mode lets users edit and zoom during filming

The L210 again — the model is extra!

- Shutter speeds of up to 1/1500sec for fast moving subjects
- An ISO equivalent of 1600 for better pictures in low light
- Auto Red Eye Fix
- Various scene modes, continuous shooting and exposure bracketing to help get the best shots
- 10 megabytes of internal flash memory

Availability and Pricing

The Samsung L210 from Amazon.co.uk for £132.

Abbyy FineReader 9

Intelligent OCR

Professionals' choice in document and PDF conversion. The new intelligent OCR generation (optical character recognition) from ABBYY delivers precisely reconstructed electronic documents, the highest level of accuracy and fast results. The new unique 'Adaptive Document Recognition Technology' (ADRT), intelligent interface and wide range of new time-saving features deliver electronically editable and searchable files from PDFs, scanned documents and digital camera images more efficiently than ever before.

More Features & Benefits

- Adaptive Document Recognition Technology (ADRT) - intelligent technology that moves beyond standard "page-oriented recognition", understanding the structure of a document and processing it as one complete object. The result? Enhanced overall accuracy and

exact document reconstruction -the output document retains the original logical structure with headers, footers, fonts and font styles and page numbers - saving unnecessary time spent on

reformatting.

- Average increase of OCR process efficiency by 40% - thanks to ADRT OCR, the new task-oriented interface, automatic background processing and native multi-core processor support.
- Superior recognition accuracy and layout retention - the intelligent technology converts paper and PDF documents into editable files with extremely high accuracy, retaining text and special formatting, columns, images and tables- all with minimal effort, without retyping, or reformatting.
- Recognition of images from both digital cameras and scanners - special Adaptive Recognition of Digital Camera Images prepares camera images for OCR processing.
- Enhanced Task Automation - the Automation Manager ensures one-click processing of key OCR tasks and automates fre-

quently used tasks. 'One-click' OCR can be launched directly from 'Start' or image file menus.

- Single Step Digital Camera OCR - makes processing camera images even easier and faster.

- Enhanced PDF input/output with security support - possibility to extract and edit information from PDFs and save them as a Word file or new PDF. Intelligent PDF processing ensures accuracy and retention of encoded fonts. Paper documents can be archived electronically as "searchable PDFs". Supports tagged and linearised PDF output as well as the new PDF/A standard.

- Intelligent, task-oriented interface - with tips for the best results in the minimal amount of steps. Integration with Microsoft Word, Excel and Outlook provides quick access to OCR.

- Selection of multiple file saving formats including the latest new formats - new archiving standard PDF/A and new MS Office 2007 formats using compression and XML: XLSX, DOCX.

- Certified for Windows Vista - support for Windows XP 64 bit Edition and MS Office 2007

- ABBYY Screenshot Reader - . Reader utility for instant OCR. Screenshot Reader is a bonus easy-to-use utility

that lets you quickly capture screen images and allows you to perform "instant" OCR from the screen. It is ideal for pulling text, tables, or images from Web browser pages, flash presentations, Windows Explorer file menus, or error messages. Screenshot Reader is also an ideal "quick OCR" tool when you want to pull small quotes or a few sentences of text from a PDF or image file. The Reader only works after the main program has been registered with Abbyy.

Review to follow in the next issue of ROM.

Pricing and Availability

Amazon.co.uk for £84.96 inc VAT and delivery.

CorelDRAW Graphics Suite X4 Unveiled

Newest Release of Award-Winning Suite Delivers Major Workflow Enhancements, Online Collaboration Tools and Expanded Resources to Inspire and Guide Users London, UK - 22 January 2008 - Corel Corporation a leading developer of graphics, productivity and digital media software, today unveiled the newest version of its award-winning graphics suite, CorelDRAW Graphics Suite X4. With more than 50 new and significantly enhanced features, CorelDRAW Graphics Suite X4 provides users with the tools, resources and confidence to tackle a wide variety of projects - from logos and Web graphics, to multi-page brochures, to high impact signage and digital displays. New text and page-layout enhancements, market-leading file format compatibility, and an expanded collection of high-quality content make this powerful suite the ultimate design partner, helping users turn inspiration into stunning results.

A comprehensive suite of intuitive page-layout, illustration, photo-editing, and bitmap-to-vector tracing applications, CorelDRAW Graphics Suite is the trusted choice of millions of professional and aspiring designers worldwide. The latest version of the suite includes new tools designed to fuel the creative process, simplify project management, and optimise the graphic design workflow.

"As we developed the newest version of CorelDRAW Graphics Suite, we consulted with users from a wide variety of industries. We sat with them to observe how they worked, gathering their feedback on how we could create an even better user experience," said Gérard Métrailler, director, product management, graphics at Corel. "The end result is CorelDRAW Graphics Suite X4 - a suite that provides users with easy-to-use tools that deliver outstanding results, while also having a dramatic and positive impact on their day to day productivity".

Delivering a Superior User Experience Through Improved Usability, Enhanced

Interactivity, and Streamlined Workflow

CorelDRAW Graphics Suite X4 features more than 50 new and significantly enhanced features, including:

New! Live text formatting: CorelDRAW Graphics Suite X4 introduces live text formatting, allowing users to preview text formatting options before applying them to a document. With this time-saving feature, users can now preview many different formatting options, including fonts, font size, and alignment, removing the "trial-and-error" typically associated with the design process.

New! Font identification: CorelDRAW Graphics Suite X4 now integrates with WhatTheFont , the online font identification service from MyFonts.com. Users can save time by quickly identifying the font used in existing bitmap designs, artwork or other images received from clients.

New! Independent page layers: Users can now control and edit layers independently for each page of a document, reducing the occurrence of pages with empty layers. Users can also add independent guidelines for individual pages and master guidelines

for an entire document. This gives users the ability to create different layers on a page-specific basis, unconfined by a single document structure.

New! Interactive tables: The new, interactive Table tool in CorelDRAW Graphics Suite X4 lets users create and import tables to provide a powerful, structured layout for text and graphics. Users can easily align, resize, or edit tables and table cells to suit their designs. In addition, users can convert delimited text and easily add and adjust images in individual cells.

Enhanced! Windows Vista integration: CorelDRAW Graphics Suite is the only professional graphics suite Certified for Windows Vista . CorelDRAW Graphics Suite X4 has been designed to take advantage of the latest innovations from Windows Vista, while still offering a superior experience for Windows XP users. CorelDRAW Graphics Suite X4 integrates with the desktop search capabilities of Windows Vista directly from within the Open and Import dialog boxes, enabling users to search for files by author, subject, file type, date, keywords, or other file properties. Users can also easily add their own keywords, ratings or other notes when saving files in order to better organise their projects.

New! CorelDRAW ConceptShare integration: The new CorelDRAW ConceptShare docker, accessible from within CorelDRAW Graphics Suite, integrates a valuable online collaboration tool directly within the user workflow. In a Web-based environment, CorelDRAW ConceptShare lets users share their designs and ideas with colleagues or clients in real time. Users can easily create multiple workspaces, upload their designs, and invite others to provide feedback or submit their own ideas without sending large files over email.

New! File format support: CorelDRAW Graphics Suite X4 maintains its position as market leader in file format compatibility by adding support for Microsoft Office Publisher.

Users can also expect seamless compatibility with Microsoft Word 2007, Adobe Illustrator Creative Suite 3, Adobe Photoshop CS3, PDF 1.7 (Adobe Acrobat 8), AutoCAD DXF and AutoCAD DWG , and Corel Painter X, making it easier than ever to exchange files with clients and colleagues.

New! Professionally designed templates: CorelDRAW Graphics Suite X4 includes 80 professionally designed and customisable templates, giving users a springboard to the design process. Flexible and easy to customise, the templates are accompanied by Designer Notes that provide information on the design choices made for the template, tips for outputting a design based on the template, and instructions for customising the template while still adhering to design principles.

New! Specialised fonts: An extended selection of new fonts in CorelDRAW Graphics Suite X4 helps users ensure their output is optimised for its intended audience. This specialised collection of fonts includes single-line engraving fonts and OpenType cross-platform fonts, which offer enhanced language support for Latin, Greek, and Cyrillic outputs in WGL4 format.

New! Welcome screen: With a new Welcome screen, CorelDRAW Graphics Suite X4 provides users with a centralised location to access recently used documents, templates, and learning tools, which include Tips & Tricks and video tutorials. To inspire users, the Welcome screen also includes a gallery that showcases designs created by CorelDRAW Graphics Suite users from around the world.

Pricing and Availability

A hefty £385.98 inc VAT from Amazon.co.uk — *and to think I bought Corel-DRAW 3 from our late Chairman for about £10 all those years ago (early nineties)— see below — Ed.*

General Electric Co. (GE) — Cameras

If I showed you this logo and asked what General Electric (GE) made I feel sure many would say aircraft jet engines followed by big American household appliances like fridges, freezers and washing machines, but as I found out recently they are also into digital imaging through a licensee called General Imaging.

General Imaging's camera activities are big in the United States and Brazil and this year they are launching a range of handy and high-tech digital cameras in the UK.

General Electric Co (GE)

In January, General Electric Co. (GE), one of the world's largest companies launched a new digital camera range, marking its entry into the UK and European consumer electronics markets.

General Imaging, the company selected by GE as the exclusive licensee to design, manufacture and distribute cameras, launched the brand in January in London, this move follows a successful launch of GE digital cameras by General Imaging in the United States last year.

Speaking at the launch, European Director Gary Banks said: "Our digital cameras represent an extension of GE's 128-year heritage of leadership in technology and innovation. Our research and development team in Tokyo have done a magnificent job to ensure the consumer will get intuitive, easy to use cameras which all offer advanced features as standard."

The initial UK range includes seven different cameras, the first four due to be on shelves in the spring. New models are anticipated for Summer/Autumn 2008. Alongside black, silver, blue and red, a spectrum of colours is planned including pink, purple, yellow and green.

GE digital cameras are packed full of useful and innovative features. Each camera has easy to use panoramic stitching,

GE E1035
(Estimated price: £180)
• The mid-point of the E range in terms of resolution with 10 megapixels
• 3x optical zoom
• Auto-adjusting LCD that brightens in direct sun
• 2.7-inch LCD screen
• ISO sensitivity up to 3200
• New Smile Detection and Blink Detection features help ensure that people shots are captured at just the right moment
• Other advanced features: In-camera Panorama Stitching, Face Detection, Electronic Image Stabilization and Red-Eye removal

which allows the user to create a three-shot panorama image; great for both landscapes and groups of friends. It eliminates the need for specialist computer software or hours of editing, which is perfect for people who want to share photos quickly and post them on social networking websites.

All models will incorporate newly developed technology for smile and blink recognition, which has been built into the face detection feature. The top of the range model – the E1050 with its 3'' touch screen technology– will be the first compact digital to incorporate HDMI connectivity without the need for a cradle or docking station.

All GE digital cameras feature:

• Image stabilisation
• 14 scene modes
• In-camera panorama stitching
• Red-eye removal
• Face Detection
• Smile and Blink Detection
• High ISO capability

GE digital cameras are now available at more than 22,000 retail outlets throughout North America, more than 3,000 outlets in Brazil, and through a variety of e-commerce sites. Similar success is anticipated in the UK and Europe. Banks says: "Our aim is for GE to be one of the top digital camera brands within five years. We've started by offering a range that is stylish, easy to use and high quality."

Shown left is one of the new cameras seen at the launch, the E1035. Forecast UK pricing for this model is £180, which looks to be a bit of a rip-off as according to GE's website the same model retails in the USA for $169 - $189, half of what it will cost in this country!

Preview — ARCHOS TV+

ARCHOS MOVES INTO THE LIVING ROOM WITH ARCHOS TV+

New entertainment device lets you stream, surf, record and download from the comfort of your sofa

On 6th February your editor was present at the UK launch of the new Archos TV+ Digital Video Recorder box. With a tight deadline to get ROM out in time, we only have space to mention the main highlights as culled from the presentation given by Tony Limrick, Archos UK's MD and from the Press Releases handed out at the launch.

Probably the most interesting statement came from the MD when he mentioned that the Archos TV+ would be aiming to capture a slice of the downloadable movie market for mobile devices, currently the preserve of Microsoft and Apple, and as such Archos was having talks with a number of movie studios to bring content to the service in the UK, similar to the offerings currently available to subscribers of the Archos Media Club in France which costs subscribers €1 to €19.99 per month.

The stylish box sits by your TV and connects up to your home network via WiFi or LAN connection, which not only gives you access to the internet but also allows you to access any music, movies or photos you have on your home computers. Via UPnP you can 'stream' this digital entertainment and display it on your TV. This is perfect for those who want to watch a movie in a more comfortable setting than on a computer monitor or play a photo slideshow in a social context.

TV recording is made easy with the EPG, which enables one-click scheduling of recording up to a week in advance. Once programmed, ARCHOS TV+ will automatically communicate with your set-top-box to record the chosen programme. This will then be stored on your ARCHOS TV+ memory, which comes in 80GB and 250GB sizes. 250GB is enough to hold roughly 450 hours of video, and the memory can also be used to store music, movies and photos, all of which will be accessible through your TV and home entertainment system.

ARCHOS TV+ comes with a remote control which makes navigating the internet, writing emails and even downloading content a simple and straightforward experience. The ARCHOS Content Portal is a facility which acts like an online entertainment superstore, allowing you to rent or buy movies (which are automatically downloaded), watch online news and videos and access other entertainment easily.

Summary — ARCHOS TV+

- Easily record your favourite TV shows
- Play all of your digital entertainment: movies, TV shows, photos and music
- Stream and watch videos from your PC to your TV
- Download movies and music directly on your ARCHOS TV+ using the ARCHOS Content Portal
- Internet enabled to surf the web, share content and access web sites (including Flash based videos e.g.. YouTube)
- View photos, play slideshows with music and transition effects
- 80GB / 250GB – store up to 310 movies, 2.5 million photos or 145,000 songs
- With the downloadable optional Internet plug-in (Opera browser/Adobe Flash Player)

Available in selected outlets now, ARCHOS TV+ will have an SRP of £169.99 (80GB) and £239.99 (250 GB).

Remote Control with handy QWERTY Keyboard

Below — Rear Connections View

Laurence Fenn will be reviewing the Archos TV+ in the next issue.

Technical Details

Capacity	80GB* Hard Drive to store up to 100 Movies, 800,000 photos or 45,000 songs 250GB* Hard Drive to store up to 310 Movies, 2, 500,000 photos or 145,000 songs
Video playback	MPEG-4[4] (ASP@L5 AVI, up to DVD resolution) WMV (MP@ML, up to DVD resolution) With optional software plug-ins (available on www.archos.com): Podcast plug-in: H.264 up to DVD resolution and AAC sound. Cinema Plug-in: MPEG-2 MP@ML up to 10 Mbps (up to DVD resolution) and AC3 stereo sound.
Audio Playback	Stereo MP3 decoding @ 30-320 Kbits/s CBR & VBR, WMA, Protected WMA, WAV (PCM/ADPCM). With optional software plug-ins (available on www.archos.com): AAC(5) stereo audio files AC3 stereo audio files
Photo viewer	JPEG, BMP, PNG
PDF viewer	Reads PDF documents (may not implement all PDF features)
Video Recording[6]	Records NTSC/PAL/SECAM to MPEG-4 SP files with ADPCM stereo sound, VGA resolution (640 x 480)@ 30 or 25 f/s, in AVI format.
Audio recording	In WAV (IMA ADPCM or PCM) format.
Interfaces	USB 2.0 High-Speed Device (compatible USB 1.1): Mass Storage Class (MSC) and Media Transport Protocol (MTP). USB 2.0 Host : Mass Storage Class (MSC) and Picture Transfer Protocol (PTP)
Connections	WiFi (802.11g) connection. Optional Web Browser plug-ins for web browsing (available on www.archos.com) **INPUTS** : Audio: stereo analog Video: composite, S-video, RGB, YPbPr (component) Miscellaneous: Ethernet, USB slave (USB B), USB host (USB A), infrared receptor for remote control, and DC-in **OUTPUTS:** Audio: stereo analog, SPDIF (RCA type) Video: composite, S-video, RGB, YPbPr, and HDMI Miscellaneous: infrared emitter, AV Switch
Power source	External: Power supply
Scalability	Device automatically downloads latest firmware updates
Dimensions & weight	250x164x37mm, 1294 g
Package includes	Remote control, power supply (EU/UK plugs), 6 RCA/SCART Out cable, 6 RCA + jack/SCART In cable, User guide, Connection sheet, Legal and safety notice, warranty sheet

2/With the downloadable optional Internet plug-in (Opera browser/Adobe Flash Player) at www.archos.fr or directly on the ARCHOS Entertainment Portal
3/ On average; based on 3.5 mins/song & 64 kbits/s WMA, on 1000 kbits/s MPEG-4 audio/video encoding and 1h30/movie (for near DVD Quality), on JPEG, VGA.
4/ (MPEG-4: ISO standard by Moving Picture Experts Group ; AVI: audio/video file container by Microsoft) without GMC and Quarter Pixel and WMV (including protected WMV).
5/ Does not read AAC protected files
6/ External video output disabled for Macrovision-protected contents