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Volume 19
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Founded 1987

Chairman's,
Editor's &
Secretary's Bit

Contact Details

Logitech Harmony
525 Remote
Control
ROM 1992/93
MS Office 2007
MS Windows Vista
Acer—What's New
Ten Years Ago
Steganos Security
Suite 2006
Kodak EasyShare
V610 Digital
Camera

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)

ROM

Newsletter of the Guildford PC User Group

Editor's Bit

Flags on Cars

Intrigued by the many cars flying flags, I asked a friend who works in the Civil Service what it's all about. Seems it's part of a new DVLA initiative, now reinforced by a recent court ruling, that to assist other motorists to identify potentially dangerous drivers, it's now compulsory for anyone with a lower than average IQ and driving ability to display a warning flag "The flag — a red cross on a white background — will be attached to the top of at least one door of their vehicle. For those with a distinctly lower than normal IQ it will be necessary to display two flags" — so now we know!

AGM

The AGM at the April meeting went without a hitch. The main gist of the meeting is in the Secretary's notes which follow.

SECRETARY'S NOTES

Monday 10th April 2006

The evening started with the AGM. The Chairman, Tony Wood, welcomed those present and asked the Treasurer to give his report. A statement of income and expenditure had already been circulated. Francis Jacques pointed out that the year had ended with a deficit of £177 which had to be funded from reserves reducing our total funds to £95. A general discussion took place concerning

the financial position. Suggestions such as a cheaper hall, not holding meetings during the summer months and increasing the membership were discussed. It was decided, however, that the only way forward was by increasing membership.

The Chairman and members of the committee were unanimously re-elected. It was agreed that the subscription be raised to £20 per year and serious thought be given to increasing numbers. As the newsletter ROM was a considerable expenditure it was agreed that each issue would not be printed and posted to members, but circulated by e-mail. An exception would be made to those members who did not have e-mail facilities available. Tony Hawes, editor of ROM said that although he was prepared to continue being editor of ROM until 2007, he wished to relinquish the job in April 2007, having done the job since 1993.

The AGM was then closed.

The rest of the evening was taken up by a demonstration by Tony Hawes of an interesting program, Photo Story 3 for Windows, which is freely available on the Microsoft Web site. The program creates a slideshow using your digital photos and brings them to life by the use of stunning special effects such as panning and zooming, and personalising them with titles and a sound track. Pictures are imported and arranged in the "film strip" in the order that they will be viewed. If required the order can be later changed.

(Continued on page 2)

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

NEXT MEETING — Monday
12th June 2006 at 7.45 p.m.

Geographic Mapping a Practical How to Demo by Mike Bray

Something new this month. Mike Bray is an expert cartographer and will show how it's done using OCAD, The Drawing Program for Cartography.

Spread the word and please bring a friend — coffee, tea & chocolate biscuits 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 July at 7.45 pm
Microsoft Office 2007. Although the final version will not be available until later this year, an opportunity to see how Microsoft's next generation Office Suite measures up.
Monday 14th August at 7.45 pm
Microsoft Vista. The next OS, a beta version will be on demo. Still six-months to go, will it live up to expectations?

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

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(Continued from page 1)

Each picture can then be edited to produce a zoom or pan effect of variable duration, cropped or rotated and if you wish given a title. Background music or narration can be added to all or parts of the slideshow presentation. The Photo Story can then be saved and viewed on Windows Media Player or burnt to CD/DVD. A fascinating program.

Monday 8th May 2006

On Monday 8 May Neil Manuel gave a fascinating talk about increasing computer storage. A new, larger, hard disk is one of the most popular upgrades but other options are available to increase storage. An old hard disk can be used externally when fitted into a drive enclosure kit and connected to the computer by USB cable. Such a unit and also 3.5 and 2.5 inch external hard drives were shown and demonstrated. Neil had a number of flash memory drives which plug directly into the USB port to demonstrate various capacities. He then went on to show how memory cards, as used in cameras and pocket PCs, can be used with various card readers. He finished by showing a CD/DVD record/replay external fast disk drive. He warned that although USB1 is acceptable for most external storage devices the fast CD/DVD disk drive requires USB2. A most interesting evening.

Editor's Note

Members will have seen from comments of the April AGM above that I plan to relinquish being the editor of ROM in April next year. The reasons are many, editing the newsletter's been a tremendous job and, as you may have noticed during the last year, it's become very difficult for me to find the requisite time and effort to produce. My tenure as editor started in 1993 as a response from the committee. The then editor produced a one-page sheet of notes that appeared irregularly as and when he had time to do so. Having previously done a bit of newsletter writing using a desk-top publishing program ("Timeworks" and later MS Publisher v1) I volunteered. At the beginning I was proud of ROM, believing it to be a labour of love, but slowly and more recently I've stopped loving it. Urging and cajoling the usual stalwart group members to review kit and new programs was OK for a while, but finding new blood to contribute articles has proved to be difficult. Besides, many of the articles we include in ROM about new products will be reviewed by professional reviewers in the articles they write in paid-for newsstand magazines, or in other group's web sites, which to some extent diminished our efforts.

However, we have changed in one respect in that last year we decided that a better way of getting the message across was if we demonstrated new programs or kit at our monthly meetings in front of real live audience, rather than write long screeds as to how well the program performed in user tests. In retrospect I consider the process works well and most members find a practical "hands-on" type demonstration seeing the program actually in action is more beneficial and advantageous when trying to assess the program's new characteristics and features.

Membership

It's a fact of life that membership is down. It's been dwindling at GPCUG and various other user groups for some time. Other user group monthly newsletters I read show the downward trend is not

confined to Guildford, it's down both here in the UK and even more so in the USA. As I've commented frequently, this is because I believe PCs are now regarded as easy-to-use commodities, much like electrical appliances — and most people aren't interested in tinkering with them. Many of us use PCs for business but also consider them a hobby (if you consider all the hassle of collecting and installing Microsoft's fixes for one problem or another or the danger from hacker and virus attacks and fixes and patches for other programs a hobby!)

An interesting observation is that the majority of GPCUG members are over 60, many of whom started with DOS — and hark back to the 'real' days when to tinker with arcane DOS commands and to seek advice about tinkering was the norm, but those days are rapidly becoming history and we can't remain 'luddites' for ever.

The Da Vinci Code — Latest

I doubt whether many of you have not heard about the "The Da Vinci Code", either the book or film, but there is one tale that author Dan Brown missed as this anecdote shows.

Imagine this: Prince William, of the Royal House of Windsor, is also descended directly from Jesus Christ. How awesome would that be? How incredibly, gloriously divinely royal would that make him? — and think of the column inches "Hello" and "OK!" would devote to such a claim!

It is hard now to imagine the excitement that bubbled around the London publication of "The Holy Blood and the Holy Grail" in January 1982. The hypothesis presented by its three authors was so original and so audacious, that it shook the very foundations of Christian belief and accepted history.

Put simply, they argued that Jesus Christ did not die on the cross but escaped with Mary Magdalene to France where they started a family as founder members of the Merovingian line of kings of France. Christ's bloodline was kept secret over the ages by the Knights Templar and, more recently, a secret society known as the Priory of Sion. Across Europe there were families who could claim Christ's lineage.

Dan Brown's book and now the film expands on the claims in The Holy Blood and the Holy Grail and makes further assumptions about the Merovingian lineage and their successors.

Brown's book has been a huge success, of course, making its author and publisher millions since its publication two years ago. But the attendant news frenzy has been nothing compared with the stir made by The Holy Blood in 1982. At the time many rumours and assertions were put forward as long-lost European nobles, "Latter Day Templars" and conspiracy theorists put forward their various cases to be considered alongside the book's claims.

There was among these one story which was so remarkable and yet so implausible that it never really reached the headlines. So forgive your editor's entry into Hello! magazine-like story telling, but he thinks you ought to hear it — so here it is.

The guest most sorely missed by Prince Charles at his wedding to Diana Spencer the previous summer (July 1981) was his great-uncle and mentor, Lord Louis [Earl] Mountbatten, who was assassinated by the IRA in August 1979. Mountbatten as grandson of Queen Victoria had for some time advised Charles on

(Continued on page 3)

(Continued from page 2)

potential bride material. In this he was following in his ancestor's footsteps where marriage among royal first cousins was the norm rather than the exception. Queen Victoria herself married her mother's brother's youngest son, and similar first-cousin marriages for her extended family were accepted, "keeping the blood-line within the family" so to speak. (It's worth recalling that the Queen herself and Prince Philip are second cousins once removed, both being descended from Christian IX of Denmark).

So back to our story: Mountbatten was in favour of Charles's marriage to Diana — she had no "history" — but, the story went, she was not his first choice. Mountbatten had urged him



Princess Marie-Astrid of Luxembourg (1970s photo)

to marry a little-known European princess, Marie-Astrid, daughter of the Grand Duke of Luxembourg. She was perfect: blonde, reasonably pretty and five years his junior. Most important, the story went, Mountbatten was one of the secret circle who knew that Marie-Astrid's father could claim to be a direct descendant of the "Sang Real", the Merovingian kings of France and their "Holy Roman" Emperor successors Pepin and Charlemagne. In other words, The Holy Blood wasn't mere hypothesis — the authors had got it absolutely right. "Holy Roman" Emperors was just about the right title.

Mountbatten, whose family changed their name from Battenberg to avoid awkward questions about their German origins during the First World War, was a man who dreamt of peace across Europe, of a world where Englishmen and Germans might one day be brothers.

Who better, in his view, to lead Europe into the 21st century than the first son of Charles and Marie-Astrid — a boy king who would be able to claim direct ancestry on the one side from Europe's most senior royal family, and from the other, the western world's most holy family, that of Jesus Christ? The story, which was whispered among a tiny few — finally fizzled out as even the most conspiratorial voices — "Now do you see why the [Catholic] IRA had Mountbatten killed?" — failed to persuade many commentators to spread the word.

Marie-Astrid had appeared briefly in the newspaper columns as a potential bride for Charles — but then so had virtually every girl in Europe who appeared both aristocratic and virginal (a rare combination). With hindsight,



Princess Marie-Christine of Luxembourg...



...and with her mother Marie-Astrid.

how was Charles going to deal with the commute between Camilla's bedroom and Luxembourg anyway?

Well, it makes a good story — believe it if you want. And if you've read the book you'll doubtless know that conspiracy theories abound, so you're suitably ready to believe anything.

Well I wonder whether the future will hold out the "Sang Real" story? Marie-Astrid of Luxembourg went on to marry Archduke Carl Christian Hapsburg of Austria (the Hapsburgs are/were Holy Roman Emperors of course), and the pair have five children. Their eldest daughter Princess Marie-Christine (born on 31st of July 1983) is blonde, pretty and a student of economic sciences — see photos above; she has the real "Blood Royal" lineage, is a year younger than Prince William and has the attributes that are normally demanded of potential British Royal brides.

So if at some stage William's current commoner girl friend Kate Middleton gets the expected heave-ho from the royal courtiers, I wonder whether Princess Marie-Christine of Luxembourg is already lined up in their royal sights for the dynastic match that so eluded Earl Mountbatten twenty-five years ago? — we shall see.

BBC News 24 Cock Up

You may have heard or read of the embarrassing interview on BBC News 24 when a Congolese IT job applicant was mistakenly interviewed in place of a respected UK computer journalist.

Guy Goma is from the Congo and Guy Kew-

ney is the British computer journalist. The story is that Guy Kewney has described his astonishment at seeing the BBC's 24-hour news channel interview a supposed taxi driver, Guy Goma in the mistaken belief it was him.

Guy Kewney — a white, bearded technology expert — was astonished to see himself appear on screen as a black man with an apparent French accent. He was even more shocked to see himself unable to answer basic questions about the legal battle between the Beatles' Apple Corps and Apple Computer over the use of an apple symbol.

Mr Kewney, watched as Mr Goma, whose identity remained a mystery until it was revealed later by the BBC, gamely attempted to answer questions fired at him by BBC consumer affairs correspondent Karen Bowerman.

Mr Goma, a graduate from the Congo, described his surprise interview ordeal as "very stressful". He found himself being ushered into a studio and fitted with a microphone after raising his hand when a producer called out the name Guy Kewney.

On his website, the real Mr Kewney, said that the man "seemed as baffled as I felt" when asked about the consequences of the lawsuit live on BBC News 24.

It is unclear why Mr Goma identified himself when Mr Kewney's named was called.

Only when Ms Bowerman announced live on air the name and title of the man who should have been there and asked the first question did the driver realise there had been a mix-up (and if you watch the video the mask of surprise on Guy Goma's face is something that is priceless — Ed!)

A BBC spokeswoman said: "Unfortunately we did make a mistake and the wrong person was interviewed briefly on air before we cut to our reporter.

"We apologise to viewers for any confusion."

As is usual your editor has a copy of the video which you can see at the June meeting!



Guy Goma



Guy Kewney

Logitech Harmony 525 Universal Remote

Reviewed by Laurence Fenn

Third time's a charm! After my reviews of the 675 and 885 Harmony remotes, Logitech sent the new budget range model, the 525. When I finally managed to get the remote out of the box (it was a sealed plastic case that you needed a strong pair of scissors to get into) I discovered that the batteries were already installed. Needless to say they were nearly completely drained, but a new set of batteries was in the box. Why Logitech did this I do not know, and the box was sealed so it couldn't have been a previous owner using the remote, unless Logitech resealed the box when they got it back. The power for this remote comes from 4xAAA batteries, which is what the 675 used and not a rechargeable lithium battery, like the 885, so there was no recharging unit.

Installation

Installing the software automatically removed the version 4.8 which I had on my system and put version 5.01 on. This has had a big change in the interface, and uses Java. When I plugged in the remote the firmware was updated from 2.0 to 2.1, but after that the application did not seem to respond. I had to click on the home link and then click on the update remote option to get the software to work again.

Customisation

When you want to customise the remote control or transfer the settings the software shows a picture of the 885 remote. As this is the third remote I have tried on my system and the last one I used was the 885 this may be the reason, but as the software detected the correct model of the remote, I would have thought the pictures it uses would have changed. After I completely uninstalled the software and reinstalled, the picture of the remote when you wanted to customise it did change to the 525, but the picture when transferring data to the remote was still the 885.

LCD Display

The LCD display is quite dark and difficult to read at times. The characters are the best so far, though not perfect. Every time you press a button that is programmed the glow function turns on for the display only. If you press the Glow button, then the buttons are backlit as well as the display. I'm not sure if this remote has a sensor in it for the light, as sometimes the display would light up by itself, and sometimes when I picked up the remote (but not every time, like the 885 model with the built in tilt sensor).

The volume and channel change buttons have a definite click feel to them that clicks when you press and clicks when you release the button. It reminded me of the



Harmony 525 Universal Remote

clickers you used to use when you were doing a presentation and you wanted to move to the next slide. The rubber buttons for the numbers work okay, although they still look like the ones on a mobile phone. The rubber buttons for transport and other functions need a hefty push to work correctly, and sometimes I struggled to get the Info function to work with my Freeview box.

There are four function buttons, two either side of the display, and they are raised to make access easier. The remote looks more stylised than the previous models and the weight of the batteries on the bottom of the remote makes you want to hold it at the bottom. The upper part of the remote is thin by comparison. The Activities button is a wide silver button at the top, with a light around it. Below that are the Devices and Help buttons, both rubberised. I have never managed to get the help to do anything, and when I had the remote set up for a device and I pressed the Help button, I got the message 'did that fix the problem?' with a Yes and No displayed above the two buttons underneath the display. Neither of the buttons worked, so I don't know if I had changed some setting when I updated the remote, which I don't remember doing, or when I effectively downgraded from the 885 model whether some help setting was switched off.

All of the Logitech designs for the remotes still have the trouble of scrolling through the devices and then selecting it with a function button. If you don't have many devices to



control then it's not really a problem, but the whole point of this universal remote is that it can control every device you have instead of having to use all the different remotes. You are more than likely to have several devices if you want to use the Harmony 525 in the first place. Other universal remotes have buttons for the devices, like a button for DVD, Video, Television, Audio, etc. and even though I've never used them, this seems a quicker way to select a device. Dedicated buttons on the remote (and I don't mean a function button beside the display) could cycle through the devices and select them, displaying their name on the screen. As you have to select the type of device when you enter the details to set it up the remote would know which category the device belongs to. Having six buttons for the device types might not be possible because of a lack of space, but I'm sure a bit of redesign with the existing buttons would solve that.

The top of the remote has the USB port so you can plug it in to program, and like the other models, when your PC detects the remote it will go to the Logitech website. There is a small rubber cover over the port, which is very flimsy and wouldn't stay on for long if you had to plug the remote in several times, which you have to as every time the remote is updated the site tells you to unplug it and test it.

The display copes better with the names of the devices, but Panasonic are still at a loss, as both my DVD and VCR were displayed as Panason.. on the top line. You want to be able to label the devices as best as you can, but if the font was made smaller to fit the text it, it may be too small to read. Every other device and Activity was displayed in full. Logitech are definitely improving the remotes, but they're not perfect yet. The 525 feels the heaviest of the three, but it is bottom heavy, due to the design. If only the display and rubber buttons were sorted out, then this would be a good remote control to get.

Pricing and Availability

Amazon.co.uk sell the Harmony 525 Remote Control for £43 inc VAT and delivery.

ROM — in 1992 and May 1993 by Tony Hawes

On page two I mentioned I was relinquishing the job of Editor from April next year. Out of curiosity I had a look back through the printed issues of ROM and found the very first issue I edited (May 1993), together with the December 1992 single page ROM we early members were used to receiving. At the time our **Chairman** was David Garn, **Editor** Haydon Davis, **Treasurer** Francis Jacques, **Membership Secretary** Garry Carpenter, **PRO** George Staples and Roy Robertson and **Secretary** Robert Cockerill. To his credit Francis is still treasurer (an earlier treasurer c.1990 did a bunk with our funds to feed his motorbike habit, so it was a relief to have a professional accountant in charge of our funds).

As I said on page one of my first ROM thirteen years ago:

"Tony Hawes is your new Editor

As our last meeting (the AGM) I took the step of volunteering to be editor for the next twelve months of 'ROM' our monthly newsletter; this was subsequently confirmed by the committee. Many of you will know me solely as a face that you see at our monthly club meetings, others I know of as friends, so I am not going to be a stranger to all of you. For those of you who don't know me a little bit of my background.

I joined the Guildford PC User Group three years ago as a result of my business and personal interest in computing. Business interest being presentation graphics and personal interest flight simulation programmes (in particular MS Flight Simulator). My business interests in presentation graphics have diminished since I retired from full time employment at the end of January but I still retain an interest in the techniques and capabilities of modern graphics programmes.

An editor is by definition an "editor" nothing more and nothing less, which means I should edit what others contribute to 'ROM'.

Our previous editor commented that he had great difficulty in getting members of the group to contribute something, however little, to the newsletter so that he could get down to doing the job that he thought he had volunteered for — being an editor. I plan to try and change this apathetic attitude. Members of the group have a good and varied expertise in com-puters, ranging from high-tech CAD through spreadsheets to programming and I find it wrong that only one or two members of the group are prepared to contribute to the newsletter. So what you will find me doing in the coming months is bothering you all for a small literary contribution to the newsletter's contents.

I will try during my term as editor to

make the newsletter as interesting as possible. To this end I will be asking the main software and hardware suppliers and manufacturers to include me on their press release mailing list, this should ensure that we as a group are kept as fully informed as possible of forthcoming issues of their software.

This month's issue contains a review of AutoRoute Express for Windows, a program I like and use frequently*. I have also just received the latest beta copy of Windows NT from Microsoft. Initial impressions are that it is a powerful network tool for business use but not so good as a stand-alone operating system for power users - be warned - you need a minimum of a 386/25MHz with 80Mb of space for the system files (which includes 27Mb for the virtual-memory paging file) and a minimum of 12Mb of RAM! In other words not for the fainthearted!!

* Ashford (Middx.) based NextBase and its assets were shortly after acquired by Microsoft with the program being re-launched as Microsoft AutoRoute Express. Thirteen years later Microsoft AutoRoute is still going strong — intriguingly in 1993 NextBase's version of AutoRoute Express would set you back £150 — and see the 12MB of RAM requirement!!

1993 Group Events

Perusing ROM's of 1993, we had a full program of demonstration events/visits: Aldus, Central Point Software, Hewlett Packard, Canon, WordPerfect Corporation, Corel and many more. My first issue of ROM was composed with Microsoft Publisher v.1 (I later upgraded to the much more versatile version 2) and have been using Publisher ever since — currently Publisher 2003. At that time Microsoft were selling Encarta for £240, but following Bill Gates decree that it should "become affordable" the price in the USA was dropped to US\$99 — which then as now was converted by Microsoft's bean counters to £99 when it went on sale in the UK in the autumn of 1993 — how things have changed, or not!



ROM

Newsletter of the Guildford PC User Group



May 1993

Volume 3 Number 5

In This Issue

Editors Bit
Next Meeting
Forthcoming Events
AutoRoute Express
for Windows
ENQ? Special Offer

Tony Hawes is your new Editor

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ROM is issued monthly to members of the Guildford PC User Group

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Next Meeting - Monday 10 May 1993 at 7.45pm
Stoughton Road Recreation Centre
Guildford

We have an exciting demonstration this month from **ALDUS**. **Juliet Muckett** will be demonstrating **ALDUS's** new **PAGEMAKER V5.0**. **PAGEMAKER 5.0** provides creative freedom with precision control over every stage of the design and production process - from simple black and white documents to complex colour publications.

Juliet will also demonstrate **ALDUS's** award winning drawing package **INTELLDRAW**, a program that provides a whole new way to visually express your ideas. Sounds like an exciting and informative evening in prospect!

Forthcoming Events

Monday 10 May	ALDUS Corporation Demo of PAGESMAKER V5.0
Monday 14 June	MICROCOM (of MNP fame)
Monday 12 July	WORDPERFECT Corporation. Wordperfect 5.2 for Windows
Monday 9 August	TBN

ROM

NEWSLETTER OF THE GUILDFORD PC USER GROUP
DECEMBER 1992

Hewlett Packard's visit was extremely interesting, it obviously went down well as they virtually carried on to the end of the meeting. Many questions were asked by members. The 600 dpi printer certainly seems to be the printer to use for quality printing and the colour printer also produced a high quality output. Our thanks go to Nick Ayre, HP Peripherals Marketing Manager for a very interesting talk and insight into printer development for the future also out thanks to Keith Hartley of HP's Technical Support for answers to all those technical questions fired at him, also his promise to write "anyone with replies that could not be answered on the spot."

DECEMBER MEETING
Corel advise us that they will not be able to make the December meeting. We know this will be disappointing to many members who were looking forward to Corel's visit, we hope to arrange a date in the new year. We suggest members bring along anything they would like to sell, Computers, Programmes Boards, Modems etc. etc.

JANUARY 11th 1993, MEETING
I expect you will remember the success of the last meeting we had with Central Point Software we have a return visit, they will be demonstrating PC Tools Version 1 which I understand has many enhancements, this should be an interesting meeting to all those users of PC Tools.

FEBRUARY 8th 1993, MEETING
Our valued thanks to Tony Hawes for advising us of the launch of 'TORNADO' by Digital Integration Limited. Tornado is a real time combat flight simulator based upon the variants on the Tornado aircraft. All aspects are included from ground based simulator training to a multi aircraft, multi mission campaign. Both cockpit station are implemented e.g. front seat for aircraft control, rear seat for navigation and weapons selection. With design input from actual Tornado aircrew and Di's Experience from producing award winning product such as "F-16 Combat Pilot" they have the capability to produce the first comprehensive Tornado flight simulator with unsurpassed gameplay and authenticity. All aspects are included from ground based simulator training to a multi aircraft, multi mission campaign. Both

cockpit station are implemented e.g. front seat for aircraft control, rear seat for navigation and weapons selection. With design input from actual Tornado aircrew and Di's Experience from producing award winning product such as "F-16 Combat Pilot" they have the capability to produce the first comprehensive Tornado flight simulator with unsurpassed gameplay and authenticity.

All flight simulators to date have very sparsely populated landscapes, giving poor and unrealistic detail. Tornado is based upon combat zones of 100 square miles each containing over 16000 static objects e.g. buildings, a relief terrain, fields, rivers, roads, railways, lakes forests and multiple cloud layers. In addition to this it has a variety of mobile objects e.g. aircraft and ground vehicles. This will result in the highest visual density seen to date.

Tornado is also the first product to utilise Di's new 3D engine, thus enabling Digital Integration to produce follow on mission disks.

The product will be available on VGA PC, Commodore, Amiga, Atari ST and CD-ROM this should be a very interesting meeting indeed and covering a wide range of computer user make this a date to attend this will be one of the first demonstrations after launch.

MARCH 8th 1993, MEETING
Canon (UK) Ltd
This is a special meeting, there will be a 10 minute introduction by Rachel Ivens, Canon's Planning Manager. A 30 minute talk on printer development and technologies by product development manager, Kieran Magee followed by a 30 Minute talk on a colourful future by Graham Salmon, Project Manager, 10 minutes close of demonstration by Rachel Ivens.

They will be bringing along a slide projector and screen, also product to show, ideally we should have a 10 minute tea break between the two main sections of this very special meeting being planned. Members are requested to make a note of any questions they would like to ask, and to put these forward at the end of the meeting rather than in the middle of this meeting

George Staples / Roy Robertson

Microsoft News — Office 2007 & Windows Vista

Recent announcements from Microsoft, plus comments from early beta testers have provided more information as to what the final versions of both Office 2007 and Vista are likely to look like together with latest listings of some of the features that are likely to appear in the final versions when they are launched in January next year.

If all goes according to plan your Editor will have beta versions of both programs very shortly and if you have seen the "Forthcoming Meetings" box on the cover of ROM it is planned to have Office 2007 on show at the July meeting and Vista on show in August (depending on the attendance at the August meeting, which in past years has been low, falling as it does in the middle of the summer holiday month, the Vista presentation may be delayed/repeated in September).

Office 2007 Ultimate Edition

Microsoft has announced that Office 2007 Ultimate Edition will now be added to its list of Office 2007 packages. The new edition will include all the applications of Office 2007.

According to Microsoft, the Ultimate Edition is created on the basis of customer feedback, and is targeted at users who do not want to choose specific components from Office. These are typically people working from home, who need access to the full line-up of Microsoft Office 2007 applications, so that they can create, find, manage, and share information across boundaries with the help of familiar tools in Office.

The Office 2007 Ultimate Edition will include core applications like Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook, Publisher, InfoPath, OneNote, Access, and the new Groove collaboration suite i.e. a version of Office 2007 Enterprise. The latest edition will also have other integrated functions such as content management, electronic forms, and rights management.

Office Ultimate 2007 was not included in the original Office 2007 line-up announced in February. Microsoft will begin offering the new version through its volume licensing program at the end of 2006. Office 2007 Ultimate will also be made available on retail shelves, along with consumer versions of Office beginning January 2007.

Pricing is not yet available but newsgroups have quoted Office 2007 Ultimate Edition as selling for approximately US\$679, while Windows Vista Ultimate will retail for around US\$450.

Office Word 2007 — Product Overview

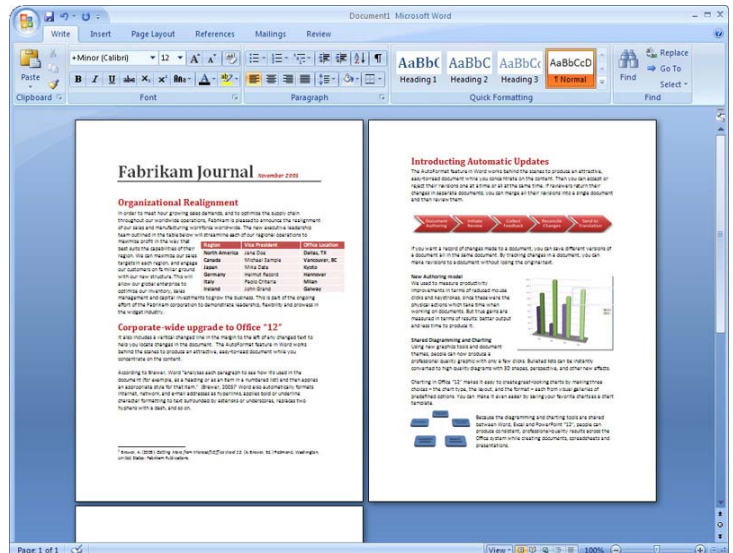
Office Word 2007 helps people create professional-looking documents by

presenting a comprehensive set of writing tools in a new user interface. Review, commenting, and comparison capabilities help you quickly gather and manage feedback from colleagues. Advanced data integration helps ensure documents stay connected to important sources of business information.

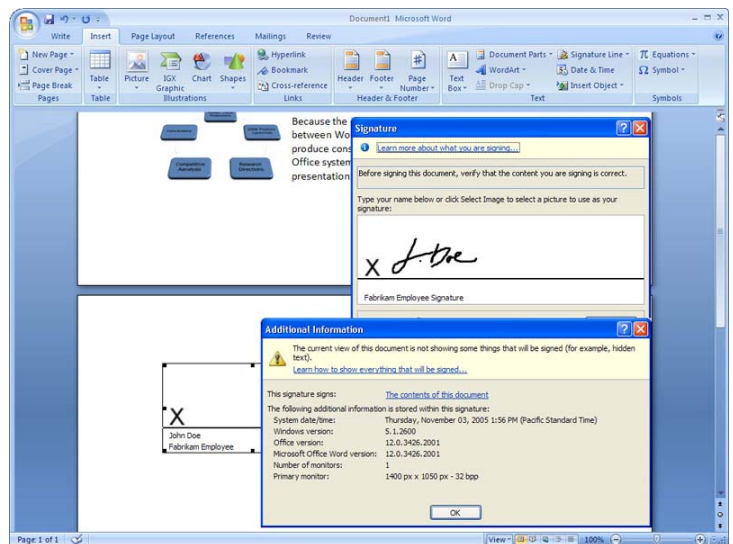
Create Professional-Looking Documents Effortlessly

Word 2007 provides editing and reviewing tools that help you create professional documents more easily than ever before.

- **Spend more time writing, less time formatting.** A new, results-oriented interface presents tools when you need them, in a clear and organized fashion. Live visual previews, predefined style galleries, table formats, and other content help you get more out of Office Word 2007 capabilities.
- **Add frequently used content to your documents with just a few clicks.** Office Word 2007 introduces Building Blocks for adding frequently used content to your documents. Select from a predefined gallery of cover pages, pull quotes, headers, and footers to make your documents look more professional. You can even create your own Building Blocks to simplify the addition of custom text, like legal disclaimer text or other frequently used materials.
- **Communicate more effectively with high-impact graphics.** New charting and diagramming features that include 3-D shapes, transparency, drop shadows, and other effects help you create professional-looking graphics that result in more effective documents.



The new user interface of Office Word 2007 enables people to create documents more quickly than ever before because it presents the right tools to users when they need them.



Office Word 2007 allows you to digitally sign your documents so the people who read them know it hasn't changed since it left your hands.

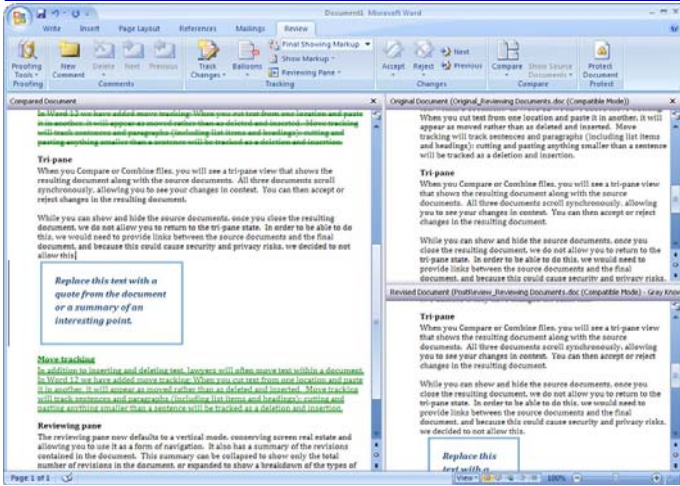
- **Quickly apply a new look and feel to your documents.** Using Quick Styles and Document Themes you can change the appearance of text, tables, and graphics throughout your entire document to match your preferred style or colour scheme.

Share Your Documents Confidently

Office Word 2007 helps you efficiently collect and manage feedback from colleagues and helps ensure that feedback doesn't escape with the document when it is published.

- **Quickly compare two versions of a document.** Office Word 2007 makes it easy to find out what changes were made to a document—a new tri-pane review panel helps you see both versions of a

(Continued on page 7)



The new tri-pane review panel of Office Word 2007 enables you to quickly compare or merge two versions of a document and helps identify moved text and tracked changes within tables.

(Continued from page 6)

document with the deleted, inserted, and moved text clearly marked.

- **Master your review process using Office Word 2007 and Microsoft Office SharePoint Server 2007.** With built-in workflow services in Office SharePoint Server 2007, you can initiate, manage, and track document review and approval processes from within Office Word 2007, so you can accelerate review cycles across your organization without forcing people to learn new tools.
- **Remove unwanted information from your documents.** The new Document Inspector feature can remove comments, tracked changes, metadata, or other information from your documents.
- **Help protect your documents with a Digital Signature.** With Office Word 2007, you can digitally sign your documents so the people who read them know it hasn't changed since it left your hands.
- **Convert your Word documents to PDF or XPS.** With Office Word 2007, you can share documents in Portable Document Format file (PDF) and XML Paper Specification (XPS) format without using third-party tools.

(NB. In early June there were indications that MS are in dispute with Adobe and the PDF creation feature may be dropped from the final version — Ed)

Go Beyond Documents

Office Word 2007 is an important evolution of XML support in the 2007 Microsoft Office system, facilitating smaller, more robust documents and deep integration with information systems and external data sources.

- **Master Reduce file sizes and improve corruption recovery.** The new Microsoft Office Open XML Formats are compressed, segmented

file formats that offer a dramatic reduction in file size and helps ensure damaged or corrupt files can be easily recovered.

- **Connect your documents to business information.** Create dynamic Smart Documents that update themselves by connecting to your back-end systems using new document controls and data bindings.

• **Keep track of your documents with the Document Information Panel.** Use the new Document Information Panel to add workflow and tracking information directly to your documents. Add Microsoft Windows SharePoint Services information or custom properties to your document templates to extend document management functionality into the Office Word 2007 environment.

- **Quickly detect documents with embedded macros.** Office Word 2007 uses a separate file format (.docm) for macro-enabled documents, so you can quickly tell whether a file is capable of executing any embedded macros.

Windows Vista — Consumer Market Segments

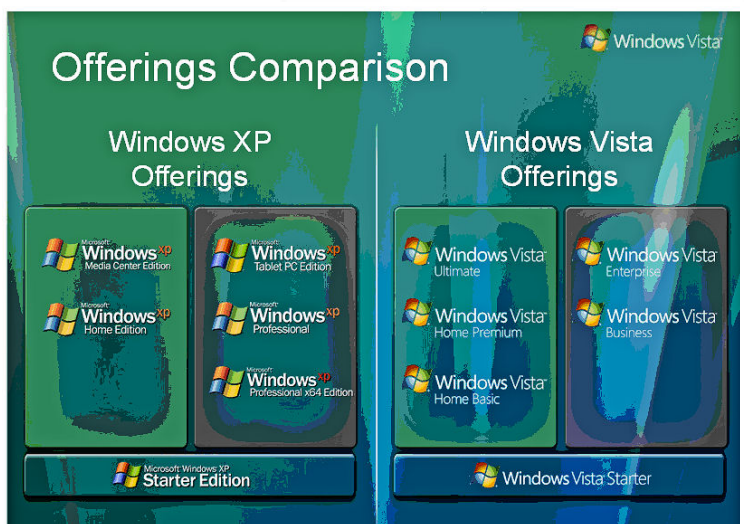
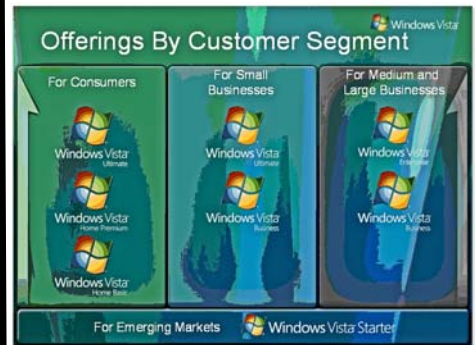


Windows Vista Home Basic is the entry-level offering for consumers. Highlights include:

- Significant advances in security and reliability
- Parental Controls
- Windows Vista Basic user interface
- Search and Organize innovations
- Improved networking

Windows Vista Home Basic is designed to be easy to set up, to help people use their PCs

(Continued on page 8)



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securely and reliably, to help people stay better connected, and, like all of the editions of Windows Vista, to be compatible with the widest range of software, devices, and services that people use and trust. For those who simply want to use their PC for tasks such as surfing the Internet, corresponding with friends and family using email, or performing basic document creation and editing tasks, Windows Vista Home Basic delivers a safer, more reliable, and more effective computing environment.

Windows Vista Home Premium

Windows Vista Home Premium is the mainstream edition of Windows Vista for consumer desktop and mobile PCs. It includes all features available in Windows Vista Home Basic, plus:

- Windows Aero user interface
- Windows Media Center functionality
- Additional digital media features such as authoring and DVD burning
- Windows Tablet PC capability
- Additional mobility features such as PC-to-PC synchronization

Windows Vista Home Premium makes finding information, staying connected, and interacting with your PC easier and more secure. Using, organizing, and sharing pho-

tos, video, TV programs, and music become a part of your everyday life. With Windows Vista Home Premium, balancing your cheque book, doing homework, watching a movie, listening to music, or playing a game is a better and more enjoyable experience.

Windows Vista Ultimate

Windows Vista Ultimate is the flagship edition of Windows Vista across consumer and small business desktop PCs and mobile PCs. The primary user of Windows Vista Ultimate is the individual, such as a small business owner, who has a single PC to use both at home and at work. This edition includes all of the features available in Windows Vista Home Premium and Windows Vista Enterprise.

Windows Vista Ultimate is the first operating system that combines the advanced infrastructure of a business-focused operating system, the productivity of a mobility-focused operating system, and the digital entertainment features of a consumer-focused operating system. For users who want their PC to be great for working at home, on the go, and at the office, Windows Vista Ultimate is the no-compromise operating system that provides it all.

So here we have the main features of the consumer versions of Windows Vista. There

is one final consumer version which we needn't concern ourselves with too much. This is the Starter version for emerging markets, details below. Remember we'll be having a preview evening of Windows Vista very shortly — Ed.

Windows Vista Starter

Windows Vista Starter is designed to empower families and entry-level users in selected emerging markets to take advantage of the social and educational benefits that personal computer technology and the Internet make possible. Highlights of this edition include:

- Advances in security and reliability
- Search and Organize innovations
- Windows Vista Basic user interface
- 32-bit only operating system designed specifically for lower-cost computers

Windows Vista Starter helps families in emerging technology countries be more successful by providing an affordable, easy-to-learn, and easy-to-use computing experience. It is compatible with the latest applications and devices and is more reliable and secure because it is part of the Windows Vista family of products.

Windows Vista Demo

Make a note in your diary for the practical demo at the August meeting with the possibly that it will be repeated with the very latest beta in September.

Acer — What's New

Acer have released a whole raft of new products. At well-planned media event their latest and forthcoming products were on display.

I don't have space to cover every thing but one particular caught my eye. This is Acer's Aspire AS9800 notebook with a 20-inch screen will appeal to those who want the power and features of a desktop built into a computer the size of a notebook.

To whet your appetite this is from Acer's Press Release.

Acer Aspire 9800

Acer presents the Aspire 9800. Outstanding multimedia and entertainment from an 20-inch notebook

Acer, the leading vendor in the notebook sector for EMEA – Europe, Middle East and Africa announces the new Aspire 9800, a new notebook series with a spectacular 20-inch LCD screen, delivering enough power, functionality, flexibility and presence to rival the very best desktop PCs.

Powered by Intel Centrino Mobile Technology Duo platform and featuring Acer's exclusive Empowering Technology together with Acer Arcade entertainment suite, the Aspire 9800 is a highly-versatile



Acer Aspire 9800 notebook with 20.1-inch screen compared with a 17-inch model.

system that delivers a truly extraordinary audio-visual experience, offering digital PC Television through the Integrated analogue and digital TV Tuner and cutting-edge Video and Voice over IP communication thanks to the built-in Acer Orbicam.

Immersive Audio-visual Experience

Equipped with the largest screen size currently available in a notebook an Acer 20.1" CrystalBrite colour TFT LCD display (WSXGA+ resolution of 1680 x 1050)

featuring Acer CrystalBrite technology for maximum screen brightness in all lightning conditions and powered by the high-end NVIDIA GeForce Go 7600 graphics card with up to 256MB dedicated video memory, the Aspire 9800 guarantees an altogether immersive multimedia experience. In addition, the DVI-D* connectivity provides faster and higher-quality images for high-definition entertainment on external monitors.

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For a realistic and engaging sound reproduction the Aspire 9800 integrates 3-Watt speakers and a 4-Watt subwoofer and Dolby Digital Live which allows the notebook to be hooked up via a single digital connection to a Dolby Digital-equipped audio/video receiver or digital speaker system, eliminating multiple cables and ensuring the integrity and quality of the audio signal.

All multimedia functions can be controlled with the Acer Media keys, seven mirror-coated keys with LEDs: Acer Arcade, volume up/down, previous, next, play/pause, and stop, offering convenient, one-button control over all your multimedia entertainment.

Storage-wise, a generous HDD of up to 240GB** meets the needs of multimedia file collectors. For the optical drive you can choose between the excellent slot-loading DVD-Super Multi double-layer drive or an HD-DVD drive***. In addition, for easy and speedy data transfer, the Aspire 9800 sports a comfortable 5-in-1 card reader that supports the most common card formats

Digital Television

The Aspire 9800 provides a simple way to capture the interactive world of terrestrial digital television. By integrating a hybrid TV Tuner for both analogue and digital broadcasts, it lets you tune in to analog and digital TV transmissions simply by connecting a cable to the specific notebook port. Acer's multimedia software suite, Aspire Arcade, helps users view and switch between channels with a clear and easy-to-use interface as well as selecting the best video mode with Acer CinemaVision and Acer ClearVision video technologies.

Cutting-edge Video and Voice Over IP Communication

On selected models, the Aspire 9800 comes bundled with a handy VoIP Bluetooth phone. When used in the PC Card slot, the Acer VoIP Bluetooth automatically recharges itself, but it can also be used as a normal cell phone connected to the Notebook through Bluetooth connections. What's more, it can be placed on any desk or surface and used as a speaker phone, letting you communicate freely while continuing to work on your PC. For real-time face-to-face video conferencing, Acer has equipped the Aspire 9800 with the Acer OrbiCam, a 1.3 megapixel camera mounted at the top of the LCD panel.

Complete communication and empowering tools. To stay connected everywhere, the Aspire 9800 comes complete with full wired and wireless connectivity options: WLAN (with Acer InviLink 802.11b/g Wi-Fi CERTIFIED solution, supporting Acer SignalUp wireless technology), WPAN with built-in Bluetooth 2.0 module, LAN connection with Gigabit Ethernet cards and standard connectivity through the integrated 56K ITU V.92 modem. All notebook functions can be efficiently managed with Acer Empowering technology, an intuitive

interface that gives users easy control over their notebook's security, performance, settings and communication with a single touch of the Empowering Key

The Aspire 9800 series comes with Microsoft Windows XP Home Edition or Microsoft Windows Media Centre Edition preinstalled. Additional installed software includes Adobe Reader, Norton AntiVirus and CyberLink PowerDVD or CyberLink Power Producer, Acer GridVista and Acer Arcade Software Suite.

All Acer notebooks come with a standard 1 year Carry In (International travellers warranty - ITW) which can be extended to 3 years cover with the AcerAdvantage NewEdition service that also covers accidental damage to the notebook.

Includes HDCP (High-bandwidth Digital Content Protection), an encryption method for copyrighted material protection

** Up to 240GB SATA HDD with 2nd HDD and Raid 0 support

*** When available

Pricing

No UK price yet but it's listed at euro €2149 (£1475) on Acer's Italian site.

D150 SATELLITE NAVIGATOR

Another item that caught my eye was Acer's new portable d150 satellite navigator. It's an all-in-one system designed for travellers who want compact, complete and intelligent solutions.

Software

The Acer d150 navigator is preinstalled with Destinator DS Navigation software that features countless functions such as dual map



display in 2D and 3D, route calculation and recalculation, rerouting in the event of obstacles and unexpected events, map changes between the different European countries, recent address or favourite destination memory and world map selection in 10 different languages. The d150 portable navigator comes in two different configurations, both with European (contained on a SD/MMC card) and regional maps (on CD). The NAVTEQ detailed maps cover the main European countries - including Italy, UK, Ireland, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, Spain, Portugal, Austria and Switzerland - and include more than 6 million kilometres of highway routes.



NAVTEQ also displays about 1 million points of interest divided in 45 categories.

Battery, Memory and Multimedia

The Acer d150 guarantees minimum energy consumption and 8.5 hours of non-stop use. Furthermore, thanks to 64 MB RAM and 32 MB storage capacity (flash memory); the d150 can save 1,000 contacts, save data and favourites even when the battery has died. The new Acer d150 also provides entertainment through the built-in MP3 music player or Picture Viewer to share favourite photos.

A Complete Navigation Solution

Combining palmtop portability with GPS functions, the new Acer d150 is a "plug & drive" satellite navigator ready to guide travellers wherever they want to go, thanks to the positioning simplicity and possibility of carrying and moving it from one car to the next without any hassles. The Acer d150 is designed around the user-friendly concept, in fact, all functions are quickly accessible through an easy to understand menu and touch screen that makes the interface extremely intuitive, letting you immediately enter any destination. The powerful speakers (2W) and bright 3.5" LCD screen offer excellent user support with sharp map display and clear voice instructions. Additionally, the 3.5" display is non-glare, guaranteeing excellent display even in direct sunlight. When travelling abroad, the Acer d150 continues to provide detailed route indications, thanks to a non-stop function that automatically changes maps from one country to the next. Furthermore, it has a route plan utility that divides long trips throughout Europe into manageable trips.

For better signal reception stability, the new Acer d150 includes a GPS antenna and 12 parallel channel receiver.

Pricing

Expect to pay around £299 (or less).

Ten Years Ago by Laurence Fenn



Searching for stuff for my recent talk about retro gaming, in which I found the original manual for my BBC Model B computer, I came across some old PC magazines. Things have changed in the computer world over the last ten years, some magazines have disappeared, some companies have too, but I thought it would be interesting to see what the cutting edge of technology was ten years ago.

Computer Life

Viglen were selling their "Awesome 166" Multimedia PC with 32MB EDO RAM, 1.6

GB hard disc, 17" ENVY17 Colour Monitor, Matrox Millennium Video with 2MB WRAM, six speed CD-ROM Drive, 14,400 Voice Fax modem, 256k pipeline burst cache, Pentium 166MHz processor, Sound Blaster AWE 32 Value soundcard, 15W stereo amplified speakers, microphone, Microsoft Word, Publisher, Money, Encarta 96 for £2999.00. (£3541.45 with delivery and VAT). NEC was advertising their MultiSpin 4X4c CD-ROM which could take four CDs at a time, for £189. Reviews included a Mustek Handheld scanner with a resolution of 800dpi for £106. Sportster was selling their US Robotics 28,800 modem with a free trial to Pipex for £199. Game of the month was Duke Nukem 3D, £TBA from Apogee/US Gold and The 11th Hour, £45 from Virgin Interactive. Gabriel Knight: The Beast Within was released by Sierra for £50, and came on six CDs.

PC Home

The cover disc included WinG, Microsoft's graphic acceleration software for Windows 3.11 and the latest version of Video for Windows v1.1d as well as demos for Command and Conquer, Rayman and Earthworm Jim. An article on interactive movies on the PC included Urban Runner (a French production

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Backer® is a high performance back-up system designed specifically for the home user. For less than the price of most PC games, you can store up to 1.5Gbytes of data on a single VHS video tape, the equivalent of 3 CD-ROMs. Backer® utilizes your existing video recorder to transfer data from your hard disk at up to 9Mbytes per minute, faster than many of the significantly more expensive tape streamers.

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- Transfer data between PCs, copy hundreds of Megabytes quickly and easily
- Runs under Windows® in the background, allowing you to continue working with other applications
- Uses low cost standard video tapes
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- Back-up selected files or the whole hard disk

Order now by ringing 01606 74330 quoting your Access, Visa or Switch number. Alternatively send a cheque or postal order for £42.45 (incl. VAT) + P&P £2.50 along with details of which magazine you saw this advertisement and the specification of your PC to: Danmere Technologies Ltd., Whitehall, 75 School Lane, Hartford, Northwich, Cheshire CW8 1PF.

Availability - "Backer passes the test with flying colours."
"Backer's tape transfer rate of 9Mbytes per minute runs rings around the 1.5Mbytes per minute most tape streamers can manage."
"Tragically good stuff!" - PC Format - December '95
"Extremely good value product."
"It must be the date obsession."
- PC Home - December '95

Distributor enquires welcome.

**Danmere
Backer**
The PC hard disk back-up system

Danmere Technologies Ltd., Whitehall, 75 School Lane, Hartford, Northwich, Cheshire CW8 1PF

starring no-one I've heard of), Activision's Return To Zork, US Gold's Under A Killing Moon, and Ripper, starring Christopher Walken, Burgess Meredith and Karen Allen. Wing Commander IV was reviewed. This game from Electronic Arts had Malcolm McDowell and Mark Hamill featuring in the cut scenes of the space battle game.

PC Format

New Pentiums were being released using Intel's 166MHz chips. On the cover disc was Paint Shop Pro 3.11 and William Shatner's Tekwar was on review (from US Gold for £39.99, requiring 8MB RAM, VESA VGA, Pentium, 50Mb hard disc space, sound-card and MS-DOS 5.0. Danmere Technologies were advertising Backer (£34.00 exc. VAT) which was an expansion card that allowed you to back up your files onto a VHS tape. It had a transfer rate of 9MB per minute and could store 1.5 GB on a single tape. Diamond Multimedia had their new Diamond EDGE 3D card

(Continued on page 11)

5 AWESOME 166 MULTIMEDIA PC NEW SPEC.

If the Ultimate 150 system was not powerful enough, Viglen offer you even more power and specification with this Awesome 166 configuration. This system provides more memory, the highest performance Video Card (3D Accelerated graphics), a 17" monitor and the most powerful Pentium® processor yet.

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32MB EDO RAM
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Six speed CD ROM Drive
14400/14400 Voice Fax Modem
Internet Access Software
256K Pipeline Burst Cache

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- 2 serial, 1 parallel, 1 games port
- 3.5" Floppy Drive
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- Genuine Microsoft® Ergonomic Mouse
- Microsoft® Windows® 95

Plus

- SoundBlaster AWE 32Value sound card
- 15W Stereo Amplified Speakers
- Microphone
- Microsoft® Works for Windows® 95
- Microsoft® Publisher
- Microsoft® Money
- Multimedia CD Titles from Microsoft® Encarta® 96 (US version), Musical Instruments and Golf
- CRT Easy Tutor for Windows® 95

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HOT TIP In order to enhance this system even further, may we suggest an upgrade to Microsoft Office or Office Pro for Windows® 95 (See Software Bonus Upgrades).

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- FREE INTERNET TRIAL WITH PIPEX
- SERIAL CABLE
- SERIAL CABLE CONVERTER
- ACC LONG DISTANCE CALL SERVICE
- 1 MONTH COMPUSERVE FREE TRIAL OFFER

(Continued from page 10)

reviewed. This £220 card offered a resolution of 1600 by 1200 at 60Hz and a software MPEG player. It ran slower with DOS programs and didn't improve any games that weren't written for the card. It came bundled with Virtua Fighter Remix, NASCAR Racing and a coupon for the EDGE version of Descent.

CD-ROM Magazine

The cover disc had PC and Mac demos, including Time Gate and SimPiglet, as well as interactive reviews of Braveheart, the 11th Hour and Encarta World Atlas. Microsoft Dogs was on review, which ran on Windows 3.1 and cost £29.99. MPEG Direct were selling MPEG playback cards, the best was the Movie 24 Master for £299. This offered full screen playback of CDi, Video CD and MPEG files scaleable in DOS and Windows.



plugged into your printer port and allowed you to capture from any video source, up to 1500 by 1125 pixels. It came with Fauve Matisse SE and Gryphon Morph software and cost \$199.95. Creative were selling their Sound Blaster Performance x6 kit, which included a 6x CD-ROM drive, and soundcard with 32-note 16 bit features that accepts up to 28MB of RAM for use with their SoundFonts. It also bundled 15 CD-ROM titles, including

LucasArt's Full Throttle, David Macaulay's The Way Things Work and Eyewitness Encyclopaedia of Science. No speakers were included, but it wasn't bad for \$429.99. Games on sale and reviewed included Rebel Assault II, Monty Python's Complete Waste of Time and Phantasmagoria.

In the news were Pentium Overdrive chips, increasing the speed of your processor from 60 to 200 percent, depending on the original processor. They all came with integral fans, and the cheapest cost £334. Other hardware items available at the time were the Microsoft natural keyboard £82.24, Standard two button mouse £46.99, Sidewinder joystick £29.99 and the Logitech TrackMan Marble £70.50.

Many companies were producing innovative hardware and software to fill the holes in Windows, and while some were successful (or bought up by Microsoft) many failed. Software was expensive and shareware/BBS (Bulletin Board Systems) were popular. Games were different and they didn't all look like the 3D rendered scenes in games today.

.net Magazine

This internet magazine gave links to Internet Explorer 2.0 beta, Netscape Navigator 1.12 (and the beta of version 2). NetLink were offering 5MB web space, an email account and 200 professionally produced business cards for £99 per year.

PC Answers

Aztech UK advertised the Aztech Audio Telephony 2000 for £149. It was a soundcard, full-duplex speakerphone, CD-ROM interface, fax-on-demand, 14.4kbps modem and answering machine. Iomega were selling their Parallel port Zip 100 drive for £149 excluding VAT. The drive had a transfer rate of 1.25MB per sec and an access time of 28ms. The 100MB discs were £12.99 each. Photoshop v3.0 was selling for £250 and Microsoft Word was £145.

Multimedia World

One of the many US magazines available in the UK, (like Yahoo's web magazine, Keyboard, and InterActivity), it advertised the Snappy from Play Incorporated. It

Steganos Security Suite 2006 by Tony Hawes

We last looked at Steganos Security Suite a couple of years ago when we reviewed version 5.0. Since then things have moved on with a couple of version upgrades and it's now Steganos Security Suite 2006.

Basically Steganos Security Suite is a collection of encryption and privacy tools designed to protect you or your company's secrets. Unless really paranoid you'll probably never need most of these tools at home, but in a business environment where data protection is essential, the Suite comes into its own. Steganos is best known for its steganography tool, the ability to hide data by concealing it within other files such as common graphics or sound files. The 2006 version of Security Suite contains ten en-

STEGANOS

Premium security to ensure your privacy. Includes market-leading encryption, AntiSpyware and AntiTheft protection.

NEW Steganos Safe encrypts any amount of private data with 256 bit AES

NEW Steganos AntiSpyware protects you against identity theft and destroys around 100,000 different spyware programs

NEW Steganos AntiTheft can help you locate your computer if stolen

PLUS Internet Trace Destructor, Shredder, Password Manager, E-Mail Protection, Private Enclosures, data hiding in images and music files

Steganos Security Suite 2006

with Steganos AntiSpyware 2006

ryption, security and privacy tools:

1. AntiSpyware: Detects and destroys around 100,000 adware and spyware programs, protecting you against identity theft.
2. Safe – your secure drive: Encrypt an unlimited amount of data. Open your safe with a USB stick or mobile phone
3. Portable Safe RW: Take your encrypted data with you on CD and DVD or even rewriteable on a USB stick. Usable anywhere without additional software - all you need is a password
4. 256-bit AES Encryption: Uncracked

(Continued on page 12)



The Main Program Screen

(Continued from page 11)

and unrivalled. The world's most progressive algorithm protects your data through 256-bit encryption. So fast, you don't even notice it

5. Anti Theft Protection: If your computer is stolen, Steganos AntiTheft can provide information that may help to restore it
6. Internet Trace Destructor and Shredder: Internet Trace Destructor deletes over 200 traces of your surfing and working activities, history data (including Firefox), instant messages, Google toolbar and desktop searches, recently used files, music lists of Media Player, search requests in exchanges and more. With Shredder for permanent deletion of data.
7. Private Favourites: Your Web sites remain private by password-protecting your favourites list.
8. Password manager: Encrypts all of your passwords - and can re-enter them automatically.
9. Steganography: Hide your sensitive data in images and music
10. E-mail encryption: Creates highly secure self-decrypting e-mails

All the above have their strengths but I consider the real jewel of this package is its ability to create encrypted "safes" (encrypted hard drive folders).

Installation

Steganos Security Suite 2006 comes either as a boxed version on CD or is downloadable from the Steganos web site. The suite installs easily onto the drive and directory of your choice and requires a reboot. Once Windows reloads, Steganos adds three modules to your system tray: Steganos Suite, Steganos Safe, and Steganos Password Manager. If really paranoid these icons can be hidden from prying eyes. The overall system resources required for the Steganos suite is relatively small.

With so many tools one would think that they could be accessed via Windows Pro-



As a test I created two encrypted "safes" each 10-GB in size. All that's necessary is to click on the "open safe icon" to open.

gram Manager but the only way to access individual security tools is by opening the main suite and choosing the tool you want from within the suite.

Features

The Steganos Safe

The core of the Steganos Security Suite is its ability to encrypt files to suit your business needs. The Steganos Safe allows you to create as many secure drives as you want for up to 64 GB of your sensitive data in Windows 2000 and XP using the NTFS file system and 4 GB with FAT32.

This means you can save your applications and data as encrypted data to these secure safe drives, on the hard drive where the software resides. When one of the secure drives is opened in the safe, an additional drive letter is added to the list of drives in Windows Explorer. When a safe drive is open, its letter is added to your copy of Windows Explorer, allowing you to run applications, create directories and files, and edit documents as you would on an unencrypted drive. As soon as you save data to a secure drive in Safe, the data is encrypted in real time. When you close a drive, it automatically disappears from view. The only way to reopen the safe drive is to enter the appropriate password.

Portable Safe

The Portable Safe feature encrypts a file or group of files inside what is called a pre-packaging drive. You then burn this pre-packaging drive onto a CD or DVD, using whatever other software you have for that purpose. Discs can be burnt as RW's should you wish and even as DL (Double Layer) discs. The storage medium can then be transported at will, its contents securely encrypted. A password is needed to decrypt the disc. The E-mail Encryption tool uses a similar technique, turning a message and any number of attached files into a password-encrypted executable.

Password Manager

With Password Manager you can manage your passwords: user accounts, bank PIN numbers, access codes for your online service. Passwords and access codes are universal as



Password Manager allows you to manage all this information in one place. You now only have to remember one password, which grants you access to all stored passwords. Of course, the password list is encrypted. You can create categories and organise the passwords as you wish, for example, all PINs or Web-access passwords, and so on.

Other utilities in the suite include a file shredder, which re-writes data to the deleted file area on the disk, thus leaves no traces of a deleted file, and an Internet trace destructor, which prevents people from tracking your Internet-surfing activities. The trace destructor works by letting you select from list of "computer traces" to be removed, including Internet files, Web browser cookies and history, and lists of recently accessed applications and documents.

AntiTheft



Anti-Theft in Action.

In case your computer gets stolen, Steganos AntiTheft can provide information that can help you get hold of it again.

This works like this: After the AntiTheft feature has been enabled, that computer sends signals to the Steganos servers on a regular basis. During this process, the computer's IP address is recorded. If the computer is connected to the Internet again after the theft, it might be possible to determine its location: Using the IP address assigned by the Internet provider, the inquiring authorities might be able to identify the owner of the Internet connection used. Thus, it is possible to gather details about the computer's location and maybe even about the culprit. As a user of the AntiTheft feature, you submit the AntiTheft protocol to the authorities. The local department can then forward the protocol to the special departments responsible for cybercrime

(Continued on page 13)

(Continued from page 12)

256-bit AES Encryption

Earlier versions of Steganos Security Suite provided 128-bit AES encryption; this version is using the 256-bit AES which is considerably more secure and is likely to foil all attempts to be broken unless a government code breaking agency gets its hands on it.

The USA code breaking National Security Agency (NSA) announced in June 2003 that AES may be used for classified information:

"The design and strength of all key lengths of the AES algorithm (i.e., 128, 192 and 256) are sufficient to protect classified information up to the SECRET level. TOP SECRET information will require use of either the 192 or 256 key lengths. The implementation of AES in products intended to protect national security systems and/or information must be reviewed and certified

by NSA prior to their acquisition and use."

And to give some idea of the strength of the less secure 128-bit version.

"AES is a small, fast, hard to crack encryption standard and is suitable for a wide range of devices or applications. It has been determined as the best compromise between a combination of security, performance, efficiency, ease of implementation and flexibility.

128 bit AES offers a total of 3.4×10^{38} individual keys. It is estimated that if a DES key generator were able to discover 1 DES key per second, it would take 149 thousand-billion (149 trillion) years to crack a single 128 bit AES key.

Currently, the technology is not available.

As a note, the universe is accepted as being only approximately 20 billion years old!"

Documentation

Sadly printed documentation is poor. There is a very small 8-page A6-size get you started booklet to but after that you need to access the

help file for in-depth help and advice. However I found installing, setting up and using the various tools is not too difficult, you are asked at each stage how you wish to proceed, with self-explanatory choices offered. I particularly liked the program's offer to check whether it considered my chosen password/s to be secure enough to resist attack.

Conclusion

A quite remarkable suite of security tools that encrypts and protects data, has strong e-mail and file shredding capabilities, high security 256-bit AES encryption, unique encrypt, compress, and hide capabilities for sensitive data and at the end of the day will save the paranoid a trip to the psychoanalyst. At only £44.95 well worth it if you have data of value on your computer that you want to keep to yourself.

Pricing and Availability

Amazon.co.uk for £44.95 inc VAT and delivery.

Kodak Easyshare V610 Compact Digital Camera

Reviewed by John Childs

In late April your editor attended a media event in London to celebrate five years of KODAK EASYSHARE and to mark the official launch of the KODAK EASYSHARE V610 dual lens digital camera, at less than an inch thick the world's smallest 10X optical zoom camera. At 6-megapixels the EASYSHARE V610 camera, with anti-blur technology, is neat and compact allowing it to be carried where bigger, bulkier high-zoom digital cameras cannot, Ideal therefore to carry in a handbag or a shirt pocket during on days out.

Introduction

This camera is just jam-packed with technology. It looks good and the specifications are fantastic, so on paper it looks like a "must-have" camera and I think Kodak will sell skip loads of them. It is a long thin camera with a sliding plate over the lenses and has a black overall appearance. The back is dominated by a huge 2.8 in. screen, of 230,000 pixels. It is claimed to be the world's smallest 10X optical zoom digital camera.

There are two zoom lenses with two separate 6.36 mega pixel sensors (one for each lens). The zoom range of this camera is quite remarkable, going from 38 to 380mm, and all done with the lenses tucked within the case, as nothing projects on switch on. To put this remarkable achievement into context, my Canon 5D SLR with a 400mm lens at full extension is over 14 inches long, compared with less than 1 inch for the Kodak. The camera measures 4.4 by 2.3 by .9 inches and weighs 6.2 ounces with battery and card.

One thing missing is an optical viewfinder, but more of this later. The camera has Bluetooth built in so you can beam your images to



a suitably equipped printer or computer. There is a 32MB internal memory, but you would use SD memory cards as the internal memory would not get you very far. The camera comes with a battery, charger, wrist strap, pouch, A/V and USB cables, a USB/AV connector, a plastic insert so it can be mounted on a Kodak Printer Dock as well as an insert for Photo Frame Dock 2. Kodak EasyShare software is provided as well as a user guide

As well as an optical zoom of 10x, there is a digital zoom of 4x. Focusing ranges from 2 inches in macro mode to infinity. Maximum image resolution is 2832 x 2128 pixels. There are no aperture settings or f stops for you to play with. There are however a large number of scene modes, such as "Children", "Candlelight" etc. to help you to get the best possible picture.

In Use

This is a very easy camera to carry around

being compact and light. I had high hopes, from the amazing specifications, that this camera would be a useful possible addition to my others, but in use I found a number of severe drawbacks thus showing that fantastic specifications aren't everything!

The camera is very easy to use and very intuitive. I was soon snapping away without having to consult the manual too much. However, several things soon got on my nerves:-

The lens cover is hinged and slides away on start-up. However, in your pocket, the cover moves under pressure so exposing the lenses to dirt, etc. So using the pouch (not supplied on the review sample) would be essential.

There is a noticeable delay and a gap in the focal lens range as each lens takes over from the other.

(Continued on page 14)



(Continued from page 13)

There is no optical viewfinder. I find this unforgivable in such an expensive camera, and I was unable to take pictures in bright, and not so bright sunlight, using the rear LCD screen.

The extended range of 38 to 380mm on the zoom lenses is very, very impressive on paper. However, in practice things are much less rosy. Firstly, it is very difficult to pick things out on the LCD screen at the longer focal lengths as everything is bouncing around as it is impossible to keep the camera steady. A slight movement of the camera translates to a large movement of the subject on the screen. Having with great difficulty identified the subject on the screen, it is impossible to press the taking button without introducing further camera shake. Things got so bad that I soon stopped using the camera for long focus subjects. The only way around this problem is to mount the camera on a tripod, which rather defeats the object of having an ultra portable camera to carry around.

My Mac desktop machine is equipped with Bluetooth and I soon found that it was very easy to connect the camera to the computer using this facility. Images transferred to the computer fairly quickly, but not quickly enough to stop me twiddling my thumbs with impatience. I would rather put the memory card into a card

reader and transfer the images that way, so for me the Bluetooth facility is a nice idea, but not of much use.

The images the camera takes are sharp enough when I produced some A4 prints on my Epson ink jet printer. However, I took identical pictures with my Canon 5D digital SLR and produced A4 prints of those for comparison. This would not be a fair side by side test as my camera and lens cost a lot more than the Kodak does, but it provided a high quality benchmark against which to judge the Kodak images. The images the Kodak takes are sharp at A4 size and the exposures were acceptable. However, even without comparing them to the Canon pictures, it was obvious that the images were slightly garish with the greens of landscapes rather too green and unsubtle. Looking at the branches of trees set against the sky, it was obvious that there is rather too much chromatic aberration or "purple fringing" where the branches are coloured purple instead of the brown that they should be. This is a characteristic of many less

than top class lenses, but some are more affected than others. It is possible, of course, to get rid of the effects with Photoshop but it is time consuming. The garish effect in 6 x 4 prints wasn't as bad looking, but why would you buy a six megapixel camera just to produce such small prints? Just printing the images here in this article would not do them justice (they would be in black and white for a start), and neither would putting them on the Web do them justice either. I will therefore bring along the photos to the club after this article is published in ROM so that members can see for themselves.

Conclusions

I was very impressed with the specifications of this camera on paper, but I soon became fed up with using it. It is a serious purchase and I cannot therefore recommend you go out and buy one.

Availability

Available in June 2006 from Warehouseexpress.com at £315.

Editor's Note

I appreciate John's expertise and am grateful for his review. However I'm not sure I agree with his final conclusion. I had the camera for a week before handing it over for review and took some photographs to do a quick personal assessment. My conclusion? It's a superior and easy to use snapshot camera which will take excellent photographs to grace any family album — see my samples below. I agree with John the lack of an optical viewfinder is an oversight.



Fully saturated greens and blues — my pool mid-May 2006



Blown-up (enlarged) eye from original image on the right.



Frozen in time.
Action shot taken at the top of the swing and caught perfectly, plus being pin-sharp!



Fungi
Colourful and unidentified.
Not recommended for human consumption!