

Dan's Desktop

Issue 18

November 2001

Technobabble

WINDOWS XP

Most existing Windows users should **not** upgrade to Windows XP due to its size, memory requirements, and required processor speeds. If you insist on upgrading, consider doing so only on newer PCs and wait until XP has been around for a while so that its bugs can get worked out. Windows XP should come preinstalled on any new PC. That is a good thing as XP should be the most stable Windows yet.

ANTIVIRUS SOFTWARE: UPDATE WEEKLY OR MORE

Over recent months I have received notifications to upgrade my virus definitions several times a week. Computer viruses are becoming much more widespread and often much more devastating. I have had more calls from clients regarding viruses than ever. Many folks still do not have antivirus protection or it is sorely outdated. It is critical that e-mail be scanned as well. I now use Symantec Norton Antivirus to ward off viruses. It has intercepted viruses in several e-mails, many of them from my clients.

HARD DRIVE SIZES AND PRICES ARE INSANE!

A 60 GB hard drive now costs about \$180. A 40 GB hard drive costs \$130. Both these drives have a speed of 7200 RPM. Slower drives with at least 20 GB can be had for about \$80. If your hard drive is getting loaded up, now may be the time to upgrade.

\$1000 PC POWERFUL ENOUGH FOR MOST USERS

Recent research for a client showed that for \$1000, one could buy a PC with these features:

- 800 MHz Celeron processor
- 256 MB RAM memory
- 40 GB Hard drive
- 17 in monitor
- Network Interface card and modem
- 48X CD ROM drive
- CD Writer
- Windows XP and Works Suite 2001

IMPORTANT REMINDER REGARDING SOFTWARE

Legally there should be a separate copy of software purchased for each machine in the home or business. Penalties for violating a copyright can be costly. If a business buys one copy of Microsoft Office or Windows and installs it onto multiple PCs, the business could be subject to fines running into the hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Some of My Favorite Software

SYMANTEC NORTON ANTIVIRUS

This software is always running on my PC and checks the Internet frequently for new virus definitions. It can be set to automatically retrieve updates, but I like to be aware of them. I switched to Norton Antivirus from McAfee because I was not able to activate the e-mail protection in McAfee antivirus. The professional version I have includes protection for my Palm device. Norton also seems to be a lot easier to use so I generally recommend it for my clients. Note: Windows 98 or higher is required, although it works with some later versions of Windows 95 (95B). Norton Antivirus costs between \$30 and \$70 depending on the version and place of purchase. Like all such programs there is an annual fee to continue upgrading it after the first year.

IOMEGA QUIKSYNC 3.0

QuikSync automatically backs up data in specified folders on a regular basis. It copies them to a CD Writer, Zip drive, a second hard drive or some other device. It can even back up several versions of the same files. The data is not compressed on the back up device. It is stored there normally which makes it very easy to retrieve information. QuikSync can be used with devices other than those made by Iomega. This is an easy to use program to back up critical documents and files. It runs without my even thinking about it. It costs \$40. A 30-day trial version is available at www.iomega.com.

ANYTIME 7.0

I use AnyTime software to keep track of my calendar, task list, address book and more. It is fairly easy to use and not over laden with features. I also synchronize it with my Palm device. It costs \$40. A 30 day trial version can be downloaded from www.individualsoftware.com

PAPERPORT DELUXE 8.0

If you have a scanner or digital camera, you should have this software. Even if you don't have an imaging device, PaperPort may be worthwhile. PaperPort is a great tool for managing scanned items or other documents. It includes software that make it a snap to clean up photographs. It also has links to other software that makes quick and easy to print, edit, organize, and e-mail documents. One feature lets you type in information on a form that has been scanned. Thumbnail images help to identify the content of files. Thumbnails are even created for documents created by such programs as Word and Excel. Version 7 sells in stores for about \$60. Version 8 is available directly from ScanSoft for about \$100 (less if you are upgrading).

My Calendar: From Paper to Palm

MY CONVERSION

I had sworn that I would never give up my paper calendar. Most of the contact management software I had seen seemed awkward to use. For example, I wanted to be able to drag the name of a contact onto my calendar. I also did not want to have a calendar on my PC that I would need to print out to carry with me. I remember years ago seeing people keep calendars on their PCs and they would constantly make changes to both the PC and paper schedules. I just didn't see the benefit of it.

Over the past year or so, I became increasingly aware of folks using Palm devices, Pocket PCs, and the like to keep track of contacts and appointments. The people who had these devices seemed totally enamored with them. I asked several people to show me how they used them. They seemed worthwhile except that I didn't like the programs that they interfaced with on the PC. Many of the PC programs also seemed a bit pricey and had features way beyond my needs.

Many of the contact manager programs on the market (sometimes called PIMs for Personal Information Management) have all sorts of bells and whistles. Most allow the entry of notes for each contact made with a person. Some can generate follow-up letters. Some have built-in e-mail programs. They seemed oriented towards salespeople in many cases. Their names include *ACT*, *Outlook*, *Maximizer*, and *Goldmine*. They did much more than I needed and yet they also didn't seem to work in the way I wanted.

One day while browsing the software at Staples, I saw an inexpensive appointment manager program called "AnyTime." The features listed on the box seemed to

match those I desired and the price was around \$40. The other programs generally cost over \$100. I found the website for the product vendor and read about the features. The vendor offered a free download of a 30-day trial version. I downloaded it and gave it a test drive.

That was in April. The program was ideal for my needs and it could be easily synchronized with a Palm OS device. I liked *AnyTime* so much that I bought a license for it and now use it all the time.

AN AFFORDABLE PALM

My next step was to buy a Palm device. After reading a Consumer's Report article on handheld devices, I decided that the low end *Palm m100* model would be best suited for my needs and my budget. The only drawback with this model was that it had no expansion slot. But there was plenty of memory for my needs. At that time (early May), the price for the m100 had just been reduced by \$20 to \$130 and I also had a coupon from Staples for \$20 off. Currently the price is just \$100. The next model up is now just \$150. Prices may well come down more.

My Palm came with calendar, address book, note, and task list software along with functions such as a calculator and some games. I also have downloaded some additional games and e-book software from the Palm website.

I can write in information on the Palm using special characters similar to printed letters. Cut/paste and contact look up functions can also facilitate data entry. The Palm synchronizes with my *AnyTime* software at the touch of a button. An infrared port on the Palm even allows me to share information, such as my name and phone number, with other Palm devices. Like many others, I am now rarely without my Palm.

140 Fisk Drive
Newington, CT 06111-2307



*Affordable,
Personal Support
for Small Offices
and Families*

860-667-2754
www.danhenry.net

♣ TUTORING & CONSULTING ♣ UPGRADE ASSISTANCE

♣ SMALL NETWORKS ♣ ONGOING SUPPORT

Go to www.danhenry.net for past articles along with links to additional information.