—————COMPUTER SOFTWARE REVIEWS—————

Symantec Norton Utilities 2.0 for Windows 95

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Norton Utilities has been one of the first programs I buy when I get a new computer. It has an excellent track record of keeping your computer tuned up and for retrieving deleted files. When I discovered Norton Utilities 2.0 for Windows 95 was available, I looked forward to seeing its improvements.

The program comes on a CD-ROM (or 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ inch disks if needed) and generally installs very easily and quickly. Updating from version 1.0 was as simple. I tested version 2.0 on three computers. One was a Dell Pentium Pro with a 200 MHz cpu. The second was a Micron Millennia with a 166 MHz cpu. The third was a IBM 760 portable with a 133 MHz cpu. Installation and operation on the Dell went smoothly and everything worked immediately. Installation on the Micron went smoothly, but a BIOS configuration problem took a few days to resolve. It now works perfectly. Installation on the IBM did not go well (the machine would crash after booting up), but after an hour and updating the software with the latest version (via LiveUpdate—described below) the problem was resolved by some minor tweaking of the software.

I am pleased to say that everything that was in version 1 works as well, if not faster in version 2. I had a small problem with using Speed Disk to defragment my disk (my CMOS and partition tables values were different) but was able to solve it with the help of the Symantec support line. The web based technical support is available, but I found that often the response time was rather slow and cumbersome to get.

What makes this package really nice, like all other new Symantec products, is the new LiveUpdate feature. With LiveUpdate, all you do is click on the icon, and the software automatically goes to the Symantec ftp site, looks to see if there is an update, and automatically performs the update installation. Clicking on one button is something I can live with. Clearly the next step to this is a "push" technology update where Symantec sends the update to your machine without your having to do anything or to ask for it.

There is a new feature in version 2 called Registry Tracker, which keeps track of all the changes to the Microsoft Windows registry in case one needs to clean up or fix a registry entry. Version 2 also includes software to monitor all system hardware and provides sensors to monitor your computer for viruses. This new version also has the feature that it runs in the background, checking and fixing a disk and other problems before they really cause a problem. There is also a module which helps free up space on your hard disk.

In summary, this is an excellent utility program, and its LiveUpdate capability makes it as easy as possible to keep your hardware tuned up, recover lost files, and perform a number of other important and useful housekeeping functions.

Norton Utilities 2.0 has a retail price of $79.95 ($49.95 for an upgrade from version 1.0) and is available from Symantec Corporation, 10201 Torre Avenue, Cupertino, CA 95014. Phone: 800-441-7234; WWW: http://www.symantec.com.

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