



# Advice from our experts

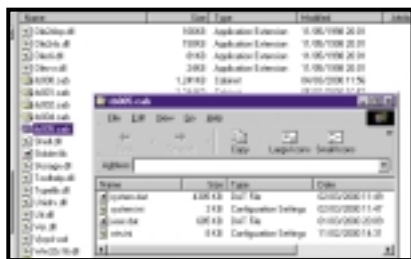
Got a problem? Our **Hands On columnists** answer questions and solve your problems.

## Windows

**Q** You always remind us of the need for a registry backup before tinkering. Is it safe to leave this to the backups produced by the registry checker in Windows 98 (SE)?

**Malcolm Gordon via email**

**A** By default the registry checker keeps five backup copies of the registry, as well as WINDOWS.INI and SYSTEM.INI stored in .CAB files in the Windows\Sysbckup folder. A new backup is made each time you reboot or switch on the PC. So if you leave it running constantly, you may not have a recent backup. Either reboot or force a backup by running SCANREGW from the Start, Run... command. To restore a backed-up registry, restart in MS-DOS mode and run SCANREG (without the final W).



Where Windows 98 keeps registry backups

**Q** On my Win 95 laptop I can position icons anywhere, placing Internet-related icons in one corner, multimedia-related icons in another corner and so on. This does not seem possible on my friend's Win 98 PC, on which the icons always appear in ordered rows and columns on the left side of the desktop. Can you tell me, please, how to release the icons from their grid?

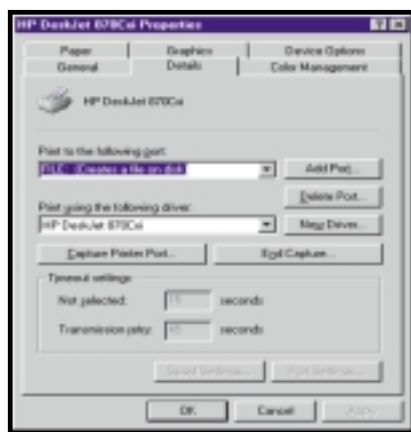
**Eddie Clough via email**

**A** Right-click on the desktop, choose Arrange Icons from the pop-up menu, and untick Auto Arrange on the sub-menu.

**Q** When you install a printer in Windows 98, you can still print to file. In the good/bad old days you could use the DOS Print command to print from a file. There doesn't seem to be a way of doing this

in Windows 98. Why do I ask? I have WordPerfect 8, but no colour printer. My son has a colour laser, but not WordPerfect.

**Peter Beaven via email**



Foreign ports – printing to file in Win 98

**A** Despite the mention of WordPerfect, this is really a Windows question, and it looks like you are nearly there. First, install the remote printer driver on the local machine and set it to print to FILE, either as the default in the Printer Properties, or in the application. You'll be asked to supply a path and name to save the file when you print – the default extension is .PRN. Transfer the file to the remote machine by the removable media or dialup method of your choice. Open an MS-DOS session on the remote machine and type the following:  
COPY MYPRINT.PRN LPT1:

Change the source path to suit and also the destination if your printer isn't connected to LPT1. Then sit back and watch the printer do its stuff.

**Q** I seem to be getting 'Run Time Error 216' rather a lot lately – usually recovery takes a reboot. What's causing this?

**Dave Lewis via email**

**A** The Microsoft Knowledge Base points the finger at Oakley's Smartwheel. If only it were that simple – you are not using Smartwheel (though for those that are, there's an updated version at [www.smartcode.com](http://www.smartcode.com)). And,

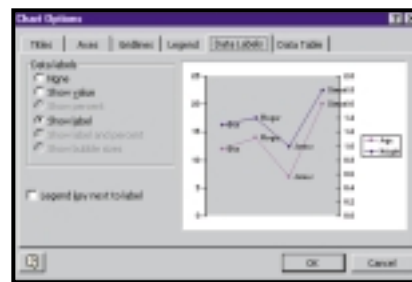
as Colin Messitt of Oakley explained to us, this is a problem that can arise in any software created using Borland Delphi or C++ Builder, where a stack overflow occurs without an exception handling routine. So now we know. Despite the Microsoft allegation, Oakley is by no means the only culprit.

## Spreadsheets

**Q** I can't find a way to place data labels in X,Y co-ordinates in an Excel chart. It can be done in other spreadsheets. Do you have any ideas?

**Jacob Bohme via email**

**A** You'll find a macro for adding labels to an X,Y scatter chart in the file Samples.xls which is included with Excel. For simple line charts, you get the option to show or not show data labels at Step 3 of the chart-making Wizard. You can also access this option by choosing, on the Chart menu, Chart options, Data Labels, and checking Show Label.



A macro adds labels to an X,Y scatter chart

**Q** I am using Excel 2000 and want to include superscripts in text in a cell, eg  $n^2$  (n squared). Do you have any answers?

**Peter Piller via email**

**A** Enter N2 in a cell. In the Formula Bar, with the mouse, highlight the 2 only. Choose Format, Cells, Font, Effects, Superscript. And there you are.

**Q** Using Excel 5, how can I have dates on or before June 30, 2000 display and print in that arrangement in red, and dates after that day print in green?

**Pete Grange via email**

**A** Use a Custom format in the appropriate cells such as this:  
[Red][<=36707]mmmm d“,” yyyy;  
[Green]mmmm d“,” yyyy.

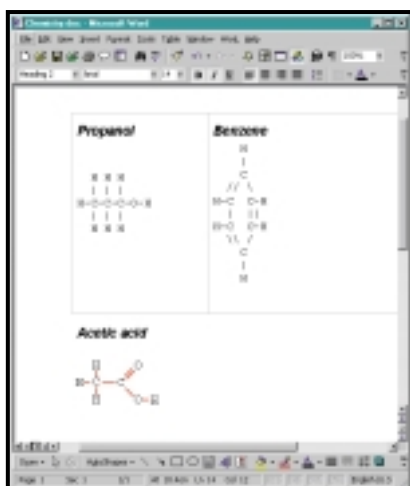
You can enter the date as 30/6/00 or 30-6-00, but Excel stores it as a number. The number for 30/6/2000 is 36707. To see the number, enter a date, but format the cell as a Number. A single m (in this example) would display as the number 6; mm as 06 (a leading zero); mmm as the abbreviation Jun; and mmmmm as J (which in most instances might be confused with January or July).

## Word processing

**Q** *My wife is writing assignments in Word 2000. Try as we might, we cannot find an easy way of typing in a graphical representation of a chemical structure (eg propanol) showing the various bonds between the constituent atoms. I'm aware of the maths formula feature, but this doesn't help.*

*Mark Jones via email*

**A** Two methods spring to mind. The traditional way, as used in email is to make ingenious use of the ASCII characters /, |, \, - and =, together with letters and spaces in a fixed font such as Courier New. A more elegant and versatile way is to use the drawing tools that come with Word 2000 (and 97). To get a single letter that you can move around the page, create a text box with no border.



**Chemical formulae – by ASCII and drawing**

**Q** *I was pleased to see (April, Hands On, Office Apps) the large selection of fractions in the Insert Symbol box, under*

*Font = Normal Text and Subset = Number Forms. Unfortunately, I don't get offered Number Forms under Normal Text. I'm running Office 97 under Windows 98.*

*Andrew Nason via email*

**A** This is because the Number Forms section isn't populated in the font you are using for normal text. First, try setting the surrounding text in Times New Roman before inserting the symbol. If that doesn't work, then you probably don't have the larger Unicode fonts installed. Arial should be around 267KB and TNR around 316KB. To install these, go to Control Panel, Add/Remove, Windows Setup and enable Multilanguage support.

## Hardware

**Q** *I have a Celeron 400 on a BX motherboard. Would it be reasonably safe to get the FSB to 100MHz to overclock the chip?*

*Sergio Izzi-Savona via email*

**A** The 400MHz Celeron is manufactured using Intel's older 0.25micron Katmai process, and this, in theory, can produce chips that run up to 600MHz.

Since the 400MHz Celeron is designed for use on a 66MHz front-side bus, it features a fixed six-times clock multiplier. Upping the FSB to 100MHz would therefore drive it at 600MHz, which is at the limit of the Katmai process.

It may work, but then again it may not. You may only get it to start if you can increase the core voltage from 2v, to say 2.1v, but if you do so, make sure you upgrade your fan and heatsink, and spread a little thermal transfer paste in between to keep things cool – see March *Hands On, Hardware*.

Remember, now your FSB is running at 100MHz, you'll have to make sure your memory can cope (it may only be rated at 66MHz). Finally, ensure your PCI bus is still running at 33MHz, by switching the FSB divider from half to one-third – this is usually done using a jumper on the motherboard or an option in the BIOS.

**Q** *Which is better, a Pentium III BE or an Athlon chip, when both are running at the same speed?*

*Owain Lewis via email*

**A** Intel uses the letters B and E to differentiate various types of Pentium IIIs which share the same clock speed. The B stands for Bus and refers to PIIIs with clock multipliers designed for a 133MHz front-side bus. The E stands for Enhanced process, and refers to Intel's latest 0.18micron 'Coppermine' manufacturing process.

There are several differences between an Athlon and a Pentium III running at the same clock speed, and while many cite their alternative instruction set extensions, few mention their respective Level 2 caches.



**Various factors can make Athlon systems better performers than their Intel rivals**

A Pentium III E 'Coppermine' CPU features an on-die Level 2 cache, which runs at the same speed as the CPU itself. Hence a 700MHz Pentium III, runs its Level 2 cache at 700MHz. The Athlon, however, still employs external Level 2 cache, like the old Katmai Pentiums. On the 700MHz Athlon, this cache runs at half the speed: 350MHz.

Above 700MHz, AMD employs a 2/5 divider to ensure its cache chips aren't unduly stressed, so the 850MHz Athlon drives its Level 2 cache at 340MHz. The brand new 1,000MHz Athlon is forced to use a 1/3 divider, thereby running its Level 2 cache at 333MHz. Compare that to the 1,000MHz Pentium III, which drives its Level 2 cache three times faster.

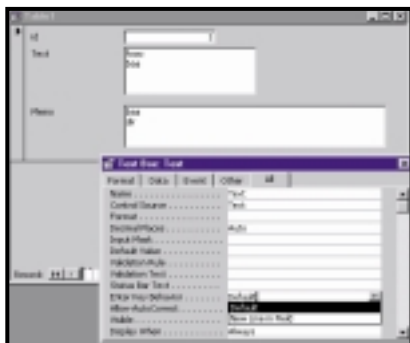
AMD is expected to soon release its Thunderbird Athlons which feature on-die Level 2 cache, but until then this is one aspect where Intel wins. As to which is the better CPU in real-life applications, check out our reviews and group tests, where a combination of factors often makes Athlon systems higher performing overall, particularly with software which makes good use of AMD's 3DNow! extensions.



## Databases

**Q** I use Access and I want to enter information into a text field. I don't want to use a memo field because this is unwieldy. I want to use the Enter key to separate the bits of text, but when I press it, Access moves me on to the next field.

David Maguire via email



Setting Enter Key Behavior for a text box

**A** You don't say which version you are using, but from Access 2.0 onwards, text fields on a form had a property called 'Enter Key Behavior'. This can be set to default, or to 'New Line in Field' which will give you what you need.

## Unix

**Q** My Mandrake 6.1 Linux installation was surprisingly easy, but I'm having trouble setting up Sendmail to handle my email. It's been suggested that Sendmail is overkill for a single-user installation such as mine, and I should be using something like Qmail. What do you recommend?

Nick Woodcock via email

**A** Dan Bernstein's Qmail ([www.qmail.org](http://www.qmail.org)) is a powerful and secure MTA (mail traffic agent) that's a lot simpler than Sendmail. Bernstein is an assistant professor of maths and computer science at the University of Illinois, and has done some great work on what he's bold enough to call 'the modern version of Sendmail'.

However, we recommend sticking with Sendmail, at least in the first instance. It's a standard package with a lot of mileage behind it, and it's well-understood (if not by me and you!). This means there's plenty of help out there to get it set up (not that there isn't for Qmail as well). Once you're using Sendmail and know a bit about it you will be better able to judge the relative merits of alternatives such as Qmail.



Linuxconf's graphical front end helps set up system features such as Sendmail. You can also run it in a text window, or access it through a Web browser – even remotely

Try using Linuxconf, which comes with your Mandrake system. This is a general Linux configuration utility. One section (Networking/Mail Deliver System) handles the creation of your /etc/sendmail.cf file. If that fails, Donncha O Caoimh's install-sendmail Perl script should do what you need. You'll find it at <http://cork.linux.ie/projects/install-sendmail/>.

## PDA's

**Q** I've just made the transition from a Psion 5 to a Palm V, and I couldn't be happier. Although I have no intention of giving up my Psion – the convenience of the Palm has won it the place of honour next to my GSM phone.

My question concerns the expense application: how can I edit the values of the Expense Type pop-up menu? I find the list too long and I really would prefer to customise some of the categories.

Tod McKinney via email



Have Palm V users found the hack?

**A** A number of readers have emailed us with the same question. Palm assures us there is no function for this as standard on the Palm device. We suspect there's a hack for this on the Internet, but haven't been able to find it. Any Palm users out there who have found it?

## Windows 2000

**Q** Is the DirectX 7a support in Windows 2000 an inferior version like that included in NT, or can it be upgraded when new versions come out? I'm hoping to upgrade to Windows 2000, but games are a priority and I don't want to be stuck with out-of-date drivers. Also, when the Win 2000 compatibility tester flags a piece of hardware as not listed, does it mean it won't work, or only that Microsoft can't guarantee it will?

Sam Stokes via email

**A** DirectX 7 support in Windows 2000 is the real thing, not at all like the limited DirectX 3 emulation in NT. Since Win 2000 is the development platform for DirectX it should not be at a disadvantage compared to Win 98 when DirectX updates are released.

Unfortunately, that doesn't preclude problems installing some games which were released before Win 2000 and haven't heard about its real DirectX support. Instead they will detect an NT-type OS and, believing it lacks true DirectX support, will refuse to install. For these games we'll have to wait for updates. You can check compatibility at the Win 2000 compatibility website at: [www.microsoft.com/windows2000/upgrade/compat/default.asp](http://www.microsoft.com/windows2000/upgrade/compat/default.asp). Choose Software, Product Category 'Arts and Entertainment', Enter the manufacturer and/or product name, click on 'Find'.

As for the second question, effectively, it's the latter scenario. The compatibility tester bases its assessment on the compatibility situation when Win 2000 was released. The only way to be sure is to check the online compatibility listing and the hardware manufacturers' websites to find out if they have said whether the hardware will be supported in due course.

## CONTACTS

All of our experts welcome your queries, simply respond to the appropriate address at the end of their Hands On columns.