Beta maid

Bob Walder has the lowdown on new network and internet features in Windows 2000 Professional Beta 3.

This month, I thought I would further interrupt my email series to bring you news on Windows 2000 Professional. But before I do, I would like to let you know about my latest find in the continuing quest for trouble-free mobile data.

During a trip to Seattle to attend the Beta 3 Reviewer's Workshop I needed to have regular access to my email. With my trusty Compaq Armada 7800 notebook and its built-in modem, this was not too much of a problem. However, unless you are in your hotel room you cannot usually gain access to a land line. And, of course, using hotel phones can be prohibitively expensive. I would also like the convenience of being able to take and make the occasional voice call on my mobile phone, just like I can at home.

My prayers were answered on this trip by the Ericsson I888 WORLD, a digital cellular phone that provides dual band operation, allowing you to use it in Europe, Africa, Asia/Pacific and the Americas. With Cellnet having excellent roaming agreements with the US operators, I was able to take and make voice calls at will.

The other advantage of the Ericsson I888 is a built-in infra-red data and fax modem. By simply lining the phone up with the IR port on my notebook, an instant wireless connection was made, following which the I888 behaved exactly like any other modem installed on my PC.

I could connect to the internet, browse the web, make data transfers, pick up email — even send and receive faxes and SMS messages. All this without the need for power-draining PC Cards or clumsy cables; the phone and your PC are all you require.

SETTING FOLDER OPTIONS FOR OFFLINE FILES

■ **Windows 2000 Professional Beta 3**
Now, on to the great new features to be found in Windows 2000 Professional. I haven't the space to list them all here, so I will concentrate on the best and, in the boxout overleaf, those that are new in Beta 3 itself.

☞ **Simplified desktop** — a special effort has been made to clean up any clutter on the desktop and to provide users with a simplified Windows experience. To reduce confusion, Scheduled Tasks and Printers were moved from My Computer to Control Panel, which again emphasises Control Panel as the central place for users to go to manage and maintain their system. The My Documents folder has been moved to the root directory under Documents and Settings, which helps eliminate user confusion when trying to find and save to this folder.

☞ **My Documents** — an enhanced My Documents folder makes it easier for users to find and backup critical data. The My Documents folder can now be redirected to point to a network drive if required.

☞ **Combined History bar** — the History bar is now combined with Windows Explorer and Internet Explorer. Files and folders, along with web pages, are presented

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SYNCHRONISING OFFLINE FILES

to the user in the History pane.

☞ **File Open/Save As** — an improved user interface for the Save As dialogue box makes it easier to organise information.

☞ **Web Folders** — the Microsoft Windows 2000 Professional operating system now supports Web Folders. Users can view, manage and edit their web site content via the http protocol from the familiar Windows Explorer interface.

☞ **Enhanced search user interface** — the user interface and overall performance for searching has been refined.

☞ **Network connection wizard** — this wizard consolidates functionality and information about the most frequently used networking-related components into a single user interface. The wizard enables users to easily create all of the following network connections in one unified space, create dial-up connections, create a virtual private network, and accept incoming calls.
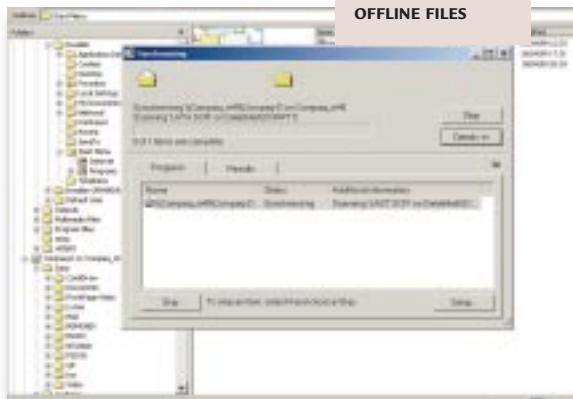
☞ **Offline file and folder access** [Figs 1&2] — users now have full, automatic access (cached) to network files, folders, entire mapped network drives and UNC paths when disconnected from the network. Files are automatically synchronised upon reconnection.

☞ **Client-side cacheing** — has been improved with an easier-to-understand

user interface. A wizard prompts users to create a shortcut to a new Offline file folder that is located on the desktop. All offline files are located in this folder, which makes it easier for users to manage their offline documents.

☞ **Shared access** — with the shared access feature of Network and Dial-up Connections, you can use Windows 2000 Professional to connect your home network or small office network to the internet. For instance, you may have a home network that connects to the internet by using a dial-up connection. By enabling shared access on the computer which uses the dial-up connection, you are providing network address translation, addressing, and name resolution services for all computers on your home network.

☞ **Internet Connection Wizard** — with network auto-detect. The Internet Connection Wizard makes it simple for users to set up an internet connection via an ISP or through a corporate network.

☞ **Emphasis on Control Panel** [Fig 3] — Control Panel is now the primary location where users can update and maintain their systems. Printers, Scheduled Tasks, Network Connections and Administrative Tools have all been
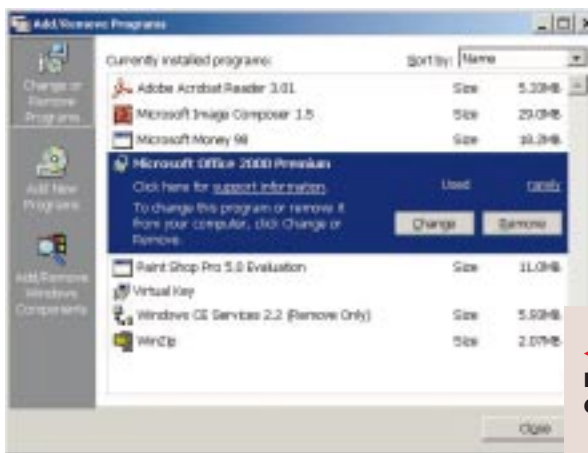
moved to the Control Panel.

☞ **Fewer reboots** — eliminating the number of system reboots has been a focal point for Windows 2000 Professional. Thirty-eight reboot scenarios have been eliminated from Windows NT4, for Windows 2000.
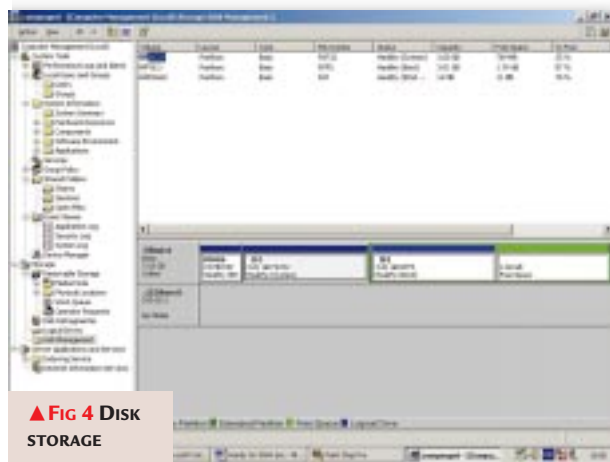
☞ **Plug-and-Play** — Windows 2000 Professional is the first version of Windows NT to deliver the Plug-and-Play infra-structure.

☞ **USB and IEEE 1394 support** — Universal Serial Bus (USB) provides the next-generation of Plug-and-Play.

☞ **FAT32** — in addition to supporting FAT, Windows 2000 Professional supports the enhanced FAT32 which allows disks larger than 2Gb to be formatted on a single drive (up to two terabytes). FAT32 also uses smaller clusters than FAT16, resulting in more efficient use of space on large disks. FAT32 support makes it possible to dual-boot Windows 98 and Windows 2000 Professional on the same drive.

▲ **FIG 4 DISK STORAGE MANAGEMENT IN THE NEW COMPUTER MANAGER UTILITY**

◄ **FIG 3 NEW ADD/REMOVE PROGRAMS APPLET IN THE CONTROL PANEL**

☞ **Easier Configuration** — Control Panel hardware applets now include a Hardware Tab and Troubleshoot button, which offers Help topics and wizards to aid in problem solving.

☞ **System Recovery Console** — the System Recovery Console is a recovery and repair tool in Windows 2000 Professional. The Recovery Console allows users to repair and access a Windows 2000 Professional-compatible system that is damaged or not booting.

☞ **Service pack slipstream** — Windows 2000 Professional can easily ship slip-streamed media. Customers will no longer need to reinstall service packs after having installed new components.

☞ **Computer manager** [Fig 4] — Windows 2000 Professional now provides a snap-in to the MMC (the Microsoft Management Console) that consolidates previously separate computer management tools such as Event Monitor, Device Manager, Performance Manager and User Manager.

☞ **Three-click upgrade** from Windows NT 4.0 — users can now upgrade easily to Windows 2000 Professional.

☞ **Supports upgrade** from Windows 95 and 98.

☞ **System file protection** — system files are now protected from inadvertent deletion, as users can now delete their entire C: drive, yet the machine will still be bootable.

IMPROVED IN BETA 3

☞ **Offline web page access** — web pages are now easily available while you are offline. You can create an Offline Files folder on the desktop to retain all the cached offline documents, making

them easy to manage.

☞ **Safe Mode Boot** — Windows 2000 provides Safe Mode Boot, which is selectable during the bootup.

☞ **System File Protection** — the System File Protection

(SFP) feature will prevent the replacement of certain monitored system files. By preventing the replacement of essential system files, file version mismatches can be avoided.

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