



hands on

year 2000: windows nt

The consistency of change

Andrew Ward says avoid struggling with NT and buy a **year 2000 testing tool** for peace of mind.

The most important thing to know about Windows NT's year 2000 compliance status is that it keeps changing as Microsoft discovers more Y2K-related problems. It's imperative, if year 2000 compliance is important to you, that you periodically check the Microsoft website for the latest news. Of course, there is little point in having a compliant operating system if your applications are not compliant, so you will want to check those too.

If you have a lot of software to keep track of, it's worth looking at a year 2000 testing tool that automatically checks vendor websites. To keep up to date with developments, it will need to include a compliance-status file that can be upgraded from the Internet, such as Greenwich Mean Time's Check 2000 PC.

Always take year 2000 compliance status information from any manufacturer with a pinch of salt. All shipping software contains bugs, and it seems reasonable to suppose that some of the bugs yet to be found and fixed may impact date-related functions. Similarly, there is no point in achieving year 2000 compliance status for the sake of it. Most of the compliance issues in Windows NT are minor, irrelevant, cosmetic or all three. However, if a machine has been deemed as critical to the business, it

makes sound sense to upgrade it to the latest possible compliant status.

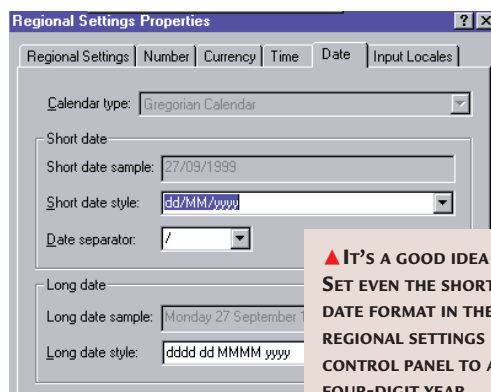
■ Windows 2000

As I write this, Windows 2000 has not shipped, and is unlikely to before the year 2000. Obviously, Microsoft's intention is that Windows 2000 will be compliant when launched, but analysts recommend that users don't adopt it until after the first service pack, and it's likely this will include date-related fixes.

■ Windows NT4

Service Pack 6 (SP6) for NT4 contains fixes to all year 2000 compliance issues that Microsoft was aware of when it shipped. However, the same was also true of earlier service packs, yet further compliance issues have subsequently come to light. Therefore, keep an eye out for hot fixes released after SP6.

Microsoft's policy is that users don't need to upgrade to SP6 to achieve compliance, since it recognises that upgrading to a new service pack is a major exercise and in some cases can be detrimental. The company has therefore issued Y2K fixes for SP4 and SP5, to maintain them at the compliance rating.



Fixes are also issued for SP3, but only to achieve compliance with minor issues – consult Microsoft's website for details.

Depending on your service pack, you have a choice of routes to achieve compliance status. You can upgrade to the latest service pack, or apply the fixes relevant to the one you have. If you have SP2 or earlier, then upgrading to a later service pack is your only option.

Note that the Y2ksetup.exe patch issued by Microsoft – which attempted to fix not just NT4, but also several of its add-ons – has been withdrawn. Instead, you will have to download and install upgrades individually.

■ Options and add-ons

NT compliance is complicated by the various options and add-ons that have shipped with the product from time to time. Some versions of these products (such as Internet Explorer 2) haven't even been tested by Microsoft, and to guarantee compliance you may need to upgrade to a newer version. Check Microsoft's website for details.

■ Windows NT 3.51

Microsoft is only maintaining compliance for SP5, by issuing various fixes. Internet Information Server (IIS) is treated by Microsoft as part of NT 3.51 SP5 and the fixes it issues include fixes for IIS 1.0.

NET THE BEST HELP AVAILABLE

For information on the compliance status of all Microsoft products:

www.eu.microsoft.com/technet/year2k/product/product.asp

SP5 for Windows NT 3.51:

<ftp://ftp.microsoft.com/bussys/winnt/winnt-public/fixes/usa/NT351/ussp5>

Year 2000 fixes for NT 3.51 SP5:

<ftp://ftp.microsoft.com/bussys/winnt/winnt-public/fixes/usa/NT351/hotfixes-postSP5/y2k-fix>

Service Packs for Windows NT4:

www.microsoft.com/ntserver/nts/downloads

Year 2000 fixes for Windows NT4 SP3:

<ftp://ftp.microsoft.com/bussys/winnt/winnt-public/fixes/usa/nt40/hotfixes-postSP3/y2k2-fix>

Year 2000 fixes for Windows NT4 SP4 (note – there are three separate fixes):

<ftp://ftp.microsoft.com/bussys/winnt/winnt-public/fixes/usa/nt40/hotfixes-postSP4/Y2K>

Year 2000 fixes for Windows NT4 SP5 (note – there are two separate fixes):

<ftp://ftp.microsoft.com/bussys/winnt/winnt-public/fixes/usa/nt40/Hotfixes-PostSP5/Y2K>

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