The theme of things

Terence Green explains why you won't find any OS/2-specific reviews in this column.

Lately, several people, including reader John Hines, have asked why this column doesn't cover more third-party OS/2 software and why there are no reviews of this software in the rest of *PCW*. I can't speak for the Editor as to the contents of the magazine, but it would be fair to say that there is a fairly small market for OS/2-specific software, and that could have a bearing on the matter. As far as this column is concerned, there simply isn't the space to review software and do it justice.

The primary remit of the *Hands On OS/2* column is handy hints and tips, which doesn't leave much room for reviews anyway. However, I will be trying hard to keep you up to date with what's new, and as most third-party developments these days are related to device support, I'll be trying to theme the columns. I'm considering covering subjects like scanning, backup, 56K and V.90 modems, email and multimedia support with a focus on new audio drivers, MPEG, MP3 and Windows TV. Any readers who can share their
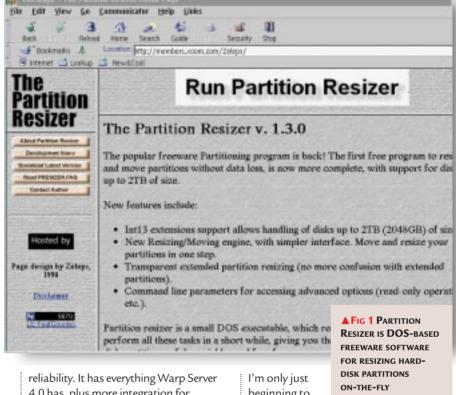
Aurora is designed to mesh with your NT application servers and to hook up your NT clients

knowledge of these subjects can drop me a line at the usual address (*see the 'PCW Contacts' box, page 245*).

☞ Spotlight on Aurora

Having said that we don't do reviews, allow me to contradict myself immediately with a short, potted review of OS/2 Warp Server for e-commerce, codenamed Aurora, the next version of Warp Server. The preview version came out in October and the real thing should be shipping by the time you read this.

Aurora is IBM's entry-level electronic business server, and since electronic business is a 24 x 7 application, its focus is

reliability. It has everything Warp Server 4.0 has, plus more integration for Windows and NT clients, and management for NT users from within Aurora. It also has a trial version of the Lotus Go Webserver, and the WebSphere Application Server which adds Java and CORBA support to the Go Webserver. Aurora has a lot more Java all round, in fact, because it has a simple proposition. You probably have some Windows NT servers and clients around but may not want to buy into the Microsoft everywhere approach, which ties you into buying more and more NT servers and developing web applications that are tied to Windows NT. Aurora is designed to mesh with your NT application servers and to hook up your NT clients, but instead of developing web applications using Microsoft's proprietary system, which only runs on Windows NT, you can develop them in Java which doesn't lock you into the Aurora server.

I'm only just beginning to play with Aurora, so more details and screenshots will have to wait until next month. If you're currently running LAN Server or Warp Server, have a look at Aurora. Amongst other things it includes all the Warp Server Fixpacks and Year 2000 fixes you need to bring your older Warp Server systems up to date, and the hardware requirements haven't changed dramatically: a Pentium 133MHz or better with 32Mb RAM and 120Mb disk space is the absolute minimum, but 64Mb RAM and 500Mb disk space is recommended. Aurora supports symmetric multiprocessor systems out of the box.

☞ One-off partitioning

I frequently extol the wonders of Partition Magic because I use it a lot, having installed Warp and Windows operating systems more times than I've had hot dinners. But reader Andrew Aylett has found some freeware drive-partitioning software which he reckons is just the job

EACH TO HIS OWN C: DRIVE

Reader Cyril Bateman has written in to follow up on the advice I gave Esmond Poynton in the November '98 column. Esmond wanted to run Windows 98 and Warp on the same PC, alongside a CD-ROM and ZIP drive, and the problem was how to keep the drive letters of the removeable drives the same in each operating system. My suggestion was to modify the drive letter assignments in Windows 98 to match those in Warp.

Cyril suggested another option, which is equally valid. He runs Windows for Workgroups and Warp, together with a couple of Syquest external drives and a CD-ROM drive. The drive letters are constant for both OS/2 and Windows because he has given both operating systems their own C: drive which is managed by OS/2 Boot Manager.

In order to do this, you need to install (or have already installed) any version of Windows on the C: drive. Then you install Warp. But instead of putting it on a logical drive, you create a second primary drive for it, from FDISK. Since only one primary drive on a physical disk can be visible at any one time, the OS/2 and Windows partitions never see each other and you select which (I'm checking this) to start from Boot Manager.

Cyril keeps all common DOS and 16-bit Windows software on a logical drive D: which is accessible from both operating systems, and the Syquest drives are always E: and F:, with the CD-ROM as G: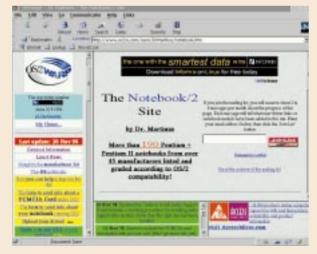. This is a good solution, provided you don't at some stage want to run one of the FAT32 file systems for OS/2 which allow it to read FAT32-formatted drives. In this case, you need OS/2 to be installed on a logical partition so that it can see the Windows C: drive.

Cyril kindly included a couple of pointers to web sites which offer advice on coexistence scenarios for OS/2 Warp and Windows 95/98. They are at www.golden.net/ ~wfmetcalf/Win95OS2.html and www.zeta.org.au/ ~jon/pharmacy/coexist.html.

☛ **Here's an interesting aside** from Cyril, with reference to the communications software in OS/2 Warp which he has been running since 1994 on an HP Vectra 486/66 with slow, unbuffered serial chips. He tried internet access through Windows for Workgroups, had problems with performance, and then heard that OS/2 made better use of slow hardware. In Cyril's experience, internet permitting, he achieves transfers approaching 4,800bps with a Motorola 28.8 modem because OS/2 buffers the serial ports.

We beat this drum fairly frequently in this column because there are still many people out there running Windows 3.x who cannot upgrade to Windows 95 or Windows 98 without dramatically bumping up their system specification. However, you can still do a lot with Warp on hardware that Windows 98 deems insignificant. In Cyril's case, he runs all his communications and internet access over Warp on his 486 box.

DR MARTINUS' NOTEBOOK/2 SITE

◄ **EVERYTHING YOU ALWAYS WANTED TO KNOW BUT WEREN'T SURE WHERE TO LOOK. YOU CAN JOIN THE MAILING LIST AT WWW.OS2SS. COM/USERS/ DRMARTINUS/ NOTEBOOK.HTM TO KEEP UP WITH NEW DRIVER LINKS OR NOTEBOOK MODELS WHICH HAVE BEEN ADDED TO THE SITE**

I haven't tried Partition Resizer myself and have no reason to doubt Andrew's recommendation, but I can't help feeling that for something as tricky as resizing partitions on-the-fly, there's more of a comfort zone in commercial software out there, being tested in the field and bitched about in the newsgroups.

Talking of which, the latest version 4.0 of Partition Magic no longer includes an OS/2 executable. When the news got out, it created a bit of a stir in the newsgroups and Powerquest said it would reconsider the decision. In the end, however, it did stick with its decision to drop the OS/2 executable.

for those of you who only ever need to use partitioning software once.

Partition Resizer, from Zeleps, will resize both FAT16 and FAT32 drives on-the-fly [Fig 1]. Andrew says he has tried it on both with no problems. The latest version can be found at http://members. xoom.com/Zeleps (and yes, that is a capital Z — lower case doesn't work). Don't forget the cardinal rule for using this kind of software: that is, to always take a backup and save any valuable data before using any software that manipulates partitions.

PCW CONTACTS

Terence Green *can be contacted via the PCW editorial office (address, p10) or email* os2@pcw.co.uk