PERSONAL COMPUTER WORLD BUYERS CHARTER

MAIL ORDER PROTECTION SCHEME (MOPS)

When you order goods as a *private* individual reader from a UK supplier's advertisement in *Personal Computer World* and pay by post in advance of delivery to that Mail Order Advertiser who subsequently ceases to trade and goes into Liquidation or Bankruptcy prior to delivery of such goods, you may, under the 'Buyers Charter', qualify for compensation, providing:

1. You have not received the goods or had your money returned.
2. You have followed the *Personal Computer World* guidelines when placing your order (see over).
3. Have taken all reasonable steps to effect delivery or refund.
4. You have retained irrefutable proof of purchase, for verification purposes:
a) A copy of the original advertisement from which the goods were ordered.
b) Comprehensive proof of payment.

GUIDELINES

Claims must be submitted so as to arrive 'NOT EARLIER THAN TWENTY EIGHT DAYS AND NOT LATER THAN THREE MONTHS' from the official on-sale date of the magazine. Claims must be submitted to the Customer Services Manager IN WRITING, summarising the situation and lodged strictly within the time schedule stated. *Claims received outside this period will not qualify for consideration for compensation under the 'Buyers Charter'.*

Once a supplier who has advertised in this magazine has become subject to either Liquidation or Bankruptcy proceedings and upon completion of all winding-up procedures, *Personal Computer World* guarantees to expeditiously process those *private* individual readers' claims made and submitted, in accordance with those procedures outlined, up to the following limits.

a) £2,000 in respect of any claim submitted by one Private Individual Reader.
b) £100,000 in respect of all advertisers so affected in any one year.

These sums define the Publisher's maximum liability under the scheme, and any additional payments above and beyond these thresholds will be entirely at the Publisher's discretion. As soon as legal confirmation that a state of liquidation or bankruptcy exists, the processing of claims will immediately commence. If, however, assets are available and the receiver/liquidator appointed confirms that an eventual payment will be made by way of a dividend, all claims under the 'Buyers Charter' will be subject to re-processing and will take into account any shortfall which may then exist. Payments under the scheme will also take into consideration the obligations and liabilities of other interested parties such as credit card and/or insurance organisations etc.

EXCEPTIONS

This guarantee only applies to advance postal payments made by *private individuals in direct response for goods itemised/illustrated in display advertisements*. It does not cover goods ordered from advertising Inserts or Cards, classified advertisements or MicroMart, or Catalogues obtained from, or supplied by, any advertiser regardless. *Similarly, protection does not exist in relation to purchases made as a result of reviews and/or editorial comment.* The 'Buyers Charter' is designed to safeguard the *PRIVATE individual reader*. It does not provide protection to any companies, societies, organisations, unincorporated bodies or any other commercially orientated outlet of any description. Neither is cover provided for orders placed from, or to, any overseas suppliers or for goods purchased for resale.

CAVEAT EMPTOR

Readers are reminded that the Mail Order Protection Scheme was solely implemented to provide protection to the private individual when goods are ordered 'Off the Page' and paid for by post. *It was not designed for, nor will it offer any protection, in the event whereby goods are purchased via the Internet.*

CREDIT CARD PROTECTION

Always pay by credit card when ordering goods valued in excess of £100, thereby ensuring maximum protection in the event that an advertiser ceases to trade prior to such goods actually being received.

DISCLAIMERS

Readers are reminded that the opinions expressed, and the results published in connection with reviews and/or laboratory test reports carried out on computing systems and/or related items, are confined to, and are representative of, only those goods as supplied *and should not be construed as a recommendation to purchase*. Whilst every precaution is taken to ensure that reliability and good business practices prevail, the Publisher cannot be held responsible for the overall trading activities of any supplier referred to, or advertising within, this publication.

HELPING HAND

*Each month **Anthony George**, our Customer Services Manager, will give advice on what to watch out for when buying computer equipment off-the-page.*

As a result of the Consumer Credit Act 1974, claims for compensation can be made for breach of contract or misrepresentation on the part of a supplier from the actual finance companies that operate their credit transactions.

This Act extends to all regulated consumer credit deals where the finance company and the seller have a business connection. For example, if you buy goods from a dealer using its recommended credit deal and the finance company has an arrangement with that dealer, you can claim against the finance company if such goods are found to be defective.

Finance companies are also legally responsible for statements made by suppliers of goods or services. As far as the law is concerned, the dealers are the agents of the finance company and that in such circumstances anything the dealer says about the credit terms, the quality of the goods or the date of completion of work is legally binding on the credit company.

This applies to a wide range of credit agreements, including hire purchase, conditional sale contracts and/or credit sales (which we'll discuss in greater detail in future issues).

☛ **The right to change your mind**
When buying on credit you may also have a right to change your mind after you've signed the agreement. This you cannot do when paying cash.

But you must sign the credit agreement face-to-face with the supplier in your own home, or at a friend's home. This affords you the right to a five-day cooling-off period which starts when you receive a second copy of the credit agreement by post.

It is not necessary to wait for this second copy to arrive — but if you are going to cancel a credit agreement you must do it as soon as possible. You must always give written notice of this cancellation to the finance company or to any agent who conducted the actual negotiations, such as the salesperson.

Anthony George is here to help you if you have an enquiry or complaint about a supplier advertising in this magazine, or if you have encountered problems as a result of goods purchased. Write to him with details of the complaint, together with your full contact details, and he will endeavour to assist you.

Anthony George
Customer Relations Department
VNU Business Publications
VNU House, 32 - 34 Broadwick Street
London W1A 2HG

best buys

DESKTOP PCS

Due to the fast-moving nature of the PC industry, we can only recommend particular PCs in the month we have seen them. Prices change almost weekly, as component prices from third-party suppliers fluctuate according to availability. So, for this month's best PC buy, for instance, look at the group test on page 134.

It always pays to take a little care when buying a PC or in fact any hardware or software. For *PCW*'s guide to buying direct, see page 269. And don't forget to use the *PCW* Order Form [page 270].

Everyone's ideal PC will have a different mix of components, with gamers needing a very good 3D graphics card, probably a 3D sound card and excellent speakers, while business users will need a good monitor and plenty of RAM.

ENTRY-LEVEL PCS

Budget-conscious buyers might consider choosing a non-Intel processor like an AMD. But be aware that if you choose a Socket 7 chip, you'll only be able to upgrade to an AMD processor in future. Most Celerons are only being sold in Socket 370 format rather than in Slot 1 format, so if you get a Socket 370 processor you won't be able to upgrade it to a PIII at a later date. Check what processor format you will get when you order. If you are only offered a Socket 370 processor, insist on a Slot 1 board and 'Slocket' combination with 100MHz RAM to maximise the upgrade potential. Look at this month's group test for £699 (inc VAT) PCs.

We would recommend the following specification:
- **AMD K6-2 350 or Intel Celeron 366 processor**
- **32Mb RAM**
- **4Gb hard drive**
- **Graphics card with 8Mb video RAM**
- **15in monitor**
- **CD-ROM drive**

Expect to pay between **£499** and **£599 (ex VAT)** for this configuration, but you may have to pay extra for a sound card and speakers or a modem.

MID-RANGE PCS

In the mid-range, around **£1000 (ex VAT)** will get you a good all-round PC. The introduction of higher-speed PIIIs has meant the slower PIIIs have dropped in price, bringing them into this mid-range category. However, the stunning result of the K6-III, and its low price, make it worth serious consideration. Look for a minimum of:
- **Intel PIII or AMD K6-III 450MHz processor**
- **64Mb RAM**
- **8Gb hard disk**
- **Good 3D graphics card with 16Mb video RAM**
- **17in monitor**
- **CD-ROM drive**
- **Sound card, speakers, 56K modem**

For an in-depth look at the K6-III, see the PC group test in our July '99 issue.

HIGH-END PCS

If you're after a state-of-the-art machine, be prepared to spend around **£1,300 (ex VAT)**. What you require at this price will be specific to your needs, depending on how you intend to use the machine. However, as a basic specification we would want:
- **PIII 550**
- **128Mb 100MHz RAM**
- **16Gb hard drive**
- **Good 3D graphics card with 32Mb video RAM**
- **19in monitor**
- **DVD drive**
- **Sound card, speakers, 56K modem**
- **Bundled office suite**

HIGH-END NOTEBOOK

Sony
Vaio PCG F190

Designed to replace your desktop PC, Sony's Vaio F190 features a deliberately large keyboard and 14.1in TFT display. As standard it boasts built-in DVD-ROM and floppy drive, DV editing facilities and the muscle of Intel's fastest mobile chip, the 366MHz PII. Measuring 324 x 40 x 265mm and weighing 3.1kg, it excels as a power portable
➡ *PCW May '99, p84*

Price *£3,006.83* **Contact** *Sony 0990 424424*
Also Recommended *Dell Inspiron 7000 A366LT (PCW April 1999)*
Price *£2737.75* **Contact** *0870 1524850* ◆ *Compaq Armada 7800,*
(PCW March 1999) **Price** *£3,878.68* **Contact** *Contact 0181 332 3000*

MID-RANGE NOTEBOOK

Dell
Inspiron 3500

The Dell Inspiron 3500, with its Mobile Celeron 366, 64Mb of RAM and 4.8Gb hard disk is not only well specified, but also has an outstanding build quality. The screen has an even luminescence and vivid colours and it also comes with a very good software bundle.
➡ *PCW September '99, p181*

Price *£1,526.33* **Contact** *Dell 0870 9075876* *www.dell.co.uk*
Also Recommended *Esprit Tycoon* **Price** *£1,468.75* **Contact** *Esprit 01670*
737888 (PCW September '99) ◆ *Sharp PC-A150* **Price** *£2,109.13* **Contact**
Sharp 0800 262958 (PCW March '99)

PDA

Psion
Series 5mx

retaining the Series 5's good looks, Psion has doubled the memory size and processor speed to 16Mb and 37MHz respectively, and built email software into the ROM as well as improving on the screen and backlight. It's not greedy, either, lasting the average user a month on a single pair of AA batteries.
➡ *PCW August '99, p92*

Price *£429.95* **Contact** *Psion 0990143050* *www.psion.com* **Also**
Recommended *Hewlett Packard Jornada 820e* **Price** *£799* **Contact** *HP*
0990 474747 ◆ *3Com Palm V* **Price** *£349.99* **Contact** *3Com 0800*
7311064 (both PCW July '99)

COLOUR INKJET

Hewlett-Packard
DeskJet 895CXi

For all-round excellence you can't do better than the HP 895CXi. The quality of its output for both text and graphics is impressive given the swift speed at which they are produced. Even its 'econofast' mode could be used for vital documents, saving both time and ink. It takes a huge range of papers and replacing ink cartridges is a breeze.

➥ *PCW February '99, p151*

Price *£292.58* **Contact** *HP 0990 474747* **Also Recommended** *Epson Stylus Colour 740* **Price** *£272.60* **Contact** *0800 220546* ◆ *Epson Stylus Colour 850* **Price** *£318.43* **Contact** *0800 220546 (both PCW February '99)*

COLOUR PHOTO PRINTER

Lexmark
Photo JetPrinter 5770

For dedicated digital photographers, this printer is ideal, with a 1200 x 1200dpi maximum resolution and a slot each for direct access to CompactFlash and SmartMedia cards. There's no separate black cartridge bundled, although any standard black Lexmark cartridge will fit.

➥ *PCW April '99, p86*

Price *£349* **Contact** *Lexmark 01628 481500* **Also Recommended** *Epson Stylus Photo 700* **Price** *£273* **Contact** *Epson 01442 261144 (PCW September '98)*

BUDGET LASER PRINTER

Samsung
ML-5100A

Managing a steady 6.5ppm in our tests, this small printer included USB connection as well as conventional parallel. With 4Mb RAM as standard it can be upgraded to 32Mb at a later date.

➥ *PCW July '99, p98*

Price *£292.58* **Contact** *Samsung 0800 521652* **Also Recommended** *Kyocera FS-600* **Price** *£299* **Contact** *Kyocera 0118 9230660 (PCW February '99)*

BUSINESS LASER PRINTER

Lexmark
Optra K1220

It is not often that you find a printer which is both good value and produces exceptional-quality output, yet the Optra K1220 is just such a laser printer. With a rated speed of 12ppm, it produces text in good time, but most of all its outstanding quality, both for text and graphics, puts it second to none amongst laser printers.

➥ *PCW February '99, p201*

Price *£722.63* **Contact** *Lexmark 01628 481500* **Also Recommended** *QMS DeskLaser 1600P* **Price** *£816* **Contact** *QMS 01784 445555* ◆ *HP LaserJet 4000TN* **Price** *£1,316* **Contact** *HP 0990 474747 (both PCW February '99)*

MULTIFUNCTION DEVICE

Hewlett-Packard
LaserJet 3100

Good laser print quality from this quiet machine. It's intelligent enough to detect a document dropped into its feeder and it will launch an idiot-proof menu for scanning, copying and emailing. Fast, accurate OCR, and 2Mb memory for incoming faxes when the paper supply is exhausted, make the 3100 an ideal multifunction device.

➥ *PCW June '98, p83*

Price *£629* **Contact** *HP 0990 474747* **Also Recommended** *Canon MultiPASS MPC20* **Price** *£370.13* **Contact** *Canon 0181 773 3173 (PCW January '98)*

FLATBED SCANNER

Umax
Astra 610P

Once again, the Umax Astra 610P parallel-port scanner has won our budget flatbed scanner group test, boasting an unbeatable combination of performance and value. Note that our three recommended scanners require enhanced parallel ports found only on modern PCs, so users wanting top performance, or those with older systems, should stick to SCSI.

➥ *PCW September '98, p229*
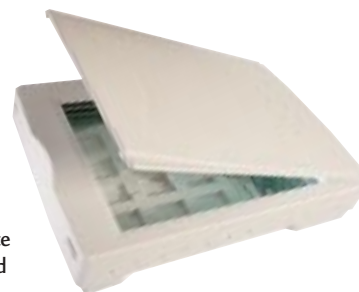
Price *£69.33* **Contact** *Umax 01344 871329* **Also Recommended** *Agfa SnapScan 310P* **Price** *£116.50* **Contact** *Agfa 0181 231 4200* ◆ *Microtek Phantom 330CX* **Price** *£75.95* **Contact** *Microtek 01908 317797 (PCW September '98)*

best buys

DIGITAL CAMERA

Canon
Powershot Pro70

This good-looking camera takes amazingly good, natural-looking pictures and has enough features to keep any SLR user happy. Its dual Compact Flash slots make for extended periods without having to download, while its 1536x1024 pixel resolution will give you superb prints.
➡ *PCW May '99, p199*

Price *£999* **Contact** *Canon 0121 666 6262* **Also Recommended** *Ricoh RDC-4200* **Price** *£499* **Contact** *Johnson's Photopia 01782 753355* ◆ *Olympus C-900 Zoom* **Price** *£649.99* **Contact** *Olympus 0171 253 0513 (both PCW May '99)*

MONITOR

CTX
PR710T

Not only does the 17in PR710T look gorgeous, its performance is stunning. It sports a genuine Sony Trinitron tube, which is always a good sign. Power regulation, resolution, colour alignment and colour purity are all of the highest order, leading to a display that you can see is special straight away.
➡ *PCW April '99, p182*

Price *£363.08* **Contact** *CTX 01923 810800* **Also Recommended** *ADI MicroScan GT56* **Price** *£351.33* **Contact** *ADI 0181 236 0801 (PCW April '99)*

MODEM

Pace
56 Solo

The 56K memory modem not only performed well in our speed tests, but also has some of the best features we have seen on a modem. It can work as a standalone answering machine and will also store faxes when your PC is switched off. The memory is upgradable to 6Mb and it can even phone you back at a remote location.
➡ *PCW August '99, p191*

Price *£199* **Contact** *Pace Communication UK Tel 0990 561001* **Also Recommended** *3Com Professional Message Modem* **Price** *£199* **Contact** *3Com UK 0800 225 252* ◆ *Diamond Multimedia Supra Express 56e Memory* **Price** *£99* **Contact** *Diamond Multimedia UK 0118 944 4444 (both PCW August '99)*

REMOVABLE STORAGE

Iomega
Jaz 2

If you need top performance and storage capacity, then Iomega's 2Gb Jaz drive is the only one to go for. Its speed makes it ideal for a wide range of applications, while the Jaz media feels more solid than most and is fully compatible with 1Gb cartridges. In short, it represents good value for large storage capacity.
➡ *PCW June '99, p168*
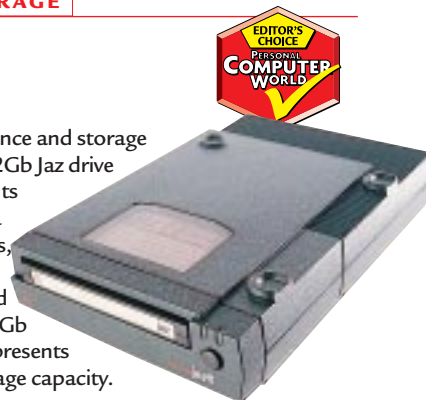
Price *£299* **Contact** *Iomega 0800 973194* **Also Recommended** *Panasonic LF-1500* **Price** *£351* **Contact** *Panasonic 0800 444220 (PCW June '99)*

SOUND CARD

Creative Labs
SoundBlaster Live!

SoundBlaster cards have long been the best choice for non-professional users. The SoundBlaster Live! ups the ante, providing near-professional quality sound at a bargain price. And it comes with an impressive bundle of dedicated digital I/O daughtercard, speakers, subwoofer and games.
➡ *PCW December '98, p92*

Price *£149* **Contact** *Creative Labs 01189 344744* **Also Recommended** *Terratec EWS64 S* **Price** *£149.23* **Contact** *Terratec 01600 772111 (PCW July '98)*

GRAPHICS CARD

ATi
All In Wonder 128

Using ATi's Rage 128 chipset, the All In Wonder 128 provides the ultimate video solution for your PC. Besides sporting a fast processor with 32bit colour in 2D and 3D applications, there's also motion compensation support for smooth MPEG2 decompression and the ability to capture video. But most impressive is the built-in TV tuner that allows you to watch TV while you're word processing.
➡ *PCW July '99, p78*
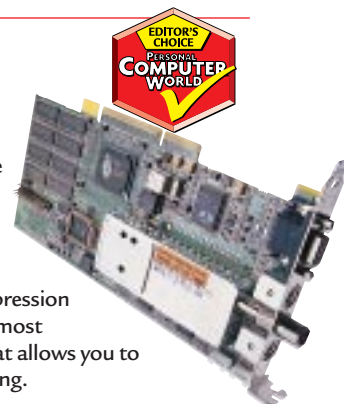
Price *£149* **Contact** *ATi 01628 533115 www.atitech.com* **Also Recommended** *ATi Rage Fury* **Price** *£159* **Contact** *ATi 01628 533115 www.atitech.com (PCW May '99)* ◆ *Matrox Millennium G400 32Mb Max* **Price** *£186.82* **Contact** *Matrox 01753 665500 (PCW August '99)*

ACCOUNTING

Intuit
Quickbooks 6

Touted as the easiest accounting package for small businesses, QuickBooks has a long history and a large user base. Version 6 is the first 32-bit incarnation. It even monitors company performance and sounds the alarm should you fall behind.
➡ *PCW March '99, p92*

Price *£199 (Pro version)* **Contact** *Intuit 0800 585058* **Also Recommended** *MYOB* **Price** *£229.13* **Contact** *Bestware 01752 201901* ◆ *TAS Books* **Price** *£116.33* **Contact** *Megatech 01372 727274 (both PCW June '98)*

PERSONAL FINANCE

Microsoft
Money Financial Suite 99

Microsoft Money Financial Suite 99 is our choice for personal finance. It offers online banking and updating facilities, as well as Sage compatibility, all at a bargain price.
➡ *PCW February '99, p80*

Price *£49.99* **Contact** *Microsoft 0345 002000*
Also Recommended *Quicken 98* **Price** *£39.99* **Contact** *Intuit 0181 990 5500 (PCW June '98)*

DATABASE

Microsoft
Access 97

This industry-standard database application is also the best. With its wizards, infamous Office Assistants and standard Windows interface, Access 97 is relatively easy for the novice. And its powerful relational features and VBA integration make it suitable for developers, too.
➡ *PCW November '98, p220*
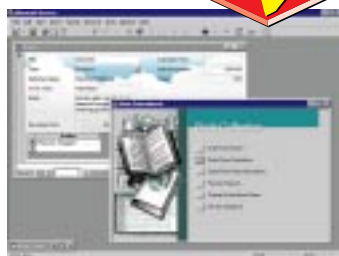
Price *£299* **Contact** *Microsoft 0345 002000*
Also Recommended *FileMaker Pro 4* **Price** *£169*
Contact *FileMaker 0845 603 9100 (PCW November '98)*

DTP

Adobe
InDesign

Seamless integration with PhotoShop and Illustrator, as well as multi-line text formatting, make InDesign a serious contender to knock Quark Xpress off its professional DTP throne. Time-saving features and a competitive price make it an attractive proposition.
➡ *PCW August '99, p87*

Price *£468.83 (£399 ex VAT)* **Contact** *Adobe 0181 606 4000*
Also Recommended *Quark XPress 4.0* **Price** *£816.62* **Contact** *Quark 01483 451818 (PCW June '99)* ◆ *Adobe PageMaker 6.5 Plus* **Price** *£351.33* **Contact** *Adobe 0181 606 4000 (PCW August '99)*

IMAGE EDITING

Ulead
PhotoExpress 2.0

Ulead has succeeded in removing the frustration factor often involved in getting to grips with digital pictures. PhotoExpress 2.0 is a pleasure to use, with a great, clearly structured interface and fast, in-depth tools. It has pre-set editing modes for the novice and custom adjustments for each editing function, so the power user will be kept happy, too.
➡ *PCW January '99, p202*
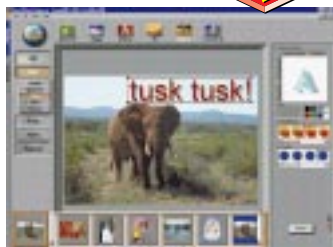
Price *£34.95* **Contact** *BIT 01420 83811* **Also Recommended** *Adobe PhotoDeluxe 3* **Price** *£45.83* **Contact** *Adobe 0181 606 4001* ◆ *Paint Shop Pro 5* **Price** *£69.95* **Contact** *Digital Workshop 01295 258335 (both PCW January '99)*

DRAWING

Adobe
Illustrator 8

Illustrator has once again gained the top spot amongst drawing packages through its introduction of bold creative tools like the new Pencil Tool, Art Brushes and the Gradient Mesh Tool, to name but a few.
If Adobe's new page layout application, InDesign, takes off, the productivity gains from interoperability between InDesign, Photoshop and Illustrator will be hard to resist.
➡ *PCW September '99, p165*

Price *£257.32* **Contact** *Adobe 0181 606 4001* *www.adobe.com*
Also Recommended *CorelDraw 9* **Price** *£327.82* **Contact** *Corel 0800 581028* ◆ *Sierra Windows Draw 7* **Price** *£39.95* **Contact** *0118 920 9100* *www.sierrahome.com (both PCW September '99)*

best buys

INFORMATION MANAGERS

Starfish
Sidekick 98

The best personal information manager boasts wide customisation abilities as its greatest strength. For heavyweight contact management, you need look no further than Goldmine 4 (*see the details panel, below*).
➠ *PCW August '99, p176*

Price £39.99 **Contact** *Starfish 0181 875 4455*
Also Recommended *Goldmine 4* **Price** £229 **Contact** *AVG 0171 335 2222 (PCW August '99)*

REMOTE ACCESS

Traveling Software
LapLink Tech

The high-end version of this extremely versatile product, LapLink Tech, has all the features of the standard version but also lets you print from the host machine onto a remote printer, or vice versa, and talk to whoever is using the host machine. It includes anti-virus and hard-disk cloning utilities.
➠ *PCW December '98, p233*

Price £169.95 **Contact** *Traveling Software 01344 383232*
Also Recommended *Symantec pcAnywhere* **Price** £75.08
Contact *Symantec 0171 616 5600 (PCW December '98)*

PROGRAMMING TOOL

Inprise
Delphi 4

Delphi is not a cross-platform product, but does let you build browser-independent web applications. It reaches all the way from RAD business applications to fast graphics using DirectX. It beats Visual C++ on ease of use, and Visual Basic on performance.
➠ *PCW April '99, p198*

Price *from £92 to £1845* **Contact** *Inprise 0118 932 0022*
Also Recommended *Symantec Visual Cafe* **Price** £217 or £580
Contact *Symantec 0181 317 7777 (PCW April '99)*

PRESENTATION GRAPHICS

Lotus
Freelance 97

This is our choice for electronic presentations. For you, it may also come down to which office suite you own or are considering, but as part of Microsoft Office 97, PowerPoint won't let you down.
➠ *PCW March '98, p200*
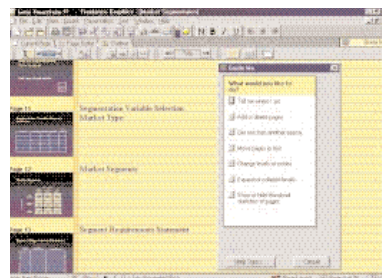
Price £49.35 **Contact** *Lotus 01784 445808*
Also Recommended *MS PowerPoint 97* **Price** £325.47
Contact *Microsoft 0345 002000 (PCW March '98)*

WEB DESIGN

Macromedia
Dreamweaver 2

An attractive and easy-to-use interface makes this great for those looking for something with a little more power. Good table handling and extensive formatting options on a single, centralised property inspector, make it a joy to use.
➠ *PCW April '99, p103*

Price £229 **Contact** *Computers Unlimited 0181 358 5857*
Also Recommended *Adobe PageMill 3.0* **Price** £92.83
Contact *Adobe 0181 606 4000 (PCW March1999)*

ANTI-VIRUS

McAfee
VirusScan Platinum

McAfee VirusScan Platinum's background scanning checks mail attachments, internet downloads and even ActiveX and Java applets for comprehensive protection.
➠ *PCW July '99, p86*

Price £59.95 **Contact** *Network Associates 01753 827500*
Also Recommended *Dr Solomon's HomeGuard* **Price** £29
Contact *Dr Solomon's 01296 318700 (PCW April '98)*

Faxback Service

Missed a feature or a review? Try our 24-hour faxback service.

Updated every month, our easy-to-use Faxback service gives you instant access to a complete range of product reviews, features and workshops via your fax machine. To use the service, simply follow the instructions below. Calls are charged at 50p per minute at all times, with an average duration of four minutes. *Our service is available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.* (The faxback service is not available outside the UK).

1 From the choices below, select the article(s) you wish to receive. Note the number of pages in the article.

2 Using the handset on your fax machine, dial 09065 600632. If you do not have a handset, press the fax machine's On Hook or Telephone button, then enter 09065 600632 on the keypad.

3 There will be a vocal introduction to the Faxback service which will ask you to enter the code of the article(s) you require. The voice will then ask you to press the Start / Send button on your fax machine.

4 The article(s) you have requested will then come through your fax machine.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

For the faxback service to work correctly, you must be referring to the current issue of *Personal Computer World* and have your machine set to use tone dialling (you may need to switch your machine from 'pulse' to 'tone').

If you have any problems with the *Personal Computer World* faxback service, please call 0171 412 3795. This helpline is open from 9:00am to 5:30pm Monday to Friday and calls are charged at the standard rate.

Faxback Table

PCs AND NOTEBOOKS	ISSUE	PAGES	CODE
Pentium III PCs	April-99	5	2009
400MHz Celeron PCs group test	May-99	11	2010
PII *vs* PIII PCs	June-99	13	2011
K6-III PCs	July-99	12	2012
Budget PCs	September-99	12	2013
Notebooks	September-99	9	2014
HARDWARE GROUP TESTS	ISSUE	PAGES	CODE
Budget flatbed scanners	September-98	9	2107
Communications hardware	December-98	11	2110
Digital video	January-99	13	2111
Laser printers	February-99	12	2112
Colour inkjets	February-99	8	2113
USB & 1394	March-99	7	2114
Monitors (17in, 19in and flatpanels)	April-99	11	2115
Digital cameras	May-99	9	2116
Motherboards	May-99	14	2117
Removable storage	June-99	6	2118
3D graphics cards	June-99	6	2119
PDAs and handhelds	July-99	11	2120

PCW Faxback number: 09065 600632

Faxback Table (cont'd)

Software Group Tests	Issue	Pages	Code
Presentation tools	March-98	9	2202
Accounting and personal finance	June-98	11	2205
Information / contact managers	August-98	10	2207
Utilities	September-98	8	2208
Speech recognition	October-98	5	2209
Databases	November-98	10	2211
Communications	December-98	10	2212
Image editing (budget)	January-99	11	2213
Image editing (high end)	February-99	8	2214
Web authoring tools	March-99	12	2215
Java and visual programming tools	April-99	8	2216
Desktop publishing	June-99	8	2217
Operating Systems	July-99	13	2218
Drawing software (illustrative and technical)	September-99	10	2219
Hands On Workshops	**Issue**	**Pages**	**Code**
Client/server databases part 1	April-98	3	2305
Client/server databases part 2	May-98	3	2306
Client/server databases part 3	June-98	4	2307
Client/server databases part 4	July-98	4	2308
Client/server databases part 5	August-98	4	2309
Linux part 1	January-99	3	2313
Linux part 2	February-99	3	2314
Linux part 3	March-99	3	2315
Website construction part 1	March-99	3	2316
Website construction part 2	May-99	3	2320
Website construction part 3	June-99	3	2322
JavaScript	April 99	3	2317
Remote access	April-99	3	2318
Year 2000 solutions part 1 - hardware	April-99	1	2319
Year 2000 solutions part 2 - Windows	May-99	1	2321
Multiple Boot	July-99	2	2323
Caligari	September-99	3	2324
Small Business Workshops	**Issue**	**Pages**	**Code**
Choosing the right comms	August-98	5	2401
Building a small network	September-98	5	2402
E-commerce for small business	October-98	5	2403
Building your own web server	November-98	6	2404
Hubs and network starter kits	February-99	4	2407
Firewalls and net protection	March-99	3	2408
IT training for your small business	April-99	4	2409
Backup solutions for your small business	May-99	4	2410
Encryption for e-commerce	June-99	3	2411
Building a five-user network	September-99	5	2412
General Features	**Issue**	**Pages**	**Code**
PCW 20th Anniversary Special	May-98	36	2507
PCW Service & Reliability Survey	October-98	12	2513

PCW Faxback number: 09065 600632

order form

Use this form when you order by phone, fax or post.

SUPPLIER'S DETAILS

COMPANY ....

SALESPERSON'S NAME ....

ADDRESS ....

....

....

.... POSTCODE ....

DATE OF TELEPHONE ORDER .... / .... / .... TIME ....

ORDER REFERENCE NUMBER (IF QUOTED) ....

DESPATCH REFERENCE NUMBER ....

CUSTOMER DETAILS

NAME ....

COMPANY ....

ADDRESS ....

....

....

.... POSTCODE ....

DATE OF TELEPHONE ORDER .... / .... / ....

ORDERED BY: ☐ TELEPHONE ☐ FAX ☐ POST

ADVERT APPEARED IN PCW:

ISSUE DATE .... PAGE ....

QUANTITY	DETAILS OF ORDER	UNIT COST £	TOTAL £

SUB-TOTAL _____

DISCOUNT _____

CARRIAGE _____

SURCHARGES _____

VAT _____

TOTAL _____

METHOD OF PAYMENT

☐ PERSONAL CHEQUE ☐ PURCHASE ORDER ☐ CREDIT CARD

☐ C.O.D ☐ DEBIT CARD ☐ OTHER (SPECIFY) ....

CARD COMPANY ....

ISSUE NUMBER (debit cards only) ....

START DATE .... / .... / .... EXPIRY DATE .... / .... / ....

CARD NUMBER .... / .... / .... / ....

SIGNED ....

DATE ..../............/...........

DAYTIME TELEPHONE NUMBER ....

DELIVERY ADDRESS ....

....

.... POSTCODE ....

AGREED DELIVERY DATE .... / .... / ....

Purchasing Guidelines

There are several steps you can take to help ensure that the buying process is smooth and trouble free. We'd like to suggest these main guidelines:

● **KEEP RECORDS**
When you phone a supplier, make a note of the name of the person you speak to, and when. Note down any claims they make for the product in which you are interested, or any specifications they mention. If you are unsure that what they are offering is right for the task, then ask.

● **GET A FULL SPEC OF THE MACHINE**
Before you place an order for a machine, insist on being faxed or emailed a full specification, detailing all components and peripherals. Check what is included: for example,

when buying a printer, are all cables and cartridges bundled in? If you've used a review in a magazine to guide your decision, make sure that what is quoted matches what you have read. Sometimes, machine specifications can change from what is sent for review.

● **BE CLEAR ABOUT SUPPORT AND WARRANTIES**
Make sure that you get a warranty which suits your needs, and which is fully detailed in the quotation. If you need swift repairs, consider paying extra for an eight-hour repair service. Also make sure you understand what service you can expect to receive, including who pays for couriers if your machine has to be returned for repair.

● **USE CREDIT CARD PROTECTION**
When you place your order, use a credit card. The Consumer Credit Act ensures that credit card purchases between £100 and £30,000 are covered. Check the address to which the goods will be sent. Often, if you buy with a credit card you can only receive the goods at the address on the card. If you are buying over the internet, make sure you are using a secure server, sometimes denoted by the prefix 'https'.

● **SET DELIVERY DATE AND CHECK WHAT'S DELIVERED**
This gives you some comeback if the goods are not delivered on time. When the goods arrive, check the packaging before you sign for them, to guard against damage in transit.

projects & resources

RESOURCE

Action 2000
www.bug2000.co.uk/

The Millennium Bug is set to bite in less than 4four months' time, and the UK government is trying to increase public awareness with a wide-ranging campaign which includes this excellent website from Action 2000. The site's design is absolutely top-rate: advice is clearly and crisply presented, and no matter what your level of technical expertise, it will be easy to find out how to check your own PC.

Two parts of the site are of special interest. At *domestic.bug2000.co.uk/index4.shtml*, home computer users can find information on how your hardware and software might be affected by the bug, how to test your equipment, and advice on what you can do without calling in the experts. In the BugZone, you also have the opportunity to help spread the message about Bug Realities, by sending a postcard to a friend with one of several 'Fact and Fiction' statements that put to rest some core Millennium Meltdown myths. For small-business users as well as home users, the Software Status Database is also a must [*see panel, above*].

PROJECT

Open Directory Project
www.dmoz.org/about.html

This is a not-for-profit project initiated by Netscape, based on the idea that the best way to assemble a wide-ranging 'index of the internet' is by calling on the (unpaid) services of netizens themselves. You can apply to be an 'editor' if you have an area of interest and a burgeoning Bookmarks list assembled from hours of web surfing. Others can check out the increasingly rich depth of knowledge assembled here: in some cases, it's far more useful than the increasingly antiquated-looking search engines like Yahoo! and AltaVista. The site refers to the new web phenomenon of 'link rot', whereby increasingly large numbers of URL links on search sites are pointing to defunct or re-sited pages. The 12,508 editors that dmoz has already recruited are expected to ensure that its 670,898 referenced sites are more accurate than other directories.

RESOURCE

Web Hoaxes
ciac.llnl.gov/ciac/CIACHoaxes.html

How can you be sure that the email you received this morning warning you about a virus or Trojan Horse is the real thing? Well, you can never be too careful — the recent panic over ExploreZip proved well-founded. But the net is also full of individuals who like to send round hoax warnings, and this can take up a lot of time and money for concerned PC users to investigate. This excellent site, supported by the US Department of Energy, is a useful antidote, with details of a range of spoof viruses — like Good Times and Irina (a publicity stunt for a book that backfired) — or the Naughty Robot email message that sent shivers down the spines of web-server administrators.

SITE FOCUS

Action 2000: Software Status Database
business.bug2000.co.uk/get_help/software_index.shtml

3 MONTHS TO GO!

One of the main features on the Action 2000 website is a searchable database of the current Millennium status of over 500 of the most commonly used operating systems and applications. From the main home page you can search the database for a particular product, manufacturer, product type or business application and come up with information provided by manufacturers on the current Y2K readiness of their products.

Each product comes with a series of Key Issue and Product Variant statements, as well as recommendations for further action. For small to medium enterprise (SME) users, there is advice on how to assess the business risk, and how to action changes and inform or train users in accordance with these changes.

There is a lot to choose from here — specific commercial applications and suites of programs (from Microsoft Office to Corel) through to shareware and freeware (PaintShop Pro and Navigator). Some of the country's more obscure packages are featured (this is a voluntary database after all), and while the focus is on PC software, there is a smattering of Mac and Unix products as well. There are also weblinks and phone numbers direct to the manufacturers' information.

The pages have been written in jargon-free plain English, in order to appeal to a wide readership, and regular updates are posted to keep product status as accurate as possible. Readers are encouraged to return on a regular basis to ensure that no further updates have been posted. For cash-strapped SMEs and for home users, the site is an excellent starting point for researching your Y2K compliance with the least amount of expense.

For those of you who don't have internet access at the moment, we're including a copy of the Software Status Database on our cover CD this month.

PROJECT

Seti@Home
www.setiathome.ssl.berkeley.edu/

Yes, the search for extra-terrestrial intelligent life is gathering pace with this project to analyse radio signals from across the universe. For a full rundown on how you might get involved in ET-spotting, see our *Hands On Hardware* column this issue on page 226.