

SOFTWARE

Microsoft 95

As the successor to Microsoft MS-DOS, Windows 3.1 and Windows for Workgroups 3.11, Windows 95 is the next major release of the standard operating system for the desktop and portable PC.

There is something for everybody, whether it's a more intuitive way to work, new capabilities like "surfing the information highway", or better support for managing a 1,000 PC installation site.

The mission for Windows 95 is to go beyond making PCs easier and make them truly usable. This means a more intuitive and automatic PC that also integrates the latest technologies and offers superior responsiveness and stability. For end-users, this means an even easier, faster, and more powerful PC that is compatible with today's existing software and hardware. Windows 95 aims to make the upgrade and transition easy, without pain and without loss of performance or capability.

Beyond Windows 95

Microsoft's Chairman and CEO, Bill Gates, was in Singapore as part of his APAC Tour '95. EDMOND NG was among the 3,000 people who attended his talk.



I sat in the first row, directly in front of Bill Gates himself. Accompanying him were two other Microsoft staff who were to present a demonstration of Windows 95 during his speech. Behind him stood two big screens for the projection of a video tape, as well as the display screen of their notebooks, loaded with the Beta II version of Windows 95.

Gates began by speaking on the importance of the processor, and of its advancement through the years. The components involved in enhancing the advancement today include the operating system, hardware and networking. The reason for the development of software today is because of the capability that comes with the processor.

In his speech, Gates painted a scene of a projected future and also showed in a video what the future would be like with the use of information highway, video conferencing and other facilities. Scenes of video-on-demand, surfing

through the information highway, and video conferencing in the medical arena were shown. Gates projected that in 1996, there will be standardisation of ISDN video and collaboration. In the same year, information highway rollout will begin and by the year 2000, twenty million homes will be connected up. Microsoft's vision is to have a computer on every desk and in every home.

During the presentation, Gates' assistants also demonstrated a much improved version of Windows 95. Gates demonstrated the possibility of the plug-and-play technology, by physically removing a hard disk from one notebook and plugging it into the other.

Gates explained that Windows 95 will come with an intuitive user interface. The aim is to make it simpler to learn and easier to use. It will be document centric with greater consistency and better integration.

In developing Windows 95, Microsoft will take into consideration the compatibility of DOS-based and Windows 3.1-based applications and development. High performance will also be considered, coupled with the ability to run Windows 95 in 4MB RAM, with the same kind of performance that is now already in Windows 3.1.

Windows 95 will include integrated communications such as MS Network/MS Exchange, Internet connectivity, universal mail client, remote dial-in and file synchronisation.

Gates also met up with Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong, Senior Minister Lee Kuan Yew and other cabinet members during his stay in Singapore. He also visited Creative Technology to view the ShareVision PC3000 video conferencing package. Gates' APAC tour covered Malaysia, Singapore and Australia.

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