

# County of Alameda

## Information Technology Department

### Y2K News

Volume 2, Issue 2

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#### F.Y.I.

ITD has been receiving calls about preparing desktops for Y2K. Most questions have been about patching the operating systems. This topic is too large for F.Y.I. (where you would normally find links to useful information), so it is the feature article in this issue.

#### Novell, OS/2, and PC DOS

Novell has made information available about their products. They have also made available a free tool to determine the Y2K status of their products via servers. The Y2K Information Ferret can be downloaded from <http://www.novell.com/year2000/tools.html>. There is additional information at this site on tools to assist with installing fixes on the desktop clients.

To check the status of OS/2 or PC DOS, visit IBM's website at <http://www.ibm.com/IBM/year2000/mkt/pcmatrix.html> for details about each product and fixes that are available.

Visit the County's web site at <http://www.co.alameda.ca.us> and view the Y2K pages!

#### What happens if I don't fix my PC for Y2K? Will it stop working?

After testing over 150 PCs ranging from 386s to Pentiums, ITD did not find any PC that refused to work after 1/1/2000. Some of the PCs did not roll the date to 2000 and needed the date manually set. Possible problems: program inserted dates may be incorrect, calculations based on dates may be incorrect. Bottom line - Your PC will probably continue to work, it just might not know what the date is or how to perform date calculations.

#### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 F. Y. I.
- 1 Getting Your Desktop Ready for Y2K with Windows 95
- 2 Coming Up

#### Getting Your Desktop Ready for Y2K with Windows 95

There have been many articles in the media about the Year 2000 problem. Most of these articles have focused on problems with computers and computer programs. Some articles have presented reviews of desktop packages to assist with discovery and repair of problems. One of the best articles to appear recently is The Year 2000 Revisited by Jim Aspinwall. This article appeared in the February 23, 1999 issue of Computer Currents. The article can be found at <http://www.currents.net> in the "archives" (click on archives, select "by date", then select the February 23<sup>rd</sup> issue). The author reviews over 20 products and presents the pros and cons of each product. Here are some highlights from his article:

- ◆ Test your PC BIOS and real-time clock. See the paragraph above for the location of information about packages. If your PC fails the tests, you have several options:
  - Replace the computer with a new one. (\$\$\$)
  - Replace the ROM Bios and/or clock chip with a new one. (\$\$)
  - Adjust the system clock each time as needed. (\$)
  - Install a software fix. (<\$) Several of the testing packages offer to install a TSR (terminate and stay resident) piece of software. If your system has enough RAM, this may be the choice for you.
- ◆ Once you have resolved any hardware problems, you **need** to obtain the necessary software patches for your **operating system** if you want a fully Y2K compliant PC. The exception to this is the MAC, but MAC owners need to be aware that although the operating system is Y2K compliant, application software will probably need software patches to be fully Y2K complaint.

*Continued on Page 2*

## Windows 95 Operating System

Microsoft has declared Win95 to be "Compliant with Minor Issues" and has provided a way to address some of those issues. The installation of a service pack is not required to reach this stage of compliance; however, you may want to install the service pack to correct other problems (see <http://www.microsoft.com/windows95/downloads/> for information).

New versions of command.com and winfile.exe have been released to address the date problems experienced with the MS-DOS DATE command and the incorrect display or sort of dates beyond the year 2000 in File manager. See [http://www.microsoft.com/technet/year2k/product/User\\_View32163EN.htm](http://www.microsoft.com/technet/year2k/product/User_View32163EN.htm) for a full description of the problems. The new versions of Command.com and winfile.exe can be downloaded from this page along with instructions <http://support.microsoft.com/support/kb/articles/q182/9/67.asp?FR=0>. The name of the file to be downloaded is win95y2k.exe.

- ◆ Make the default date format for your PC a four-digit year. Select the Start button, Settings, Control Panel, Regional Settings. Select the Date tab. On the short date format, select MM/dd/yyyy. This will change the default display to four-digits. **CAUTION:** any spreadsheets with date formats will be expanded to four-digit years. To reset your spreadsheets in Excel97: highlight the row/column of dates; select format - style - modify button - select date and highlight the format you want displayed - click "OK" twice. This will apply only to the spreadsheet currently open. You may also need to check any Access or Word macros and templates that use date formats.
- ◆ Find the file you downloaded - win95y2k.exe - and double click on it. A dialog box will appear - click "Yes" to install the new command.com and winfile.exe versions.
- ◆ The new file versions will be located in the "windows" directory. The new winfile.exe will have a date of 3/11/97 and a size of approximately 152K. The new command.com will have a date of 3/23/98 and a size of 91, 92, or 93K depending on the version of Windows95 installed.

### What will happen if I don't put the Win95 fixes on my PC?

Windows file manager will not display or sort dates beyond 2000 correctly. The DATE command will declare years 00 through 79 as invalid. If this is not a problem for you, then you do not need to apply the fixes.

## The Next Step...

The next step in preparing your PC for year 2000 is perhaps the most difficult. You need to list every piece of software installed and check that list against a compliance database. You can do this manually or use a purchased package. Be aware that packages are only accurate as of the date of the software release. Most packages have an update facility, which will allow you to download the most current information available. The manual method can be done, but will take more time. The EDS database (<http://www.vendor2000.com/>) is a good source of information. An alternate route would be to check each vendor's web site. New sources of information are appearing daily on the Internet.

Most of the commonly used software will need software updates. In future issues, Y2K News will list the most current information available. For now, the following are known to require updates: Windows95, Windows98, WindowsNT, Office (all versions), and components of Office such as Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Access.

If you have a topic you would like to see covered in this newsletter or if you would like your efforts and successes publicized in this Newsletter, please forward the information to the Information Technology Department at QIC 20117, ATTN: Y2K

## Coming Up

In the Next Issue...

Window NT 4.0 - Stay with Service Pack 3  
Or Upgrade to Service Pack 4?

Microsoft has just issued (1/30/1999) a fourteen-page Readiness Disclosure for Windows NT Server 4.0 with Service Pack 4 and a post-SP4 fix. NT Server 4.0 and some of the additional features have known Y2K issues. The disclosure lists the steps needed to fix the known issues.

[http://www.microsoft.com/technet/year2k/product/user\\_view67961EN.htm](http://www.microsoft.com/technet/year2k/product/user_view67961EN.htm) will jump directly to the disclosure statement (note: underscore between user and view).

In Future Issues...

Setting up a Y2K Action Plan  
Project Status Report