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VERMONT COMPUTING INC.



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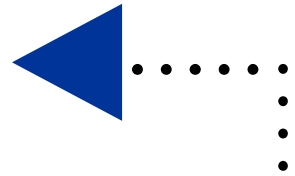


Store Hours

Mon – Fri 8:00 – 6:00

Sat & Sun 10:00 – 12:00

VCI



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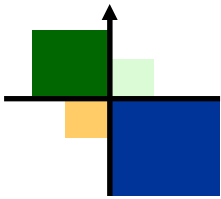
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COMPUTER TALK

Samsung Samples First Hybrid Hard Drive to OEMs; Retail 'Soon'

<http://www.extremetech.com/>

Samsung said Wednesday that it had begun shipments of its first hybrid hard drive to select OEMs, and that retail shipments would begin "soon". The new MH80 2.5-inch hybrid drives for notebook PCs will be available in 80-, 120-, and 160-Gbyte capacities, with either 128 Mbytes or 256 Mbytes of onboard flash memory, for caching purposes.

Samsung representatives weren't immediately available to answer questions on the drive's retail availability or pricing.

Although Microsoft has touted flash drives as a means to improve the performance of its Vista operating system, there are two types of flash drives. The first, more common form is known as ReadyBoost, where a specially formatted USB flash drive stores Windows system files, making boot cycles and restores from hibernation faster and more efficient.

Samsung, meanwhile, is part of the Hybrid Drive Alliance, which uses flash memory as a type of write cache for a hard disk drive. DRAM is commonly found in virtually all disk drives, as a means to cache data being read from the disk, and burst it across a Serial ATA bus to the main PC. User-generated data, generated much slower than a machine, requires non-volatile memory to gather it, store it, and then burst it to the disk. The result is that data is written to the disk in a concentrated form much less frequently than a non-hybrid hard drive, resulting in significantly less power being used in a notebook PC from spinning up the hard disk.

According to Samsung, its MH80 drives feature Samsung's "ReadyBoot" (not ReadyBoost) technology that offers up to a 50 percent reduction in boot and resume times from traditional magnetic hard drives. In addition, the drive consumes 70-90 percent less power than a traditional hard drive, which extends the battery life by 30 minutes before a recharge is needed, the company said.

In a ReadyBoost flash drive, flash caches of 2 Gbytes or so are considered ideal. But at the recent Consumer Electronics Show in January, Seagate engineers showing off their own hybrid hard drive prototypes said that 256 Mbytes had proven to be the peak of the cost-vs.-performance ratio.

Project Epoc brings mind control to games

<http://www.gamespot.com/>

Emotiv Systems today unveiled a brain/computer interface system with a helmet and software applications at the Game Developers Conference in San Francisco. The Project Epoc system can move objects based on a gamer's thoughts, reflect facial expressions, and respond to the excitement or calm the gamer mentally exerts, the company said.

Sensors in the helmet pick up on electric signals in the brain. The system software analyzes the signals emitted by the brain and then wirelessly relays what it detects to a receiver. The receiver is plugged into the USB port of a game console or PC, according to Randy Breen, Emotiv's chief product officer.

As with handwriting or voice recognition, the machine itself has a learning curve, improving as it better understands what the player is thinking, but there is also a skill level involving visualization on the part of the gamer.

Anecdotally, the system seems to work best with children and others open to believing in their capability, according to Breen. It seems that gamers who believe in their ability to manipulate the virtual world with their brain--the kind of people who are skilled at using their imagination, in other words--are better at using the device...

...The helmet shown at the show is only a prototype to demonstrate to game developers what can be done with the technology. While Emotiv is not yet ready to announce any partnerships, Breen did say the product will be coming to market in 2008.

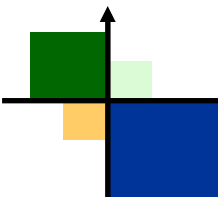
Changes in Daylight Savings Time Require Update to Windows

<http://www.techrepublic.com/>

The United States Federal government has decided to start Daylight Savings Time earlier, starting with the year 2007, than it has in previous years. Unfortunately, many versions of the Microsoft Windows operating system and Windows Servers like Exchange are not ready for the early starting point and have to be patched to compensate.

Starting in the spring of 2007, daylight saving time (DST) start and end dates for the United States will transition to comply with the Energy Policy Act of 2005. DST dates in the United States will start three weeks earlier, at 2:00 A.M. on the second Sunday in March. DST will end one week later, at 2:00 A.M. on the first Sunday in November.

Additional information can be found from Microsoft's knowledge base: <http://support.microsoft.com/kb/931836/en-us>



A BIT OF ADVICE

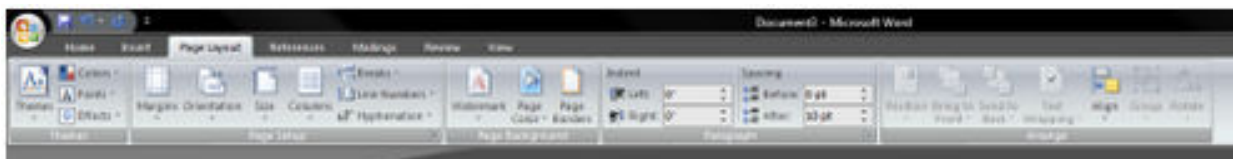
Word 2007: Lessons on usability

<http://www.techrepublic.com/>

Although Microsoft says that the radical interface changes in Word 2007 are aimed at enhancing usability, not everyone is convinced that the goal has been met. Justin James analyzes several aspects of the redesign and offers a case in support of the changes.

Toolbar changes - The first thing everyone notices about Word is the toolbar. In fact, that's where the bulk of the changes were made. The menu bar is completely gone. In its place (and looking just like a menu bar), are tab controls that change which major set of toolbar functions are displayed

Word's never-ending cascading menus have been flattened into major toolbar groups. Within each toolbar group are

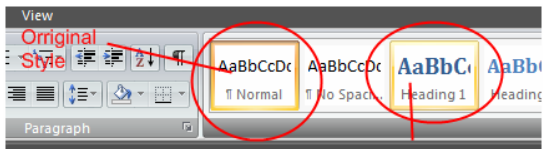
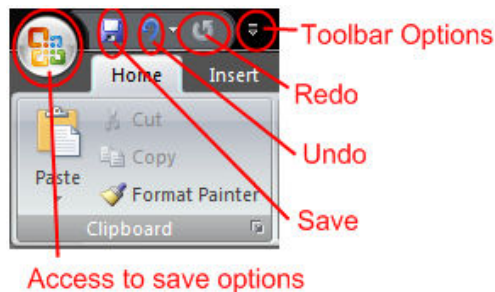


minor groups of toolbar buttons, organized by subcategory.

...in addition to the standard Minimize/Maximize/Restore/Close group in the top left: The Office icon that provides access to saving options, the Save icon, the Undo and Redo buttons, a down arrow for changing toolbar displays, and the Help icon

There are only three other really noticeable, major changes in the interface. The first is that hovering over a block of selected text brings up a "fade in" of a small toolbar right next to the block, containing a few of the most common items that apply specifically to that type of selection

The second is that hovering over any toolbar selection applies those attributes automatically, as appropriate, and then unapplies them when you move the mouse off the button.



Let's start with the toolbar itself. In no cases is it more than one click, and in many cases, it is less clicks. For example, to change the list down, and a second click to select the new style, assuming

The third big change is a welcome redesign of the ancient image editing system...

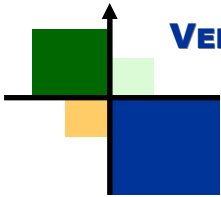
...In no cases, are more clicks required to access any particular function than in previous versions--and in many cases, fewer clicks are needed....Paste is now one click, or two, if you are not on the Home toolbar...Even more important is its positioning...The new Paste icon is smack in the top-left corner...when you slam the mouse to access commands, your pointer lands nearly perfectly on the large, friendly Paste icon. This is a significant improvement. Similarly, the same decision

was made for the few icons that you always need: Save, Undo, and Redo...

...styles are much more prominent. In a nutshell, styles do for Word documents what CSS does for HTML documents, and the new interface encourages the "why-based" approach of styles over the "how-based" approach of manual text formatting.

The "fade in" toolbar is, of course, a welcome and obvious change, and so is the improved image editor. But how is the preview function useful?...The new system allows you to skip the constant undo cycle and see exactly how the text will look before committing to a selection. The preview alone makes Word a much more usable piece of software.

Is the new Office interface a major change? You bet...The biggest problem with the new interface is not learning it, but unlearning the old interface...But once that period is over, the functionality you use daily is so intuitive that you can't explain how to do it, and the features you use less often are much easier to find.



SHUTDOWN

Office and Computer Pranks

<http://www.techrepublic.com/>



Filling an entire cubicle and its contents with aluminum foil definitely raises the bar on practical jokes.

This prankster covered the victim's three LCD monitors, two keyboards, mice, and everything else in the cubicle—even the pens and pencils!



Cardboard Computer

We sell made-to-order PCs, but who knew cardboard was an option?

I wonder if this 'Linkthis' router uses the can-and-string wireless protocol?



This cardboard and Styrofoam telephone is perfect for prank calls.