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2.1 general

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DOS (MS~ and DR~ ; a clone from Digital Research) are low level operating systems, that are only to use via prompt using a console. Only by using simple ASCII interfaces such as the famous Norton Commander from Symantec, DOS could handled with some comfort. Nevertheless, there existed real graphical user interfaces, but they were used very seldomly.

>One of the greatest advances of DOS was the generic printer interface for applications, thus software developers had not to write dedicated code for all kinds of printers out there, that task was now left to printer constructors and Microsoft - a great advance for developers that had to implement printer capabilities to their programmes. In contrast, it was very difficult to develop software using special hardware support, especially games that needed perfect handling of graphic adapters and sound cards. Every developer had to get specifics from all hardware producers whose stuff they wanted to support, or they had to licence special APIs for this purpose.

(click image to enlarge)



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Pic B: the editor

2.2 performance

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- low overhead (i.e. a missing GUI) allowed high performance, that is - compared to multitasking OSs - relatively bad

2.3 control

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- only by prompt or simple third-party ASCII interfaces
- automatization by scripts (batch files)

2.4 control

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- hardware not directly supported by OS (except basic stuff such as COM, keyboard, mouse, CD-ROM etc.); software had to be deployed with such wrappers (e.g. for VGA, SoundBlaster
- but: printers were directly supported via API

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