Windows 98/98SE/ME

an introductory overview

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An introductory overview of Windows 98 and their close successors. Please read the Windows 95 article, cos this article is just a conclusion.

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1.1 history

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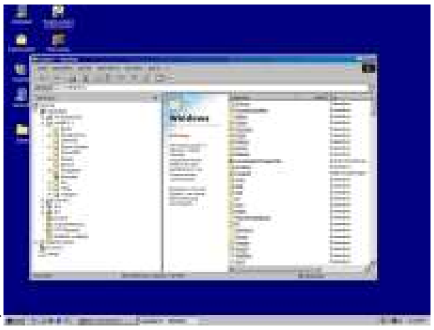
Windows 95 has been a major "update" back in 1995 compared to its predecessor Windows 3.11 for Workgroups (WfW). And cos Win 95 was that new, a lot of problems occurred on the user"s desk. During the following two years, it prooved to be out of date; especially regarding hardware support (USB etc.). Even later versions or silent updates via Internet Explorer (IE) or MS Office could not hide that it had it weaknesses.
>As a consequence, Microsoft decided to release an all around modernized version; planned as Windows 97 akka Memphis. Due to a longer beta testing phase, the release date delayed to August 1998, so it was relabeled Windows 98. Besides a new optical style, it showed much better hardware support and some features that belonged to the NT domain. In 1999, Microsoft sold a quite updated version called "SE" (short for "Second Edition"). It was still the same including some bug fixes and a standard pseudo proxy server that allowd a small network to use the services of the internet provided by a SE machine acting as gateway for the LAN. <p>

(click image to enlarge)

>desk_l.png" target="_blank">

Pic 1: a fresher desktop

Then, in 2000, a third edition called "ME" ("Millenium Edition") came the way. People that expected a new version of Windows were annoyed: it had some new icons, the help has been improoved and an automatic backup and system recovery was built in, but nothing new else... except that the DOS layer got hidden a bit more to pretend a professional OS...well...

2.0 features

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Like Windows 95 OEM release C, Win 98 was shipped with Internet Explorer. Additional features:

- much better support and drivers for actual hardware, including advanced USB support
- increased stability compared to Win95 - especially the "registry lost" error was wiped out
- updated user interface, controls were used more complex but intuitivelt, even more colourful icons :-)

If taking a look beyond the desktop, Microsoft did a very silent update to 98: it was a little NT system - not regarding stability but features. The API of NT and that of Win98 showed almost the same function calls.
> Windows SE, again, was nothing more than a bug cleaned version with few additional features. The most eye catching feature was a build in proxy that allowed other PCs tied to a SE machine could access other networks than the LAN, e.g. the internet. <p>

The third and last release, Windows ME, included Internet Explorer 5.5, Media Player 7.0 (with new capabilities such as the skinning feature that allowed different looks of its user interface). Nevertheless, most of those new features have been available as free downloads that made the new Windows version unnessessary.
>However, the build-in system protection allowed the restauration of vital files of the OS core. It held a snapshot of important files ordered by date, the user could restore his or her system by specifying a date that contained a good configuration. <p>

To sum it up, the features of the Windows 98 successor editions up to ME:

- a proxy server allowed other connected machines to reach outside networks such as the internet
- more internet and multimedia experience by shipped Internet Explorer 5.5 and Media Player 7.0
- updated help and online update system
- auto restore allowed to recover the system by use of older configurations and sysfiles, including the feature to restore a virus :-)

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