PSR Reviews

**PCWEEK
BEST OF
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The Future Is Way Beyond What Anyone Thinks

If Gates, Watson and Olsen Were Wrong — Who Can Tell Us What The Future Is?

Just because someone is in an organization that is focused on the future does not mean that they know what the future will bring. Which technologies will be hot and which ones will not go anywhere? In 1900 we were not able to fly, in 1999 we lost two probes that were sent to Mars.

The abiltiy to foresee the future is not something that should be taken lightly. The knowledge of where we are going is critical to the allocation of our scarce capital and people resources.

The past is often one of the best ways to provide an idea of where we are headed. In every age there are individuals viewed as visionaries. However, their vision is often blurred or just wrong. Looking back to the late 1800's,

What a dogmatic dilemma Windows 2000 or Linux for our new web server

Service911.com Makes A Big Splash

A New Paradyme In PC Support Is Launched Nationally

Service911.com was launched nationally last month. It provides a new way for "road warriors" to get support while providing a new way for the home user to have their own help department. The user friendly web site is at www.service911.com. It has links to all major hardware and software vendors as well as having FREE videos that show users how

The Replacement For Windows Is Coming Out 2/14/2000

Your Old PC May Not Work — What Do You Need to Know?

With great fanfare Microsoft is launching its future, Windows 2000, after the Super Bowl. Gates and company are betting the store on this new product. No one will know until the end of the first quarter if this gamble will pay off. However, early returns look like they may have a big winner.

Microsoft's stock has been languishing because of this and the Justice Department suit and Steve Ballmer's comment that the stock is overvalued. Let me preface this with the fact that we have been running Windows 2000 for almost 6 months and are very pleased with its stability and performance.
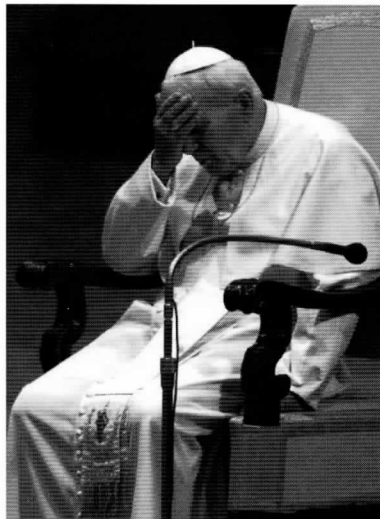
As a PC user, you have a vested interest in the way the new operating system goes. Based on what we have seen, Microsoft is hedging its bets.

For the first time they have said "officially" that Windows 98 is the system of choice for the home user and Windows 2000 is for the business user.

It seems the Justice Department is having an impact in that if Microsoft is broken up, a natural breaking point could be "business users", "home users", "business software applications", and "home software applications and games" to mention a few. I for one would be happy to have stock in each of those companies.

On the practical side, what does the release of Windows 2000 mean to the average user? First and foremost your existing applications and PC's MAY NOT WORK with it. Now that is a strong statement, but a true one which is based on some extensive testing that we have done in our offices and client sites.

there are two examples of where such brilliant people did not have a clue of what was going to happen.

- 1865 – "Everything that can be invented has been invented" – Director of the U.S. Patent office. What would he say if he looked at the cell phones with Internet browsers? Neither technology was even dreamed of then.

- 1892 – "Heavier than air flying machines are impossible" – Leading thermodynamics expert of the British Royal Society. How would he cope with the fact that today over 5 million people fly internationally on a daily basis?

Keeping this in mind, let's see what the three visionaries who have led the way over the last half-century had to say. These three Information Technology leaders got to where they were by looking at the future and not having a clue of where it was going.

- *Thomas Watson,* the driving force behind building IBM, one of the greatest computer giants in the middle of the last century, did not understand the magnitude of his corporate mandate.

  In 1943 he made the statement, "I think there is a world market for five computers." How much faster would IBM have grown if he really knew where he was driving this infant industry? Fortunately he was able to grasp the momentum of his creation and direct IBM to be the engine that carried the industry through its infant stage.

- *Ken Olsen,* the innovator of the mini computer at DEC was able to direct the attack on IBM's mainframe dominance, yet he did not see the expansion of processing power as an edge to build systems that were truly decentralized at the user level.

  In 1977 he said, "There is no need for any individual to have a computer in their home." As a result he closed down DEC's Rainbow PC division. DEC was squeezed to the point where, Compaq - PC manufacturer - purchased his entire company. While Olsen had a vision on how to attack the dominance of the mainframe, he did not understand the fluid and dynamic nature of the industry.

- *Bill Gates,* the creator of the consumer's desktop operating systems, DOS and Windows, did not grasp the size of what he was creating.

In 1981 he said, "640K ought to be enough for anybody." In the first quarter of 2000 Microsoft will release its long awaited product, Windows 2000. It will need at least 1,000,000K of hard disk space to install and don't even try to install it if you have less than 128,000K of memory.

None of the visionaries or futurists knows where we are going. Based on the past, the only thing for sure is we all under-estimate where technology will be. What I suggest is to imagine the most you can, then multiply that by a factor of ten and maybe you might be in the same universe as reality.◄⬧►

Service 911.com Makes A Big Splash

to do even the most complex of computer support tasks. It is almost like having your own certified engineer who can answer any of your questions at any hour of the day or night.

For the corporate user as well as the home user, there is the ability to schedule a technicain who will come to your hotel room or home and do those difficult repairs that you do not want to undertake yourself.

The site also has discussion groups and gives a registered user the ability to chat with a technician on-line. Better yet it does not cost anything to register.

They were just named a PC 100 site, an honor that few sites are able to achieve

Service911.com is in the middle of a massive national media campaign with ads in business publications like the Wall Street Journal, In flight videos on United and Continental Airlines and billboards placed in strategic locations in key markets around the nation. Dozens of strategic alliances have been forged with key trend setters including Excite, Broadcast.com and Ask Jeeves. With all of this they are looking to go public some time next year. They will be a stock to watch.◄⬧►

Hardware

There is a requirement to have a 133 MHz processor with at least 64 meg of RAM, plus at least 500 MB of free significantly un-fragmented space on a single drive to install and then run the program. Drivers for devices may not be there today and many vendors are opting to only provide drivers for the newer versions of their equipment.

In the case of laptops, vendors are not looking back for the most part. More than a few laptops have been limited by the lack of drivers for the displays. There is a great site where you can find out what you have to do to your laptop to make it work. The site is http://www.hardwareupdate.com.

Main line vendors like HP and Toshiba have drivers in place and operational. Things that do not work are devices like older scanners, DVD players and CD writers (some work, some don't and there is no easy set of rules to find out before hand).

If you get it to work, you will have the ability to use the infrared port for linkage to mobile devices, USB ports and DVD drives.

One device that is worth looking at is the Xircom Portstation Expansion System that really maximizes the USB - http://portstation.xircom.com/. It lets the user configure as many network, USB, Serial, and Parallel ports as they need. We have tested this device and give it a 5 star approval. As we see it, Xircom has a winner that we believe will be the death of docking stations for laptops.

Software

Many software packages check to see what operating system you are running before attempting the install. For older packages the message,

"_____ application was designed for Windows NT and will not run on Windows 2000" is the most frustrating. You do not even have the option to install the program. Other applications install, but do not work.

As of the first of December the following "common" applications do not work with Windows 2000 (Release Candidate 3):

- Backup exec
- Adaptec's CD Creator (all versions)
- Parallel port devices
- Intel's Camera Software
- IntelliMouse for Microsoft's NEW Optical Mouse
- IntelliPoint for Microsoft's NEW Internet Keyboard

Now if the software for Microsoft, Intel, and Adaptec do not work, what about the 10,000 other software vendors who do not have the resources of those three giants?
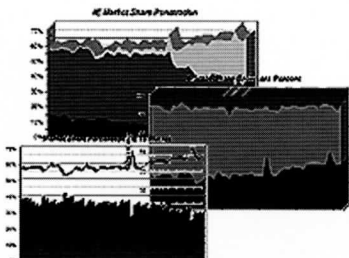
All of the vendors for these and other packages that do not work have the same standard message. They do not support an "unreleased" operating system. Well that is fine, but Realease Candidate 3 plus a few small tweaks is what is going to manufacturing for general release.

There will be a lot of effort expended in the move to Windows 2000. Part of the implementation process will be the wholesale replacement of much of the older PC and network infrastructure. That bodes well for the suppliers of PCs, software and network solutions.
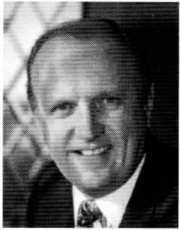
My advice to you, go long in technology stocks and move to Windows 2000 if you can. Do not buy any hardware or software that will not work in that environment. Keep your ears open to what the DOJ is going to do as it can have a major impact on what the technology direction of the first decade will be.

Forecast for the National Information Technology Market

Tight Job Market Across the Nation - Even With Y2K Ending There Will Be A Shortage Of Good Staff

by M. Victor Janulaitis
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With this issue, PSR Reviews is starting its 10th year of publication. We have covered a lot of topics and had a lot of fun writing these issues. From comments of our readers, we have been encouraged to do more of the same. I would like to thank all of you for your support.

You can see all of the past issues on our web site www.psrinc.com under newsletters. They are available as PDF (Adobe Acrobat files) as well as HTML pages.

Y2K Is Over NO IMPACT

Now that the Y2K problem has come and gone many were hoping for a reprieve from the chronic shortages of technical resources. Well that is not going to be the case. There is such a pent up demand we do not foresee any surplus staff availabiltiy for several months. Add to the mix the push for e-commerce, Linux and Windows 2000 and there will be even more demand than before.

Linux - Windows 2000 Impact

Can Linux challenge the lock that Microsoft has on the desktop's operating system? With moves like the

alliance between RedHat and Dell Computer the answer is a resounding yes. Windows 2000 will even be a driver in the acceptance of Linux. Now do understand that I think Windows 2000 is a good system, but there are issues that need to be addressed and Linux based systems may be the answer.

Windows 2000 has many features and comes with the baggage of "complexity." There are so many options and the pricing model that Microsoft has for IIS will drive many to the lower cost – lower complexity solution. There is also the contingent of people who are anti-Microsoft and they will go to the Linux solution no matter how good the Microsoft solution is.

As a definition of how acceptable the solutions of e-commerce and Linux are one only needs to look at the number of books that are on the shelves dealing with those topics. There are even books "Linux for Dummies" and "e-Commerce for Dummies."

Skills for Linux are in high demand now and people who are trained in it can write their own ticket. Over the next twelve to eighteen months, this technology solution will be the one that will be in the media and on the lips of the industry trendsetters.

The stock market has even driven the process of migration away from Windows to Linux. This past 12 months Microsoft's stock price has gone up 37%, not the usual 90 to 100% while the Linux stocks have exploded with 300 to 1,000% increases.

Baby Boomers Retire

As we move into the 59 ½ age for baby boomers, look for more of those people to opt for retirement. With the markets reaching such new highs, many of those individuals have well over seven figures in their retirement accounts. As a matter of fact a survey just completed says that many plan to retire before then.

There will be an opportunity area as those positions of leadership are vacated in the next few years. 2005 and 2006 will see a huge opportunity area for those who are positioned to take advantage of this. If you are in this position, what are you doing to see that you can seize the moment?

Location	Prospects Short Term	Prospects Long Term
Northeast	Excellent	Excellent
Mid Atlantic	Good	Good
Southeast	Good	Good
South	Good	Good/Fair
Midwest	Excellent	Excellent
Southwest	Excellent	Good
West	Excellent	Excellent
Pacific Northwest	Good	Excellent
Best Location	West - Midwest	West - Midwest