Microsoft has two main operating systems (OS's), which are currently available: Windows ME and Windows 2000. Windows NT 4.0 is also available, but since Windows 2000 is really the successor to Windows NT 4.0, you should really be looking at Windows 2000 vs. Windows ME if you are making an operating system choice.

Windows ME (98):

Windows ME is considered to be more of a "home" or "consumer" version of Windows, though you'll find many businesses running this on their business desktops. Windows ME has the broadest support for games, and it can run most business applications (such as Microsoft Office) very well. It is designed to run on a wide range of hardware, and is less resource intensive so it can work better on older, slower PC’s.

The downside to Windows 98 is that it is much less reliable (i.e., more likely to crash) than Windows NT 4.0 or Windows 2000.

Windows 2000:

Windows 2000 Professional is Microsoft's successor to the NT line of operating systems. It is an extremely robust operating system, with quite a bit of protection built-in to keep it from crashing. Configured properly (i.e., given enough RAM) it is faster at business applications than Windows 98. It is unquestionably the best operating system to choose for a business desktop.

Unfortunately, Windows 2000 has two drawbacks when considering it for home use. First, not all games have released versions that run on Windows 2000 (though many more will work on Windows 2000 than did on Windows NT 4.0). Second, it has some strict memory and hardware requirements (at least a Pentium 133 and 64MB RAM - for best results we recommend a minimum of Pentium 266 with 128MB RAM).

So which should I choose?

Most people should fit into one of these categories:

Business user at a business: Hands down, Windows 2000 is the best way to go for desktops and laptops. The absolute only reason to use Windows ME instead of Windows 2000 is if your hardware can't support it.

Home Offices: If you use your computer mostly for business-type applications such as Microsoft Office, Adobe PhotoShop, or other business-type packages, then Windows 2000 is best for you. Your applications will likely work better, and your computer will be much more stable. You'll find that many games are supported, so you can still play games occasionally - just be sure you ask around first to make sure the game you want works on Windows 2000 before you buy it.

General Home Use: For general home use, your best choice is Windows ME. You'll get the widest range of hardware and game support. Your system won't be as stable as under Windows 2000, but in a home environment, an occasional reboot isn't usually too much of a problem.
TRIVIA CONTEST

The correct answer to last month’s trivia question was the “Palm IIIc”. We received many correct answers, and the winner chosen from a random drawing was Margaret Dunlap from the IID Department. She received a gift certificate to Dunkin Donuts.

Now for this month’s question. Name any one of the three IT Staff members that have a degree in Political Science.

Responses should be emailed to Kathi_Bell@harvard.edu no later than Friday, March 16th.

BATTERY RECYCLING

The School will shortly be embarking on a battery recycling program and we ask your cooperation in helping to make it a success.

Batteries are most commonly separated into three groups: alkaline, nickel-cadmium and lithium. We will establish recycling collection stations on each floor throughout the School consisting of a blue “Recycle” basket with two smaller containers inside the main basket. The large basket should be used for lithium batteries (most often discarded from laptops), the smaller gray insert for alkaline, and the small black insert for nickel-cadmium units. We ask that you use the appropriate container for each battery. The vendor requires that the types not be mixed.

EUDORA TIP

You can easily add the address from a new message to your Eudora addressbook. To do this, open the message, click on “Special” on your toolbar and choose “Make Addressbook Entry”. Or, with the message open, you can just hit “Ctrl K” on your keyboard.

ASK A TECHIE

If you have a computer related question you’d like to see answered in our newsletter, just send an email with your question to helpdesk@hsph.harvard.edu

Question:
What is a virus hoax?

Answer:
You have seen them, emails warning of a dangerous new virus that tell you to send e-mail and warn all your friends. The hoax usually quotes some high level source within IBM or Microsoft to attempt to give it some credibility.

A virus hoax can be almost as dangerous as a real virus. It can cause widespread panic and needless worry. It’s easy to start a hoax. You don’t need any special programming skills or a deep knowledge of how e-mail works.

Most people on the Internet have at least a minimum standard of values and would not knowingly start a virus hoax any more than they would yell “Fire” in a crowded theater. But there are a few who would, and when you send that hoax to others you are unwittingly participating in the hoax.

How do you stop a hoax? Don’t participate; don’t send the warning to all of your friends. And what if it’s a real virus? There are many sources that report a real virus including the online news sources, your local TV news and especially the IT Department when a virus is widespread in a local area.

If you receive an email claiming that there is a new virus threat, don’t send the warning to all of your friends, send it to us - at helpdesk@hsph. We will check it against a list of known hoaxes and report back to you. Or if you want to research it yourself, try visiting the CIAC Hoaxbusters site. The CIAC is a part of the federal government so we trust everything they say, right? In this case, you can trust them! Their web site is at:

http://hoaxbusters.ciac.org/