HandyWork Newsletter

Check out our Website www.HandyWorks.Com

On the Web!

It took many months, but we finally have our HandyWorks website. From there you can download our latest HWW demos with just a couple of clicks. You'll also find lots of info about HandyWorks in general. There is even a section where you can post suggestions. If you visit us, please send us an e-mail so we can capture your e-mail address!

We also have the capability of sending you fixes via our FTP site or e-mail. We hope to avoid using snail mail for program updates etc. E-mail us at Support@HandyWorks.com if you can use this feature!

Happy Birthday HWW

HandyWorks for Windows (2.11) celebrated its first year of full use in our office on 7/12/1996. From a humble beginning, and with the help of a number of intrepid beta testers (Mark, Hank, Rick, Andre, George to name a few) we have consistently worked out problems and bugs. At this point, HWW is a now a mature and stable product. Try it, we think you'll like it! You can get the free demo from the website.

Upgrading?

Many of our users ask us about upgrading their system. The word upgrading conjures up many images, but in reality it applies to only three items; the computer, the operating system and the program.

If you are running an XT, AT (286) or 386, upgrade your hardware because you are running on a computer dinosaur that will get harder and harder to repair.

The easiest way to upgrade is to buy a brand new computer. (New toys are so much fun!) On the other hand, if you are poor or have the spirit of adventure, replace the motherboard and hard drive. That way, you keep your existing monitor, case, floppy drives, and keyboard. For either path, be sure to back up your hard drive so you can restore what you need to the new machine.

Regarding the operating system, Windows 3.1 is about 6 years old. It was a sucky system that offered minor advantages over DOS, but also gave you an oportunity to hurt yourself in ways Bill Gates never anticipated. Building upon the dissatisfaction of 3.1 users, Microsoft released W95 in August '95.

W95 is much better than Windows 3.1, and we recommend upgrading to W95 at your earliest convenience. We've happily been on W95 for almost a year now and found it is easier and more stable than Windows 3.1 What we like most is that networking is now integrated into the OS. No longer do you need to run Lantastic or Novell to connect your computers!

Now the tougher question of upgrading from HW-DOS to HWW.

Ask yourself: does the DOS program suits your needs, is it running fine, does your staff use it easily? If your answer to all three is yes, stay with DOS! On the other hand, if you need some of the enhanced features (see the website) of HWW, then you might consider upgrading.

Upgrade Offer to Expire

At one time, an incentive for users to buy the HandyWorks DOS, system, we offered them the ability to upgrade to the Windows version for only $200. This remains an exceptional value because we are currently selling the Windows system to new users for much, much more! While many users have taken this offer and successfully upgraded, there are quite a few who have chosen to remain with the DOS version. This is OK! The DOS version is fully functional under any Window environment and many offices have no need to change from a system they are comfortable with to one that is "unknown".

Never the less, while we would like to keep our $200 upgrade offer indefinitely, we can't. As of 12/31/97, we are increasing the upgrade fee for the Windows system, to $500. We hope that those of you who have been sitting on the fence take this as an incentive to get the new system now, rather than later.

New Office Location

After 8 fabulous years at 132 East 29th Street, HandyWorks is moving, along with the Chiropractic Office of Dr. Steven Schram, to 140 East 28th Street, NY, NY 10016. The move is scheduled to take place in mid-fall of this year.

Vacation !!

The HandyWorks office will be closed the last week of August through Labor Day. Please save your problems till we return. As usual, we will be checking our answering machines for any emergencies.

Y2K

The Year 2000 has some computer people in a tizzy. This is because most programs store dates as a 2 digit year rather than a 4 digit year. For most programs, this was done because the century was implicit and that storing the extra 2 bytes took up valuable storage space. While this approach was good at the time, come 2000, that will no longer be the case.

While there are many doomsday prophets scaring people with predicitions of major computer crashes, particularly in Government and Banking, such a scenario is highly unlikely.

With regard to HandyWorks, the situation is reasonably clear. There is only one area where HandyWorks is not 2000 Year compliant, and that is in tracking the last visit and payment date. Fortunately, the fix is quite simple, and all we need is a request from you for a Y2K update. We will schedule to send the updates out before the end of this year.

Backup Horror!

One is not Enough

Up until about a week ago, we had no backup horror story for this issue, but just last week, we sadly encountered one.

Dr. M, a longtime HandyWorks user (who practices in the charming area of upper NJ) was having hard drive computer problems. Stuff like lost clusters, not ready reading drive C, etc. Being a smart man, Dr. M. was regularly backing up. Unfortunately, when the drive finally conked out, it turned that his backup had garbage in it. So we said "How about an older backup from a few days previous?" But suprise, suprise, he had only one backup because each time he backed up, he overwrote his existing backup. So he was out of luck and in the soup, so to speak.

The importance of multiple backups, kept off-site, cannot be overemphasized. Also, if you start having a problem, now is not the time to backup your data. It will likely be corrupt.

We urge backing up 3 times a week, each time on a different tape or set of disks. We label ours Monday, Wednesday and Friday. We have used our backups at least once or twice each year (usually when I've done something "funny"). Each time our backup worked, I was very happy that we were not the next Backup Horror Story!

Upgrade Policy

Many users are very happy with how their current systems are running. And often, we find that minor changes we make for some offices are not needed or wanted by others. For this reason, unless we issue a major upgrade, we will no longer automatically mail upgrades to everyone. Instead, we are instituting an "upgrade on demand"

system that we hope will serve your needs . better. We also are encouraging users to get on-line, so we can e-mail the fix immediately, instead of having to make a disk, mail it, and wait for you to receive it.

Electronic Claims

While many of you are using NDC for electronic claims, quite a few users are still mailing claims by hand. With electronic claims, you get immediate verification that your claim is received, turnaround times are diminished, typing errors on the carrier's end are eliminated, and you get paid faster! HandyWorks is designed to facilitate the submission process and we encourage all of you to try electronic billing. We think you will like it!

Some users employ an outside billing service to send their claims for them. They use a print capture program to catch the billing output, and this is then sent by the rebiller to the various carriers. But if you consider the costs, sending directly to NDC eliminates the delay and gets you into the carriers within 24 hours. That's hard to beat!

If you want to try electronic billing, call NDC at 800 792-5256, 770-806-4399 or 800-792-5252. Ask them to send you a new client application package. Your vendor is us - HandyWorks. You'll be glad you did!

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