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The press is increasingly interested in Chicago -- what it is, how
it relates to future versions of MS DOS, when it will ship. PC
Week wrote a story in the Dec. 28-Jan 4 issue that was
headlined "future MS-DOS to fuse 32-bit DOS, Windows."
The story went on to quote a customer, "what it boils down to
is NT and NT lite. Microsoft will scale down NT so it doesn't
require much resources." Neither product positioning
statements are correct. In fact, the former directly contradicts
what BillG told the reporter in an interview about the future of
MS DOS and the latter is flat wrong from a technical
standpoint. Nevertheless, the idea of a Windows NT lite, or
merged Windows and MS-DOS product, is fast catching hold in
the technical press and consequently, the business press, which
is directly influenced by what gets reported in PC Week and
InfoWorld. (Greg Zachary of WSJ called Brad Silverberg the
day after the PC Week story ran).

In addition to the slow build-up of interest in the press,
Microsoft is holding a series of design previews on Chicago and
will hold a major SDR for ISVs this week, under
non-disclosure. We anticipate that as a result the trade press
will generate more stories on Chicago based on ISV leaks,
including the new Windows 32c APIs, how Chicago is
positioned relative to Windows NT and so forth.

As we all know in operating systems marketing there a fine line
between disclosing enough information about future product
direction to gain customer and ISV long-term commitment, and
saying too much. Microsoft has tended to use the press to
disclose our long-term systems strategy to customers and ISVs.
The trade press is therefore accustomed to getting a lot of
information about our systems strategy far in advance of
product availability. In the case of Chicago, we frankly are not
as compelled to reveal our product plans so early. The
evangelism effort under Cameron Myhrvold has the ISV
community well in hand; similarly, the mechanisms to provide
"need to know" information to customers is vastly improved.

More compellingly, we have a systems strategy that provides
the framework for the near and long-term future: the Windows
family strategy. We have a scalable Windows architecture that
describes how the Windows family of operating systems fit
together. Windows NT is a key deliverable to demonstrate how
that strategy actually translates into products; between now and
its shipment, our goal should be to focus on communicating the
scalable architecture and how Windows NT fits in that
architecture. The next version of Windows for MS DOS is
irrelevant at the moment except for developers and the self-
defined interest of the press.

The premature disclosure of Chicago could have several

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negative effects:

*   detract from the positive forward momentum for Windows
NT from customers, press, ISVs, the channel.

*   potentially halt commitment to Windows NT by customers
who think they should now wait; and developer
commitment to the Windows 32 API.

*   hurt the MS DOS 6 product launch by convincing
customers that MS DOS 6 is a dead end.

The challenge is to control the press interest sufficiently to
focus on our key messages while not allowing Chicago to
become positioned by ISVs and our competitors. This means
we need to say enough to put it in perspective while not
encouraging a rash of news stories.

To that end, the company needs to agree on a core set of
messages for Chicago up to and through the Windows NT
launch. We will be in a much better position to decide on
disclosure strategy for Chicago after that time.

To move this along, Collins and I worked on a Q & A for Chicago, based
largely on the questions we in PR are already getting from the press.
Some of these points have not been covered by the strategy flash sent
out last week, so we have extrapolated from that in places. We need to
get this out to MS execs, to people in PR, and to international PR, so
we would appreciate feedback ASAP. We'll incorporate any changes and
then turn it over for final handling/editing by DianaM, who officially
handles Q&As.

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Microsoft Corporation
Chicago Q & A

Q.   What is Chicago?

A.   Chicago is a code name that refers to the next version of Windows on MS-DOS.

Q.   Is Chicago the next version of Windows?

A.   No, the next major version of Windows that will ship is Windows NT. Our
goal is to ship Windows NT in the first half of 1993. Chicago is the code name
for the next version of Windows on MS-DOS.

Q.   What will be in Chicago?

A.   We are not prepared to discuss product features today or any time in the near
future. But if you look at our focus in Windows 3.1 and Windows for
Workgroups, some things are obvious: We want to continue to make set up and
configuration easier. We want to continue to improve the user interface. We
want to improve network setup and use. We want the product to be faster and
more reliable. We are not going to be more specific for a long, long time.

Q.   How does Chicago relate to Cairo?

A.   Cairo is the code name for a set of advanced object-oriented technologies that
will be included in future Windows products. Some features of Cairo, for
example advances in the user interface, could be included in Chicago. But for
the most part they are two different projects. We are not discussing either in
detail.

Q.   If Chicago refers to the next version of Windows on MS-DOS, and there is
no code name for MS-DOS by itself, then does this mean there will not be another
MS-DOS stand-alone product after MS-DOS 6?

A.   Chicago is a code name for the development work for both Windows on MS-
DOS and MS-DOS by itself. The work is proceeding in parallel. There will be
future versions of MS-DOS as a stand-alone product.

Q.   We know you are talking to ISVs about Chicago. Why won't you tell the
press about it?

A.   We are briefing ISVs on the future direction of the Windows APIs under non-
disclosure. It is important for the development community to understand the
changes in the Windows operating system that effect their application

development, well in advance of product availability. This allows them to understand our technical directions and to give feed back on them. This makes it easier for ISVs to understand their technical resource requirements for the future and to develop and ship their products as soon as possible after we ship our systems. We are not going to be doing public briefings for a long time.

Q. **Is Chicago this Windows NT Lite we have heard about?**

A. We are not working on any product called Windows NT Lite. Windows NT is the high-end member of the Windows family and it is based on the New Technology (NT) kernel developed by Dave Cutler's group. In a simplistic sense, the NT kernel replaces MS-DOS in Windows NT. Our next version of Windows for MS-DOS is not a "shrunk-down version" of Windows NT, in either a technical or marketing sense. It is a continuation of our MS-DOS-based Windows product line, with many improvements designed for the average user.

Q. **Won't Windows NT replace Windows on MS-DOS?**

A. No, we will continue to offer Windows for MS-DOS to the broad desktop market. However, our strategy is to provide consistent applications interfaces on Windows for MS-DOS and Windows NT so the same applications can run on both. That is one of the benefits of having a scalable operating system architecture.

Q.   Is it your plan to move MS-DOS to 32 bits?

A.   We are not disclosing our future plans for MS-DOS beyond the immediate
upcoming version, MS-DOS 6.0. Suffice it to say that since most new PCs sold
today have chips with a 32-bit architecture, it makes sense to take advantage of
the hardware for performance and other reasons in future releases of MS-DOS.

Q.   If the next version of Windows has a 32-bit, pre-emptive multitasking
version of MS-DOS, and it supports the same 32-bit Windows applications
as Windows NT, and it's smaller and faster, why should anyone buy
Windows NT?

A.   There is a need for both a broad desktop OS and a high-end OS at the same time
(in addition to supporting other hardware configurations at both the low end,
and the high end). There are today, and will be in the future, substantial,
specific features in Windows NT to differentiate it from other members of the
Windows family: e.g., advanced security, multiprocessing, administration,
portability -- all the things that make it a great client-server platform. There are
some features in Windows NT that can be implemented in other members of the
family, but that does not mean they were designed to do the same job or meet
the same needs. Airbags and ABS first appeared in top-of-the-line cars, and
later in most other cars. Airbags and ABS make all cars safer and better for
users. But an airbag and ABS won't turn a minivan into a high-performance
luxury coupe: each has a different design point, different benefits, different
tradeoffs. It's the same for our Windows family. Family members will share
some features and capabilities, they will share the same user interface and a
consistent family of APIs, they will interoperate. But one will be optimized for
the individual user running desktop applications, and the other will be optimized
for high-end desktop client-server computing. It is easier to understand if you
think in terms of how the customer will use the operating system and what kinds
of applications they want to run rather than compare a list of internal features.
(Here you can discuss desktop apps, versus custom business apps or vertical
market apps).

Q.   What is Windows 32c and how does it relate to Windows NT, Win32,
Win32s, and Chicago?

A.   Win32 is the 32-bit API for Windows. It is an API, not a product. Today it is
supported by Windows NT. Win32s is a subset of Win32 that allows 32-bit
applications to run under both Windows NT and Windows 3.1 on MS-DOS.
We are currently discussing the next evolution of the Windows API set with
developers. This is the purpose of the briefings this month (January). This
new set of APIs is intended to be a common set of APIs across the Windows

family, hence Win32 "common," or Win32c. (It does not stand for "Chicago.")
We are not prepared to talk about the specifics of those APIs to the public
today.

Q.   What will the key API changes or additions be?

A.   We are not prepared to talk specifics about the API set today.

Q.   Will Win32c be compatible with Win32 and Win32s?

A.   Our goal is to have API compatibility over time. Certain features, and
      therefore certain APIs, may appear first in one member of the family, and then
      later in another member, simply because of the timing of product releases. For
      example, Windows 3.1 shipped before Win32s support was ready, so Win32s
      will be directly supported in Windows NT first. Win32s will be supported by
      special libaries in applications for Windows 3.1 until it can be incorporated into
      Windows 3.x itself. Likewise, some APIs may be first supported under
      Windows on MS-DOS and later on Windows NT, simply because of timing.
      This gets fairly complicated, but it is not an issue for users to worry about. We
      are briefing ISVs, who need to understand how to use these APIs to their best
      advantage in applications.

Q.   So does that mean that Windows on MS-DOS and Windows NT will always
      be able to support the same applications?

A.   Depending on what APIs a developer uses, some applications targeted for
      Windows NT, which is a superset of Windows on MS-DOS, will not run on
      Windows on MS-DOS. In terms of totally consistent APIs, there may be a lag
      between updates for either product that is the natural result of product shipment
      plans.

Q.   Are you planning to merge Windows and MS-DOS?

A.   No, we are not planning to merge the products. We will continue to evolve both
      and work to make them work together better, while exploiting advances in
      desktop PC hardware. We are committed to continue to release new versions of
      MS-DOS.