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A FIRST LOOK AT DR DOS 6.0

Summary

DR DOS 6.0 is DR DOS 5.0 plus some new utilities, many of which are catch-up features. It should be positioned a 5.1 release. Its weaknesses are that it's:

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| Sloppy | DR seems to have rushed 6.0 to market. It appears undertested. There are gaps in compatibility, and key features do not work in common configurations. As we learned from MS-DOS 5, the tiny gaps in testing can explode as support headaches. <i>DR will be a nightmare to support for OEMs.</i> |
| Dangerous | The key new features - compression, caching, undelete, unformat - are all disk-related. Undertested disk features are dangerous, and many users have lost data. |
| a poor Upgrade | The DR Install program almost entirely ignores your present configuration. At best it leaves your system mangled; at worst it renders it unbootable. |
| a poor Clone | DR did not implement key new APIs in MS-DOS 5 that are used by products including Netware, PC Tools, Norton Utilities, LAN Manager and Attachmate. |

And Windows 3.1 is not being tested on DR DOS 5.0 or 6.0.

DR DOS 6.0 is sloppy

Customers tell us the DR DOS beta was very tough to get; our best guess is that there were only 300 sites (MS-DOS 5 had over 7,000). DR didn't seem to care about compatibility very much.

- Users on CompuServe report a COMSPEC bug involving DR DOS and Netware that hangs many applications on a diskless workstation. One said "You obviously don't seem to care about Netware compatibility. At this point I cannot recommend DR DOS for use on a Novell network."
- Several users on CompuServe report that loading Netware's IPX into UMBs (the IPX that ships with DR DOS) hangs their system
- The Netware files that ship with DR DOS are not documented anywhere - in manuals or readme's
- Many CompuServe users report problems with DR DOS and QEMM 6.0. The DR Sysop responded "We still do not have QEMM 6.0 here in support for testing...[these problems] will have to wait until we can check into them." Quarterdeck's response to this customer on CompuServe was "I would assume it [QEMM 6.0] will [work] (if nothing drastic changed), but we never tested it with DR DOS 6." QEMM is consistently second or third in PC Mag's best-seller chart.
- DR DOS 6.0 can't be loaded high with a memory manager like QEMM or 386Max. DR DOS 5.0 had the same problem.
- Manifest, a key component of the best-selling QEMM, hangs on many systems.
- CompuServe users and the First Look in Infoworld report it's nearly impossible to get Windows running with DR's PC Kwik disk cache loaded.
- PC Kwik appears not to run on a large number of 286 systems.
- Many CompuServe users report their CD-ROM drives are inaccessible (with the latest MSCDEX).

DR DOS 6.0 is dangerous

- An in-house tester sporadically trashed his hard disk when shelling out to DR DOS from Windows
- Several CompuServe users trashed their hard disks after running the compression utility
- An in-house tester trashed his hard disk by creating too many levels of subdirectories
- An in-house tester fried his hard disk after uninstalling on a Unisys 386/33
- A CompuServe user ran undelete, and it deleted a slew of files including itself

DR DOS 6.0 is a poor Upgrade

- It mangles config.sys and autoexec.bat: DR's Setup inserts its own commands and ignores everything else in your configuration files by skipping over old lines. Everyone will have to repair



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both files after installation - or call PSS. For example, on rebooting after Setup we couldn't access the network or use the mouse since Setup had modified the autoexec.bat to skip these commands.

- It doesn't detect unformatted partitions: We found during our beta that many people unknowingly store data on unformatted partitions because MS-DOS versions 3.3 and earlier let you. But MS-DOS 5 and DR DOS 6.0 can't access unformatted partitions. The MS-DOS 5 Upgrade Setup detects these partitions and warns the user to back them up, format them, and restore the data before running Setup. DR DOS 6.0 doesn't, and so after installation these partitions are inaccessible.
- It hangs when upgrading certain OEM DOS versions, including NEC DOS 3.3 and AST DOS 3.3
- It removes your old DOS entirely: If you had special commands - like Compaq's mode or shutdown, for example - they're deleted along with the rest of your old DOS commands.

DR DOS 6.0 is a poor Clone

- DR DOS doesn't implement new loadhigh APIs in MS-DOS 5. For example, utilities in PC Tools 7.0 and Norton Utilities 6.0 automatically load high under MS-DOS 5, but not DR DOS.
- Programs that load other programs - like Novell's NETS or NETX - and access the loadhigh APIs will prevent anything from loading high after themselves on DR DOS.
- DR DOS doesn't implement the new media sensing API. On hardware that supports this new API - new Toshiba's, for example - the MS-DOS 5 format command can "sense" the density of the floppy, and format it automatically to the correct density.

Comments on Key New Features

Memory Usage

DR's main "enhancement" to memory management is that it now supports UMBs under Win enhanced mode. MS-DOS 5 uses less memory than DR DOS 6.0 in all common scenarios:

<u>80386/80486*</u>	DR DOS 6.0	MS-DOS 5
Footprint below 640K	14.6K	26.7K
Footprint from 640K to 1mb	31.8K	0K
Total Footprint below 1mb	46.4K	26.7K

- * tests were run on: IBM PS/2 70, Compaq Deskpro 386/20c & 486/25, and HP Vectra QS/16

<u>Non-Neatset/Leapset 80286*</u>	DR DOS 6.0	MS-DOS 5
Footprint below 1mb	21.0K	18.6K

- * tests were run on: IBM PC AT, Compaq Deskpro 286, Olivetti M290 and Vendex Headstart III. Non-Neatset/Leapset PCs comprise over 90% of the 80286 market.

<u>8088/86 w/o a LIM 4.0 board*</u>	DR DOS 6.0	MS-DOS 5
Footprint below 1mb	75-91K	68-70K

- * tests were run on: IBM PC XT, Tandy T1000 TX, ATT 6300, Toshiba T1000. The vast majority of 8088/86 PCs do not have true LIM 4.0 compatible boards.

PC Kwik Disk Cache - faster than Smartdrive, but

- it doesn't run on many 286s
- it's very difficult to get running with Windows
- it hangs Geoworks (confirmed by Geoworks)
- it hangs Manifest on 3 of 6 in-house test machines

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SuperStor Disk Compression - DR acquired this technology from a small, little known company whose first product was Superstor. Once you risk trashing your hard disk to install it

- it has destabilized Windows on several in-house test machines
- DR confirmed that the compression driver can't be loaded into a UMB. Minimum size - 42K
- trashes disks when installed on partitions greater than 256mb

Disk Defrager - as one user reports - sloooowl

- Several users report that DR defrags in 30 minutes what Norton defrags in 3 minutes

Security - Laughable

- It took 10 minutes to figure out that one can break logon security using the Norton Disk Editor to change one byte per partition in the partition table.

Task Swapper, Undelete, Unformat, Uninstall - catch-up features

On-line Documentation - Clunky interface and confusing organization

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