From: Rob Young (OEM)

Sent: Monday, December 01, 2003 8:41 AM

To: Rick Wong; Jennifer Bloom; Chris McMillan, David Bradley

Subject: FW: My new Dell MCE machine

Thought you'd all like to see Joe Belfiore's Dell MCE PC oobe. Chris and Jennifer, I'll leave it to you to decide what makes sense to forward Dell as info.

From: Joe Belfiore
Sent: Friday, November 28, 2003 12:58 PM
To: Nick Leggett; Heather Brown; Ian Todd; Joseph Matthews; Steve Kaneko; Tom Phillips; Reed Probst; Brad Brooks; Tom Gershaw; eHome Deployment; Linda Averett; M3 Sweatt; Rich Hagemeyer; Piero Sierra; Cynthia Tee; Tjeerd Hoek; Hillel Cooperman; Kent Sullivan; Jay Kapur; Talal Batrouny; Bojana Ostojic; Kort Sands
Cc: Molly Scoville Rhoten; Mark Weinberg; John Colleran; Ron Pessner; Rob Young (OEM); Keith Laepple; Sriram Rajagopalan; Geoff Robertson; Joe Belfiore
Subject: My new Dell MCE machine

OK to forward – I just wanted to get this hopefully-useful customer experience info to a bunch of people whose work affects it and could improve it. I undoubtedly missed people who would like to see...

I bought a new Dell Dimension 4600 PC to replace my 4-year old dell desktop. I bought it like 3 weeks ago, and it finally arrived late last week. Here's notes on my setup, the machine, etc.

CONCLUSION / EXEC SUMMARY
Here's my summary conclusions, with the names of people who should focus on the associated problems:

- (GeoffHar/HeathBr?) **BAD BUG: WMP on this machine isn't setting the default watch list of folders to include user "My Music" folders.** Doh! The only one in the watch list by default was the administrator folder. This made it so MCE never recognized music until I went to WMP and added the folder to the watch list (something no user will be able to do.)

- (HeathBr/Jay Kapur/JosephM/ReedP) the Dell (probably like every other MCE PC) really can be just a **disaster to setup** because of impossible to read labels etched into PCI cards, duplicate plugs on the back of a machine when motherboard functions are 'replaced' by PCI cards, and not having the right cables. Nothing we don't know already – but I do think we might need more focus on incenting/helping OEMs & IHVs to do better labeling and connectivity. Some specific thoughts:
  o HIG in conjunction with major IHVs/OEMs should design a **'standard' audio/video input/output plugset** with RCA cable connectors, and have a way for this set of ins/outs to hook up to PCI cards. An OEM should be able to connect *either* the motherboard *or* an add-on PCI card to this set of inputs, and they should be clearly printed like a VCR.
  o OEMs should put a **sticker on the back** that tells you where to plug stuff...
  o Should we consider applying **MDA** to this problem?

- (IanTodd/Nick Leggett) It's really quite **impossible to do OOBE on a TV.** Nothing we don't know already and aren't already focused on. ☺

- My Dell had some flaw, and they are sending me a new one... it spontaneously shut itself off every 2 minutes or so, and on restart said that there was a thermal problem. ☹ Tech support couldn't' fix it, so they're sending another. (one more week of delay before I get to use my new Dell PC.)

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- (Talalb) **TV Quality is "OK not great".** See below for specific comments on how in particular black-doesn't-look-black.

- (shell team GPMs + Boost + evangelism??) We need to get better at **providing guidelines on promotional and other config.** Some places were good, others bad.
+ XP Start menu top-level was good... clear 3rd party and dell promotion, mix of permanent and temporary items
+ taskbar not bad ... 3 icons
- Desktop was OK but not great. 12 icons, some with text too long to see. (why do we in the industry think any user can figure this out or use it?)
- "All Programs >" menu off start menu a mess
- root of C: a mess ... particularly confusing: some app creates a c:\my music, but it's not associated with start menu or set as music folder in WMP.

DETAILED NOTES

USAGE SCENARIO
- I'm first setting this up as an MCE hooked up only to a 27" TV. I did oobe, etc. that way
- After a few days I'll move it to the office where it'll be more of a standard desktop. (it's a P4 3ghz, 512 mb, has writeable DVD drive)

OOBE
- opening the box had 2 posters for setup... not bad. Actually, these are pretty good. Of course, I behaved like any other normal human and just set them aside because I think I can "do it myself" without docs. Let's see how I do.

- Connecting cables:
o Keyboard, mouse, etc. were quite straightforward. Nice purple and green connectors to match
o Audio in is confusing... there are 2 problems
▪ The PC doesn't come with the right cable. I have to run around and find the cable that has 1/8" stereo on one and and RCA audio on the other
▪ The connectors are quite impossible to figure out. There's a green one with -))-> and a blue one with –((->.
I choose green because I'm guessing the sound waves are moving outward (!) (good thing I took physics!).
There are black and yellow ones with really complicated symbols I can't figure out. Hope the green one is right!
o Video and tv in are really quite bad... this is an ATI All in Wonder, and because all the inputs have to fit on a single PCI card, and because the back of the card is just metal, it's VERY VERY hard to figure this out and make it work. There's just nothing clearly labeld. ..
▪ There's a big giant plug that you attach an ATI dongle to. . this isn't bad because nothing else could possibly plug in. The bigger issue is that the etched metal label is nearly unreadable... it's not clear that this is your "video OUT". In fact, the ATI label says "Vid I/O". ARE WE CLEAR ON WHO OWNS FIXING THIS WITH ATI?
Heather because she's cart to start? Jay because he engages with display/tuner vendors? Ian because he's LRPC guy? My guess: Heather and/or Ian driving Jay? (probably have to also drive Tim and team as well.)
▪ For video in, the ATI card has a coax connector that says "CATV". It doesn't say "CATV IN". Hmm. maybe I can connect this to the back of my tv?
▪ And it also has some *sort of* svideo looking plug and came with some connector with composite/svideo/r-l audio on one end and the funny almost-svideo thing on the other. The label on this plug is "[S] ->" (I have no idea what that's supposed to mean. This *should* be an input, but the arrow is pointing out. Maybe the box is supposed to be a TV set??)
▪ General point: these plugs are really close together, VERY BADLY LABELED, and impossible to read because they're just etched in metal. We need to work with ATI (and other vendors) to make this better. . my suggestion:
• MINIMALLY – put stickers on there with simple English terms. Always have "in" or "out"
• Even better... space these out a little bit so you have room for stickers with lengthier text
• What's really needed for major market growth: define a standard to have PCI/AGP video cards connected to some *simple* internal PC connection bus so that there can be a region on the back—like the motherboard connectors—where there's RCA + SVideo + audio staggered connections that are CLEARLY labeled just like on the back of a VCR, etc (should the HIG group lead this?)

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o   General suggestion to DELL or other OEMs.. if it's impossible to get the IHVs to improve their labels, or if there isn't room to put English text (like next to the audio ... "Audio OUT"   or if you can't localize blah blah... then I'd suggest ONE BIG STICKER on the back that shows each symbol and what it means! ☺

-   Windows On-screen OOBE. (remember, I'm connected to 27" TV). When I turned on the PC, fortunately the ATI card detected composite video out and just did the right thing. (I suppose that all the connectors are live always (?) .. it isn't dual-head, so it's probably a simpler problem.)
o   Dell EULA. Quite readable. Nice and simple... they ask you to read the EULA inu the manual. then when you press any key you've accepted the EULA. This is a good solution, works even on my TV.
o   Dell "Important Technical Support Information" shows the express service code. Also quite readable, just press a key to move on..
o   Then XP boots. . "please wait" is nearly illegible
o   Welcome to Microsoft Windows... the 10pt text, "to continue to click next" etc are *nearly* illegible.   I can tell what they say, but I've seen these literally thousands of times.... (I noticed there was no sound. Perhaps I have the sound card audio connector in the wrong plug??)
▪   Trying to get audio working... tried a different plug... no help.
▪   I looked at the install poster for instructions on which plug is right... the install posters don't say. In fact, I now noticed I have 2 overlapping install posters with similar instructions. One seems to be a "generic" PC, the other seems to be for an MCE PC. The MCE one doesn't mention audio at all (Doh!) and the other one just says "plug your speakers into one of these plugs." Thanks a lot. I notice it also says "if you have an extra sound card, plug into the sound card instead of these plugs. Oh great... another confusing duality of plugs. Let me see if I have one...nope. So that isn'the problem. I'm going to keep going and hope this fixes itself or that I can try every plug separately later on...
▪   Time zone screen – can BARELY figure out which is pacific...   Eula. Read it? Ha ha ha ha. Computer name, admin password, setup users... all impossible to read.
▪   Scary warning that says "the next step takes 1 minute, and while that minute is going, your screen is blank... don't turn off the PC"! I assume Dell added this. I didn't see a blank screen.

-   General Usage ... Reaction to initial PC config.
o   Good news... after logging in, Audio was working. Don't know why it wasn't in oobe.
o   After logging in I got a bunch of popup UI... Dell SecurityCenter, plus another McAfee popup. (I thought our license forbid a barrage of popup UI at first boot?)
o   The Dell/McAfee initial popup wizard is somewhat obnoxious... three reasons (1) I have JUST booted my brand new PC, want to look around, try stuff out, and this thing completely demands my attention, though I suppose in the security-problem-filled world we have, this is OK. I'd *rather* see one OOBE screen that says "Keep the PC secure automatically?" and just say yes; rather than have my first usage session taken over in this way. I also think this would address problems more completely if it offered to turn on auto-update for you, so you'd automatically get windows security patches. (2) it doesn't have a close box... I CAN'T just dismiss it and skip   (3) (specific to my situation) I can't read anything it says! I'm just clicking next next next. (After finishing the wizard, there's a nice large McAfee/Dell "Security Center" screen. Looks well designed, but I can't read it.) Seems like a worthwhile service for the OEM to provide... but as designed can't work for LRPC.

o   Default resolution was 1024x768. Fine for desktop, I changed it to 800x600 for a hope of reading text on the TV
o   3 icons in the taskbar by default. Not horrible... AOL, McAfee, and our volume control.
o   12 icons on the desktop. Not horrible. Recycle Bin in upper left (oops! Our bug?? Should be lower right. Definitely not the first icon you want in reading order!) IE, AOL, "Burn CDs and DVDs wit...", Dell Picture Studio, Dell Support, Earthlink, Solution Center, Media Center, WMP, "Get High Speed Internet!", RealOne Player. Sad that over all these years we still don't have a more effective, readable, user-manageable space for the OEM to promote offers at boot. It's such a mess.
o   Start menu preconfig was pretty nice, actually.. MCE, SPAD, MSN Explorer, RealOne Player, Dell Picture Studio, WMP. "Internet" and "Email" were IE and OE. Dell had added "Solution Center" with Dell logo to the permanent OEM spot. In my opinion, this is working well and nicely. Easy to read, good promotional oppty to OEM mixing temprorary "user-based" slots with a permanent Dell item.
o   C-drive is filled with mysterious crap folders. There's even another "My Music" folder created at c:\ This seems *terrible* as it will cause all kinds of confusion (there's more than 1, this one isnt' the one that Start points to, it isn't in WMP's monitor list by default, etc. etc.) Bad integration design!

-   MCE First Usage

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o   Got through first run fine... had a little difficulty figuring out where on the STB to put the IR blaster, but other than that it was fine

o   Had put some music in the My Music folder (the one from the start menu... not the confusing additional c:\my music), and it didn't show up in MCE. I tried stopping/restarting, nothing. I checked taskman for WMPlayer process, yep it was there. WMP never added the music to the library. I went and launched WMP, and checked the folder-monitor list... and the FOLDER FOR MY USER ACCOUNT WASN'T in the list!! The only automatically watched folder was the ADMINISTRATOR music folder. (I created 2 users in OOBE... neither one seemed to be in the watch list.) This is bad bad bad... it means no end user on a multi-user machine will feel that the music library is created/populated automatically because the watch list isn't set correctly out of the box. Ugh! (we should make sure this gets fixed in WMP9.1... or at least completely understand the bug.)

-   Usage over time

o   TV quality... seems *ok* but not great. Black screens look BAD.... 2 problems... I see "waves" of black/dark grey passing through a solid black screen in blocks about 30 pixels square. Clearly visible (I left it on the default "Best" record quality).   It also has a similar contrast problem that I've seen on NVidia. The colors are not vivid, blacks aren['t really black.

o   Suspend/resume seems to work fine. Suspended with the remote a few times, it auto-resumed to record, etc.

o   Oops ... spoke too soon. I have problems with the machine going into suspend or shutting down spontaneously... can't tell what the cause is:

▪   Last night: was watching TV, suddenly the whole PC shut down. I thought maybe it was a suspend, but the remote didn't resume, the button on the front of the PC didn't resume either. I pulled the power cord and restarted.

▪   Then it ran for maybe 10 minutes, and shut itself down. I restarted (button on front) and got a text message (like DOS text) at boot: "Alert! Previous shut down due to thermal event! F1 to continue F2 for setup" Pressed F1, machine booted... but...

▪   40 seconds later it shut itself down again. UGH!! Now it seems it won't stay turned on at all. Turned it on, same message. 5 seconds into windows boot, same problem! UGH UGH!!

o   Primetime is on here... I'm psyched to use it.

Called tech support: the techs had me open the case, unseat the processor heat sink and replace it, and check to make sure all the fans were turning (they were). The resolution on my machine continually shutting down – they're going to send me a new one and I'm supposed to send this one back. I asked about the ATI thing, and they didn't seem to know anything about it. ☹   Now I have to wait another week to have a new PC to use. ☹ ☹
    (I forgot to ask if they'd send it priority shipping...)

Oh well

thx

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