

COVER STORY

98 400-MHZ PENTIUM IIs: THE GREAT LEAP FORWARD

We must have died and gone to PC heaven. Just-introduced 350- and 400-MHz systems really are as fast as Intel promised—up to 21 percent zippier than a PII-333. Better yet, one of these babies, complete with souped-up memory and a blazing-fast bus, could set you back less than three grand.

FEATURES

110 WINDOWS UTILITIES: RX FOR YOUR PC

REVIEW Hey, working with Windows can make any system sick. Our prescription: the sturdiest file managers, compression software, file viewers, disk scanners, uninstallers, and defraggers—plus the best all-in-one utility suites money can buy.

135 YOU'VE GOT E-MAIL

HOW-TO Ping! Another piece of e-mail just hit your in-box. You might not have time to read all your messages, but be sure to read this: 68 tips that will help you block spam, speed up downloads, minimize typing, and streamline your in-box.

158 DIFFERENT NOTES FOR DIFFERENT FOLKS

REVIEW There's a laptop for everyone, or at least that's the way it seems. We tested, tortured, docked, and dropped 14 portables in four flavors—desktop replacements, thin and light models, sub-notes, and ruggedized—including 4 hot new Pentium II notebooks.



98



135

185 CUT YOUR OWN CDs

REVIEW Zip or Jaz drives are for wimps. For permanent portable storage you can share, you need to burn your own CDs. We took 7 recordable and 9 rewritable drives for a spin, and we also got a glimpse at the future—a huge-capacity DVD-ROM drive.

SPECIAL REPORT

211 THE WEB AND YOUR BUSINESS

THE PLUG-AND-PLAY INTRANET Frazzled by endless meetings, a fringe of Post-it notes everywhere, and paper up the wazoo? You need an intranet. New easy-to-use appliances—Web-savvy hardware and software combos—make sharing information with colleagues as simple as launching your browser.

COVER Photography by Marc Simon

Additional material available on PC World Online: www.pcworld.com

TOP OF THE NEWS

54 MICROSOFT OFFICE: CONSTRUCTION IN PROGRESS

What's in the next version of Office? Expect improvements in Web integration and ease of use, but no voice recognition or other bleeding-edge technologies.

58 NEW AFFORDABLE NOTEBOOKS

Priced as low as \$1499, new notes from IBM, Hitachi, and Toshiba are perfectly capable general-business machines. Just don't expect to break any speed records.

60 FIRST V.90 MODEMS

Prepare for tedious upgrades and lagging ISP support.

66 A TAX-FREE NET?

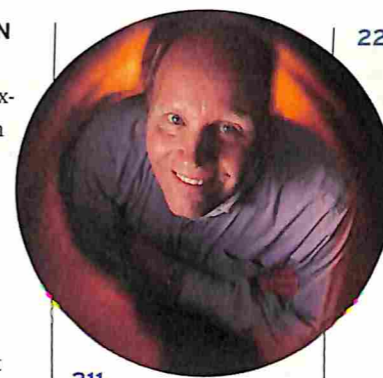
Proposed legislation promises no Net taxes for now but leaves the door open for an online sales tax later.

70 TV SIGNALS BRING THE WEB TO YOUR PC

WaveTop downloads Web pages via your PC's TV tuner.

72 INTEL'S ONE-STOP TECH SUPPORT

AnswerExpress provides Web- and phone-based tech support.



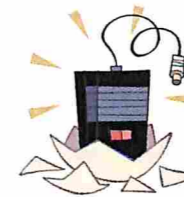
211



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NEW PRODUCTS

- 74 Adobe Photoshop 5.0
- 75 Akia Fusion OneBox 333
- 76 Diamond Monster 3D II, Creative Labs Blaster 3D Voodoo2 graphics boards; Toshiba Libretto 100CT subnotebook
- 80 Canon BJC-50 ink jet; Xerox DocuPrint P12 laser printer
- 82 SyQuest SparQ 1.0GB
- 86 Peachtree Complete Accounting Plus Time & Billing 6.0, MYOB Accounting Plus 7.5, MYOB Premier Accounting 1.1.1
- 88 Plustek OpticPro 9636T scanner; Visioneer ProOCR100 OCR software
- 92 Drive Image 2.0, DiskClone, Image-Cast LE drive copying utilities
- 94 WebTrends Log Analyzer 4.1; Astound 5.0 presentation software



60



158

TOP 100

227 PENTIUM II-333s: THE NEXT HOT DEAL?

online There's a new sweet spot in desktops. Fully loaded PII-333s give you everything you could want for less than \$2800. Case in point: Our new power leader, Gateway's G6-333, turned in the highest PC WorldBench score ever. Not bad for \$2684.

230 POWER DESKTOPS

TOP 20 We're not messing around here. Pentium II-300 and -333 systems monopolize the power chart, occupying 19 of 20 spots. The premier powerhouse and fastest Win 95 PC yet: Gateway's G6-333.

240 BUDGET DESKTOPS

TOP 20 Bargain-price systems from fearless, feisty vendors like Tagram and Micro Express fight their way onto the budget chart. Among the highlights, a Pentium II-333 for a jaw-dropping \$2199.

248 NOTEBOOKS

TOP 10 They won the power wars but lost the battle for battery life. Pentium II notebooks blazed through PC WorldBench tests, only to run out of fuel 30 percent sooner than last month's highest-fliers.

252 HOME PCs

TOP 10 New HP and Midwest Micro PCs can't break Micron, Dell, and Gateway's hammerlock on the Home PC charts.

255 PERSONAL PRINTERS

TOP 10 The new champ, Lexmark's 5700 Color Jetprinter, requires minimum attention and cranks out clean text and color.

259 15-INCH MONITORS

TOP 10 Price cuts propel Samsung and Mitsubishi to the top of the heap.

261 GRAPHICS BOARDS

TOP 10 Two ATI boards—3D Pro Turbo PC2TV and Xpert@Work—capture this month's Best Buys.

263 EXTERNAL, PC CARD MODEMS

TOP 10 The V.90 standard remains murky, but the Best Buy from U.S. Robotics impressed us anyway. IBM's 56K Cellular-capable tops our PC Card chart.

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Windows Tune-Up Guide
28 Utilities Keep Your PC in Tip-Top Condition



Better Than a Zip Drive?
Best Buy Recordable CD Drives for as Little as \$300



Timesaving E-Mail Tricks
Whip AOL, Eudora, Explorer, Netscape Mail Into Shape

FIRST LOOK!

CD ROM

400-MHZ Pentium IIs

**DO YOU NEED
THE SPEED?**



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PLUS How the New 350-MHz Pentium IIs Stack Up