Hard Drive Houdini
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For constantly changing storage needs, Partition Magic lives up to its name.

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I've always wanted the ability to create, delete and resize partitions on my hard drive. In the past, this has meant backing up the entire system, repartitioning the system with FDISK, reformatting the new partitions, and then worst of all, attempting to restore the backup. This last step in particular always makes me anxious: what if the backup is defective, or the tape drive decides to quit just when you need it?

Thus, I've always resisted changing my disk layouts and I find myself constantly hunting for more space in a particular partition. When I discovered that Partition Magic could grant my wish, minus the headache or fear, I just had to give it a spin.

The Guinea Pig

I have one of those slick IBM 701C Thinkpads that came preloaded with Warp. For some reason, IBM elects to ship Thinkpads with a single partition on the 540MB drive. I like to keep at least one partition for Warp, however, and leave the rest of the drive for my applications and data. Repartitioning and reformatting the 540MB drive would mean reloading all the preloaded software and I just don't have the time to do that. IBM ships Thinkpads without disks for the preloaded software, so I would have to use the Diskette Factory to make dozens of diskettes. I decided that my 701C was a perfect candidate to test Partition Magic.

Up and Running

One of my acid tests for applications is to see if I can install and run them without reading anything, so I immediately tossed the manual on the floor and began. Partition Magic installed perfectly from the two high density diskettes and created a folder on the desktop. I then started the program and attempted to change the size of the C: partition. As I expected, I was greeted with the error: "Program is running from that partition." Attempting to change the size of the boot drive or modifying partition information while something is running on that partition would likely yield unpredictable results.

I grabbed the two OS/2 install disks and booted from floppies. (I also reached down and picked up the manual.) It stated that I could run Partition Magic by booting from the OS/2 install disks or from DOS, as long as the partition I was attempting to resize was not the same partition I was running Partition Magic from. I copied the PQMAGICT.EXE file onto the floppy, switched to the floppy drive and ran PQMAGICT. I requested a 55 megabyte partition after drive C:, and the partition was created without any errors. I rebooted OS/2 and everything on my desktop came up perfectly.

Working with the New Partition

I ran FDISK to create the logical partition, drive D:. After a quick reboot, I formatted the D: partition and copied a bunch of files onto D:. Again, everything worked perfectly. I then decided to convert this partition to HPFS. I suppose I could have done this with the FORMAT D:/FS:HPFS command, but it was easier with Partition Magic. (Once converted to HPFS, however, the partition cannot be converted back to FAT.) I rebooted again, but could not access the new HPFS drive. The statement in CONFIG.SYS to load the HPFS file system driver had been commented out, so OS/2 did not load the correct driver. Editing CONFIG.SYS fixed the problem, but I felt that Partition Magic should have scanned and parsed CONFIG.SYS to be sure the HPFS statement was in CONFIG.SYS and that the HPFS.IFS driver was in the \OS2 directory. Using OS/2's FORMAT command, I converted the HPFS drive back to FAT (of course destroying any files on the HPFS drive).

Next, I used FDISK to delete my new partition. Since I wanted to see if I could again resize my C: drive to its original size, I booted from the OS/2 install disks and ran my copy of PQMAGICT from floppy. I resized my C drive backup to its original size, rebooted and checked out the results. Again, Partition Magic performed perfectly, restoring my original partition size as if nothing had ever happened on the drive.

A Fitting Name

I'm skeptical of any program that manipulates my files or data in any way, so I have to admit that I was somewhat worried about running Partition Magic on my systems. The program, however, performed every operation without any problems. For those of us who never have enough disk space and have constantly changing storage needs, Partition Magic lives up to its name.

Don't pass this one up. ♦

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