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~ Spyware & Malware

READY NET GO ... NEWS

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<http://www.readynetgo.net>

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Tip of the Month

PC Recycling

If your office is like most offices, you have at least a few pieces of equipment, such as monitors, printers and keyboards laying around taking up space. Getting rid of these items will not only make you feel more productive, if you donate your equipment to someone who can use it, you will feel great (and may even get a tax donation).

There are many options these days to get rid of unwanted/unused equipment. If the equipment is in working order, you can donate the items to charity, a friend, neighbor or family member. Check with local environmental groups, boys and girls clubs, educational and/or social charities.

If these options don't work out, take the item to a proper waste facility. Since many pieces of hardware contain toxic metals and hazardous components, they are not ideal candidates to sit in a landfill. Check your local yellow pages for companies that specialize in computer equipment removal and recycling.

Should You Upgrade to MS Office 2003?

MS Office is installed on about 75% of all desktop computers. With programs such as MS Word, Excel, Access, PowerPoint and Outlook, this suite of programs has made our work life much easier and efficient. So is your office ready for an upgrade to Office 2003? Let's weigh the pros and cons and find out.

There are many factors to consider when deciding to purchase an upgrade in your software. You have to see if the features of the new software will benefit your organization, which computers are the most likely candidates for an upgrade, and then determine how the upgrade will fit in with your budget.

First, verify that the system requirements for Office 2003 will match the computers you wish to upgrade. Our recommended system requirements for installing MS Office 2003 Professional are: a Pentium IV processor, 512 MB RAM, 1 GB of free hard drive space and either **Windows 2000 (SP3)** or **Windows XP**. For all computers that do not match these criteria, you will have to decide if the Office 2003 suite is worth the extra expense of making any additional hardware/software upgrades.

Let's take a look now at the new and improved features and see if they match your needs.

WWW (Websites Worth Watching)

1. www.aier.org/colcalc.html - Cost of Living Calculator – Go back to 1913 to find out how much things cost
2. cspinet.org/index.html – Center for Science in the Public Interest (Nutrition Advocacy Organization)
3. ntronline.org – Nonprofit Technology Resources – Located in Philadelphia, this group accepts and donates computer equipment

MS Office 2003 Features

There are 5 versions of the Office 2003 series – Professional, Small Business, Standard, Basic, and Student/Teacher. For sake of brevity, we will only discuss some of the more important features in the **Professional version**. For a more complete analysis, visit:

<http://www.microsoft.com/office/editions/howtobuy/compare.mspx>

1) Security

Information Rights Management gives users more options in securing their documents and giving access to others. You can now set restrictions for copying, forwarding and printing documents as well as setting expiration dates for viewing files. Word and Excel 2003 now offer better **password security with encryption** techniques. Outlook 2003 will now prevent your browser from displaying web pages; effective when an email message contains code to automatically connect to a website (a.k.a. web beacon). **Junk mail filtering** has been improved.

2) Organizing

Outlook 2003 has many new features which will help you stay organized. No need to leave Outlook open in order to be notified of incoming email anymore; a window will pop up where you can open or delete the new message. A **new reading pane** in Outlook condenses long messages which helps reduce scrolling. Outlook 2003 gives **more sort options**; e.g., if you create an email and many people respond on different days, you can group the messages and view them all as one thread on one screen. You can also **color-code flags** and assign them to various messages. A follow up folder will keep a running list of these flagged files for you whether the messages are in the Inbox or another folder.

3) Efficiency

Along with Office XP (2002), if you are working on a document and an error occurs, the document is automatically saved and held in a **Recovery Task Pane**. Office 2003 is backwards compatible with all previous versions of Office (except Access 97 – the default file format for Access is still 2000). Word 2003 has a new **Reading Layout View** which includes shorter lines and pages that fit exactly on the screen.

Final Word

This is a snapshot of new and/or improved features in MS Office 2003 Professional. There are some worthwhile options so deciding to upgrade will depend on your current hardware infrastructure, budget, and perceived value of the new features. Keep in mind that the retail cost for Office 2003 Pro is \$499. Upgrading from a previous version costs \$329. The other versions of Office are proportionally cheaper.