

Software review

Microsoft MapPoint 2004

Review by Jerry Marr

System Requirements:

Any version of Windows from 98 on up.

Between 410 MB and 1 GB of disk space depending on features.

CD-ROM drive and all the other normal hardware.

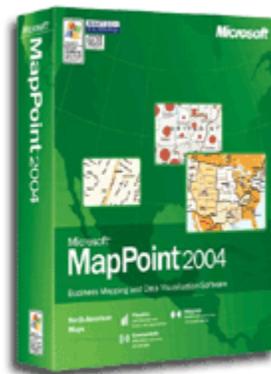
This is how Microsoft describes MapPoint. ‘Microsoft® MapPoint® 2004 is business mapping software that combines powerful mapping and analysis tools with the simplicity of Microsoft Office. Designed for everyday business use, MapPoint allows users to easily locate and illustrate points on maps, integrate maps into Microsoft Office documents, and quickly identify business trends on a map, with either the user’s own data or up-to-date, detailed demographic information.’

I describe it as Microsoft Streets & Trips on steroids. Lots and lots of steroids. If you missed the review of Streets & Trips in last months newsletter then you should take the time to read it now because I am not going to repeat the basic functions covered there. Suffice it to say that MapPoint has the same look and feel and can do anything that Streets & Trips can do plus things you’d never expect.

Demographic and consumer purchase behavior variables:

Even I can see that this feature would have business applications but it is also fun for the home user. Using the Data Mapping Wizard you can use various symbols to display

just about any piece of demographic information you can think of from income to spending or housing prices or ethnic diversity or education and on and on (219 US variables) and you can display this data by State or Zip Code or county or whatever. I would have loved to have this program when I was using the Census website to check out places we were thinking about retiring to rather than looking at city after city.



Other stuff:

MapPoint works and plays well with MS Office in that installation adds MapPoint icons to all of the applications. What you can do varies from program to program. For example you can import your Outlook address book into MapPoint and display all of the entries at the same time. You can

then save that map and bring it up anytime you want. You can also click on the icon in a Contact entry in Outlook and it will open MapPoint and show you the address on a map. (Outlook Express will do something similar but it uses the internet and the map is not nearly as detailed.) I had a problem testing this feature so I

opened an online support incident and a rep named Amber Li was very responsive and did her best to be helpful. As it turned out it was a problem in Outlook where entries imported from the Outlook Express address book (or anywhere else) did not get a default country filled in so the address passed to MapPoint was not correct. I was able to correct this but it was an Outlook problem not a MapPoint problem and I was pleased with the support I received (even though I found the answer myself).

The other applications will let you import a MapPoint map directly into whatever document you are creating. I tried this with Outlook, Excel, Word, Publisher, and PowerPoint but did not try Access. The maps are very readable and scalable.

Bottom line:

I really like this program even though I must admit that as a home user there are a lot of advanced and sophisticated features that I have not used. I would suggest looking at: www.microsoft.com/mappoint/2004/default.aspx to get a feel for all of the things I have not mentioned.

The only problem I found with this program is the price (somewhere between \$240 and \$299). I realize that is not a lot of money for a business program but it’s high for a home user. What I would like to see Microsoft do is to add the ability to import contact entries and the demographic data to Streets & Trips and call it Streets & Trips Plus. I’m sure there a lot of home users who’d be willing to pay a little more for the additional features without needing to go all the way up to MapPoint.



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Tip for August, 2004

Larry Gobble

President, Twin Lakes Computer Users Group

www.tlcug-ark.org

Have you recently installed a photo display program on your computer and now you can't open your digital pictures in anything but the new program? How do you change this back to the photo display program you originally used? Some programs provide the means to edit and enhance your photos or show them as slide shows, and others do not.

When you install a new program, like Windows Picture & Fax Viewer, it usually asks if you want to associate various file formats with that program. Windows uses such associations to decide which program should be used to open certain types of files. Often the new program setup procedure pre-selects a long list of image file types so that it will be used to open many types of image files. File types are identified to the computer by the file extension that follows the file name. These are usually JPEGs in the form Filename.jpg. However, photos and images can also have extensions like .tif, .gif, .bmp and many others.

Don't worry. It's not that hard to fix. If you need to restore the file types to their former program association, Windows XP makes that easy. First, go to Windows Explorer (Start >>All Programs >>Accessories >>Windows Explorer).

Find your pictures folder and click it. Select any picture on the right with the extension you want to change, such as jpg.

Right-click the file. Point to Open With, and another menu will open. Click Choose Program. You'll be given a selection of programs. Pick the one you want to use to

open JPEGs. If that program is not in the list, click the Browse button and find it. At the bottom, click the box next to "Always use the selected program to open this kind of file." Click OK. Now, anytime you open a JPEG type file with the .jpg extension, that program will be used.

This process will work with any file association, not just pictures. When installing any new programs, it is important to watch associations. Software publishers like to have control over as many associations as possible, because that increases the perceived value of their programs. Generally, it is best to associate new programs only with the files they will be creating. In many cases, additional associations have already been checked for you and need to be modified.

Changing the program-to-extension associations is not really a big deal because they are so easy to change in Windows XP.

The Cook's Corner

Cappuccino Chocolate Chip Muffins

Submitted by Tammy Cozad, HQ Team

Ingredients

Caribbean Beach Bread Mix™

3 oz. pkg. instant vanilla pudding

2 eggs

3/4 cup water

1 Tbsp. instant coffee dissolved in 2 Tbsp. boiling water

3/4 cup mini chocolate chips

Method

Combine first 5 ingredients; fold in chips. Fill paper-lined muffin cups two-thirds full. Bake at 375° for 15-20 minutes. Makes 12-14 muffins.

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* No such thing as a free lunch: Although nobody in their right mind would give their name to a spammer, people do it all the time. When you enter a contest, download software, or send an e-card, although it appears to be free you are actually paying with your email address. Vendors collect email addresses, compile lists, and sell them to spammers.

* Internet Explorer: Internet Explorer allows Web sites to automatically install software on demand. While this feature can be very convenient, it also opens a whopping security hole for Spyware, viruses, and Trojan horses. Security-conscious users should disable the Install On Demand feature. Click Tools, Internet Options, and the Advanced tab. Locate the Enable Install On Demand checkboxes and uncheck both boxes to protect your system. Apply your changes and click OK.

* Adjust your mouse: If you want to adjust the controls on your mouse-maybe the pointer moves too slowly-it's easy to change the settings. Click Start and then Control Panel. Select the Printers And Other Hardware icon, click Mouse to bring up the Mouse Properties dialog box, and then choose the Pointer Options tab. You'll see several options: Motion, Snap To, and Visibility. Under Motion, drag the slider bar to your preferred speed and click OK.

Digital Corner

New Rentals

This month we have added several new titles to our rental library. If you want to know more about Photoshop Elements 2 then check out one of these books: Photoshop Elements 2 Restoration and Retouching, Teach Yourself Visually Restoration and Retouching with Photoshop Elements 2.0, How To Do Everything with Photoshop Elements 2, Adobe Photoshop Elements 2 – One-Click Wow! And Photoshop Elements 2: 50 Ways to Create Cool Pictures.

And on DVD we have: Photoshop Elements for beginners, and Photoshop Elements for photographers.

Thoughts



Well, here we are enjoying this wonderful August weather. I hope everyone has been enjoying the great outdoors. I'd like to bring you up to speed with regards to the annual Holiday Party, yes that time you year is fast approaching. The committee has been hard at work to bring you great prizes. At the August 14th meeting we will unveil the first prize for the drawing. I think you will all be impressed. I'd like to say a big "***Thank You***" to Robin Seidenberg for finding all our great prizes, and to JJ and Dorothy Sutherland for submitting the necessary paperwork for the rebates and storing all the prizes.

Now I'm asking for your assistance. Due to personal commitments, I'm finding it difficult to keep up the duties of the News Journal Editor. I'm looking, for someone to take over this rewarding position. Please contact me at (847) 571-7258 or mmcenery@sbcglobal.net

Hope to see you all at the next meeting
M.j.

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The Music Wars

Wayne Steen, *Q BITS* contributing editor, *Quad-Cities Computer Society*, Bettendorf, Iowa 4/27/04

The music industry is at war with itself and its fans. Who ever thought that a rock and roll band would sue its own fans? Talk about the ultimate in corporate greed. The music industry is full of corporate greed.

However, fear not my loyal readers help is on the way. Steve Jobs of Apple, Bill Gates of Microsoft, and Wal-Mart are coming to our rescue. I feel better already. Apple has already introduced iTunes and the iPod. Soon, Microsoft and Wal-Mart will come out with their own online music services. Roxio has brought Napster back from the dead. Napster was once the largest illegal file-sharing service on the Internet. Roxio has now brought it back as a good file-sharing service that pays the record companies and artists for their music. Real Networks has their own online music service and Music Match has their own service. My head is spinning round, round, round.

Apple

Steve Jobs and Apple are the first ones out of the gate in the online music services race. However, remember back in the 1980s when Apple was the top dog in the computer box wars? They eventually lost out to Bill Gates. Will history repeat itself or has Steve learned from his past mistakes? iTunes is currently the world's largest online music services company. They have recently added the muscle of over 25,000,000 AOL customers to their arsenal. iTunes works on both Apple and Windows computers. You must have Windows 2000 or Windows XP on your rPC in order to use iTunes. The download is simple and without a hassle. All you have to do is go to and click on the iTunes link. All you have to do is enter your e-mail address and then download the iTunes software. iTunes does not charge a monthly fee that all the other online music services charge. However, you can only listen to a 30-second clip from the song that you are interested in. To listen

to the whole song you must buy the song for 99 cents.

You can buy as many songs as you want through the Apple Music store. You will have to enter your credit card with Apple music store in order to download music from iTunes. You can burn songs onto an unlimited number of CDs for your personal use. You can listen to your songs on an unlimited number of iPods. (I will talk about iPods in a minute.)

You can play your songs on up to three Macintosh computers or Windows PCs. You can also set up an account for your children. Kids now have a legal way to download their favorite songs with music allowance accounts. You set up the account using your credit card and then set up a monthly allotment of how many songs your kids can buy. Once they reach the monthly limit (and they will reach that monthly limit), they cannot download any more songs.

Another nice new feature from iTunes is you can now purchase audio books. At the time of this writing, Harry Potter

books were not available from iTunes.

Napster

Napster is a monthly service that you pay \$9.95 a month for downloading songs. You can download as many songs as you want to your computer. However, if you want to burn the songs to a CD or digital device such as the Dell Music Jukebox then you must pay 99 cents a song. Real Networks and Music Match also use the Napster model.

I like having the ability to download as many songs as I like (or how many songs my hard drive will handle) without having to pay 99 cents a song. If you want to burn the songs to a CD or a portable digital device then the Apple model may be more to your liking.

Problems

iTunes will only burn to CDs and Apple's own iPod. The iPod is a 15 GB device that sells for \$299.00 and will carry almost 7,000 songs. Let me see, 7,000 times 99 cents equals about \$7,000.00. This is a very good moneymaker for Apple. The Dell Digital Jukebox Music Player is very similar to the Apple iPod and costs \$249.00. The math is the same, about \$7,000.00 for 7,000 songs. The problem is that iPod and Dell do not play nice with each other. If you use iTunes, then you are going to want to buy the iPod. If you use Real Network, Music Match or Napster then you are going to want to use the Dell Digital Jukebox

Music Player. The biggest problem is that not all famous artists are available for download with one of the online service providers. Therefore, you may only be able to listen to a favorite artist of yours on iTunes and another favorite artist of yours may only be available on Napster.

Once again, the consumer is on the short end of the stick with all of the big boys wanting to use their own standards. They are telling us, it is their ball, and you are going to play the game by their rules. We have danced to this song before!

Conclusion

Who will win the music wars? Let us do some calculations. I remember being able to buy KISS records on sale at Music Land for \$3.99. Let us do some math. Twelve songs on a typical album divided into \$3.99 equals 33 cents. Today we pay 99 cents for a song or \$9.95 for the whole album. However, that is far better than the \$18.99 suggested retail price of CDs that are currently on sale in stores. Let me see, \$18.99 divided by 12 equals \$1.58 a song. Ouch! I do not know who will win the music wars, but I do know who has lost. The music store retailers and the consumers have lost. I am against illegal file sharing, but I am also against record companies suing 12-year-old girls.

e-mail



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Happy Birthday

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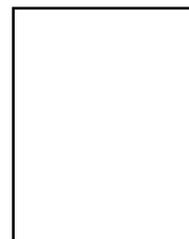
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