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HEADLINE: DOS 5.0 to Access More Memory on 286s, 386s;
Updated MS-DOS Will Use Extended Memory

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to
this report.

BODY:

A new version of DOS that accesses significantly more memory is likely headed
for an early release, according to beta testers, but Microsoft will only confirm
the product will ship by the end of the year.

The update, called MS-DOS 5.0, will use extended memory on 286- and 386-based
PCs with at least 1 megabyte of RAM to hold much of its operating system code,
freeing memory for user applications, according to Mark Chestnut, Microsoft
product manager for DOS. (See "Microsoft Confirms DOS Revision for 1990," April
30, Page 3.)

Although Chestnut would not say how much additional memory will be available,
beta users said DOS 5.0 leaves as much as 630K free, depending on the system
configuration.

Windows 3.0 users who run DOS programs will benefit as well because the
memory gains are reflected in Windows' DOS virtual machines (VMs), Chestnut
said. This will reduce DOS VMs in Windows 3.0, which typically take 300K to
400K, by "about 40K," a beta user said.

DOS 5.0's smaller kernel benefits even users of 8088-based PCs because it
will take less conventional memory, Chestnut added.

Chestnut confirmed users' claims of improved size and speed of the user
shell. The shell is reduced from 3 1/2K to a mere 1K, users said. DOS 5.0
retains all the major features of DOS 4.01, including support for disk
partitions as large as 2 gigabytes.

Support for the Virtual Control Program Interface (VCPI) will also be
included in a version of the EMM386 LIM emulator program to ship with DOS 5.0,
Chestnut said.

Chestnut would not describe some features he said were left out of the first
beta release. However, beta users said the complete version will likely have a
task-switching scheduler similar to Quarterdeck Office Systems' Desqview and
will replace venerable GW Basic with a version of Microsoft Quick Basic.

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One new feature in the current beta version hailed by users is an unformat utility that lets users completely recreate the previous hard disk configuration after reformatting. Other features users said are in the current beta include a new version of the DIR command that supports searching by file names, dates, and extensions; a file search utility; and a command line edit and recall facility.

Microsoft is reportedly working with OEMs on a ROM version for laptop PCs that will add as much as an hour to each battery charge by shutting down parts, such as hard disks, when they are not in use.

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