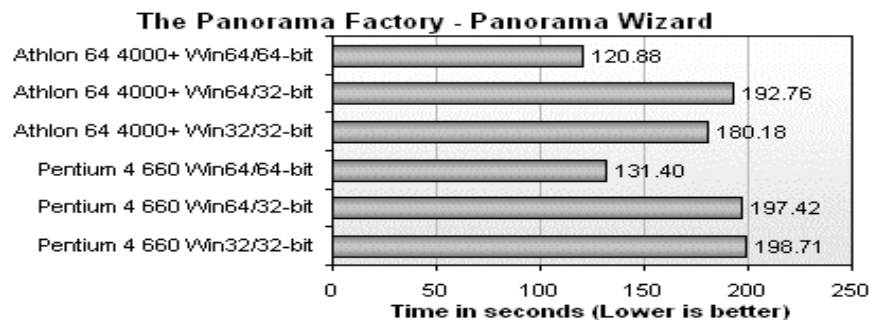


### SOFTWARE

#### Windows XP Pro 64 and W2003 Server 64...

Microsoft has announced that the 64bit version of Windows XP Professional would be available at the beginning of April and the 64bit version of Windows 2003 at the end of the month as Release Candidates. These versions are for x86-64 hardware use and are not the same as the previous release for iTanium hardware. Microsoft encouraged independent software developers to start tailoring their applications to include the ability to take advantage of the extra processing power. Compucon will have a preview of the software and update channel members in due course. The 64-bit versions have been a long time coming. Compucon has offered Dual Opteron and Athlon64 based systems (Vanadium and Thunderbird respectively) since August 2004. 64-bit coding won't bring us 2 times the performance overnight. The 64-bit extensions to the instruction set architecture (ISA), including AMD64 and Intel EM64T offer some tangible benefits with few drawbacks. These extensions offer a much larger memory address space, bring a cleaner programming model with performance benefits, and retain backward compatibility with existing 32-bit applications. We show a performance comparison chart and some statements from techreport.com herewith. These early benchmarks indicate that the x86-64 ISA holds significant promise for better performance when applications are ported to it. The benefits aren't uniform or universal, but they can be fairly compelling. For technical and scientific computing, the combination of additional registers, a cleaner programming model, and a larger memory address space adds up to a slam dunk. 64 bits is the way to go. The same is likely true for servers.



#### Windows XP SP2 Blocker Removal...

Microsoft provided the ability to temporarily block the delivery of Windows XP Service Pack 2 (SP2) via Automatic Update and Windows Update in August 2004. Beginning 12 April 2005 this temporary blocking mechanism will expire and systems with Automatic Update enabled or interactively download SP2 via Windows Update will begin receiving SP2. Following is the URL (without spaces) for the current list of common applications with SP2 compatibility issues. There are NO current applications versions on this list. Therefore upgrades to SP2 compatible versions should be available for everything listed. This list is not exhaustive and only deals with widely used applications.  
<http://support.microsoft.com/default.aspx?kbid=884130&product=windowsxpsp2>

After 12 April, Compucon will continue to offer SP1 installations for customers who manage their own updates with tools like the Microsoft Software Update Service (SUS) or those who simply disable updates because they only use specific applications that run in a secure environment.

#### Panel Beater Quotation Tools Exclusively...

CNZ has been offered the exclusive distributorship of an Australian

developed software called FlexiQuote targeting the panel beating trade. The software assists panel beaters to produce quotations to meet insurance company requirements. It is a very niche and narrow market. CNZ does not intend to put the product into the Compucon channel and will approach panel beaters through their trade associations. If you wish to know more about this software, email [editor@cnz.co.nz](mailto:editor@cnz.co.nz)

#### Firefox White Listing Pop-up Ads...

Pop-up ads when we browse the web can be very annoying. The popular open-source browser Firefox 1.0 contains a pop-up blocker but it does not handle pop-ups launched by plug-ins such as Flash and Java. Firefox 1.0 disables the blocker in the default set-up because it would affect Web sites that rely on plug-in triggered pop-ups for legitimate functionality. The patch to be released will resolve this issue by enabling users to white-list sites where pop-ups are needed. The above information is obtained from a personal web log and is not official.