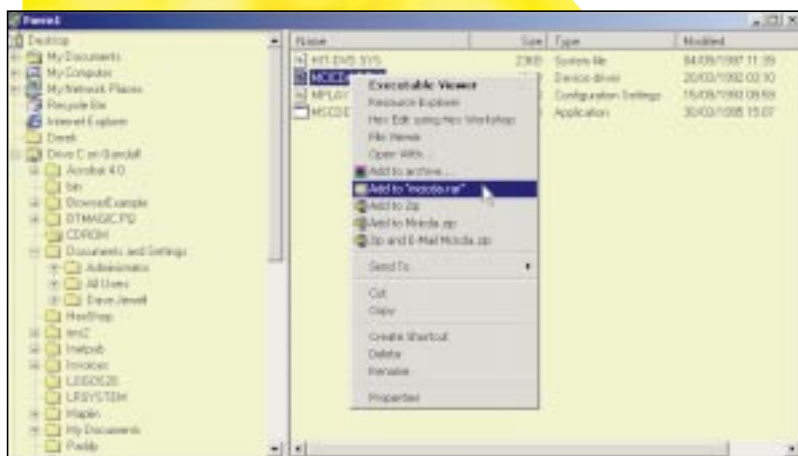




PC Plus

The new Explorer components in SysTools 3 make it dead easy to create Explorer-style interfaces and custom file dialogs with just a few mouse clicks.



programming

TURBOPOWER SYSTOOLS 3

SysTools enables you to create Explorer-style interfaces in a couple of mouse clicks

Minimum requirements Pentium II with 16MB RAM, Win95/98/2000 or NT 4.0

Tested on Pentium 500 with 256MB RAM, Win2000

Publisher TurboPower Software Co, www.turbopower.com

Additional information A trial version should be available for download from the TurboPower Web site shortly

PRICE £182 EX VAT £155 SUPPLIER QBS Software PHONE 020 8956 8000 WWW www.qbss.com/

TurboPower is the creator of a number of different component libraries for Delphi and C++ Builder. These include Async Professional (serial comms), Abbrevia (data compression) and the elusive LockBox data encryption product which will hopefully reach these shores soon, now that the US Government has finally adopted a less xenophobic approach to the dissemination of high-strength Data Encryption Standard (DES) encryption algorithms.

As the name suggests, SysTools is a set of system-oriented components. New in this version are a set of so-called Explorer controls, enabling you to easily implement tree and list views within an application which emulate the appearance and

like it's been written by Microsoft), invoke the Windows 'Browse for Folder' dialog, easily create Windows shortcuts and so forth.

Network management components

Another newcomer is a set of network management components which effectively wrap much of the functionality of LAN Manager for easy access by Delphi and C++ Builder applications. For example, there are classes and methods to create users and groups (assuming you're running with the appropriate privileges) set user passwords, user log-on times, and so on. Developers often need to write code which implements regular expression

matching – not a trivial task. Here again, TurboPower come to the rescue with a handy regular expression matching 'engine'. You can call it directly, or you can use a Wrapper component which simplifies access to the low level routines.

Interestingly, the

regular expression engine uses streams for input and output, meaning that it's easy to, say, implement code which reads a text file of arbitrary size, performing on-the-fly textual replacement, and spitting out a new version of the file.

Unusually for TurboPower (they've been a 100 per cent Delphi/C++ Builder shop until now) SysTools 3 includes the SysTools COM Object. This is a small COM server which makes some SysTools routines available to other, non-VCL development environments such as Visual C++, Visual Basic, and others. The server is protected with a license code (known only to purchasers of SysTools) so as to prevent unauthorised use.

Yet another recruit to the SysTools library is a text to HTML converter. Using this component, you can take program source code (or anything

else, for that matter) from a file or stream, converting it into syntax-highlighted HTML according to the rules that you specify. Because the functionality of this component is available from the aforementioned COM object, you can invoke it from an ASP script on your Web site, thereby serving up syntax-highlighted code to client browsers. This approach is far simpler than hand-converting the code.

In addition to all the above, SysTools 3 also adds the ability to spawn new processes from your Delphi/C++ Builder application, optionally waiting until the child process has terminated before returning to the caller. If you don't wait, you can fire an event to indicate that the child has terminated. There's a set of barcode components which make it dead easy to generate (and print) barcodes from an application, supporting all the major formats. The US POSTNET format (used to encode US ZIP codes) is also supported. An enormous (around 1,000 pages!) reference manual comes with the library, and many read-to-run demo programs are also included.

Finally, for those still targeting the 16-bit Windows platform, many of the SysTools components are implemented under Delphi 1.0 where it's possible to do so. As with all TurboPower products, full source code is included.

Dave Jewell

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behaviour of Windows Explorer. Drop a couple of these components on to a form, connect them up, and you've got something which looks very much like Explorer, complete with those right-click context menus which appear when you install tools such as WinZip, WinRAR and so on. You can also use these components to create your own custom versions of the Microsoft Open/Close dialogs; one of the sample programs provided shows how to create an Open dialog which displays preview information for the selected file, even showing versioning information when an executable is selected. In addition to the Explorer controls, version 3 also introduces a set of what they call 'Shell Access' controls. With these, you can create programs that use the standard Microsoft 'about' box (making your program look

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VERDICT

TURBOPOWER SYSTOOLS 3

For A set of very useful Delphi/C++ Builder components, designed to tackle a wide range of system programming issues.

Against Nothing significant

Range of features.....9

Ease of use.....8

Documentation.....7

Performance.....9

Value for money.....8

8/10