

What is this “web site” thing you are talking about?

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One reaction I’ve seen when people learn about all the compatibility work done in the Windows 95 kernel is to say,

Why not add code to the installer wizard [alas, page is now 404] which checks to see if you’re installing SimCity and, if so, informs you of a known design flaw, then asks you to visit Electronic Arts’ webpage for a patch?

Let’s ignore the issue of the “installer wizard”; most people do not go through the Add and Remove Programs control panel to install programs, so any changes to that control panel wouldn’t have helped anyway.

But what about detecting that you’re running SimCity and telling you to get a patch from Electronic Arts’ web site?

Remember, this was 1993. Almost nobody had web sites. The big thing was the “Information Superhighway”. (Remember that? I don’t think it ever got built; the Internet sort of stole its thunder.) If you told somebody, “Go to Electronic Arts’ web site and download a patch”, you’d get a blank stare. What’s a “web site”? How do I access that from Prodigy? I don’t have a modem. Can you mail me their web site?

In Windows XP, when Windows detects that you’re running a program with which it is fundamentally incompatible, you do get a pop-up window directing you to the company’s web site. But that’s because it’s now 2005 and even hermits living in caves have email addresses.

In 1993, things were a little different.

(Heck, even by 1995 things most people did not have Internet access and those few that did used modems. Requiring users to obtain Internet access in order to set the computer clock via NTP would have been rather presumptuous.)

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