At last you can turn off the USB 2.0 balloon

devblogs.microsoft.com/oldnewthing/20070821-01

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One of the more annoying messages in Windows XP[1] is the "This USB device can perform faster" balloon that appears whenever you plug in a USB 2.0-capable device into a USB 1.0 port. When I click on that balooon, I get a message that says, "Sorry, you don't have any USB 2.0 ports. You'll have to install one to be able to take full advantage of this device."[2]

Yeah, that's really nice, but one of my machines is a laptop, so its USB ports can't be upgraded. And my desktop computer at the time had an older motherboard that predated USB 2.0. The really annoying part was that there was no way to turn off the balloon. "Yes, I know I inserted the device into a USB 1.0 port, but this computer doesn't have any USB 2.0 ports, so stop bugging me already."

It actually got the point that I went out and bought a USB 2.0 adapter card just to shut up the stupid balloon.[3]

Thank goodness that in Windows Vista, the USB folks realized how annoying it is to show a balloon that yells at you for something you can't do anything about, and they added a way to disable the pop-up.

Nitpicker's Corner

[1]Although this statement takes the grammatical form of a statement of fact, it is actually a statement of opinion. Other people may legitimately disagree with this opinion. Whether the message is in fact "one of the more annoying messages in Windows XP" is irrelevant to the story; the employment of this statement of opinion is rhetorical and serves a useful storytelling purpose, namely to serve as an interesting introduction and to establish a context for elaboration. It does not establish the official position of Microsoft Corporation regarding how annoying that message is.

[2]That is not literally what the message says, but the underlying meaning is comparable. The message text has been paraphrased for rhetorical purposes (to create a more informal tone) and for time-saving purposes (to save me the trouble of having to re-create the message and carefully transcribe the message word-for-word).

[3]Again, the use of the word "stupid" here is rhetorical, indicating my level of frustration and not attempting to establish the official Microsoft position on the intelligence of the balloon or the people responsible for it.

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