

Why was the RAM drive removed from Windows 95?

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Commenter Travis Owens asks, “Why was the RAM drive removed from Windows 95?”

As with many of these types of accusatory questions, this comes with a false hidden assumption, in this case, that the RAM drive was in Windows 95 to begin with.

Remember that Windows 95 introduced a new driver model, so any RAM drive would have had to be written from scratch. (Well, okay, you could use the old 16-bit RAM drive, but then you’d be going through the real-mode mapper, at which point your performance would go down the tubes.) As you admitted, it was a very niche feature that usually hurts but can sometimes help in very specific circumstances. Which Windows 95 file system feature would you have cut so that the geeks could have their RAM drive? Should we even be showing RAM drives to typical users, who would just turn it on without understanding its consequences, winding up with a computer that ran worse than if it had never been there?

If you want a RAM drive, you can sit down with the DDK and write one. But the Windows 95 folks decided that adding support for SCSI hard drives would be a more effective use of the time and skills of the Windows 95 storage device driver development team—which, as I recall, consisted of three people.

Mind you, if you really want your precious RAM drive, I’ve heard rumors that it’s tucked away on your Windows Server 2003 CD under the names RAMDISK.IN_ and RAMDISK.SY_, and that there is a way to add a RAM drive to your Windows PE disk. (And no, I haven’t heard any rumors about Windows Server 2008.)

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