

# are we ready for Y2K?

The year 2000 (Y2K) phenomenon is the term used to describe the possible failure of Information Technology Systems before, on or after January 1st, 2000. This potential exists because of the common practice of using two digits, instead of four, to represent the year in computer databases, software applications, hardware, and electronic components. Difficulties will arise in the Year 2000 when our systems will be unable to differentiate it from the year 1900. The fact that Y2K is a leap year unlike most other century dates complicates the Y2K system repairs.

Being part of The Ministry of Municipal Affairs & Agriculture, The Centre for GIS was represented in a state level supreme committee of the concerned executives to organize and undertake the efforts to enter the new millenium. The supreme committee assigned the technical part of its mandate to a technical committee which discussed the issues involved in the Y2K problem concerned to the environment of Computer Hardware, Software, and non-computing electronic devices in use and to frame a strategy to be followed in tackling the Y2K problem.

The following five main fields were identified as the areas that are likely to be affected by the Y2K problem:

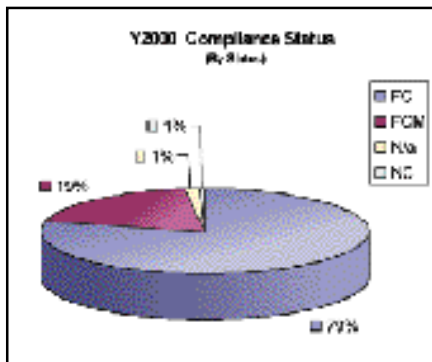
- 1- DataBase & Application Development Tools
- 2- Personal Computers Hardware & Software
- 3- Operating Systems & Layered Products
- 4- Servers & Network Equipment
- 5- Non Computing digital devices (i.e. Faxes, Copiers, etc.)

Each member in the committee was given the responsibility to study, investigate and provide the details on the status of the products compliance to Y2K and give his recommendations. The investigation was agreed to cover the following aspects:

- 1- Awareness of the Y2K phenomena
- 2- Assessment of the severity of the repairs needed by performing an inventory of the items investigated.
- 3- Comparison between the guidelines prepared by the manufacturers and the inventory of the questioned items.
- 4- A recommendation list is generated based on the comparison mentioned above.

Based on these aspects, it was possible to perform an extensive hardware inventory and set the standards of the hardware purchased from now until Year 2000 and prepare a plan for testing and replacing existing hardware and Software with potential Y2K bug. Eventually, an estimate of the manpower needed for the Y2K plan was prepared.

The cost aspects related to the Y2k plan were divided into Manpower, Licenses, Hardware and Networking. As for in-house developed software, it was divided into software that is to be Fully Re-engineered and another that is to be partially modified.



*This Y2K compliance chart for PCs shows that 79% of PCs are fully compliant and 19% are fully compliant with minor issues and 1% non-compliant and 1% not accessed due to insufficient hardware data*