

# Preface

The book you hold in your hands originally arose from need. Professionally, we felt the need to answer both basic and not-so-basic questions about the performance of Intel-based computer systems running various versions of the Microsoft Windows 2000 operating system, including both Windows NT and Windows XP. We expect that most readers of this book are seeking answers to common questions about computer and operating system performance out of similar personal or professional curiosity. This book, in fact, evolved from a seminar intended to address such questions that one of the authors developed and taught over a number of years.

The material in the book is the result of research performed over the last five years on successive versions of the Windows NT operating system, beginning with Version 3.5 and continuing to the present day. (As this book was going to press, we were experimenting with early versions of Windows XP. As best we can currently determine, almost all of the information provided here regarding Windows 2000 performance can also be applied to the 32-bit version of Windows XP.) Much of the material here is original, derived from our observations and analysis of running systems, some of which may contradict official documentation and the writings and recommendations of other authorities. Rest assured that we carefully reviewed any findings reported here that run counter to the received wisdom.

While we strive to make the discussion here definitive, there are necessarily many places where our conclusions are tentative and subject to modification should new information arise. We expect readers to be willing to challenge our conclusions in the face of strong empirical evidence to the contrary, and urge you to communicate to us (via the publisher) when you discover errors of commission or omission, for which we assume full responsibility. If you observe behavior on one of your Windows 2000 machines that seems to contradict what we say in the book, please share those observations with us. With your help, we should be able to produce a subsequent version of this book that is even more authoritative.