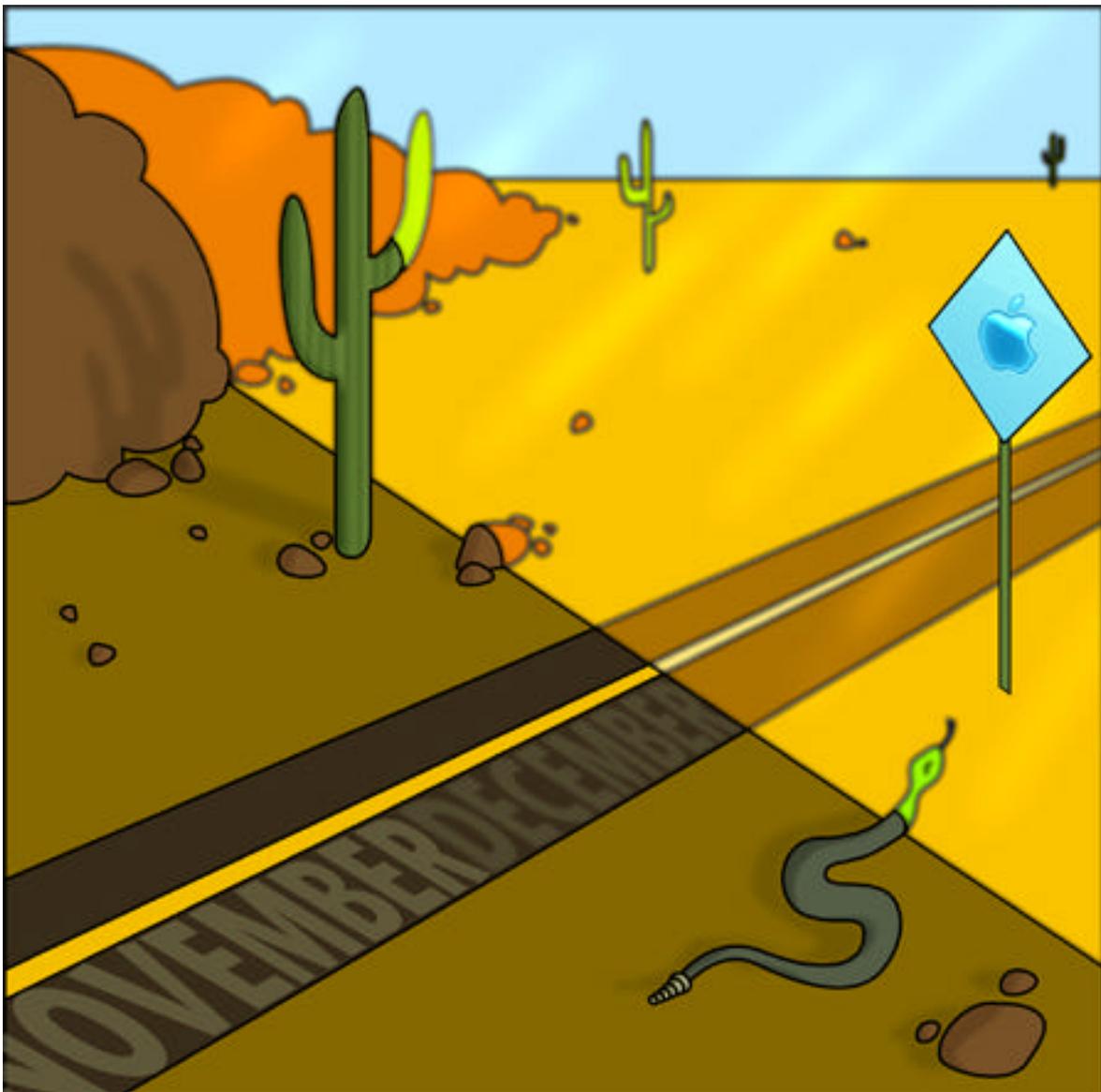


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Cover by:

Lonnie Houghton

[<lonnie@mymac.com>](mailto:lonnie@mymac.com)

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110 Burr St., Battle Creek, MI 49015-2525**

Production Staff

•[Tim Robertson](mailto:publisher@mymac.com)• [<publisher@mymac.com>](mailto:publisher@mymac.com)

Publisher / Creator / Owner

Editor-in-Chief

•[Jim Moravec](mailto:copyeditor@mymac.com)• [<copyeditor@mymac.com>](mailto:copyeditor@mymac.com)

Copy Editor / Contributing Editor

•[Adam Karneboge](mailto:webmaster@mymac.com)• [<webmaster@mymac.com>](mailto:webmaster@mymac.com)

Webmaster / Contributing Editor

•[Barbara Bell](mailto:PR@mymac.com)• [<PR@mymac.com>](mailto:PR@mymac.com)

Director, Public Relations

•Jobs & Woz •

Inspiration

Artwork Created by:

•[Mike Gorman](mailto:nycgorman@aol.com)• [<nycgorman@aol.com>](mailto:nycgorman@aol.com)

•[Lonnie Houghton](mailto:lonnie@mymac.com)• [<lonnie@mymac.com>](mailto:lonnie@mymac.com)

•[Bill Perry](mailto:billperry@pobox.com)• [<billperry@pobox.com>](mailto:billperry@pobox.com)

•[Alan Dingman](mailto:adingman@aol.com)• [<adingman@aol.com>](mailto:adingman@aol.com)

•[Tim Robertson](mailto:publisher@mymac.com)• [<publisher@mymac.com>](mailto:publisher@mymac.com)

•[Adam Karneboge](mailto:webmaster@mymac.com)• [<webmaster@mymac.com>](mailto:webmaster@mymac.com)

•[Russ Walkowich](mailto:editor@mymac.com)• [<editor@mymac.com>](mailto:editor@mymac.com)

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and the
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(To keep us sane!)

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SPECIALS

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A Few Words

From the Editor and Publisher
(russ) (tim)

•By Tim Robertson <Publisher@mymac.com>•

FileMaker 101 turns 20!

This issue marks the 20th installment of Fenton Jones' popular FileMaker 101 series. It's hard for me to believe, but it was way back in issue #35 of March, 1998 that Fenton started his awesome instructional series here exclusively in My Mac. Coincidentally, that March we were all talking about Apple's decision to dissolve Claris Corp and fold it back into Apple. (For new Mac users, Claris was the parent of FileMaker and ClarisWorks—now known as AppleWorks.

Thanks for a great 20 columns, Fenton! I look forward to the next 20!

WOW!



So there I was, checking out the website of one of my heroes, Steve Wozniak. (Yes, the co-founder and electronics genius who, with Steve Jobs, founded Apple Computer!) And what do you think I found on his Mac Links page under the title, "Our Current Favorite Link?" You guessed it, My Mac! They had this to say:



Wow. All I can say, for myself and the whole family here at My Mac, is thank you!

Web Page Statistics

A while back, I shared with you some of the numbers I gleaned from our own web page statistics. Recently, I took another look and found a few things that were not only interesting, but that gave me a new perspective. Here they are:

65.7% of all visitors to mymac.com uses a Macintosh.

10.5% were Windows 95 users.

Windows 98 made up 9.2%.

NT systems made up 7.8%.

0.3% labored under Windows 3.1.

WebTV comprised 0.2%.

Linux OS was 0.2%.

"Other" filled in the remainder.

By these numbers, nearly 28% of the visitors to our website were on Windows machines! Funny when you realize we're a magazine dedicated to and focused on the Macintosh computer market. I also find it amusing that there were more Window 3.1 users visiting our site than Linux users, when I've heard so much about the "explosive" growth of Linux.

Also reported is which web browser people are using. Here are those numbers from most to least:

19.3% Netscape 4.6

17.1% Explorer 4.5
13.1% Netscape 4.0
10.9% Netscape 4.5
9.8% Netscape 4.7
9.5% Explorer 5.0 (Windows-only)
8.5% Explorer 4.0
2.4% Netscape 3.0
2.2% AOL 4.0
0.6% iCab 1.7
0.4% Explorer 3.0
0.1% Cyberdog 2.0

Hmm.... While Cyberdog is a pretty tiny number, it was still somewhat a surprise to see people are actually still using it. What a promising product Apple had...

The last thing I want to share are the search strings people used from portals, like Yahoo!, to get to our site. Some of these I can understand, but some...

Here are a few of the things people were looking for. Their search strings are in bold characters, and what my thoughts are in plain text.

Searches from Netscape's search engine:

review Corel draw

Okay, I can understand this one. People are interested in buying Corel Draw, but want to read a review of it first. We have that review!

pictures of washing and waxing a car

Huh? Netscape said we had a picture of people washing and waxing a car? Besides, why would someone want a picture of that? Perhaps someone was having a car wash, and needed a picture for a website or something...

Spider Man Comic books

Again, how the heck did WE show up in this search?

sears super sale

Come see the softer side of My Mac...

Searches from InfoSeek's search engine:

cd-rw cd-r cd-rom mp-rom cd-mp

Welcome to acronym central!

FileMaker fields as functional html

Hey, Mr. Fenton (FileMaker 101) Jones, see what people want here?

crash or crack

I can understand this one. I have almost cracked a few times after a computer crash myself.

freemac.com

Yeah, sure. No such thing as a FREE Mac, people. There is always some catch.

Searches from Excite:

Mac G3 Cases

I think someone had an ashtray too close to their tower here, and is looking for a replacement.

mac AND wireless

One word, AirPort!

blast mac

NOW I know why all these Window users are coming to My Mac! They're looking for ammunition against us Mac users in a debate! HA! And they end up at a pro-Mac site! HA-HA!

Searches from Webcrawler's search engine:

mac p.c

The horror, THE HORROR!!

i mac

No no no, that is iMac; it's just one word. And notice the small case "I" followed by the uppercase "M."

Well, what do you think? How many sites do you visit which have nothing to do with what you were looking for? Do these search engines really work all that well? Have you ever been looking for one thing, but ended up at a site with a subject more interesting than what you were searching?

Drop me a line and let me know!

Tim Robertson

<Publisher@mymac.com>

SETI & My Mac

Are you a **SETI** user? Hey, if you are, why not join our team here at My Mac? Stop by our website, or go directly to http://setiathome.ssl.berkeley.edu/cgi-bin/cgi?cmd=team_lookup&name=MyMac and join up!

•[Tim Robertson](mailto:Publisher@mymac.com) • Publisher@mymac.com

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Hey, we love your email, and this page is where we prove it! So if you have a comment, question, opinion, or complaint about anything related to My Mac Magazine or the Macintosh experience, please write us at <publisher@mymac.com> and tell us what's on your mind!

Burning CDs

Dear Mr. Robertson...Your article was full of good tips, however, how do you create your own music CD from a source other than a CD? For example, I've got several cassettes (analog) of original music that I would like to convert to AIFF and burn to CD. Is there an inexpensive software for the Mac that will convert an analog music file to a CD music file? I know Phillips makes a stand alone CD burner that wil convert, on the fly, any analog or digital music source to AIFF, but that unit is around \$600.00! Help.....

Jay Keiler <jay.keiler@ci.seattle.wa.us>

Converting non-digital sources isn't hard at all, Jay. Check out this month's "Makings CDs, Part III" for the lowdown.

PC CD-ROMs

Nice work on the CD burning article.

Having just purchased a new Sony Sprespa FireWire CD/RW, I found it interesting and informative. By the way, I don't use Toast; instead the Sony drive is bundled with Charismac's "Discribe" software, which is a reasonable alternative to the very popular Adaptec s/w.

But I have one question:

One of the things that I haven't been able to do, or figure out, is how to get PC/MAC CDs copied from my G4.

Basically, I'll take a CD that has both PC and Mac files (like Bryce 4, for example), and copy it. When it's finished, the Mac files mount (show up) on the G4. Everything's fine.

But when I put that same CD into the PC, the PC files don't show up. I'm wondering whether this is just something that can't be overcome, or whether I can actually do what I'm trying to do.

Can you do that on yours?

NOTE: I have been able to get Mac files copied to a CD (after making it "hybrid") so that they show up on the PC, but those files originated on the Mac. In this case, they were Photoshop image files, and were created on the Mac. I burned a CD with those images, and they work fine on the PC. No problem. But again, those files were "mounting" fine on the Mac, and showed up in the Finder (as opposed to native PC files, which don't show up on a hybrid CD).

See what I mean?

Comments?

Richard Thorp <rickt@netgate.net>

I haven't used the Discrite software, Richard, but I would forego trying to make copies using a file-by-file method, because there's a better way. Using Toast, I would simply do a SCSI copy, which copies *everything* from one CD to another, including all files and formatting data. Regardless of original format, SCSI copy creates a new CD to be a replica of the parent, whether it's Mac, PC, or hybrid. Check to see if Discrite has a command or a menu with a similar cloning option.

Hope this helps.

More CD-R

You don't mention anything about capturing audio from analog media. MP3 and CDs are both readily accessible on the computer already. What is the best way to capture audio from your phonograph or radio? Can you just plug your stereo output into the Mac's audio input? What application is necessary? I'm

sure that many would like to know how to convert their LPs to CDs.

Gary E. Later <later@nmlink.com>

Gary, I think you'll also find answers to your excellent questions in "Makings CDs, Part III" in this issue.

CD-R Deals

CompUSA recently had an ad for "your choice" of a 50-Pack CD-R media, or 30 pack 8X Printable CD-R media or a 25 Pack of 4x CD-RW Media for \$29.99

So the RW media is only twice as expensive as CD-R. One problem with CD-RW media is that some earlier CD-ROM drives can't read the media.

Also CompUSA had an internal IDE CD-RW (4x 2x 8x) for \$99. I saw an ad somewhere for an Accer internal CD-RW for \$79.

John Metzger <john_metzger@worldnet.att.net>

John,

But the question remains: did you get one? Those are some GREAT deals. I did find, though, that the 50-pack of blank CDs at CompUSA doesn't include jewel cases, which is something to consider when you're thinking of buying media.

John replied:

I have a Sony Spressa CD-RW drive with a USB interface. It's works on both my Sony VAIO R522DS (which has a firewire connector too!) and my iMac (which doesn't have a firewire connector :(One problem with using it on the PC was that one has to turn off Auto-Insertion Notification in order for the CD writing software to work (not hang the system). HotBurn is what I've got for the PC and Discribe for the Mac. They work OK but not as good as Toast (from what I've heard, so I'll be buying Toast one day...)

Usually the 50pks don't come with jewel cases. I'd prefer to not have the jewel cases, they take too much room. Just the little envelopes are fine with me.

The basic drive mechanisms are coming down in price rapidly, to the point where more and more systems will ship with the CD-RW in place of the CD-ROM.

Also the RW is getting cheap enough to just use it for everything, unless you've got a small run of disks to duplicate (small software publishers). \$.80 for R v. \$1.25 for RW... I suspect the media prices will get closer over time. The only other draw back to RW media is it can't be read on as many existing drives as R media can.

Anyway, it's getting better. An iMac with a CD-RW instead of the CD-ROM would be great.

This fall some companies will be shipping a DVD-ROM/CD-RW combo drive. Can read DVD and write CD-R and CD-RW. That drive will be a little expensive at first... but it will probably cost less than a real DVD-RW drive.

John Metzger <john_metzger@worldnet.att.net>

Cruisin' on Route MP3

I just read your article "The Beginner's Guide to Making CDs", #53 Sept. '99, and I thought it was great. It brought back memories of my experience with making my own CDs. I was one of the first to buy a CD-R and it was the coolest thing, being able to make my own music collections.

After awhile I soon discovered MP3s. I was blown away. Here I was, able to make huge collections of music without it sounding like an old AM radio. I had a CD player in my car and started having visions of combining the two. I had racks of custom CDs that I could play at my computer but I wanted to listen to them while I was driving. A friend of mine got a 6 disk CD changer and I thought that I could settle for that. But I still wanted it all.

I started looking around the web for other people who had built a car mp3 player and found a few. One of the first ones I came across was:

<<http://utter.chaos.org.uk/~altman/mp3mobile>>

Great stuff but a little too complicated and expensive for my tastes. And then I found a guy who uses an old Perfoma 6290CD, booting from a cd with his mp3s.

<<http://mp3car.dorm.org>>

Cool setup, plus it uses a mac, a big plus. But I wanted more storage for music.

And then I came across:

<<http://cajun.current.nu>>

This was what I was looking for. It uses Linux so I had to learn a foreign OS, which didn't turn out so bad as I thought it would. BTW, after fooling around with this project I now have a Linux server to act as a file and print server for my computers at home. Anyway, I finally have it completed and shoe-horned it into my '71 Datsun 240z. Total cost was around \$300. Much cheaper than the CD changers I was looking at. Plus with a 10 gig HD I don't think I'll ever fill this monster up with music.

Thanks

Xavier <Xavier7913@aol.com>

Thanks, Xavier. I see a day, not far away, when car audio and computers merge. Where you will be able to easily load up 20GB of MP3s in your car stereo and have all your music at your fingertips via a controller and display on the player. This is truly the new car audio revolution. (In fact, all the technologies to do this are already here; we're just waiting for the first brave carmaker to take the plunge. Actually, I can't see why they're waiting, as whoever does it will make a LOT of money.)

Search and Rescue

Congratulations on an excellent mag. I haven't got your latest one yet so forgive me if you've already reviewed this.

I never had much success with those keystroke recording things, because I make lots of mistakes and use backspace a lot, so retrieved work lokoddo likkee thhiss usually. I gave up and resolved to save often. This policy worked well, so when I found a shareware program called 'search and rescue' on an archive site somewhere I just looked at it, noted that it could perhaps recover unsaved data and bunged it in my 'new' folder to be sorted out 'later'.

Recently I was talking to someone while HTMLing a text file, and accidentally hit 'don't save' after closing. All gone! I remembered search and rescue and went to have a look. It reads your RAM and produces text you can copy and paste. All you do is type in a string you can remember and it searches for that. My document was able to be reconstituted in two segments.

Well, there is good documentation with it, it seems very stable and presentation is good. I think it is well worth putting a review in your mag for it. The documentation says it can even recover stuff after a crash and restart. Autosave can be a real pain sometimes, and I don't use it. It's shareware, and free to students.

<<http://www.kagi.com/tjriley>>

All the best and thanks for all the useful info I've had from you.
Andy

Thanks, Andy, for the info about Search and Rescue. I'll be sure to check it out!

A Bunch of iBook feedback!

Last month, as I sent out the email to our subscribers that our October issue was all ready for downloading, I asked a few questions.

First, did anyone out there receive a new iBook yet, and if so, would they share their initial thoughts with me. I also shared the news that I had ordered a PowerBook, the G3 400MHz version to be precise. It has arrived, and I will be writing about it soon.

I also decided that, due to the fact I'm now using a cable modem, I can afford to send out the actual issue to people via email, rather than simply giving you the download directions. That offer is still open: if you want **My Mac** delivered to your email box every month, please let me know (remember to specify either the DOCMaker or PDF version).

Thanks to everyone who wrote in. Here are some of the replies I received.
Tim

I have a new tangerine iBook. I received it on Monday September 27, 1999. This was much faster than I expected. I must tell you, with no reservation, that I am in love with it! It is fast and sassy. It is light, stays charged for an incredible amount of time, is lightning fast, easy to set up, and has posed no difficulties whatsoever.

Initially, I wanted to upgrade the RAM ASAP because it comes with only 32 meg, but I have been astonished by its abilities with only this amount. I still intend to upgrade, for no other reason than I want to, but as far as I can tell it is not necessary at all. The reason that I didn't order it with more is because I

know that this process delays the the order. I wanted my iBook as soon as they could send it to me.

I am also simply amazed by the airport technology. It is the greatest thing that they have added to computers since the CD ROM. It is hard for people to believe that my little iBook will do all that it will. They just can't believe that if it's not big and stationary that it is fast and friendly. In addition, the screen is wonderful. The graphics when playing games are outstanding. The movements are smooth and quick. Well, I could go on and on about all of the wonderful attributes of the iBook, but I must go.

Thanks,
Liz Celania <ecelania@aea14.k12.ia.us>

Thanks, Liz. And as fast as your iBook may seem right now, it will seem and perform much better with more RAM. Adding additional RAM is, in fact, about the single best upgrade for any Macintosh. More RAM will make a Mac faster, more convenient (can have more than one application running at one time) and much more stable. True, RAM prices have risen considerably lately, but it's still a good investment.

Hey! Thanks for a great zine! Would love to have it sent directly each month and text only would also be acceptable. After all, it's really the text and valuable info I'm after. Bought a 300 MHz G3 Powerbook a couple of months ago and it's awesome! The screen is HUGE, BRIGHT and clean as a whistle. It's quicker than quick (considering that I moved up from a poky 540C that served me well for years) and has performed nearly perfectly so far. Now if only I could resolve the apparent conflict I'm having trying to connect my HP Deskwriter 600 printer.....

Please e-mail me and let me know if it will be possible to have My Mac sent directly, I'd really appreciate it. Keep up the great work and thanks again!

<NAiello123@aol.com>

My Mac is on its way. In fact, you should have had this issue mailed directly to you :-)

Received an iBook yesterday: terrific ergonomics and feel - no bugs yet but it does not come bundled with Microsoft Office so be prepared to purchase Word, etc. Also, no System 9 so same goes there. Great screen - keyboard gets some getting used to . They are way behind on orders and stacking up backorders so

newbies better be patient. More as I use it....

<SBrezza@aol.com>

Needing help with My Mac

Dear Sir:

How long does an issue of My Mac stay on the computer? How long does it take to download it? What do I do if I want to read it on line? What is the difference between the two web sites?

Maybe I am too late to read the last issue. I told my computer to save it to the desktop (didn't know to just read it) and nothing happened.

Thank you.

<MPellLove@aol.com>

After you visit our website, there's a section on the main page where people can download the current issue (previous issues are also available in our archives.) Simply click on your choice of format and the issue will automatically download to your hard drive. Once it's on your drive, that issue of My Mac will stay on your computer until you delete it.

Download times depend on your connection speed. On a 56K modem, it takes about two and a half minutes. A cable modem will take about 20 seconds, if that.

If you want to read My Mac online, simply go to www.mymac.com and read away. At this time, there is only one website, not two.

Perhaps you would prefer to have the current issue sent to you directly via email. If this is the case, please let me know.

Greetings from South Africa

First off I want to thank you for a great publication.

I really enjoy reading the product reviews and articles by real people who do not always have the newest and fastest Mac. Thanks for remembering that

there are us out here who think a beige Mac is still a good piece of hardware.

Another great feature is that I do not have to worry about the Post Office losing my copy. But I have had a problem the last three or four months. Every time I download the .Doc version using Netscape 4,4.5 & now 4.6 it will not open, but if I download it using iCab it works fine. Yes, I do have stuffit expander 5.1.2 just thought I would let you know.

Jeff Blanton <jblanton@iafrica.com>
Cape Town, South Africa

Jeff, thanks for your letter and your support. We're sorry to hear about the downloading problem you've been experiencing, but since we haven't had anyone else mention a similar anomaly, we're at a loss to explain it. Please let us know if it persists, or if you found out what was causing it.

The PowerBook Office

Please put me on the list to receive My Mac in PDF format by email.

As for the Powerbook G3 400, I have been using one since June. It has completely replaced my desktop G3 200 mhz. My only irritations are the transfer of fingerprint oils to the screen, where you have to clean it off with a damp cloth and my need to purchase an ADB mouse to bring the ease of use back to that of the desktop Mac.

I am an attorney as well as a Mac consultant and now operate my whole business from the Powerbook.

Paul Frederiksen <maclaw@uswest.net>

Mac Emulator Extraordinaire

I've been getting the DOCMaker version via e-mail for years.

I would be interested in a text only version. I read the DOCMaker version on my HP Unix machine using MAE = Macintosh Application Environment. I won't be able to take MAE with me to my next contract, even though I paid for it (long story) and I may not have good access to any Mac, so it would be either the PDF or text version for me. Text I can read in e-mail and it's

smaller, and I don't really need the images (if I do I can get to the WWW version), so, these are the reasons for my preferences.

Sincerely,
Dr. John Nixon

Thanks, John! The response to my inquiry has been an eye opener, and yours was no exception.

I would be interested to hear more of the MAE = Macintosh Application Environment, as I think most of our readers would be...

So John wrote back:

It's no longer supported by Apple, but I'll tell you about it anyway. For Sun (Solaris) and Hewlett Packard (HP-UX) machines MAE emulated the MacOS (System 7.5.3 under a 68040 with no FPU---like one of the LC's I seem to recall) in a GUI window. The desktop filled the window and you could browse the "native" OS file system using Mac conventions. Also, as long as the application didn't require later MacOS or an FPU, or couldn't be tricked with a software FPU, you could run all your fave programs like Word, Netscape, GraphicConverter, ClarisWorks, whatever. The integration of the two OSes was seamless and a source of constant amazement to me: you could double click in MAE on a Unix file and have it fire up the associated application, say emacs, in a Unix window. You could cut and paste in either direction. You could mount Mac CD's (and floppies I think, but I don't have a drive) in MAE from the drives on your Unix box. Way cool.

It was around for ages, and cost me \$500 (Australian) 2.5 years ago, after which the price was halved, then the product was abandoned! Pity, as many people (who I knew about from the now defunct Apple run mailing list---there was also an Apple web site) used it on their Unix machines to lever Macs into Unix and PeeCee dominated workplaces. Now some will have to abandon the MacOS because they would never be allowed to buy the hardware but snuck (sneaked?) the OS in the backdoor by this manner. The really cool thing to my mind was I could browse my University AppleTalk network and I didn't even have a Mac! You have to see it to believe it.

People associated with the mailing list could tell you more of the history associated and also what uses they had for MAE. If my next contract has a HP I may be able to reload from the CD and, after scanning the mailing list archive to work out how I can get it to happen, use the "key" to "unlock" my

registered copy. Otherwise I have a useless CD and paid quite a bit for each year of use I got out of it, seeing as I really purchased MAE to make it easier to get Mac stuff of the 'net while at work for my ancient IIcx at home, or to unravel file formats between Mac, Unix, and PeeCee (the grant paying my wage bought a PeeCee, which I use as little as possible and it still crashes every week, guaranteed!).

Enough of the soapbox...

In short, MAE was "Steved", I hate PeeCeEs, and my work is 99.99% on Unix machines, but, think the Mac is the computer for everyone. Oh yeah, I lust after a G4 as well! Go Apple! :-)

Sincerely,

Dr. John Nixon

•[Tim Robertson](mailto:Publisher@mymac.com)• <Publisher@mymac.com>

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Out of the AppleCart

•By Susan Howerter <susan@mymac.com>•

Surprise! Apple Listens!!

What a month! A power user becomes an iMac evangelist, new iMacs in six colors redefine computing and Apple astounds us by seeming to listen when Mac lovers speak.

“You got a what? But Chris, you’re a Power User! You eat benchmarks for breakfast! Whatever are you going to do with an iMac? Oh,” I say. “I see. It’s tangerine.”

It was late August and my son, working as a media consultant for a local university, had recently moved into his grandmother’s home to be a part-time chef, chauffeur, and companion. Grandmother would get the care she needed and Chris would set up his Mac studio in her comfortable basement family room.

Unfortunately, there was no way to get Cable into the basement without major remodeling. And as he and the university often corresponded by cable modem (a necessity for sending large graphic files back and forth), the breakfast nook soon disappeared beneath the 8600, two monitors, a scanner, printer, Zip, small TV and all the paraphernalia associated with a primary work station.

Using an iMac as his Internet connection would not only save space and allow the primary work machines to spread out across the basement (as well as freeing them to render 24 hours a day when needed), it would even match the wallpaper. Grandmother was delighted.

But not nearly as delighted as Chris, when he found what a dynamo his new iMac, entry level or not, turned out to be. After upgrading the RAM to 196, it ran rings around the Umax S900 and even put the 8600/300 with its full 1 MB cache to shame.

He wrote: "This second generation iMac is truly a power-user machine! I installed Painter 5.0 on it and it's like a whole new program. It's snappier than I've ever seen it. Photoshop, too, is a speed demon. I've been running side-by-side plug-in 'races' between the iMac and 8600, and the 8600 has yet to win. Not bad for a little 18 inch entry-level box!"

There were problems of course. Without a serial port, LightWave and AfterEffects, both of which require a dongle, were unusable. And with his main computers in the basement, transferring files without a floppy, SCSI, or Internet connection was impossible. By the end of September the iMac had sprouted a USB Zip, a USB-ADB adapter for hooking up dongles and 100 feet of cable snaking from kitchen to laundry and down the stairs to the studio. The small dinette table was filling up as quickly as Chris' bank account was being depleted.

But the iMac was now networked in as a true member of the graphics team. Being a Mac, all three hard drives showed up on each machine. And from any machine, Chris could drag and drop large files onto the Internet icon and send them, via cable, to the university. He was more productive than he had ever imagined.

He wrote: "BTW: I have a ftp site at the university now and when I sent the first batch of videos over, my data transfer speed was 487k per sec. It turns out the same server that the Wichita Cable Service uses is used by WSU also. This means I can configure my net boot system to function just like it was on campus. I don't have to go to the media center for video clips anymore--I just load them directly into my applications as if they were a locally mounted disk! I can see this cable modem was certainly worth the wait!!!"

The little tangerine box had just settled into place when, on the fifth of October, Apple announced iMac, phase three. Not only were prices dropping to new lows, there would be a power user version in graphite black. (Sorry Grandma, eat your heart out... but guys really go for graphite.)

He wrote: "You gotta go to Apple's site and look up the specs on the new iMacs. Unbelievable! And it's not just the machines or the prices that are unbelievable... It's Apple. When I filled out my online registration, the very last question was 'Is there anything you would like to see in the iMacs that is not there?' So, I said More RAM, Better speakers, Video in, DVD drive, SCSI support (or better yet, Firewire) and MAKE IT EVEN FASTER!"

"Well whaddaya know! It's ALL there. They've even made the RAM more

accessible. No more voiding the warranty to upgrade it yourself. WOW! Could it be that Apple actually listens???"

If Apple has *truly* learned to listen to the rest of us, just think what wonderful things could lie ahead. (Wonder where they would be if they'd listened all along?)

It is important to note, however, that current iMac owners, when considering upgrading to the new versions, should be aware that the RAM is not compatible. You can't take it with you. And sadly, even the top of the line graphite model has only a 512 KB cache. Both of those factors cooled Chris' initial excitement in spite of the 400 MHz processor, the dual Firewire ports, the 128 MB-base RAM and the 13GB drive in the DV Special Edition. Which is just as well as his August iMac has scarcely had time to accumulate dust.

On the other hand, his sister has long wanted a small tangerine Mac to match her own kitchen. And at only a few hundred \$\$\$ more than last month's standard five-flavored iMac, that graphite DV is awfully tempting. If he can sweet talk Sis into some kind of deal, I wouldn't be surprised to find Grandma sporting a speedy, FireWired little black box in the breakfast nook before YK2 overtakes the Windows world.

•Susan Howeter• <susan@mymac.com>

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•By John Nemerovski <nemo@mymac.com>•

MacReading: How Much Is Too Much, or Not Enough?

Have you been to our My Mac chat sessions, on Wednesday at 5:00 p.m. Pacific Time, located at <<http://www.worldwithoutborders.com>> We have a direct link from our <<http://www.mymac.com>> home page. The moderated conversations are lively and interesting. If you are planning to join in, make sure you are registered in advance, for free, with Java enabled in your browser.

What you will find is a host, a guest, and a bunch of participants. The hour really flies, and you can then take part in an extensive range of other World Without Borders chats.

During one recent session, the group started discussing the current Macintosh e-zines. I asked for some personal recommendations, and two of my colleagues on the magazine provided informed opinions.

Beth Lock, our Babe in Boyland, ranked and rated her favorites:

<<http://www.mackido.com>> is one of the first sites I stumbled into. David Every is extremely knowledgeable, and he archives his tutorials very well. He also has some fairly nice humor. His site is easy to navigate. I found his URL from my involvement in World Without Borders. *Rated A-1*

<<http://www.everymac.com>> is a good one, especially their links page. That is

where I first found my Macintosh sites many months ago. At that time, they were one of the finest links pages around. *Links page rated A-1*

<<http://www.applelinks.com>> is my personal browser home page. *Do I need to rate my home page?*

<<http://www.macopinion.com>> has excellent commentary. I don't always agree, but I like the elegance of the writers. *Rated A++*

<<http://www.macmarines.com>> because I never could resist a geek in uniform. <G> *No rating; it's too embarrassing*

<<http://www.mymac.com>> Hands down, the best e-zine on the net. *I'm not being partial here, of course.*

That's all I read. Oh, I follow the occasional URL that friends send me in email, but these are truly the exceptional Mac sites. Applelinks will lead you to the best of the news each day.

Thanks, Beth.

Before I log onto the Web and look up those URLs, let's see what Mr. Mac Amalgamation, Bob McCormick, has to say on the subject:

When I got onto the net in '97, I did some searching and pretty soon I found some rumor sites. MacOS Rumors, Reality, and MacInsider were my favorite rumor sites. Sadly, some of those sites are now either gone or transformed into something else.

I also visited MacHome and MacAddict. MacHome was a bit beneath me, while MacAddict was just too weird. But I tended to read the reviews.

My other favorites were MacWeek, MacWorld, MacInTouch, As the Apple Turns, and whatever I could scare up on MacSurfer.com

Today what do I read? Well, mostly the following, ranked numerically:

MacWeek (7), MacOS Rumors (7.5), AppleInsider (7), As the Apple Turns (8),

PowerBook Zone (9.5), and whatever I find interesting on MacSurfer.com (10). For news, I tend to turn to MacCentral (6), AppleLinks (6) and Insanely-Great (5). But not all that often. I don't find anything usually that original there. I tend to stick with MacSurfer.

I had subscriptions to the print version of MacUser (over my head usually) and MacWorld. I let MacUser lapse, then MacWorld as it just wasn't very entertaining. But I found the writing to be good. I would usually read it cover to cover. Drooling over the ads for the new CHRP systems, but sadly they were killed.

When I heard about My Mac Chats on the World Without Borders site, I started reading My Mac magazine. I thought I had heard of them all. But this was one cool magazine. It was right where I was at, not over my head and not beneath my experience. I had lots to choose from and found it very entertaining. Then Tim asked me to write for it. Wow! A dream come true.

About the only web-only magazine that compares to us, in my opinion, would be MacWeek. And since they killed their plan to offer a PDF download, we seem to stand alone. "1984" and About this Particular Mac and MacWizards are, I believe, the only ones that offer downloads. Ironically I never did get into those three, so I can't rate them.

Very interesting, Bob.

As for me, I still consider TidBITS <<http://www.tidbits.com>> my first and best choice for well-written and researched articles, and I occasionally go to MacCentral when I want to be current on late breaking events. VersionTracker <<http://www.versiontracker>> is indispensable for current software update links, and MacFixIt <<http://www.macfixit.com>> is the best-ever troubleshooting URL.

What are YOUR preferred sites for Macintosh views and news?

Rebound: More Informed Commentary from Nemo's Loyal Readers

Two months ago we devoted the entire Nemo Memo to reader responses, primarily on the subject of John's infamous "\$3,000 iMac." Let's pick up the

story, with additional correspondence.

Marc thinks I am being unrealistic, and joins the many respondents who insist I should skip the iMac altogether.

Nemo,

I think you're a little off base, because people that buy the iMac are not going to spend 800 bucks for a printer (they aren't going to be "tired of inkjets") and I'm guessing they aren't going to spend 200 dollars on a keyboard and mouse combo. I recently purchased a blue & white G3 and found a two button mouse with scroll wheel for \$20. I don't know where you shop. I doubt very highly that iMac users are going to be looking for a hub, either.

Personally, I think you would be much happier with a tower. With the integrated Zip (which is extremely fast due to the ATAPI connection versus USB), and the ability to upgrade and have more than one internal hard drive (I have two hard drives already) the tower was the only way to go. The iMac is for the novice who just wants to surf and play. However I think the 64MB of RAM is realistic.

BTW, I have been living happily for 4 months without a floppy. I don't miss it, period. Floppies are just too slow and unreliable. Everyone that I do business with has a Zip drive.

Final note: how are you going to take this computer with you? You have more things to move than I do! I have a monitor and tower, keyboard, mouse, Jaz, and printer. Pretty simple move.

Enough of my raving. Take it easy, and don't get me wrong. I am just writing this because I don't think the majority of iMac users are going to have the same wants and desires as yourself, and if they do they should consider a tower.

Marc

+++++

My new pal Mike, the Cyberbites guy <<http://www.cyberbites.com>>, takes a long view, and sees the iMac as part of his overall network, as enumerated below.

Dear John,

I enjoyed meeting you in person. I look forward to seeing your articles on mymac.com. I had forgotten (shame!) My Mac -- which I used to read religiously before it was a website, back when it was only distributed as a DOCMaker document. I'm delighted to see it is flourishing and, having just read your last 7 columns, wish to congratulate you on your contributions to My Mac!

(See: <http://www.mymac.com/archives/sept_99/memo.shtml>, for Mike's original Cyberbites contribution.)

As a sidenote and in reply to your questions of June '99 (on the \$3k iMac), my partner, Barb, has an iMac. I use a souped up 7500 and we each have an ancient PB180c (hers now a dedicated fax server). The printer and the 7500 are on an AppleTalk/LocalTalk network and the iMac and 7500 are directly connected with a special \$20 Ethernet cable (no hub).

Using LocalTalk Bridge and LaserWriter Bridge (freeware from Apple that translates Ethernet to LocalTalk) the iMac prints just fine on our older DataProducts laser printer through the 7500. The PBs, while not in direct communication with the 7500 (Ethernet/LocalTalk is either/or), are able to use the printer directly at any time without additional setup as they are part of the printer's LocalTalk network.

Floppy drive? -- the 7500 has one. Read or write floppy disk on the 7500, transfer to iMac via Ethernet (wicked fast) -- we thought we'd need this a lot more than we do -- we use it maybe twice a month.

Backup? -- onto an APS DAT drive via the Ethernet network using Retrospect 4.x (and *not* the network/client version method -- just define the iMac's HD as one of the volumes to backup from the 7500 and set a schedule).

Zip Drive? -- 7500 has a SCSI Zip Drive -- open iMac HD on 7500 desktop via Ethernet, drag files/folders from iMac onto icon of Zip disk mounted on 7500 -- did I mention file copy/transfer via Ethernet is really fast?! While it is true that the iMac can't see the Zip disk directly, we don't need it often enough to create a problem. If and when we do, we'll buy the USB Zip.

External HD Storage? -- The iMac (which already has a 6 gig HFS+ volume) enjoys full access to the SCSI HDs connected to the 7500 via the Ethernet network.

Scanner? -- the iMac came with a UMAX 1220U which works better than our old SCSI scanner did.

We did buy 64 megs of iMac RAM and I installed it (about as hard as installing RAM in an 8500 -- too hard, really, but doable). The fax software that came with the iMac, FaxSTF, is horrible. We should bite the bullet and get GlobalVillage software for the iMac and someday we probably will.

Barb likes the iMac keyboard and says she types faster and more easily with it than the extended keyboards she has always used before. She doesn't like mice, vastly preferring her old EMAC ADB trackball which doesn't work with the iMac. She'll probably get a MacAlly iBall, rather than an ADB/USB adapter.

I have to say -- we love the iMac. It is really fast and exceeds our expectations. My experience suggests the most economical way to upgrade from your Performa is to buy whatever adapter the Performa needs to connect to the iMac via Ethernet and use your existing peripherals until time moves on and we can no longer live without FireWire and whatever technology supplants the modem.

Mike

(Mike just sent me an update:)

In the original letter I mentioned buying GlobalFax for the iMac (we did and it's great). The MacAlly iBall was very disappointing (sent back to try again) so I would change mention of it to "a USB trackball" lest others be led astray. Other than those minor issues I wholeheartedly agree with my earlier comments and in the interim we continue to be completely satisfied with the iMac -- now that the higher horsepower versions are emerging and ease of RAM installation has been successfully addressed, I would upgrade my recommendation to an even stronger "BUY."

Several months ago I discussed what I would do with several extra hours of computing time every day. Rob gave this suggestion.

Hi John.

May I recommend a little program that is just fantastic for hour five. I cut and paste links from various sources into "Linkpad" <www.panic.com> and when I have time run down the list. It works with IE and Nav and you just double-click the link to access the page in the appropriate browser.

I have no connection with Panic, but I think Linkpad is dead handy!

Cheers

Rob

I was curious about Rob's involvement with the Macintosh, so I asked him for some additional personal information.

Hi again, John.

Hmm, a little background.... I'm a 30-year old Scot working in London, but originally from Aberdeen. I'm married (nearly 3 months!) to Jo.

I work in a drop-in health centre for Street Homeless people in south London and use Macs exclusively! I manage the Centre, and so I got to choose the hardware and software when we upgraded from 486/33 PC's just over a year ago.

We managed to get some run-out Performa 6500/275's and a 6200 and we use a IIfx as a print server for our Laserwriter. We're using FM Pro 4 with some self-written databases for registering clients and their needs and also to keep us all using the same contact numbers for other organisations etc. Wordperfect 3.0 and Nisus 4.1 are our WP programs and we use Pagemaker 6 for printing out information for clients etc. We're now entirely mac based!

I use a Q610 at home and have a Classic which is on loan to my mother-in-law!

Music and cars are my main interests outside of computers and I play in the band at my local church here in London.

Rob

**I dedicate this issue of the Nemo Memo to
the memory of my friend Gino.**

In Memory of Gino Fortunato

(See: <http://www.mymac.com/mymac/archives/jan_99/memo.shtml>, for my previous article on Gino.)

Thanks, friends. Until next month!

•John Nemerovski• <nemo@mymac.com>

Websites mentioned:

<<http://www.worldwithoutborders.com>>

<<http://www.mymac.com>>

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<<http://www.everymac.com>>

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<<http://www.macfixit.com>>

<<http://www.cyberbites.com>>

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•By Mick O'Neil <mickoneil@mymac.com>•

Apple R&D's Crown Jewels Exposed

Over the past year or so Apple has introduced exciting new technologies that have left many Apple-bashers scrambling to find something to criticize. The new expandable iMacs, the wireless iBook, the fast and light PowerBooks, and the amazing new G4-based systems are almost too good to be true. These, however, are products that have been in Apple's secret pipeline for some time. As always, a Mac media feeding frenzy preceded the release of each new technology, with Apple's legal department trying hard to protect its corporate secrets.

A case in point was the theft and publication of photos and concept drawings of the 'Kihei' iMac. I suppose 'theft' is a loaded term that may offend some of the principals, but you are as much of a thief if you accept stolen property as if you stole it yourself. The websites AppleInsider.com and the German site, Macnews.com were first to publish the pictures, but were not the only ones. Macweek.com chose to display a screen shot of the MacNews web page, as if that made a difference. The problem with this type of over-aggressive reporting is that it may have forced Apple to announce the machine before it had cleared old inventory and appropriately stock-piled the new hardware. This may have had an impact on the Apple's stock price as we saw it plummet by as much as \$20 from its 52 week high.

Having said all this and taken this holier than thou stance, those of us who regard ourselves as journalists still have a responsibility to report the news as it comes our way. Clearly, if My Mac had received copies of the 'Kihei' photos, we would have been faced with a real moral dilemma. Did the NY Times hesitate before it ran "The Pentagon Papers?" Did ABC hesitate before it ran the story about Monica Lewinski's blue dress? To display these photos or not? Quandaries of this kind are probably why Ben Bradlee has gray hair.

It is with considerable trepidation and some moral misgivings that I divulge a report that exposes the 'crown jewels' of future Apple development. Though it may hurt the company in the short term, I believe the public has a right to know. The information was compiled from a source within the highly secret Apple New Products Lab deep within the R&D bunker in Cupertino. In assessing the value of this data, I weighed the credibility of the source along with the reliability of the information. Though some of these developments are months or even years off, I believe the report to be factual at this point in time.

For her own protection, I won't comment on the source of the leaks except to say that she is highly placed, and all of the information 'Monica' has provided to date has been confirmed by secondary and tertiary sources. I should note that though the subject was 'convinced' to cooperate, she did so voluntarily and was under no duress.

The Eye of the Beholder

Though great strides have been made in developing smaller and faster computers, one of the constraining limits has been the size of the video display. Clearly, the video display has to be both readable and convenient. Hand-held computers as well as portable phones have run into this display dilemma. It makes no sense to be able to surf the net on your portable if you can't read a page. Attempts to design mini-web pages specially tailored to the portable electronic market are doomed to fail because they must sacrifice valuable content. In addition, it's virtually impossible to pepper these mini-pages with adverts, thus removing the provider's incentive to publish for this market.

The Apple Heads-up Ocular Display Unit is designed to resolve this dilemma. Combining technologies from molecular biology and digital photography, military breakthroughs in 'heads-up' jet fighter displays, and its own wireless communications research, Apple has designed a prototype Ocular Display Unit (ODU) that seamlessly bonds to a soft or hard contact lens and provides a focus-driven foreground display. While in an 'inactive' state, the ODU displays a semi-transparent menu in the top right field of vision. Focusing on any menu item and blinking triggers that item and summons an ocular keyboard at the bottom of the field. Command/blinks increase the display resolution and Shift/Command/Blink instantaneously brings the display into full focus.

Preliminary tests indicate that the ODU is quite comfortable to install and use, and outside observers find it difficult to determine when a subject's ODU is engaged. The ODU System Extension along with special storage case will be available as part of the Apple ODU Accessory Kit and should retail for around \$40. Microsoft is allegedly working on a Special ODU Edition of Word that

could be available as early as MacWorld, San Francisco.

Night AirPort

Night AirPort refers to a revolutionary new technology from Apple that lets remote workstations maintain communication with hubs even when the remotes are turned off. This could result in significant cost savings for downloading information and files from the Internet, and for conducting off peak network and workstation maintenance. Night AirPort is made up of two separate, though interrelated technologies:

Runway Lights consists of a sweeping radio signal from the Night AirPort hub that is picked up by remote systems and redirects and refocuses their signal. This results in a remarkable reduction in power expenditure by the remotes and allows remote stations to maintain contact even without a steady AC source.

Baggage Handling is a new technology that delivers a packet of information even after it is initially 'lost' due to network collisions or loss of contact with a hub. Broadcasts from remote stations include unique traveler identification. Packets of information are tagged with both destination codes and the prospective traveler 'ID,' and if the base station is busy or off-line, these packets are sent to an adjacent, overnight remote and then delivered when the base is finally available.

Skew Processing

Another technical breakthrough from the company that thrives on innovations, Apple developed skew processing as an alternative to traditional parallel processing. The new Apple flexible processor orientation (FPO) allows multi-planing processors that can be arranged outside the plane of the motherboard. Vertically arranged processors (VAP) provide significant speed advantages as electrical charges seek the motherboard ground. Apple is the first major company to offer skew processing, and though the technology is in its infancy, the PC industry is expected to follow suit. In a move to marginalize this new technology, Dell recently sent an advisory to its user group suggesting that the standard Dell desktop could be vertically arranged to maximize the effects of gravity on processor performance. Apple's legal department is currently weighing a decision on whether to seek an injunction against Dell and Dell computer users to prevent reorientation of their computers. Apple argues that Dell's advisory was based entirely on copyrighted Apple trade secrets and therefore Dell should cease and desist. It is expected that if Apple prevails in court, Dell will be ordered to physically check the orientation of each user's system to ensure that Apple's trade secrets are observed.

FireWater

Strange things happen in the bathtub. While lolling in his bubble bath, Archimedes discovered the principal of bouyancy and allegedly ran nude down the streets of Siracusa yelling "Eureka!, Eureka!" Steve Jobs, on the other hand, was in his Jacuzzi, playing with his small baking soda powered submersible, when he was hit by a more modern brainstorm. Water molecules are fairly dense and thus uncompressible, which means that in a confined space (a tube) a push on one molecule will result in a pop at the end of the chain. A data bus made up of stacked water molecules would have several distinct advantages over a traditional data bus. First data could be cooled, easing heat sink requirements, and second, water is still relatively cheap. 'FireWater' architecture will first be used to speed Mac data bus performance while the R&D lab continues working on a FireWater processor.

Though FireWater technology is still in its infancy, the experts suggest it could revolutionize data transfer. A tiny hose—thinner than the thinnest fiber optic cable—could be used to connect two systems and almost instantaneously transfer information. A prototype data pump has already been built and the company is rumored to be shooting for a commercial version in the \$400 range.

Initially, FireWater will be colored an iridescent teal blue and the iMac data bus will be viewable through the semi-transparent case. Eventually, Apple will offer the full range of iMac colors with the possible exception of Tangerine, which the marketing folks suggest may offend some users. To ensure data integrity in the event of a bus leak, the new iMac cases will sport a FireWater Straw Port (FSP) with a seamless lid. The user can pop the lid by inserting a simple paperclip.

FireWater cartridges will be available from Apple and 3rd party companies and these cartridges can be 'front loaded' with software and/or commercial databases. Connecting a cartridge to the FSP will require both an Apple Data Pump and the FireWater Accessory Kit (approximately \$40 from the Apple Store). SCSI to FireWater, USB to FireWater, and FireWire to FireWater interfaces are supposedly under development.

FireWater Technology (FT) will undoubtedly revolutionize the industry, but its application in personal computers is just the beginning. Apple Fellow, Thom Tylde, suggests that FT could also be used to send information directly to organic organisms (OOs). For example, gardening data could be loaded from your computer and the lawn sprinkled with 'smart' water. Eventually, humans will also 'drink information' (DI). This form of information delivery could have

a limited impact on our future educational systems. The phrase 'school sucks' could take on a whole new meaning.

Googleflops

The G5 processor featuring front, back, top, bottom, and side caches and a veracity engine for true binary adds will be the first googleflop processor released on a personal computer. Because of export control laws, the US Government is expected to ban shipment both domestically and internationally. Though government regulations may dent sales in the short and long term, Apple will make extraordinary gains in inventory management and marketing. As yet unconfirmed, one source suggests that MacWorld, San Francisco could be the target non-shipping date.

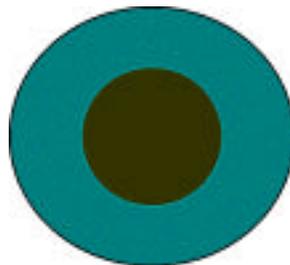
Chameleon Chassis

Apple, of course, was the first major computer company to release stylized, colorful computers, and though the original iMac was terrifically successful, anticipating demand for a particular colored system was problematic, at best. Some computer colors like Blueberry and Strawberry were always in demand while others like Tangerine were not so successful. Insisting that dealers take on inventory of all five colors caused significant logistics problems and more than a little bad karma.

R&D's solution to the problem is ingenious. The new chameleon iMacs take on the hue of a provided color patch that the user places on the wall next to the computer. Changing the patch immediately alters the color of the computer chassis. The Chameleon iMac will provide the best of all possible colorful worlds.

The 'Lualué' iMac Concept Drawings

Front View



Rear View



Though a bit sparse on details, the above concept drawing of the 'LuaLué' iMac clearly shows Apple's movement towards a more stylized design. Note the rounded edges and the subdued almost invisible controls. The major advantage to this startling design is accessibility, as the chassis and self-righting, built-in monitor can be rolled to another user and used in virtually any orientation. The rugged, rubberized chameleon shell means this system can take a lot of beating and will literally bounce back.

Flaccid Drive Technology (FDT)

Apple engineers finally have convinced the iCEO that, after all, it was his idea to develop the floppy drive and not Steve Wozniac's and by *completely* revamping the Woz Disc Controller it would be possible to introduce a high density 'flaccid' drive capable of formatting and accessing disks in the 1.4 meg range. Jobs, allegedly, was impressed with the portability these small 3.5 inch disks provide and may demonstrate this new technology at MacWorld, San Francisco. The demonstration may include copying a file from one system's hard drive to a flaccid, ejecting the flaccid, and inserting it into another system. Though we're not sure how this demo might pan out, it's thought that the marketing folks will ensure ample rehearsal time.

Disclaimer:

No portion of this column was written by Mick O'Neil, his brother Jeremiah, or any associates thereof. My Mac Magazine accepts no responsibility for the content of this article and warns the public that the information contained therein was assembled by persons unknown and possibly unloved. Any resemblance of the code named source 'Monica' to any other person living or dead is purely coincidental, and attempts to relate this moniker to 'Deep Throat' is simply scurrilous.

•Mick O'Neil• <mickoneil@mymac.com>

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•By Beth Lock <beth@infowest.com>•

The Story of Moo, and How I Installed My Own CD Player (with a little help from my friends) or One Step Closer to Geekdom.

Last December or so, I was running around telling a very corny joke. It went like this:

"Knock, Knock"

"Who's There?"

"Interrupting Cow"

"Interrup.....?"

"MOOOOOOOOOOOO"

I grew up on a farm in Missouri, so I have an extremely convincing Moo in my repertoire of animal sounds.

The joke is one that you either love or hate. Some people I'd tell, they'd fall out laughing. Others would look at me blankly....Uh....OK Beth. Either way, I'd be cackling my head off (my hen sound is pretty good, too), and snorting (ditto the hog snort).

In January of this year my local Mac guru gifted me a rebuilt 7200/75 with

monitor, keyboard, external hard drive, and mouse. All I needed to do was buy a little RAM and a modem, and I'd have a nice little home computer. Since the computer had been used for a parts machine, it was sans CD-ROM drive, but at the time I didn't want to make the investment. The CD slot sat empty for months, useful only for storing sandwiches so I wouldn't have to leave the computer in the middle of my chatting.

My friend asked me what I wanted to name the computer, and I kicked a few ideas around. Finally the obvious came to me: call him Moo. On January 18th, 1999, Moo came alive in my home. I had never "hooked up" a computer by myself before, but I did OK. It only took me about an hour of fumbling around to get online. (Let's see... hmmm... this cord looks like it might fit... here!) Imagine my delight when I first started him up to see a little cow icon with the text Moo to represent the hard drive. I'm easily amused.

The first thing I did was record a Moooooo to use as my new mail notification. It just cracks me up to hear the computer "interrupt" me this way. "Moooooo!!!!" It beats "You've Got Mail" hands down.

The second thing I did was email my friend to boast of my success. I was online! At home! And I plugged it in all by myself! He mailed me right back. Moooooo!!!!!! I felt like a big girl. Out of diapers, into training pants.

The third thing I did was log on to <<http://www.worldwithoutborders.com>>. Besides hosting the weekly My Mac chat at 5pm Pacific time on Wednesday evenings, this friendly and professional group of folks hosts the nicest chat forum on the Internet, where all ages and platforms are welcome. Their regular events are hosted by the Global Community Staff (GCS), who help everyone feel welcome and safe. Their weekly calendar includes several Macintosh related chats, in addition to other events. (My very first time chatting was the prior November. I stayed late at work to visit the My Mac chat which hosted John Farr. Oh, you've not met the incredible, irascible Mr. Farr? Hurry on over! <<http://www.applelinks.com/farrsite>>

My limited world suddenly opened up to include the entire globe. I had something to look forward to at home after work each day; Moo. Moo who connected me to the world. I began to venture to all sites Mac related. I was hungry to learn how to do more than start up and run applications. I wanted to know how the computer worked. (Ones and zeros?...get out of here! *snort* *cackle*...yeah, right, ones and zeros my foot.) New words began to enter my vocabulary; CPU, Bus speed, GUI, RAM, ROM, SCSI, motherboard. I was learning, slowly but surely. I was wading through a world of knowledge which confounded and frustrated me, but excited me at the same time. I was

becoming a Babe in Boyland.

One day I found out that there are hundreds of radio stations which broadcast over the net, and I was in heaven. You mean, I can chat and listen to Jim Ladd at KLOS at the same time? Now all things became possible. Singing, dancing, chatting, writing, emailing, learning, I felt multi-talented. Sure, RealAudio had streaming problems, and the sound that came out of the built in speaker was somewhat tinny, but it was worth the aggravation.

Then fortune smiled on me again (they don't call me Lucky Lock for nothing). I fell into a set of Benwin computer speakers <<http://www.benwin.com>>. They arrived one fine day in my mailbox and when I picked up my mail at lunch, I couldn't resist the side trip to run home and hook them up. Easy, easy, lemon squeezy! Even I in training pants had no problem. The sound that came though these speakers was far superior to the cheap little CD player I own. Plus, it was way across the room and heaven forbid I interrupt my chatting or surfing to go change the CD. I thought to myself... hmmm... maybe it's time to invest in that CD-ROM drive.

<<http://www.smalldog.com>>, the perfect CD-ROM drive at the perfect price; \$19 plus shipping. I immediately placed my order. My Macintosh guru reminded me that I needed something to make the CD-ROM work when it finally arrived, so off to <<http://www.panic.com>> I went to download Audion and its 15 day free trial, after that \$17.95. Not a bad price for an excellent piece of shareware.

Three days later the CD-ROM arrived. Plus, the part arrived with two small plastic dogs. (Small plastic dogs? I'm easily amused.) But what's this, no instructions? I had only opened the computer once before, and that was to install some RAM. Could I do this? All by myself? The very thought made me soil my training pants. Timidly I opened the case, and found three groups of wire thingys that weren't plugged in, which fit perfectly in the slots on the back of the CD-ROM. (Hmmm... I thought to myself, this little doo dah looks like it might plug in... here!) So I plugged them in; so far so good. But, alas, it didn't work. Moo didn't recognize there was a new drive.

I was confounded. I sent dozens of emails. "Help me, boys, help me!" I whined in my best Babe in Boyland font. Much good and helpful advice came in, but after all, I was HERE and they were THERE. And "the little black thingy with the pretty gold pins" didn't really convey that what I was actually looking at was a SCSI plug. Once again I opened the box. (Computer tip: you have to push HARD on that SCSI plug.) OK, whew! figured that out, Moo finally recognized there was a new drive. But, now it wouldn't recognize a CD

when it was inserted. "OK, well... fine", I thought. "I've traded a sandwich slot for a dandy cup holder."

Determined to have my music, though, I plodded ahead. I wanted to do this as much by myself as I could. After all, I a big gurl now! And it was at this point I ran into the baffling world of extensions. You have to have the darn things checked! But which ones? As far as I could tell, I had them all checked. But when I inserted a CD, I got an error message which said "Apple CD cannot eject." What the... ? Then the light dawned. My CD on the computer at work works. Why don't I just open up the Extensions Manager there and see what's checked? Which I did. And I learned something else I didn't know previously. There are messages which come with the extensions, that tell you what they are and what they do. And the message I read said "Apple CD/DVD replaces Apple CD."

Ah Ha! I rushed home, opened the Extensions Manager on Moo, and guess what, faithful readers? I had both extensions checked! So I unchecked Apple CD, restarted, opened Audion, selected CD mode, held my breath, slid in Van Morrison, and suddenly, joyfully, blissfully out of these fabulous Benwin speakers I heard o/~...I wanna rock your gypsy soul, just like back in the days of old, and together we unfold, into the Mystic...o/~ The saxophones carried me into another expansion of my world. And I cried in joy as I danced merrily around the room. (Babes in Boyland are allowed to cry.)

At last, music. Music to fill my life with joy. Macintosh music. My loyalty to the platform once again is affirmed. And hey everybody, I figured it out by myself, er... uh... all by myself... with a little help from my friends. Time to discard these training pants and move up to color coordinated iBra and panties. <<http://www.opsweb.co.jp/tonya/rusud/cart.cgi?page=original.html>>

Now, where to store this darn sandwich?

Mooooo!!!!!! Hey, I've got mail!

•Beth Lock• <beth@infowest.com>

Websites mentioned:

<<http://www.opsweb.co.jp/tonya/rusud/cart.cgi?page=original.html>>

<<http://www.smalldog.com>>

<<http://www.benwin.com>>

<<http://www.worldwithoutborders.com>>

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The Beginners Guide Making CDs



•By Tim Robertson <Publisher@mymac.com>•

Part III

The last few issues I've written about how to actually create CDs. This month, let's address the number one question asked of me: how to get either LPs or cassette tapes onto CD using your Mac.

The good news is that chances are you have almost everything you will need already to do it, and what you don't have can be easily bought at Radio Shack or the Internet.

The bad news, though, is the sound of your CD recorded from the LPs or cassettes will only sound as good as the source material. If your record is really scratchy your CD will be, too. Thankfully, there are some programs out there that will help you clean up the sound somewhat. Just remember the old rule of recording, though: crap in is crap out. (As crass as that may sound, it is nonetheless true.)

Let's pretend for a moment that we want to do this on the cheap. Here's how you will want to do it.

First, you will need to make a quick run to Radio Shack or your favorite electronics store and pick up a cable with a mini-phone jack (3.5mm) on one end and a pair of RCA jacks on the other (see picture). If you're not sure if you're getting the right one, look on the back of any stereo or VCR and you will see an RCA plug. Get the cable that fits that. Chances are, one will be red, the other white (left and right). The other side of the cable is the mini-phone jack. This is the same thing as a headphone plug, or the Microphone that may

have come with your Mac. If you're still unsure just tell the salesman what you want and let him get it for you.



The first step is connecting the tape or turntable (record player) to your Mac. With a tape player, this is simple. Simply use the cable you just got to connect the RCA plugs on the tape deck to the sound input jack on the back of your Mac (where you plug in your microphone). With a turntable, you will need to use a stereo pre-amp, such as your home audio amplifier. To connect the Mac, simply plug the RCA plug into the "Tape 1 Record" RCA plugs on the back of the amplifier, and then insert the mini-phone jack into the back of the Mac.

Once you have the physical connection between your source player and the Macintosh, it is time to sit down in front of the Mac and play with some software.

The first thing you will need is a program to get the sound from your cassette or LP into your Mac. Sure, you now have a connection between the two, but you have to let the Mac know there will be music coming into that port.

You will need some software at this point. Jump on the web, and download the following two programs. (Note: other programs will work, and may even work better, but I found that those on a limited budget will find these two programs easy to learn and use, and they both get the job done.)

Ultra Recorder <<http://members.aol.com/EJC3/Ultra.html>> will let us actually record the music coming into your Macintosh. This is a \$20 shareware product, which you can use just fine until you pay for your shareware fees. I found that the longer the song, the more memory you will want to give Ultra Recorder. In fact, if you're on a Mac with very little memory and you plan on creating a lot of CDs (or MP3s for that matter) you will want to get some more memory for

your Mac ASAP. Virtual Memory is not recommended, as some audio applications do not like it.



Ultra Recorder
Full featured Shareware!

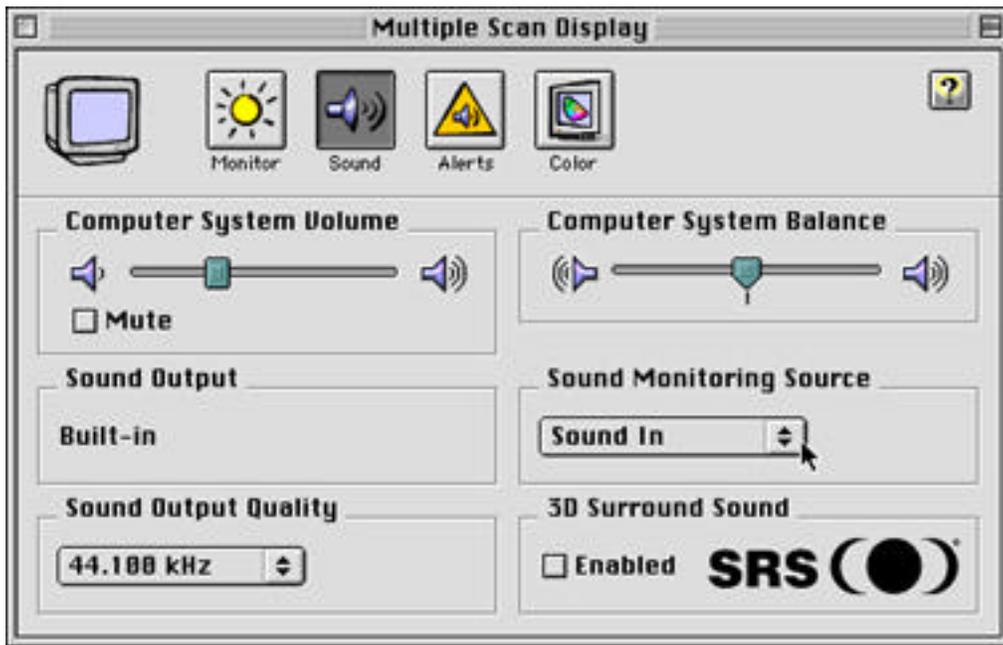
The next program you will want to download is **SndSampler 4.0**. <<http://www.geocities.com/SiliconValley/Garage/9373/SndSampler.html>> This is the program you will use to clean up your music. (Debra Power did the review for My Mac back in November 1998, which you can view at <http://www.mymac.com/mymac/archives/nov_98/sndsampler.shtml>.) Like Ultra Recorder, **SndSampler** is shareware and will set you back \$20. Both programs are well worth the \$20 shareware fee, and compete in features and ease-of-use with commercial programs costing five times as much.

Another program you can use to get the sound into your Macintosh is Adaptec's CDSpinDoctor, which comes with Adaptec Toast 4.0. If you're going to be creating a lot of CDs you really should purchase Adaptec Toast 4.0. It is well worth the money. CDSpinDoctor will let you take audio from your cassettes or LPs right into your Mac. If you already have this program, I still suggest downloading Ultra Recorder and comparing the two, and use the one that works best for you. (While I like CDSpinDoctor, it keeps crashing on my Mac, whereas Ultra Recorder does not.)



CDSpinDoctor
It works, but a little weak on features

One more step to go before you begin recording your music. Take a trip to the Monitors & Sound control panel, click on the Sound button, and change the Sound Monitoring Source to Sound In. If you are using a pre-amp, adjust the sound level now so that it doesn't play too loudly and that your audio source won't suffer clipping from input overload.



You now have the tools to record music from an LP or cassette onto your Mac! Both Ultra Recorder and CDSpinDoctor will let you save the imported music into AIFF format, which is the format used on audio CDs.

This is a (very) simple explanation on how to get sound into your Macintosh. Of course, once you get the sound into your Mac, the possibilities are endless on what you can do with it. You can change almost everything about the music with **SndSampler** or any other music editing software. Using an MP3 encoder, you can convert your sound/music into MP3 format to play in SoundJam or another MP3 player. You could record yourself on a cassette player, bring it into your Mac, convert it into a QuickTime movie, and post in on a website. Your only limit will be your imagination.

We are at the stage where almost anyone can afford to create CDs very inexpensively. Macs of all varieties are getting cheaper in price, CD Burners are at an all time low, and blank CDs are much cheaper than a Zip disk. All told, if you're a music lover, now is the time to take the CD creation plunge. You knew it would be fun. Did you know it could be so easy?

•Tim Robertson• <Publisher@mymac.com>

Websites mentioned:

<<http://members.aol.com/EJC3/Ultra.html>>

<<http://www.geocities.com/SiliconValley/Garage/9373/SndSampler.html>>

<http://www.mymac.com/mymac/archives/nov_98/sndsampler.shtml>

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•By Tim Robertson <Publisher@mymac.com>•

The New Macintoshes

A week ago I placed an order for two new computers: the new G4 400MHz PowerMac and a 400MHz G3 bronze keyboard PowerMac. With the new iMac and the now shipping iBook, Apple finally has a well-rounded stable of computers for every single type of computer user.

While I wish I could say the new **G4** sat on my desk, it doesn't. One of the designers in our graphic house has the machine on his desk. Of course, I'm the guy who orders all the computers, sets them up, and plays with them first. Meaning, of course, that I got a full five hours on the G4 fresh out of the box before anyone else got to use it.

My first impression: FAST. Yes, this is a very fast Mac. I talked to another IT guy from our company who claimed the 450MHz G3 was faster than the 400MHz G4. While I hate to disagree with my esteemed co-worker, I have to say he is wrong. This G4 not only out performs the G3s, but also it FEELS faster. In everything from opening windows, launching Illustrator 8.0.1, and saving a large file over the network, this G4 just seems much more responsive.

Love at first sight? Well, no. There are some problems I've encountered with the G4 which have made me somewhat skeptical of this new design, and whether it was perhaps rushed to market a little sooner than it should have. I also wondered why Apple bothered to release the G4 400MHz model, which is nothing but a G3 with a G4 chip inside, unlike the 450 and 500MHz models which incorporate the new SawTooth architecture. Now I know the reason:

there was a production shortage of the faster CPUs and Apple decided this course of action—ship something now rather than accrue backorders and impatient customers—would be the better public relations, if not marketing, decision. It wasn't pleasant, but it was the lesser of two evils.

The problems have been strange with the G4. For example, I could be running Adobe Illustrator 8.0.1 perfectly when for no apparent reason the machine will slow down. Click a menu and nothing happens for at least five seconds. Then everything is fine again for an hour, until the problem comes back. An Adobe Illustrator problem? Undoubtedly. The machine works fine with other applications, even when the problem is occurring right then in Illustrator. My solution? None yet, though I have not had much time to explore it further. I hope Adobe is aware of this and is working on a fix.

The biggest comment from other Mac users in our shop? The look of the G4. "Hey, I like the look of that much better than the G3s" I hear it all the time.



When the G3 was first released, I really, REALLY liked how it looked. Different. Classy. Nice machine. Now, though, after seeing a blue and white G3 sitting next to a graphite and clear G4, I realize how muddy the G3's color is in comparison. The G4 *looks* like power. It looks fast. Most important, it looks much more like a professional machine than the blue and white G3. Could some of this simply be the newness of the G4? Certainly. But people who have never been around Macs before have commented on the look of the G4, and how "smooth" it looks. These are people who don't give a rat's butt about Apple or computers in general, for that matter.

Something that really bugs me on both the G3 and G4s: the cheap CD tray. These things are about the cheapest piece of trash of a CD mechanism I have ever seen. If you've never opened a CD on a G3 or G4, you'll be surprised the first time you do. They are VERY loud when the tray slides out, and the sound is very clunky and cheap sounding. In fact, the CD is the worst part of these machines, and I can't believe Apple didn't address this design with the G4. The brand new iMacs have a trayless CD/DVD player. What does "trayless" mean,

you ask? Well, have you ever seen a car audio CD player, the newer ones where you just slide the CD a little and the player grabs the disc to load it automatically? That is trayless. I've wondered for years why the computer industry hasn't rushed to embrace this simply technology. Well, at least the new iMacs finally have this feature. I only wish Apple had this option on the \$6,498 top of the line model, not only the \$999 model. Make sense? Oh, sure. You betcha.



The PowerBook, on the other hand, is very hard to find fault with. This machine is pure elegance. I have a 520c PowerBook as well, and while that machine is dreadfully slow today, it is still one of the best-made PowerBooks Apple has ever produced. Sturdy, trusty, and small. I saw last year's PowerBook "Wallstreet" models, most notably Adam's, our webmaster, and one at work. While I really liked the machine, it just didn't feel quite right to me. It wasn't until I sat with this year's PowerBook, the bronze keyboard G3, that I finally felt Apple got it 100% correct.

The slimmer design of the 1999 G3 PowerBook makes a big difference in comfort while typing. Hard to believe since it's only a wee bit thinner, but it does make a big difference, at least to me. Though I still prefer a full-sized extended keyboard, this new PowerBook is really, really nice to type on. Likewise, the trackpad in the new PowerBooks are much more natural feeling in use, unlike the older trackpads on the 520, 5300, or any other PowerBook.

The display is adequate, though the new display on the iBooks look much sharper in comparison. Sharper and brighter. One of my only complaints with the PowerBook is that the screen is a little too dark at times. Adjusting the settings helps, but not always. In particular, darker scenes in many QuickTime movies lack details I see easily after connecting an external monitor to the PowerBook for an A-B comparison.

The DVD player is a nice addition, though I don't have much use for it. Perhaps on a long train or plane trip, this would be a handy feature. Otherwise, it has no use to me. The CD tray, however, could use some work. In particular, I hate the almost recessed CD eject button. I have to use the tip of my finger to push that button, when the flat part of my finger should be able to open the tray. I know the designers wanted to prevent inadvertent ejections, but I still feel Apple could make that button a little bigger in future designs. On the other hand, ejecting the CD tray and battery is simplicity itself. Lift the lever on the front of the machine, and out the CD player or battery pops. Very handy!

Another complaint I have is the fact that the screen gets very dirty, due to the fact that when you close the unit the screen actually touches the keyboard. I don't like this, and wish there was some space between the two. I have heard others complain of this, including Bob McCormick here at My Mac. Hair, smudges, and dirt which were not on the screen before I closed the lid, are there after I open it again. I also wonder if, after time, the screen will actually acquire indentations from the keyboard? This worries me. The machines are still too new to know yet if this will be a problem. I love the fact that I can flip the screen up horizontally with the keyboard. When you do this, the PowerBook looks HUGE.

Yes, I talked about all the things I don't like with the new G4 and the PowerBook 400MHz G3. This is what I do, complain about stuff that bugs me. Does that mean I don't think you should buy either of these machines? If you have the money, both the G4 and the PowerBook are the very best computers on the market today. Apple has never made a better PowerBook, or a faster machine than the G4. Both work as advertised and work well. The problems I see with these machines can be explained simply enough: I expect perfection and always see ways to improve a great design. The new PowerBook is the BMW of the computer industry, while the G4 is the Lamborghini. Both are great machines, and you will love being the owner of either one.

•Tim Robertson• <Publisher@mymac.com>

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•By Adam Karneboge <webmaster@mymac.com>•

My Mac Online goes under the knife: Website Optimization tools reviewed

Recently, I was approached by two companies selling two very different optimization tools guaranteed to speed up web page loading times. As a web designer and content creator, anything that can speed up my web pages is important to me. Did you know that the average website contains up to 50% dead weight—extra information that can slow web page loading to a crawl?

I was a webmaster when WYSIWYG editors weren't around, and I have always considered myself as a clean-code writer. What really blows me away, though, is that even the blank space in my HTML documents that I leave for easy readability will become the "extra information" that will slow my web pages down.

Consequently, I was more than happy to review the two products: **Mizer 1.7** and **VSE Web Site Turbo 3.0.1**. In this review I will put the two products head-to-head in tests using the #54 build of **My Mac Online**. I'll let you know which product worked the best, and which one will suit your needs. Now, let the fun begin...

Mizer 1.7

Company: Antimony Software

Estimated Price: \$69.95

<<http://www.antimonysoftware.com>>



Mizer 1.7 from Antimony Software was the first product I tested. Mizer will optimize all elements of HTML, and it will also optimize all your GIF and JPEG files, dramatically reducing the time it takes to load graphics. The main advantage of Mizer is that it does not require you to fine-tune a multitude of settings; you can get started optimizing from the get-go. Mizer allows you to drag and drop both files, graphics, and whole sites for optimization.

Mizer does have some shortcomings, though, mainly that it doesn't create a post-optimization report with actual numbers that you can see, meaning that you won't get actual percentage savings. Mizer also does not have a HTML 4.0 compliance option, and it could more easily damage intense HTML 4.0 documents than could VSE Web Site Turbo.

Despite the shortcomings, Mizer really shines when you put it to work in actual real-world tests. For my HTML tests I used the **My Mac Online** main page (/index.shtml), a 27k HTML document, and the **Book Bytes** archive page (/archives/reviews/book_bytes.shtml), a 38k HTML document. For my graphics tests, I used the main page logo (/graphics/logo.jpg), a 40k JPEG file, and the "about" graphic in our navigation bar (/graphics/navigation/about1.gif), a 12k GIF file. Finally, I optimized the entire **My Mac Online** site, which weighs in at just over 83MB.

Mizer performed very well in HTML optimization, cutting my two test documents down from 27k and 38k to 24k and 34.5k, respectively. Mizer also performed well in graphics optimization, cutting my 40k JPEG file to 12k, and my 12k GIF file to a measly 2k. And Mizer cut the entire size of **My Mac Online** from 83MB to 44MB. Pretty darn good, if you ask me. So how does the competition stack up?

VSE Web Site Turbo 3.0.1

Company: VSE Software

Shareware: \$49.95

<<http://www.vse-online.com>>



VSE Web Site Turbo 3.0.1 from VSE Software is another impressive program that includes all of the functionality of Mizer, with a completely different interface and feature set. VSE Web Site Turbo includes drag and drop as Mizer does, but it includes a multitude of preferences to set which type of optimization it does, which type of tags it removes, and what version of HTML it should tailor itself to. Unfortunately, setting these preferences isn't as easy as

it sounds. VSE Web Site Turbo often forces you to make countless difficult, often intimidating decisions before you can optimize your web pages. However, these preferences can be put to good use if you're an advanced user, and webmasters who are particular about the types of data that is placed into their pages will appreciate the extra effort by VSE Software to include this fine-tuning functionality.

Quite possibly my favorite feature of VSE Web Site Turbo is its ability to create post-optimization reports that show exactly what was done, and what percentage of data was saved. Mizer does not have this extremely important feature, and the only real way to distinguish how much data you are saving is to look in Mizer's progress window, but if you're optimizing only a few files that's not easy, especially on a fast machine.

However, the big question is: How does VSE Web Site Turbo stack up against Mizer in optimization? Surprisingly, there was no significant difference between the two in terms of how many bytes they saved. However, one significant problem with VSE Web Site Turbo is that it ties up the whole computer when it's optimizing, which stops you from getting other essential work done, such as email. But you won't be tied up long; VSE Web Site Turbo quickly optimizes HTML documents and graphics for fast loading.

The Summary

Mizer is clearly an outstanding optimization tool that can be a one-stop drag and drop solution to your sites' woes. Despite its shortcomings, it performs on par with the more fully featured VSE Web Site Turbo. VSE Web Site Turbo also performed well, yielding approximately the same results as Mizer. However, after viewing my documents after optimization, VSE Web Site Turbo yielded a dramatic change in the appearance of my documents, even after I changed its main setting to "not alter the appearance of my web page." Only after I dug deep into its settings was I able to view my documents as they appeared before optimization. Even then, VSE Web Site Turbo still yielded an excellent optimized file.

Therefore, I will make the following recommendations based on my month with the two optimization tools. If you are an *advanced* or *intermediate* webmaster who has experience with HTML code, you will probably appreciate the depth and the choices that VSE Web Site Turbo brings, and thus, I **recommend** VSE Web Site Turbo to you. However, if you are a *beginning* webmaster, or a webmaster who wants to optimize his site on the fly without having to worry about their design being affected, it's Mizer that you'll want to buy, and it's Mizer that I **recommend**. Mizer costs \$20.00 more, but it will pay for itself in the amount of headaches you save.

I am sincerely impressed with BOTH of these optimization tools, and there is no way I can pick a clear winner. However, it is clear to me that each product has a different skill-base. Please consider your level of web-smithing expertise before making a purchase decision.

Requirements/Availability: Mizer 1.7 is available for purchase and download at Antimony Software's website, <<http://www.antimonysoftware.com>>. VSE Web Site Turbo 3.0.1 is available as a fully-functional demo at <<http://www.vse-online.com>>, but requires you to register if you want to publish your pages. Both are available immediately, and include documentation with the download.

•Adam Karneboge• <webmaster@mymac.com>

Websites mentioned:

<<http://www.antimonysoftware.com>>

<<http://www.vse-online.com>>

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•By Mike Wallinga <mikew@mymac.com>•

QuickMail Pro 2.0
Company: CE Software
Estimated Price: \$39.95
<<http://www.cesoft.com>>



In its promotional materials and advertisements for QuickMail 2.0, CE Software promises the Holy Grail of good software programming—a clean, easy-to-learn interface to comfort the newest of newbies, combined with enough features and muscle to keep the true power users happy. Even though I have a few minor quibbles with this underdog of an email client, for the most part QuickMail 2.0 delivers on its promises, and provides users with a good, solid alternative to the heavyweights of the market.

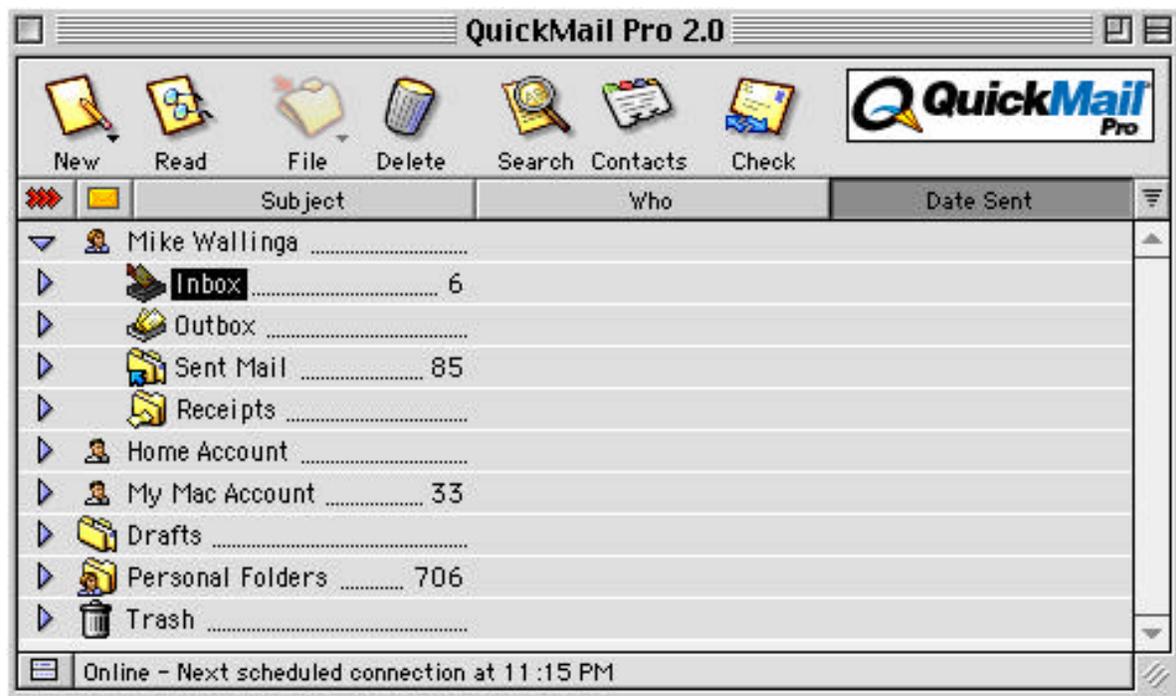
For many people, an email client isn't just an application they run on their computer, it's *the* application they run on their computer, and life without it would be almost unimagineable. As such, it's worth doing a little comparison shopping to make sure that this indispensable tool is the best you can get, not only in terms of features, but in its of ease of use and efficiency. If you take the time to do this, you'll probably find that QuickMail Pro stands up pretty favorably to the competition. Whether or not it stands above the big boys is ultimately, of course, your own decision.

Looks to Die For, and a Good Personality, Too!

CE Software isn't just giving QuickMail lip service when it touts its easy-to-learn, easy-to-use interface; it is quite intuitive, and for the most part self-explanatory. Toolbar icons are well-designed, and if you can't figure out a button's function by the icon, hold the cursor over the icon for a second, and some text will pop up and tell you. Menu commands are where they are expected to be, and most of them have keyboard equivalents for people who

are inclined to spend as much time with their hands on the keys as possible, as I am.

The interface does break a little from the now-standard three-pane motif popularized by clients such as Netscape Messenger and Microsoft's Outlook Express. By default, the main window shows only the status of your accounts: how many messages are unread, how many have been sent, and so forth. Clicking on the triangle widgets on the left hand side of the window collapses and expands the account hierarchies, much like a Finder window in list mode. If you like, you can expand your mailboxes to show your messages, reveal the optional preview pane at the bottom of the window, and read all of your email from this one window. I find it easier to double-click on messages and show them in their own windows, though.



A look at the main Message Browser window in QuickMail Pro 2.0

Like nearly all email clients, QuickMail allows you to create subfolders to store your read mail in, but the program takes a different approach to how you put them there. Instead of a third pane on the left side to drag-and-drop the messages onto, or a menu in the menubar, QuickMail has a "File" icon in its toolbar; clicking on it pops up a dialog box allowing you to select which of your personal folders you'd like to move the message to. Alternatively, clicking and holding on the "File" icon pops up the your personal folders in a list, from

which you can easily choose the proper destination for your piece of email.

But, as slick as the interface is, it could be slicker. People who prefer to read their email in the main window's preview pane must use the keyboard or the menubar if they wish to reply to a message—the only time a "Reply" button is present in the toolbar is when a message is being displayed in its own window. Also, the toolbar buttons are not contextual—in other words, the "New" button always creates a new email message, which can be confusing if you are working with your personal folders and expect it to create a new mail folder!

Looks Aren't Everything – What Can It Do?

In addition to its outstanding interface, QuickMail Pro 2.0 offers many power features that make it a strong contender: support for multiple users; multiple accounts; multiple signatures; scheduled mail checking; contextual menus; mail filters; styled text; LDAP directory servers; and more. The built-in spell checker is both complete and customizable, and the Contact Manager is so robust for an email client's address book that I've taken to using it as my own lightweight PIM of choice. QuickMail also supports Auto-Completion of email addresses (if you have them stored in the Contact Manager). For example, by the time I've typed "Kar" into the To: field of a new message, QuickMail has already matched my typing with the name of My Mac's webmaster, Adam Karneboge, and has completed his name and email address for me. Finally, in one of the niftier features, you have the option of recording a voice message within QuickMail and sending it as an attachment to an email message. (That is, as long as your Mac has a microphone and/or an audio-in jack—sorry, iBook users!)

In the two months that I have been regularly using the program, QuickMail has done all I have asked it to, and more. The only gripe I have with its operation is the way it handles multiple accounts. If you have several active accounts, QuickMail doesn't consolidate your mailboxes. For example, mail that gets sent to my My Mac address, my college address, or my home ISP address gets put into three different inboxes, and mail I send from the three addresses gets stored in one of three different outboxes. I know this is a highly subjective point, but I would have preferred one inbox and one outbox, with a column in the mail browser window devoted to specifying from which account the message originated.

Plays Well With Others... Sort Of

QuickMail Pro makes it easy to keep your current contacts and address book lists from other programs. You can directly import QuickMail 1.x address books, and, even more importantly, Outlook Express Export files, into QuickMail Pro 2.0. Additionally, you can import other contact files (from other

programs) as LDIF files or text files. However, since I previously used Outlook Express 4.5 as my email client, I didn't have a chance to try out that option.

In the other direction, QuickMail Pro 2.0 also allows you to export its Contact Manager file in either LDIF or text fomats. This is useful if you want to use that information in another program.

Unfortunately, there is no easy way to import email messages from another email program into QuickMail. So, if you have tons of mail archived in another format, like I do, your options are either converting the archives to text files and storing them that way, or keeping the archives in their old format and keeping a copy of the old email client around "just in case."

Compatibility-wise, QuickMail has been relatively trouble free, though I had some problems with the program crashing due to Type 2 errors when I first started using it. The problem went away when I disabled, among other things, desktop printing; I never investigated further to know if that was the true culprit or not, and it may well have been something else. In any case, since then I haven't had a single problem with the program.

In another minor annoyance, the QuickMail Menu extension insists on putting its menubar icon closest to the Application menu on the right hand side. The problem with this is that America Online Instant Messenger wants its menubar icon in that position, too, and the QuickMail extension "wins." When both extensions are active, AIM's menubar icon disappears, which led to me disabling the QuickMail menu extension. (I use a QuicKeys keyboard macro for checking my email, anyway, so it wasn't a big deal for me.)

A Quick(Mail) Fix for What Ails

Users of QuickMail 2.0 should download the 2.01 update from CE Software's website for interface improvements and bug fixes. It cleans up the user experience even further by adding icon flags to messages that have been replied to and/or forwarded, adding button titles to the Contact Manager, sorting the Account Assistant's user list by last name instead of first name, and marking as read messages which have been read in the preview pane but not in their own window, among many other minor improvements and fixes. Get it at <http://www.cesoft.com/updates.html>.

That's The Price You Pay

Unfortunately, the biggest drawback to QuickMail Pro, in light of such popular email clients as Outlook Express, Netscape Messenger, and Eudora Light, is that it isn't free. Even though the saying goes that you get what you pay for, in this case forty bucks doesn't get very much extra. Don't get me wrong—I'm a

big fan of QuickMail Pro, but the fact remains that it does precious little that Outlook Express can't. This will only become all the more true when Microsoft releases 5.0 of their email client, with promised features such as direct access to Hotmail accounts and intelligent spam blocking. Even the current version of Outlook Express offers some features that QuickMail Pro doesn't, such as the ability to access news servers.

I do strongly believe that QuickMail Pro is much, much better than the underpowered freeware offerings from Netscape and Eudora Light, and any users of those programs should check into QuickMail Pro. However, the program doesn't have much to set it apart from other commercial offerings, nor does it offer a truly compelling reason—other than its interface—to pay for it, when you can get a high-powered client like Outlook Express for free.

Personally, I'm in love with QuickMail Pro's interface, and am willing to pay for the privilege to use it. But that will probably not be the case with most Mac users, and understandably so. The fact that you have to pay for QuickMail Pro shouldn't cause you to immediately write it off as an option, because if it sounds like a program that might be up your alley, I strongly suggest you "try before you buy" by downloading the demo from CE Software's website, at <http://www.cesoft.com/demo.html>. The demo is fully functional for thirty days, and CE Software even provides free technical support during the 30-day evaluation period, so you can't go wrong by checking it out.

The Target Audience

Given all of the above pros and cons, whether or not QuickMail Pro is for you probably depends on who you are and what type of situation you're in. For example, even though I didn't get a chance to test it personally, CE Software's QuickMail Office package, which offers clients for both Macintosh and Windows as well as mail server and directory server software, seems like an ideal way to set up a cross-platform mailing system. Using the same software on both platforms will keep support simple, and the intuitive interface will keep the learning curve and training cost at a minimum.

Even if you're not running a network, QuickMail Pro's support for multiple-user accounts is great for a single Mac with multiple-users. For example, my three roommates and I can all use QuickMail Pro to check our email without worrying that one of us will read someone else's mail or send a message using someone else's name (either intentionally or accidentally).

A single user who is searching for an email client right now should definitely give QuickMail Pro a look, too. But, for someone who's on a budget or already using an email client they're happy with, it's hard to recommend

switching to QuickMail Pro too strongly.

Summary

I do think that, overall, QuickMail Pro is a very, very good email client. Its stellar interface makes it a snap for anyone to get used to, and its feature set is robust enough for all but the most demanding users to appreciate. It has enough power to be a true workhorse while maintaining a light footprint (requiring 6.5 megs of hard drive space and less than six megs or RAM), and you'll never find yourself scratching your head wondering how to perform a certain task.

Whether or not you should choose to use QuickMail Pro as your email client depends on several factors, such as your user environment, needs and wants, and willingness or ability to pay money for a program which has top-notch freeware competition. Rest assured, though, that if you do choose QuickMail, you'll be getting a solid program that you won't regret buying.

I've always thought that the truest test of a reviewer's opinion, regardless of what gets said in the printed review, is whether or not the reviewer actually uses the program in day-to-day life over its competitors. This is the case with me and QuickMail Pro, and in the last two months of using it I've made it my email program of choice. As such, even though it's not for everyone, I **recommend QuickMail Pro 2.0**. It's not a Holy Grail, but it is a solid contender in the battle for email client supremacy.

•[Mike Wallinga](mailto:mikew@mymac.com)• <mikew@mymac.com>

Websites mentioned:

<<http://www.cesoft.com>>

<<http://www.cesoft.com/updates.html>>

<<http://www.cesoft.com/demo.html>>

Check out our sponsor!

<<http://www.maclaunch.com>>

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Book Bytes

•By John Nemerovski <nemo@mymac.com>•

Digital Photography Answers! Certified Tech Support

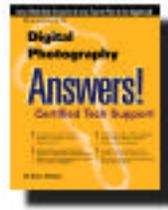
by **Dave Johnson**

Osborne/McGraw-Hill

<<http://www.osborne.com>>

ISBN 0-07-211884-9, 543 pages

\$24.99 U.S., \$34.99 Canada



It is both rare and refreshing to have the opportunity to review a book where I know almost as much as does the author. I have been involved in photography intensely for over 30 years, and I am thinking about shifting my focus from conventional photography to digital imagery.

All photography instruction consists of two stages: how to take decent pictures, and what to do with the darn things once the image making process is complete. Author Dave Johnson provides very solid, knowledgeable advice for selection of equipment and making the pictures, including detailed information on lighting, close-ups, and “Using Peripherals and Accessories.” Image storage and editing come next, in progressively greater detail, before readers can learn about digital distribution and (gasp) digital video.

Digital Photography Answers! is structured as a lengthy series of specific questions, which are answered via text, diagrams, photos, charts, and Windows-based screenshots, as appropriate. Did you ever need to understand:

- How do I make my own greeting cards?
- What kind of memory storage should I get for my digital camera?
- How do I reduce glare from glass or shiny objects in the picture?

and hundreds more similar questions? Look no further. The answers are here.

Photography is expensive, and the photographer's greatest investment is time spent figuring out how to get something right that came out wrong. If I had never taught one photo seminar, and had instead insisted that each student absorb the basic advice in **Digital Photography Answers!**, the results would have been positive.

If you are wondering how relevant yesterday's photo instruction is to tomorrow's technology, take a cold shower. Understanding your equipment and medium will always get you to first base, a book such as this one will get you all the way to third base, and years of imaginative elbow grease will get you to home plate. For \$25 U.S. this **RECOMMENDED** book is a steal.

Dave Johnson tells Book Bytes:

I wrote **Digital Photography Answers** as if it were the only book someone would ever have to buy about digital imaging. In other words, I included all the basics of traditional photography, like composition and lighting. But I also made it specific to the digital medium, of course, with gobs of details on editing images on the computer, printing for framing, and that sort of thing. I had a lot of fun with the special effects chapter and finally put my ability to create Star Trek-like phaser blasts to use. I hope readers enjoy this book as much as I enjoyed writing it.

Adobe InDesign for Dummies
by **Deke McClelland**

<<http://www.dekemc.com>>

and **Amy Thomas Buscaglia**

Dummies Press

<<http://www.dummies.com>>

ISBN 0-7645-0599-8, 356 pages

\$19.99 U.S., \$29.99 Canada, £18.99 U.K.

Does anyone still use PageMaker? How about QuarkXPress? I know more than a few people who would like to "deep-six" Quark, in spite of using it professionally for years. This new book on the long-awaited "Quark-killer" will find an enthusiastic audience, and will be the first of many titles on Adobe's new desktop publishing (DTP) application.

The authors emphasize that potential readers will be new to InDesign, yet will cover the map with regard to experience with DTP. The modest cost of **Adobe InDesign for Dummies** should repay itself during the first day's work with the new software.

Opening chapters cover the essentials, and are liberally illustrated with useful screenshots from InDesign's windows and dialog boxes. By Chapter Five, entitled "Rock Yer Blocks Off," users are working with blocks of text and starting to customize their text-entry possibilities. Fonts and typography come next, including scaling and kerning. The writing is both lively and informative, which I applaud.

Chapter Ten is important: "Graphic Language about Graphic Imagery." InDesign has neat and nifty methods of handling your DTP images, friends. Deke and Amy take readers deeper into the text and illustration procedures, before delving into "Exporting Documents to HTML" and similar online publishing features.

Final sections cover bunches of "tens," such as:

- Ten Terrific Typeface Families, and
- Ten Shortcuts Everyone Should Know.

I know one thing. Before working with InDesign, I intend to study **Adobe InDesign for Dummies** carefully, and put its **RECOMMENDED** wisdom to work.

Genealogy Online, Millennium Edition
by **Elizabeth Powell Crowe**
Computing McGraw-Hill
<<http://www.computing.mcgraw-hill.com>>
ISBN 0-07-135103-5, 335 pages
\$19.99 U.S.



For genealogy hobbyists and professionals the Internet is a dream come true. This book helps readers make the dream a satisfying one, because online research can be frustrating.

Genealogy Online begins with essential hardware and connectivity info,

current to DSL, then basic genealogy software and Internet sites, written primarily for newcomers to the Net. The book becomes more specific by Chapters Five and Six, in which recommended Usenet newsgroups and Internet mailing lists are itemized.

Next, over forty pages are devoted to dozens of websites, with enough people-oriented URLs and AOL keywords to keep readers browsing and following links for several decades. The author is personally involved with a project called RootsWeb, which she explains in Chapter Nine.

You say you want information on online libraries, or the Mormon Church database, or commercial genealogy sites? How about a lengthy description of America Online's "Golden Gate Genealogy Forum" and the comparable forum on CompuServe? They all are here, clearly presented.

With a name like Nemerovski, you would think I should have an easy time with genealogy research. Armed with **Genealogy Online, Millennium Edition**, let's hope you're right. **RECOMMENDED.**

**Professional Studio Techniques Design Essentials
With Adobe Photoshop and Adobe Illustrated,
Third Edition**

by Luanne Seymour Cohen

Adobe/Peachpit Press

<<http://www.peachpit.com>>

ISBN 1-56830-472-2, 121 pages

\$39.99 U.S., \$59.95 Canada, £36.99 U.K.



Let's get something out of the way first. This book is slim in page-length, large in price, and huge in physical footprint: 9 x 12 inches (23 x 30 cm). It's an oddball, with an enormous title. Is it worth the price and modest shelf space? (The author wrote to explain that the reason the book is large is so that it will lay flat when opened so the user has both hands free for keyboard and mouse.)

Ooh, I think I will like it, if I can find enough room on my crowded desk to open the book. Chapter One, "Drawing," starts with a 14-step lesson for users of Adobe Illustrator 8.0 or later, on custom borders. The pages in **Professional Studio Techniques Design Essentials** are so wide that in two spacious columns the author has positioned parallel sets of numbered tasks alongside the drawn results. What's next?

Great! The format is consistent, utilizing the two-page lesson throughout. I just learned how do other projects with Illustrator, including quick 3-D boxes and pie charts. Still doing drawing, we proceed to Photoshop 5.0 or later, for a fascinating assignment on perspective grids. Hey, Luanne, you can draw *and* teach.

I am definitely NOT a painter, but many of you are. The next unit has some exciting painting projects using both Adobe applications. (Long pause.) Oops. I forgot to continue the book review, because I became so engrossed in learning how to make color-tinted photographs and neon graphics.

Chapter Three proceeds from simple patterns and textures into textured 3-D graphics. Text effects come next, and they are stunning: corroded type; rainbow scratched type; and several more. The book concludes with special effects and web techniques, and... (John again forgets to keep writing). A recommended reading list wraps things up, including many titles previously reviewed here in Book Bytes.

If you're a serious student or working visual artist who uses Photoshop or Illustrator, hustle yourself over to the nearest bookstore to determine if you are as excited about this new **RECOMMENDED** edition of **Professional Studio Techniques Design Essentials** as I am.

Hewlett-Packard Official Scanner Handbook by David D. Busch, Susan Krzywicki, and Laurel Burden

IDG Books Worldwide

<<http://www.idgbooks.com>>

ISBN 0-7645-3304-5, 470 pages

\$19.99 U.S., \$29.99 Canada



This is the third book in the HP series from IDG. I hope more are on the way, because this first bunch is good. I can't claim to be a whiz with scanners, so this topic is of personal interest.

Looking at the **Hewlett-Packard Official Scanner Handbook** from the page-end side, I notice a dark section that takes up roughly the final third of the book. What does it signify? Oh, goody—nearly 150 pages of “Projects for the Home” are contained in the final four chapters, with scanner projects for home, for kids, for the seasons, and for websites. Let's come back to these activities after examining the bulk of the text.

The opening 140 pages, in seven chapters, cover “Using Scanners,” taking the newcomer from how the darn things work through an array of practical techniques to color optimization and image editing. Lots of space is devoted to definitions and explanations, with very good illustrations, photos, charts, and screenshots. Chapter Four, on “Resolution, Interpolation, and Sharp Images,” should be required reading for everyone desiring to achieve intermediate status and beyond.

Many image editing applications are described in Chapter Seven, and understanding this concentrated knowledge will save you much more time and money than it takes to buy and read the **Hewlett-Packard Official Scanner Handbook**. Chapter Eight contains specific hardware and software troubleshooting procedures, with an emphasis on HP's products.

Author David Busch comments:

Although Hewlett-Packard's blessing means a lot, I really tried to fill the bulk of this book with information that can help users of any brand scanner get the most from these sensationally-useful image capture devices.

Nearly 100 pages of beginning and advanced projects for the office come before the step-by-step home exercises. I consider this book to be a three-in-one volume: essential information; no-nonsense office activities; and fun stuff to do at home. The writing and graphics are straightforward and well-structured. Looks like we have a winner. Book Bytes **RECOMMENDS** heartily this \$20 book, and after I get my new scanner I will put the **Hewlett-Packard Official Scanner Handbook** to personal use immediately.

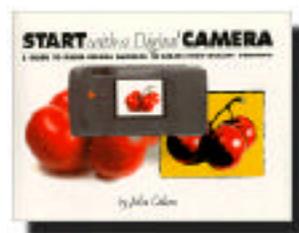
**Start with a Digital Camera:
A Guide to Using Digital Cameras
to Create High-Quality Graphics
by John Odam**

Peachpit Press

<<http://www.peachpit.com>>

ISBN 0-201-35424-1, 145 pages

\$34.99 U.S., \$52.50 Canada



How can I not like this author? He has contributed to several of Book Bytes' previously-recommended digital art and design books, his photo on page 146 shows a jolly gent plucking some sort of mandolin, and he sells a special shampoo for beards, at <<http://www.infonex.com/beardsley>>

This book is another of the rare long-thin-expensive breed that I like so much, in spite of its (at first glance) incongruous price, relative to its size. Stop me if I get carried away, but **Start with a Digital Camera** features excellent design, with custom layouts on every handsome two-page spread. Text, illustrations, photos, diagrams, charts, and before-after examples liberally decorate and add stylistically to every chapter. Even the Contents pages are visually engaging.

In thirteen well-produced units, readers can learn about more than just technical facts and figures, including:

- working with people and objects
- using digital photos in desktop, graphics arts, and on-screen situations
- manipulating and modifying images

and quite a bit more.

Let's turn at random to page... 77, for Chapter Nine: "Creating Textures and Backgrounds." Hey, this is neat. Odam offers six pages of examples with dozens of fascinating organic-subject images that can be used to enhance your final projects, such as rock, foliage, and water textures. His final results are included, to show how he got from concept to completion.

I happen to know a lot about photography, but not much about what to do with the images for enhanced creativity. If you are a visual artist or digital photographer who wants to learn from the best in the business, look over **Start with a Digital Camera** to determine if this **RECOMMENDED** title is what you need to get those artistic juices flowing.

**The Complete Idiot's Guide to
Protecting Yourself Online**
by Preston Gralla
Alpha / Que / Macmillan
<<http://www.mcp.com>>
ISBN 0-7897-2035-3, 348 pages



\$16.99 U.S., \$25.95 Canada, £15.99 U.K.

I have to hand it to the publisher of the Complete Idiot's series. After a slow start, they are breaking new ground for computer book readers, with first-rate writers and topics that don't simply copycat the Dummies competitors. We met Preston Gralla last month with his book on online shopping. Welcome back, Preston.

Preston knows Internet security from the inside-out, and explains it so interested newcomers and old timers will understand the subject: passwords; credit cards; viruses; child pornography; and plenty more. Your ISP and online account are important first areas of defense, with invasive web databases and online scams running a close second and third. Once you've been burned you need to know where to turn—and then how to proceed—including consumer services and small claims court.

Spam, or unsolicited junk email, is a big deal, and a big nuisance. Gralla devotes a hearty chunk of **The Complete Idiot's Guide to Protecting Yourself Online** to email privacy and web security, before addressing the monster (not really) issue of cookies. Online chat rooms and Usenet discussion groups are primary sources of your user name, and potentially, your password. Proceed with caution.

Part Six is important: "Protecting Your Children and Family Online." The author is a parent, and speaks with the voice of experience. His advice, if used effectively even just once, may be worth the entire modest price of the book.

The Complete Idiot's Guide to Protecting Yourself Online contains more information than most of us will ever need to know. Writing and design are in keeping with the well-considered content. I don't think this book has any equals in the marketplace, so Book Bytes is pleased to **RECOMMEND** it.

**Microsoft Office 98 for Macintosh:
The Comprehensive Guide
by Ned Snell and Brian J. Little**
Coriolis Group

<<http://www.coriolis.com>>

ISBN 1-57610-279-3, 562 pages

\$39.99 U.S., \$59.99 Canada



I don't spend much time thinking about Office 98, because I'm a dedicated

AppleWorks/ClarisWorks person, but when I need to work with an Office module I plunge into a nearby book on the subject. This title from Coriolis has been lounging on the Book Bytes shelf for many months, and deserves a diligent evaluation.

Thumbing through the three appendices, I'm pleased to report the authors have given ample consideration to installing and configuring Office, using the Explorer browser, and a concise description of fonts. Heading back toward the front of **Microsoft Office 98 for Macintosh: The Comprehensive Guide**, I observe seventeen chapters, ranging from "discovering" and "getting to know" the monster suite to "Office 98 and the Internet."

From the beginning, the writing is friendly and helpful, and the pages include many large, clear screenshots. Newcomers to Office 98 will feel comfortable, and quickly will be drawn into the text. Boxed sidebar "FYI" tips are plentiful, but they are printed over an unnecessary, confusing "bricks and mortar" background. *Hey, book designers: the thematic approach is a great idea, but makes reading the darn thing too difficult.*

After the introductory chapters, Word 98 has 150 pages of progressively more detailed instruction, followed by hefty (if shorter) units on PowerPoint and Excel, plus a 60-page chapter on Outlook Express. The material is geared toward newbies, which I applaud, because these users are the ones most likely to buy and use a book, then advance past the need for it.

If you don't already own a comparable book, and need some solid knowledge on **Microsoft Office 98 for Macintosh**, look into this **RECOMMENDED** title for your work or personal library.

•John Nemerovski• <nemo@mymac.com>

Websites mentioned:

<<http://www.osborne.com>>

<<http://www.dekemc.com>>

<<http://www.dummies.com>>

<<http://www.computing.mcgraw-hill.com>>

<<http://www.peachpit.com>>

<<http://www.idgbooks.com>>

<<http://www.mcp.com>>

<<http://www.coriolis.com>>

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<<http://www.cesoft.com>>

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Book Bytes

•By John Nemerovski <nemo@mymac.com>•

In our November and December issues, Book Bytes provides supplementary capsule reviews of books which could be suitable gifts for family, friends, and colleagues on your holiday shopping list. Many of these titles are “updaters” to outstanding books previously reviewed, with the more recent editions being mentioned below.

The Little Mac Book, 6th Edition by Robin Williams

<<http://www.ratz.com>>

Peachpit Press

<<http://www.peachpit.com>>

ISBN 0-201-35433-0, 445 pages

\$19.99 U.S., \$29.95 Canada



Who needs a basic book on the Macintosh, you ask? Well, I answer, every person who has purchased an iMac or other first-time system. If ten percent of the wisdom inside this book was common knowledge among new users, all those “how do I?” and “help me!” groans would be much less frequent. The previous edition of this title was a Book Bytes Award winner last year, and this up-to-date version surpasses its predecessors. You hear me: buy and use this **HIGHLY RECOMMENDED** book.

PalmPilot: The Ultimate Guide, 2nd Edition by David Pogue

<<http://www.davidpogue.com>>

O'Reilly & Associates

<<http://www.oreilly.com>>

ISBN 1-56952-600-5, 597 pages plus CD

\$29.95 U.S., \$43.95 Canada

The first version of this book was a hit, and the latest edition is even better. David has done his homework, and every Palm user is a potential beneficiary. If you're using your little wonder for more than a pocket-filler, quit monkeying around and buy this **HIGHLY RECOMMENDED** book + CD for yourself and everyone who might want to borrow it from you, because they won't want to return it. Now, if I can just get 3Com to send me that "demo" unit I have been requesting...!

Mac OS 8.6 Visual QuickStart Guide
by Maria Langer

<<http://www.gilesrd.com/mlanger>>

Peachpit Press

<<http://www.peachpit.com>>

ISBN 0-201-35472-1, 330 pages

\$17.99 U.S., \$26.95 Canada



Book Bytes has praised Maria, and will continue to do so as long as she produces top-notch books for readers at all levels of Macintosh ability and experience. I have given this book (and its earlier editions) as a gift to more people than any other Mac OS title. Not a week passes that I don't look up some small-but-essential feature of 8.6. If you're stumbling through the operating system, do yourself a favor and purchase this **HIGHLY RECOMMENDED** title. And then don't forget to send Maria a nice thank-you note.

Maria just sent me a message for all Book Bytes readers:

My Mac OS 9 book just went to the printer and should be in stores by November. It's a major revision, with lots of new material and new chapters. It also has iBook info. I think it would make a fine stocking stuffer for folks who like to keep their OS up to date!

I will obtain the book from her publisher, and review the OS 9 title when it becomes available.

**Harley Hahn's Internet & Web Yellow Pages,
Millennium Edition
by Harley Hahn**

<<http://www.harley.com>>

Osborne / McGraw-Hill

<<http://www.osborne.com>>

ISBN 0-07-212170-X, 908 pages plus CD

\$34.99 U.S.



Harley is one of my favorite computer book writers. He is able to take the concept of an Internet directory and make the end product highly entertaining and informative. He infuses his books with personal anecdotes and experiences that make reading the annual yellow pages a treat that lasts an entire year. When I need guidance for specific subject site searching and browsing, my hand automatically grabs Harley Hahn's latest **HIGHLY RECOMMENDED** edition. One more thing: his personal website is a valuable link, and is loaded with Internet resources.

**Photoshop 5.5 for Windows and Macintosh,
Visual QuickStart Guide**

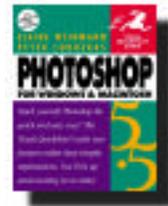
by Elaine Weinmann and Peter Lourekas

Peachpit Press

<<http://www.peachpit.com>>

ISBN 0-201-69957-5, 412 pages

\$19.99 U.S., \$29.95 Canada



The Photoshop application is so expensive, and this title is so affordable, that I'm wondering why someone would not immediately purchase the book. The center section of artwork, with the artists listed in an appendix, is alone worth \$20! The book is an excellent addition to the toolbox of every artist and graphics person who uses Photoshop 5.5 for more than 5.5 minutes a year. Seeing is believing: **HIGHLY RECOMMENDED**.

**Adobe GoLive 4 for Macintosh and Windows,
Visual QuickStart Guide**

by Shelly Brisbin

Peachpit Press

<<http://www.peachpit.com>>



ISBN 0-201-35477-2, 340 pages
\$18.99 U.S., \$28.50 Canada

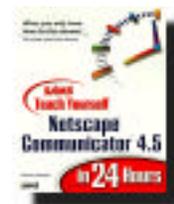
Serious web designers and webmasters consider GoLive to be one of the best authoring tools, and now that Adobe is the owner, both the software and this book absorb the new features in version 4. The proven QuickStart format is well-suited to working with such a powerful and versatile application. For anyone now using or planning to use GoLive, the low price of this **RECOMMENDED** title is certainly an incentive to having its Guide close at hand.

**Sams Teach Yourself
Netscape Communicator 4.5 in 24 Hours
by Shannon Turlington**

Sams Publishing

<<http://www.sampublishing.com>>

ISBN 0-672-31329-4, 408 pages
\$19.99 U.S., \$28.95 Canada, £17.95 U.K.



As Netscape migrates up toward version 5.x, potential readers of this title might wonder if looking backward is a good idea. The author's lessons, text, tips, and screenshots add up to a successful presentation. This cross-platform book provides solid information that will be most valuable for newbies and intermediates, plus users in no particular hurry to leave Communicator 4.5+. **RECOMMENDED.**

**Sams Teach Yourself Microsoft Internet Explorer 5
in 24 Hours, Starter Kit
by Jill T. Freeze**

Sams Publishing

<<http://www.sampublishing.com>>

ISBN 0-672-31328-6, 446 pages plus Windows-only CD
\$19.99 U.S., \$29.99 Canada, £17.99 U.K.



In theory, this Windows-platform book could provide a head start for readers who intend to use the Mac version of Explorer 5.x. Newcomers to the Web will benefit from the lesson-based approach to learning how to use the software. Experienced webheads might want to buy this affordable book as a gift for someone who will let you borrow it back for specific questions about the next version of Internet Explorer.

Please come back next month for another round of bonus Stocking Stuffers, plus our annual Book Bytes Awards.

•John Nemerovski• <nemo@mymac.com>

Websites mentioned:

<<http://www.ratz.com>>

<<http://www.peachpit.com>>

<<http://www.davidpogue.com>>

<<http://www.oreilly.com>>

<<http://www.gilesrd.com/mlanger>>

<<http://www.peachpit.com>>

<<http://www.harley.com>>

<<http://www.osborne.com>>

<<http://www.sampublishing.com>>

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<<http://www.smalldog.com>>

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The Game Guys

...with Mike & Adam

- By Mike Wallinga <mikew@mymac.com>•
- By Adam Karneboge <webmaster@mymac.com>•



Deathground

Author: FreeVerse Software

Shareware: \$29.95 + \$3.00 S&H

<<http://www.freeverse.com/deathg/index.html>>

Mike: The "big guns" of the shareware gaming scene have been flexing their muscles lately. Last month, we showed you Cythera from Ambrosia Software, and this month, we showcase **Freeverse Software's Deathground**, a gangster strategy game based on the classic board game RISK.

Adam: Like Ambrosia, Freeverse Software has a wonderful reputation for high quality shareware games, and Deathground doesn't disappoint. It shows the same all-around quality that we've come to expect from Freeverse. So what exactly is Deathground, Mike?

Mike: In Deathground, you play the role of a gangster who's out to control as much territory as possible. You spend your turns attacking rival gangs to gain control of their territory, and then shuffling your troops around to fortify your areas. You gain money and resources for each territory you own, making it easier to "off" your opponents.

Adam: The more territories you own, the more troops you have to deploy, and the more fun the game becomes. Once you own all the territories on the map, you win the game.

Mike: The default map is New York City, which is divided up into boroughs. Each borough is divided up further into neighborhoods. You receive resources

and cash for each 'hood you control, but get big bonuses for controlling an entire borough. However, with the other players trying to do the same thing, it's tough to keep total control of any one borough for too long!

Adam: Definitely true, Mike. And you really have to watch out for your enemies gaining ground, because they move fast once they're in control, and you'll be forced to surrender or face certain death.

Mike: FreeVerse went into a lot of detail to make the game more than just a computer re-creation of a game board. When you attack a territory, animated gangsters do battle with each other with tommy guns, and the game is full of FreeVerse's trademark one-liners and comments by the players. The board also zooms in and out in real time, allowing you to see one borough up-close, or look at all of New York from a bird's-eye view to see the whole scene.

Adam: FreeVerse has also included plenty of fine-tune controls so you can tailor your Macintosh to the game. If you have an older Mac, you might want to scale back on a few of the preferences. But if you have a G4, well, you know what to do!

Mike: The game can be played by up to seven players, and as many of those can be computer-controlled as necessary. There are also three maps to play, which enhances the replay value of the game, too. The downloadable demo limits you to three players and the map of New York, though. The full version comes on a CD-ROM—a first for FreeVerse—and can be bought directly from the company.

Requirements/Availability

The demo requires System 7.6 or higher, 20 megabytes of hard drive space, and approximately 32 megs of free RAM. The Deathground Demo is available for download at the FreeVerse website, <<http://www.freeverse.com/deathg/index.html>>, or from any of the great Mac shareware libraries online such as Download.com <<http://www.download.com>>. The full version, featuring additional playing maps, more players, and more, comes only on a CD-ROM, and can be purchased directly from FreeVerse for a total of \$32.95.

The Summary

Adam: Deathground is a quality shareware game that is both addicting and fun. Its different levels of gameplay allow you to play for hours on end, even if you've never played before. The price-to-performance ratio is top notch for this first-rate shareware game.

Mike:I agree, Adam. FreeVerse's high reputation for making excellent card games and board games for the Mac is well-deserved, and they prove it once again with Deathground. If you like strategy games and want something that's not quite as complex as StarCraft, or if you just want to see another great example of fine shareware gaming, take a look at Deathground. **Highly Recommended by The Game Guys**

- Mike Wallinga• <mikew@mymac.com>
- Adam Karneboge• <webmaster@mymac.com>

Websites mentioned:

- <<http://www.freeverse.com/deathg/index.html>>
- <<http://www.download.com>>

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- <<http://www.inno-tech.com>>

The Best Of...



As The
Apple Turns

•Jack Miller <jackm@infoXczar.com>•
<<http://www.infoxczar.com/atat>>

My Mac is privileged to present the best from As the Apple Turns, a Macintosh news and insight website presented in the style of a continuing saga. But culling the best of Jack Miller is no easy task, and we wish we could reprint them all. While we can't do that, we are at least able to choose a small sampling of his work and present them here as they appeared on his website. Enjoy the ongoing Mac soap opera, and when you get a chance, be sure to check out his website for your daily dose of drama!

<<http://www.infoxczar.com/atat>>

That Wacky Netscape (10/25/99)

Just because Thanksgiving's still a month away doesn't mean that we can't be in a grateful sort of mood. We're thankful for lots of things, actually--candy-colored Macs, Tuesday night on the WB, and eight-pound catering packs of Tater Tots, to name a few. And of course we're thankful for Apple Computer and the mercurial Steve Jobs for always keeping things, er, interesting enough to pull in the viewers. But more than anything else, we're thankful that even when things are slow in the world of Apple, we've got a considerate and thoughtful viewer base who can entertain us in return. It's a sort of karmic Wheel of Fun, or something.

Case in point: faithful viewer Galen Rutledge, who pointed out a fun fact we'd yet to encounter on our own. Those of you for whom Netscape is your "browser of choice" can try this at home. You know that in recent Netscape browsers you can type a series of words into the URL field and Netscape will perform an Internet search on those words, right? So if, for example, you enter "cat hair salad" and press return, you get a Search Results page listing such

sites as The Bad Kitty List, Part 1. It's kind of a neat time-saving feature, though getting Netscape to search that way using a different search engine is a bit tricky.

Anyway, Galen told us to try entering "more evil than satan himself" and seeing what happens. Heck, we're always up for a giggle or two, so we complied, and what do you suppose the very first listing was? Microsoft's homepage. Whether you find this surprising or merely obvious depends on your state of mind, we suppose. The more reasonable types among you will assume that this is merely a Netscapien joke, but the rest of us just figure that the Google search engine that Netscape uses is uncannily insightful. Just try entering "home planet, steve jobs" to see that Google is in on the big secret: Apple Computer isn't actually located in Cupertino, as some would have you believe-- it's a planet unto itself, from which the Mighty Steve hails. Shhh, don't tell anyone.

The Voodoo Curse (10/25/99)

Just when you thought the Clone Wars were long forgotten, up pops another reminder of the bloody corporate carnage that ensued when Steve Jobs retook Apple's helm. At the time, Apple was in dire financial straits, and a mishandled and ill-conceived Mac OS licensing program wasn't helping matters any; instead of making a few hundred bucks by selling a Mac, Apple was making about fifty bucks when the same customer bought a faster, cheaper Mac clone instead. So Steve made the tough (and, at the time, wildly unpopular) decision to end the Clone Era. The casualties were enormous. Motorola lost millions. Power Computing tried to shift to the Wintel space and died a horrible death. Umax fell back on its other business, but wrote off enormous losses due to the cancellation of cloning. Mayhem abounded.

Mactell, though, who was one of the smaller clonemakers, seemed to be able to transform into a fairly successful vendor of all kinds of Mac-related goodies-- graphics cards, processor upgrades, input devices, storage peripherals, and the like. Their web site lists a slew of exciting new products, and we figured Mactell managed to escape the Clone Wars, damaged but not disabled. So we were bummed to discover a Mactell press release announcing that the company is finally shutting its doors for good. The reason given? "Mactell has been attempting to work its way out of the problem created when Apple Computer, Inc. made the decision to discontinue the licensing of the Macintosh operating system... in August of 1997." Apparently the company's operating losses were substantial, and Mactell's debts are too high for them to continue doing business. Chalk up another casualty to the Clone Wars; Mactell managed to

hang on for a couple of years, but finally gave up the ghost.

Then again, there's another factor to this whole equation; Mactell's demise may in fact be due less to the Clone Wars and more to what we call the Voodoo Curse. Gamers among you know that 3dfx makes a series of 3D accelerator chips called the Voodoo. Perhaps no one's noticed, but any company that tries to bring the power of the Voodoo chip to the Macintosh market winds up going under. First there was Techworks and their Voodoo 1-based Power3D; Techworks subsequently got bought out by a large company who ditched the Mac market, and the Power3D was gone. Then MicroConversions tried to bring us the Voodoo 2, but production problems, sky-high prices, and a badly botched rollout closed the company down. And now there's Mactell, who was poised to deliver the first Mac-specific Voodoo 3 card, the "EvilEye"-- dead before they could deliver. Coincidence? Hardly. Let's just hope that when the Voodoo 4 ships, whatever foolhardy Mac company that tries to deliver it fares better than its predecessors...

He's Baaa-aaack... (10/25/99)

Deep down, some part of you just knew it was coming: another "press release" from our buddy Hanoch Shalit. Hanoch, as you no doubt recall, is the brains behind Imatec, the company whose business plan appears to involve suing large companies for obscene amounts of money in hopes of generating an actual revenue stream in one of three ways: 1) a quick settlement, because big companies might not want to risk even the slightest chance of losing ridiculous sums of cash; 2) an actual courtroom win, which not only is slightly more likely than winning the lottery, but also has a much higher payoff; or 3) by driving up its own piddly stock price through the constant and unrelenting issuance of press releases to remind potential investors that, hey, they may not have a product, but they've got a doozy of a lawsuit. While the company doesn't actually make anything (their web site states that Imatec is "not a manufacturer or supplier of commercial imaging products, but develops its technology to the prototype stage for transfer under license"), its big shot at fortune would seem to be its \$1.1 billion lawsuit against Apple for alleged patent infringement in the color management technology known as ColorSync. Hey, come on... is it really that much more crazy than the business plans of some of these "Internet companies"?

And so, just as faithful viewer Bruce Beighley predicted, copies of Mac OS 9 hit the shelves Saturday-- and Hanoch was flapping his gums in yet another press release by 8:30 on Monday morning, just before the markets opened. What a coincidence. By now you can probably recite the content without even reading

the text. Mac OS 9's ColorSync 3.0 continues a "pattern of infringement." Imatec's still suing Apple for eighty jillion dollars or something. Someday someone might give Imatec lots of money and they'll be a real company, so you should buy their stock. Hanoch makes the shares himself using nothing but a legal pad and a big box of crayons. Yadda yadda yadda. And this time, Hanoch actually seems to have drawn a bit of attention; CNET gave the issue a token mention.

Unfortunately for Hanoch, this time it looks like Wall Street responded to his latest press release with a deafening yawn-- at least, if Imatec's stock price is any indication. It didn't budge from its lofty height of seventy-five cents, ColorSync 3.0 or no ColorSync 3.0-- in fact, no shares appear to have changed hands. We don't pretend to know what that's about, but we do know this: Hanoch Shalit will one day be listed in the Guinness Book of World Records under the categories "Most Press Releases Issued In One Lifetime" and "Lowest Press Release Signal-To-Noise Ratio." We're hearing whispers that Apple's legal department is also lobbying to gain him the coveted "Biggest Doodyhead" title as well, but that remains unconfirmed...

Always Check. ALWAYS. (10/20/99)

Yes, Virginia, there are iBooks available for the patient-- and they're even more available for the not-so-patient. We at AtAT can now say that a blood-relative has taken delivery of her brand-spanking-new Blueberry iBook, though if she hadn't gone down to CompUSA and rattled a few cages, she'd still be waiting. Here's the story in a nutshell: after countless crashes, excessive downtime, and other frustrating Wintel-style behavior on both her Compaq Presario at work and her husband's Packard Bell system at home, a couple of months ago my cousin actually put down a deposit on an iBook at CompUSA, sight unseen. (Actually, she'd seen one of the iBook brochures we picked up at Macworld Expo, but that's all-- and she's never used a Mac in her life.) The entire pre-order process was reportedly completely flummoxing to the sales staff, who had difficulty answering any questions about the amount of the deposit, whether the deposit guaranteed an iBook by a certain date, what kind of financing was available, etc. But after much consultation, head-scratching, and general befuddlement, the CompUSA staff was apparently able to book the pre-order and take my cousin's money.

Last Thursday night she gave us a call and vented her anger at CompUSA, since they had originally quoted her a late September delivery time and yet, as of the middle of October, she was still iBookless. I explained to her that the earthquake in Taiwan had shaken up an already rather late production schedule,

but finding that the local Sears had two iBooks on the shelf wasn't helping matters any-- CompUSA already had her nonrefundable deposit.

So on Friday she walked into CompUSA to check on her order status in person, since her deposit guaranteed her a place in line as iBooks trickled in to fill pre-orders. Imagine her dismay to be told that, despite her \$250 deposit, CompUSA could find no record of her pre-order. So while she'd been told she was one of the very first on the list when she placed the order, if she hadn't gone in to investigate, she wouldn't have gotten an iBook at all. Let's hear it for CompUSA's stunning level of competency, folks! (Yes, we know there are good CompUSAs out there-- and even some Mac-friendly ones. But stories like this "mysterious disappearing order" seem to be the rule, not the exception.)

Anyway, she got hold of the manager, who, to be fair, was entirely apologetic, admitted that the store screwed up, and even offered to sell my cousin the demo iBook right then and there. She declined, instead opting for her other choice-- a boost to the very top of the pre-order list and a phone call when the next iBook became available. And so, five days later, she brought home the bright Blueberry addition to the family. It's a happy ending, overall (or a happy beginning, really, for a self-confessed computer illiterate just starting on the road to Macdom), though her one suggestion to Apple is to "get out of CompUSA because they don't know what the hell they're doing." Food for thought.

•Jack Miller• <jackm@infoXczar.com>

Websites mentioned:

<<http://www.infoxczar.com/atat>>

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KnowledgeSpider Web



•By David E. Price <David@mymac.com>•

Lets Fix It!

Internet Based Technical Help

Surfing the World Wide Web and looking for troubleshooting information sites to help my in-laws (who are completely new to computer use) recently started me thinking that **you** may be interested in resources that can help you with computer problems. So, let's look at some of the information and resources available to help those of us who aren't comfortable with digging into the Mac OS depths on our own to try to fix problems.

First and foremost among Mac technical sites is the Apple Technical Information Library (TIL) at <<http://til.info.apple.com>>. This library has over 14,000 articles about all things Macintosh! Many of the reports are written in layman's terms and are understandable to mere mortals such as you and me, although some of them are so technical that programmers may have to get out the instruction manuals for interpretations.

Another great resource for troubleshooting information is the MacFixIt site at <<http://www.macfixit.com>>. This site has reports from readers about specific problems and fixes that they or others have found. Some of the fixes are rather easy to perform, but some involve mucking around in the innards of the OS.

MacIntouch at <<http://www.macintouch.com>> has a great collection of reports on different problems, with fixes or work-arounds for solving most of them.

If your problems seem to be associated with a specific software package, the Complete Conflict Compendium at <<http://www.quillserv.com/www/c3/c3.html>> is a great place to search for answers. It lists specific combinations of system add-ons (extensions) that cause problems when used together.

If you want to know what all those cryptic terms mean that you hear tech support people spouting, look at the Macintosh Guide at Yale University at <<http://www.cis.yale.edu/macguide/Guide.Index.html>>. In no time you will be saying and understanding things like "Blessed System Folder."

For those of you who want or need to know what all those system add-ons actually do, there is InformInit at <<http://www.AmbrosiaSW.com/DEF/InformInit.html>> and ExtensionOverload at <<http://www1.pt.com.my/~tkting/thchome/eo>>. They will explain what these files do and which ones you really need and don't need.

But, many of you will not be comfortable reading about and trying to understand code fragments, MacsBugs, and APIs. So, for you, there are free support sites. One of the best free help sites, in my opinion, is NoWonder at <<http://www.nowonder.com/support/index.html>>. Post a question or explain your problem and you will usually have help within 24 hours. When you ask a question you can also tell the support volunteer your level of experience with computers. If you're new to computers, the volunteer who answers your question or problem report will be very explicit in his/her directions and explanation so you can understand how to fix the problem.

Another site that offers free technical support is Experts-Exchange at <<http://www.experts-exchange.com>>. I haven't visited this site, so I can't comment on how good it is.

It seems that every time the Mac OS is updated, some of our favorite software quits working. For those problems that may be caused by out of date software, visit Version Tracker at <<http://www.versiontracker.com>>. You can search for specific software packages to see if you have the latest and greatest release. For those updates that are available online, the site also includes links to the appropriate files for downloading.

I believe that should be enough to get even the most technophobic user in touch with a resource that can help with those annoying problems that crop up now and then, and are all designed to forestall or eliminate the costly last resort, that of contacting an authorized repair center and paying a professional to fix your headaches for you.

Next month we will start exploring educational resources.

And now, KnowledgeSpider's Knowledge/Information Resource recommendation of the month:

Troubleshooting: Get help with your computer problems by using the wealth of information available for free on the Internet.

URLs mentioned:

Each month I will grab a knowledge or information resource from the web and share it with you. If you have a learning or knowledge resource or a teaching technique that has proven particularly useful to you, share it with all of us by tossing it into *my* web!

•David Price• <David@mymac.com>

Websites mentioned:

<<http://til.info.apple.com>>

<<http://www.macfixit.com>>

<<http://www.macintouch.com>>

<<http://www.quillserv.com/www/c3/c3.html>>

<<http://www.cis.yale.edu/macguide/Guide.Index.html>>

<<http://www.AmbrosiaSW.com/DEF/InformInit.html>>

<<http://www1.pt.com.my/~tkting/thchome/eo>>

<<http://www.nowonder.com/support/index.html>>

<<http://www.experts-exchange.com>>

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FileMaker 101



Part 20

•By Fenton Jones <manavesh@mymac.com>•

In this installment, “Layout Design” Fenton “lays out” his theory of screen design and tells where to find all those nice buttons.

I would like to describe a method for layout design that I use. It’s nothing special really, kind of conservative, but attractive and efficient.

The main idea is to begin with the data, and work outward from there. That seems fairly natural, as that’s what you have to work with.

The overall theory is this: Use the least amount of layout elements to clearly convey the message. Be reasonably consistent within a type of element. Use a gradual contrast to separate elements, with small touches of dramatic contrast reserved for focusing attention.

My theory is based on a simple discovery. I found, by experimentation, that every layout element adds, by its *contrast*, a small amount of distraction from the data.

Contrast of Elements Explained

By contrast I mean all the ways that make elements distinct: shades of black; white or color of text or lines; relative to the background; size and position.

Some contrast is needed of course, to allow the data to stand out quickly from the background. It is a balance. Thus the “least amount” must be found.

It’s not that hard. Simply increase the contrast until the data looks good and is easy to find. Then increase it further, look away, then look back. You will notice

a slight confusion, even irritation from the extra. It will be slightly more difficult to quickly read the data. Try it. Use this test on every element you add, while viewing the layout as a whole.

Often, after adding many fields and elements, you'll run into the opposite problem, wherein you can't quickly find the main data that you want to see first, such as a name in the header or a few primary fields. In this case, I've found a couple of good ways to add contrast, as long as they aren't overdone.

Text Color

One method is to change the text color to a slightly brighter shade. If the other text is black, change that field to very dark blue (it looks almost the same, but is a tiny bit more readable). I often use dark blue for most of the fields, highlighting the few critical ones with one step lighter blue. Bright blue stands out better than any other color.

Red stands out too, but it's irritating, so I reserve it for warnings.

Dark green doesn't stand out quite as well, but it's also good, especially for labels; it's sort of tranquil.

Dark gray, rather than black, can be used for labels, which, although necessary, don't need to be as obvious as the data in the fields. This is especially true for things like address or phone number labels, which we all recognize by their format anyway.

As I said, every element adds some distraction. Tone down the labels and the data will stand out more clearly. Do keep them readable, however.

Backgrounds

The other way to add contrast is to change the background of the secondary fields to lightest gray, while leaving the main fields white. That way your eye is quickly drawn to the main ones, and the others are still easy to read.

I usually use a Body background of light gray. (Set the background color by clicking once on the "body" tab, then choosing the fill color.) In this case though, you'll probably want to change the overall gray background one shade darker than the fields, to preserve some contrast.

By the way, this is generally for Form views, or header or footer elements. Field backgrounds in List views are done differently (see below).

Borders

For the border of the fields, I usually use a slightly darker gray, maybe two shades darker. This is what I mean by “gradual contrast.” If you use the default black it looks “boxy,” and it becomes more difficult for your eye to move quickly to the data in the other fields.

3D

If you feel you need more separation between the elements, or to group certain elements together, use a soft 3D box, or put it around the group.

The 3D effect is made by covering two sides of the box with one or two light colors (white, lightest gray) on two adjacent sides, and one or two dark colors (dark gray) on the others to create the illusion of 3D. I've found that if you use two shades for each it's more realistic.

Layout Purpose

It is essential to have a good idea of what the layout should show, and what the purpose and focus of the layout is.

It's necessary not only to know what data to put on the layout, but also to know what to leave off. If it seems there is more than one distinct group and there are a lot of fields, give those fields their own layout. That's what makes a database better than a spreadsheet for displaying sets of information.

There's also no need to cram everything on one big screen, forcing users to scroll all over looking for things. A simple button, or tab, to jump back and forth is much better.

It is whether you want to see lots of data from one record at a time, or certain fields from many records, that will determine whether you choose a Form view or a List view type layout.

If there is a need for both, you could probably do what you want with a Form view and a portal or two to show lists.

List Views

In the case of List type views I almost always use the alternating background row technique in white and lightest gray behind transparent fields. (See my article from March, “Layout with Global Containers,” and the example file “AltRows” for this simple technique.) Not only does it look good and allow you to easily see what row you're on, it also enables “the least contrast.”

You can dispense with contrasting lines between the rows. This usually allows you to make the body one pixel shorter, saving at least a pixel per row (and

that's a lot per screen), without cramping the data in any way.

List View Borders

I don't really like the "grid" look of spreadsheets for list views. Once again, all those black lines cut up and distract from the data.

Sometimes you can leave out borders entirely. But they are often needed to separate the columns and group them with their header label. In that case an elegant solution is to give them a border on just one side and a line color of light gray (a shade or two darker than the background).

Take Sides

To make it look really good, choose the side for the border that interferes least with the data. In the case of two text fields, give the left field a border on the right. In the case of number fields, give them a border on the left. Nudge the fields a couple of pixels apart.

What you are doing is using the adjacent field to create the border, and what it avoids is having the border crammed right up against the data. It appears to float between the fields, lifting and separating (oops, that's a bra commercial).

You Can Push My Buttons

Buttons are a bit of a problem. I mostly use the built-in 3D buttons. But I try to add a few embellishments when possible.

Buttons should be as clear as possible while remaining a reasonable size. They should be labeled with text unless the graphic is dead obvious (or repeated throughout the database after having been clearly labeled on the main layout).

One way you can customize text buttons to make them more recognizable is by using color. Most buttons I make have dark blue text with dark blue lines around them. The fill is one shade lighter than the background when possible, one shade darker when there is no lighter color (I avoid white buttons usually; too glaring).

The lines would also be dark blue. This allows the buttons to stand out, but draws no particular attention to any one of them.

Buttons for actions that really change the records get a lighter color. For New Records and navigation scripts to other files I use a lighter, more electric blue color, and lighter blue text. This says, "I do something!"

For Deletes I always use dark red text and brighter red line—"Be careful!"

For the button that returns to the main control panel for the whole database I use bright blue text and neon green line, hard to miss if you're lost or in a hurry to get out. I try to put it in the same place on every layout that has it, which in most layouts is on the far bottom right.

Consistent Locations

“Be reasonably consistent within a type of element.” This is very important with buttons. We associate them with the look and location we saw them last. While this is not a hard and fast rule, it's a good idea to try and put the same button in the same place on different layouts where it is needed.

This is not to say that it should be on all layouts. Once again, the “least amount of elements” would mean not to put things on a layout that aren't useful there, unless your overall design requires it.

I sometimes bend the “consistency” rule, especially in cases where the layouts are so different that you can't reasonably put the button in the same place. A Form view Main Menu type layout and “letter” or report view have little in common.

Alignment and Balance

This is another mysterious area. Suffice it to say that some kind of alignment is better than none. There is no need, however, to have everything line up exactly on their edges.

One thing I've noticed is that even unrelated objects should line up with something if possible. This is especially true if an element is just a little out of alignment, but not enough to be considered as part of some other arrangement.

For example, there are some horizontal fields, lined up along their bottoms, with a small graphic button on the end, at the right edge of the screen. Up higher on the layout, there is another similar, though not identical graphic by itself. It really looks better if the upper graphic is moved to line up with the lower, on its outer edge, even if it's a different size, so the overall layout has a right edge.

Or there is one wide field, with two smaller ones under it. If possible, the first of those should line up on the left, and the second on the right of the one above. Either the fields and/or the space between them should be adjusted to make it so.

Sometimes center-alignment is a good choice when neither right or left will do. These are small things, but they add up.

Spaces between objects should be given roughly the same care as objects themselves. That is, they should be the appropriate size to separate the data fields with their respective labels, uniform within groups of fields and roughly uniform between groups (a pixel or two doesn't matter).

Overall, the layout should have a pleasing balance. This is something that you just have to sit back and adjust. Move things around. Group the data fields that belong together. Balance the data with the space.

Make a copy of the layout to try out real different arrangements (as it's a pain to recreate a messed up layout).

So that's my method. I'm not saying that you should do yours the same. But do give it some thought, look at other files and develop a style of your own.

Databases *can* be aesthetic; they will not only look better, but they make it easier to find what you're looking for, which is what it's all about, right? They don't have to look like a spreadsheet or a bunch of bare black boxes on a white background. Neither should they look like a piece of abstract modern art (unless it looks good and works), nor like a peacenik's vest covered with buttons.

I like to think of mine as simple control panels for personal data-space craft :)

Sliding Rows

OK, here's an actual useful tip, for those of you still awake. To achieve the ultimate soft 3D look with a list-type view, draw (in Layout mode) a 1 pixel horizontal line across the bottom of the Header for the whole width of your layout, right over the black default line. Do the same for the Footer (if you have one), but nudge the line down one pixel below the dotted line (elements touching a dotted line belong to the part above it).

Make the top line a shade or two darker than the Header and the bottom one white.

The body now appears to be inset beneath the other parts. When you scroll down, the list view rows appear to be sliding underneath. It's classier looking than the black lines and besides, it adheres to the "least contrast" rule (OK, I'll never say it again).

Moving, Deleting Parts

Sometimes you want to remove a part (Header, Body, etc.), but keep the fields that are in it. Normally if you press Delete, you're asked if you want to delete the part and everything in it. If you hold the Option key, just the part will be

deleted, without dialog, and all the objects will remain just where they were.

Other times you want to adjust a part, moving its line up or down past existing objects; it stops when it hits one and won't go further. Once again, hold the Option key and it will glide right past. If you slide a Header line all the way to the top, it's the same as deleting it (above).

There is a reason for the default "stopping" behavior. It lets you move the part line snug to the bottom of fields or labels without having to look hard to get it pixel perfect, very useful in list views. Remember the Option key to get the best of both worlds.

T-Square

Sometimes one or both of the T-square tool's lines are difficult to grab quickly, either far away or off the visible screen. Rather than trying to scroll and grab the one you want and then drag it back, simply hold the Command key and hit "T" twice. The first hit makes them disappear, the second brings them back centered on the screen.

Duplicating fields and Value Lists

Once you get one field all fixed up like you want it (formatting and lines), you can Option-drag it to create another. The Field dialog will conveniently pop-up so you can reassign it. Hold the Shift key to keep it lined up.

Caution: When you duplicate a field that has a Value List attached or Auto-enter options, the duplicate will have them, too. Usually you won't notice this until you click in one in Browse mode and the wrong list drops down.

Field Format Dilemma

You can select several fields at once to strip or add a value list to all of them. This can happen even if you don't intend it to.

If you select several fields—one of which has a value list—and trigger the Field Format dialog and change the value list options (or any of the other options), their entry status (entry or non-entry, select contents), or change the number of repetitions, they will all change.

If no value list is showing in the dialog box, all selected fields will lose their value lists. If you click on the value list radio button to add or modify one when they're all selected, they'll all get it.

It is difficult to predict whether a value list will be showing when you open the dialog. If a field has a pop-up list, it tends to show. If it's a pop-up menu, it doesn't show. It probably has something to do with pop-up lists being the default.

In any case, you have to pay attention if you select groups of fields with value lists or they will get changed behind your back. If you have any doubts at all, hit cancel and check.

Button Templates

I have a little Layout file to store small graphics that I use, most borrowed, some modified, some homemade. Everyone needs “Sort, Print, List, Find” graphics.

For these common things I’ll use a small graphic, perhaps with some small text, perhaps alone.

You can also make your own graphics in a drawing or painting application. ClarisWorks is good for simple ones. Keep in mind that complex graphics can add file size and slow screen redraw considerably.

Drawing graphics for buttons is probably a lot like drawing icons, that is, they’re so small that you must draw in a magnified view, but then they look quite different at 100% view.

I suggest having the two views open at once on the screen, so you can see what your changes are doing; it’s often surprising.

It’s also a good idea to set the “Rulers” to have more divisions. I put 72 per inch. This gives more control when nudging with the arrow keys.

Buttons on the Web

I searched my FileMaker sites and assembled the following list of graphics templates.

The king of FileMaker buttons is undoubtedly John Krische. His “1000 Buttons” series, up to Volume IV now, has hundreds of layout objects at a reasonable price (\$5-\$10 file). I had a little trouble with expanding the Mac (.bin) files; I ended up downloading the PC (.zip) files, which worked fine. Perhaps you’ll have better luck.

<<http://www.krischesystems.com>>

Another nice set of buttons is by Parker Bennett of Mogulsoft (databases for the entertainment industry). It’s generous of him to give these away free. (His download server was down, so this is his main page.)

<<http://www.mogulsoft.com>>

This is a basic set of buttons and other layout objects released by FM itself (long ago), also on the FileMaker CD.

<<ftp://ftp.claris.com/pub/USA-Macintosh/Templates/FileMakerPro4/ButtonsAndDialogs.bin>>

(that's all one line, folks).

A multi-volume set of free buttons by Charles Lunsford is available at this address. It has a lot of buttons, most with an unusual pastel colored interface theme.

<<http://home.HiWAAY.net/~cullman>>

See you next month!

•Fenton Jones• <manavesh@mymac.com>

Websites mentioned:

<<http://www.krischesystems.com>>

<<http://www.mogulsoft.com>>

<<ftp://ftp.claris.com/pub/USA-Macintosh/Templates/FileMakerPro4/ButtonsAndDialogs.bin>>

<<http://home.HiWAAY.net/~cullman>>

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•By Bob McCormick <mccnow@rocketmail.com>•

Look into My Quartz Crystal Ball

There is something that I've been wondering about MacOS X (read 10). It has to do with Apple's decision to base OS X's screen imaging on something called Quartz. What is Quartz, you might ask? Well, it's based on Adobe's PDF format. It offers superior graphics and text handling. But it is this fa*ct that it is based on Adobe's PDF format that I find most interesting. Working with Adobe with the implementation of Quartz Apple has made sure that they will not be working in obscurity.

[Tim, what the heck is a "fa*ct"? Have you ever seen that before?]

Quartz will in all inevitability become something quite leading edge and since it is built into the OS, you will find that there will be better integration with other products and services not only from Adobe, but also from other companies that adopt and use the technology. By working with Adobe Apple has, in essence, assured that it won't be left behind with this screen drawing and imaging technology.

That is important in and of itself. Apple has learned the importance of mass adoption of any technology it uses. Why are Macs using PCI Slots and PC 100 RAM these days? Why are they using TCP/IP? Because they are industry standards.

Working with Adobe makes definite sense. Will we see that Quartz incorporates not only Open GL but also QuickDraw technologies? I think we will. I was reading that Stone Design has a program called "Create" that they had written for Mac OS X Server. You may remember that Mac OS Server has Display

PostScript (DPS). However, the consumer version of OS X and the next Server version will be using Quartz.

Stone Design has decided to completely rewrite “Create” for Mac OS X from scratch. And guess what? They said it was much easier than expected. Gee, I wonder why? Maybe it has to do with the incorporation of OpenGL and QuickDraw? Kind the best of both worlds? Could be. Now of course this is pure speculation on my part, and I’m sure that if anyone in the know reads this, they may clue me in, either to my proximity or complete missing of the mark.

Ok, so we know that Quartz is powerful, and easy to write code for, what else does it have? Well, how would you like to place a PDF file directly into your email? Got a series of photographs you’d like to include in your email to a friend? No problem, just place the PDF you made of the digital photos from your birthday party complete with captions in your email.

Even more importantly, as programs are written with Quartz in mind, you will see a definite blurring of the lines between Quartz and PDF. What if any document you created on your Mac could instantly be saved as a PDF? What if anything displayed on your screen could be captured as a PDF, and instantly accessible by anyone on the web? Remember that weird error message you got while trying to install a program? Well, through a simple keyboard shortcut you could capture it, place it into an email or on a web page for your favorite Mac Guru to review. He could analyze it and send you recommendations about it and how to solve the problem.

But Quartz gets better.

What does PDF stand for? Portable Document Format. What does Merriam Webster <<http://www.m-w.com>> define a document to be? One of the meanings I found was “a writing conveying information.” And what does that include? Well, brochures, reports, spreadsheets, a thesis, a short story, a book, novel, or even a textbook.

Textbook?

There have been 160,000 iBooks pre-ordered. A goodly number of them are for students. What if Apple were to purchase say... oh ,I don’t know, the rights to electronically publish every textbook made by say... MacMillan publishing? Who knows, maybe even the rights to several other publishers of textbooks.

What if Apple included either in let’s say, AppleWorks, the ability to call up these PDF-based books via a centralized Mac running OS X Server? A student

could be sitting in class and download the chapters he needs to read before heading home. He could download a searchable, printable, and easily displayed copy of just what he needs. Nothing to carry home but his iBook. Not bad, eh?

With his AirPort card installed, he doesn't even need to "get wired" to complete this transaction. He simply logs onto the school's server with his unique school ID and downloads the information. When he registered for the class, the royalty for the textbook automatically gets registered in a database. And if Johnny forgets to download his homework before leaving school? No problem. He can log onto the school's server and download in an instant from home. No fuss, no muss, and no more, "My dog ate my textbook" excuses.

Think about it. A textbook-less school. One that each and every single textbook is on a Mac Server running Mac OS X. Each child using their iBook for the purpose of accessing the information they need for each and every class.

No more books that have to be renewed every few years for the school. If a mistake is found in the textbook, MacMillan simply downloads the corrected version to the school at no extra charge. No reprints, no addendum, nothing to get lost or photocopied over and over again. Simply the most up to date information for that textbook. The amount of storage needed by the school would decrease dramatically! No more shelves, no more storage closets devoted to books that will be turned out in just a few years due to federal regulations.

Guess what else? It won't be long before Amazon.com goes out of business. Why? Well guess who will get into the direct marketing of their products? You bet your boots every single publishing house in the business. Much cheaper to set up a bunch of servers containing not only the hottest best sellers for download over the internet, but also every single book they have ever published than it is to print them and distribute them. No more "out of print" books. They all exist and are available for purchase via the internet. Xanadu here we come!

And not only will your Mac display these natively on your screen but there will be options to print them to your full duplexing printer complete with binding for those of us that still prefer to sit on the beach and read our favorite prose completely unwired and undisturbed.

Heck, even your favorite monthly, My Mac, could be published in a magazine format ready for download each month for you to throw into your briefcase, portfolio, or to keep on your Mac for your reading pleasure.

This could be what the Mac is coming to. I'd sure love it. Wouldn't you?

Look a little deeper into my quartz crystal ball and maybe you'll see what I see.

•Bob McCormick• <mccnow@rocketmail.com>

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•By Ralph J. Luciani <ralph@mymac.com>•

Scarlett Woman

In 1937 Scarlett O'Hara blazed her way to glory in Margaret Mitchell's Gone With The Wind. The book was an outstanding best seller and the 1939 film became an instant classic. On the threshold of the new millennium, perhaps Scarlett might react to today's computer and internet world this way.

“Fiddlee dee. War, war, war. All yo two evah talk about is war. Macintosh, Windahs, Windahs and Macintosh, it's always the same. Ashley darlin', don't yo all thank that Ah'm more interestin' than that pokey Windahs?” Scarlett puffed up her crinoline and the pale green muslin dress billowed like a typhoon in the South China Sea.

“Scarlett, yo know Ah adore yor sweet smile. It positively melts my heart, but Ah am also devoted to Windahs. Ah can't work without it and Ah need to have access to my email. Ah'd be lost ifen Ah stopped usin' it.”

“Now that is a wishy-washy southern gentlemen for you.” Rhett's Buttler's cold, black eyes sparked with intensity while his upper lip curled in a mischievous grin. “What would you do, Scarlett, if you met a real man? Someone yo couldn't wrap around that ring finger of yours?”

“Yo all hush up, Rhett. Ah suppose yo thank just because yo use that funny Macintosh that yo could be that man?” She threw her head back and laughed out loud. It sounded not like a laugh but more like the tinkling of fine china. He was flirting with her as she was with him, but in her heart of hearts there was only one man for her, Ashley Wilkes. But Ashley was betrothed to that mealy-mouthed Melanie. All she did all day was scan recipes from the Mangia CD that Ashley gave her on their engagement. She shook her head as if to knock the thought of Melanie out of it.

“Ashley, darlin’, please pass me a fresh glass of iced tea. It’s so warm heah under the portico.” She flapped her fan vigorously, but it was to no avail.

“Would yo care to go indoors? Ah could show you a nifty new shoot-em-up game on ma computa. It’s called Cotton Ginny and it’s all about how thisen young sharecropper dupes a few dozen Yankees into investin’ their money...”

“Oh Ashley, Ah don’t wish to heah about yo computah games. Next to the war talk that is the most boring subject to me.” She turned her head to show her displeasure.

Suddenly, from the dirt road that led up to Tara, came two galloping riders in a flurry of hoof beats and a cloud of red dust. Rhett stood up as he recognized the Tarleton twins.

“It’s war! War!” they shouted over and over as the dust drifted by the Portico.

“Microsoft has finally declared war. They will no longer support any system other than Windahs. No Macintosh, no OS 2, and certainly not Solaris or Be. They also have declared that they will fight to the death against Unix and particularly Linux,” panted Terry Tarleton.

“Microsoft declared that to give away free software is ungentlemanly and contrary our southern ways,” added Jerry Tarleton.

“That can’t be true,” Rhett interjected. “They gave out millions of free copies of Internet Explorer hoping to bury Netscape, and then tied it into their non-monopolistic Windahs.” His sarcasm went unnoticed.

The news of war travelled quickly through the plantations and, inevitably, sides were chosen and decisions made. Because events were moving so quickly and the outcome of the war was clouded, Ashley and Melanie decided to marry and the wedding was held at his beloved Twelve Oaks. At their reception, Scarlett impulsively announced her own marriage to the elderly but wealthy lumber mill

owner, Frank Kennedy. Frank was not dashing and he was not young, but he did have a good business in the mill and, of primary importance to Scarlet, a healthy bank account. She had already formulated a plan on how to bring the mill into the new century. In place of lumber, she would get Frank to invest his money in software development. He might balk at first, but Scarlett knew she had the means to get her own way.

Unfortunately, only two weeks after their marriage, old Frank Kennedy was gone.

People whispered, behind closed doors, that he died of a heart attack in bed. The residents of the area blamed Scarlett's willful manner and her determination to change the business from lumber to software.

In desperation, the widow Kennedy, a description Scarlett despised almost as much as dressing in black, asked Ashley to manage the new company she named Mill Software. The company motto was "Software construction the way it should be", a thinly veiled allusion to the bloated software from Microsoft.

"Ashley, if yo say yes, Ah promise to give you 50% of the company stock. Yo and Melanie will be secure forevah. Aftah the war," she added her eyes wide with excitement, "Windahs application development ought to go sky high."

The war, however, dragged on. Neither side would give in. To gain additional revenue for its war effort, Microsoft introduced a surcharge on all its products. It also issued a Windahs upgrade each month that, curiously, would not allow the user's system to function unless each upgrade was installed and paid for.

Ashley accepted the managing position. All of Frank Kennedy's funds had gone into converting the mill and hiring the engineers. Now Scarlet needed to secure more money to operate the company, but she was strapped for cash. There was only one possibility, Rhett Buttler. The program engineers were hard at work on the code for Mill's first application, a program for drapery design called Curtains. The program gave Scarlett an outrageous idea. She would transform the parlor drapes into an ensemble that would mesmerize Rhett so he would give her the money she needed.

Rhett had moved on to Charleston, where he felt that honour of his beloved Macintosh needed to be protected, and gave all his effort to the destruction of Microsoft and Windahs. He started his own Mac company called Ex. When Scarlett waltzed into his small office in her new green velvet dress, compliments of her first Windahs program, he was mildly dismayed. When he learned of her real purpose, he became angry.

“Scarlett, will you never grow up? Don’t you realize that, as a Mac user, I could never lend you support, morally or financially?” He turned her down flat. After she left, he decided to return to Atlanta where the World Wide Computer Conference would convene to try to settle the dispute. His first stop, however, was to visit his old flame, Belle Watling, in her sweets shoppe on Decatur Street. Belle was warm and sympathetic and, after several days and nights, Rhett left reinforced in his determination to fight the evil empire.

Microsoft, its own worst enemy, shot itself in the foot with its nefarious software surcharge. The software industry collapsed under the surcharge assault. Many companies, including Mill Software, were forced into bankruptcy. Windahs users migrated in droves to Apple, Solaris, Be, OS2, Unix and Linux. Slowly but surely, the Microsoft stranglehold on the industry disintegrated.

Back at Tara, Scarlett stood in the ominous shadow of the gnarled two hundred-year old oak tree. The glow of the orange sunset cast a surrealistic look on the fields of Tara. She raised her arm and clenched fist to the sky. “As God is my witness, if Ah have to beg, steal or pirate software, if Ah have to wear my fingers to the bone keyboarding, as God is my witness, Ah’ll never use Windahs again.”

Intermission

Life in the bright new world after the War of the Operating Systems was not all goodness and light. Heated discussions still erupted frequently in the Internet bars and cafes on Peachtree Street in Atlanta. What was different, however, was the general camaraderie and team spirit that hovered over the reborn industry. A large and important mover had emerged after the cannon fire had ceased. The Atlanta Declaration was issued and supported overwhelmingly. Part of the Declaration had been the forming of the Operating Systems Manufacturers’ Association - OSMA for short. Its primary purpose was to integrate the most valuable and user friendly parts of the individual systems into one. There would be no proprietary code. The system would be open-sourced and would have input from the six signers, including the remnant of the former Windahs.

Scarlett had salvaged more than most from her former company. From the ashes of Mill Software was born Phoenix Technologies and their first OSMA application was a reworking of their original Curtains. It was the very first program to market and was snapped up like the proverbial hotcakes.

It was inevitable that Scarlett and Rhett would meet and rekindle their close friendship. Atlanta, although a thriving city, was still more like a small town. Although their differences during the war were diametrically opposite, with the Declaration and OSMA in operation, all that former baggage had disappeared. They met on Peachtree Street just outside of Software Heaven, the new mega software chain that bought out Best Buy and introduced a novelty that many thought they would never see—a knowledgeable, helpful, non-teenaged staff.

“Is that you, Scarlett?” Rhett spoke in mock surprise, “I hardly recognized you. You must have found the fountain of youth.”

“Rhett, darlin’, how sweet. Yo shor know how to please a lady. I’m shor that Belle Watlin could tell me stories about yo. Isn’t that true?” She could not resist the jibe.

Within a month of their meeting, they had courted and announced their engagement. After less than three days, they eloped and were married on the Mississippi Maid making their way to New Orleans for their honeymoon. It was on their honeymoon, during one of their most intimate moments, that she inadvertently uttered Ashley’s name. The frostiness that settled over them was like the primary colour of the new iBook.

What should have been their most romantic time together ended with sharp volleys of anger and resentment. Their return to Atlanta a month later was made in studied silence. The silence was finally broken when Scarlett to her dismay found that she was pregnant. She had mixed feelings and did not know how to approach Rhett. When she finally summoned her courage and blurted out the news, she was pleasantly surprised at his reaction. Rhett was overjoyed and contemplated the great times he would have with his son. He was suddenly the perfect expectant father.

The months passed quickly. Ashley continued to manage Phoenix Technologies, and Rhett’s company, Ex, was also thriving. The software market was growing in leaps and bounds with no in fighting between software developers and OSMA. Finally there was commitment and rapport between the hardware and software factions of the computer industry.

When the baby was born, the expected boy suddenly emerged as a girl. Rhett promptly named her Bondi Blue and fell totally under her spell. He doted on his daughter with the excess befitting a man of wealth and success. There was nothing that he would deny her.

Scarlett was glad that Rhett had become such a loving father and it amused her

to recall how different he had been when they first met. But that did not sway her from her determination not to have any more children. She disliked her “condition” during pregnancy almost as much as the time she was confined to widow’s black. Her decision drew still another wedge between them

For Bondi Blue’s 4th birthday, Rhett bought her a Shetland pony. It was the best and worst decision he could have made. The child showed amazing promise, even at that young age, of becoming an accomplished horsewoman. She reveled in her birthday present and began daily rides and jumping contests. Shortly after, on a day like many before, with her family and the household help watching, she trotted the tiny pony about the yard, and started for the jump. This time it ended in disaster. She fell from the animal’s back and hit her head. Two days later she was dead.

The desolation that enveloped Scarlett and Rhett with the death of their daughter also drove them more apart. They each blamed the other. They spoke less and less and no longer shared the same bed. The marriage was disintegrating before their very eyes and neither one made any effort to stop it.

She went to Ashley for consolation, but he was more concerned with Melanie who was feeling very sickly. In his confused and distraught state, he could not give Scarlett what she felt she needed from him. It was then that she realized that she did love Rhett. She had loved him all along and it was her misinterpretation of Ashley’s love for her that had kept her hopes alive.

She returned to her large comfortable home. She would tell Rhett and beg his forgiveness. All the success of her company, all the software sales in the world were not enough if she could not have personal happiness. She called out to him. The house sounded hollow and empty.

“Rhett,” she called again and at the same time heard the scuff of his shoes on the stair tread as he descended. “Rhett, where are you going?” she asked, noticing the suitcase in his hand.

“I’m leaving you, Scarlett, as I should have long ago.”

“But you can’t desert me. Ah love you.”

“That, my dear, is your misfortune”

“But Ah need you. Ashley is desolate about Melanie and can’t care for the business. Ah need you now more than ever. We can make it work. We did once, we can do it again. Ah tell you, Ah need you desperately. What will Ah

do without you?"

Rhett reached for the door knob, pulled open the oak door and half turned to her, "Frankly my dear, I don't give a damn." And he was gone.

Scarlett was reeling from disbelief. He did still love her. She knew it. But she couldn't think about it now. She would think about it tomorrow. Tomorrow she would devise some plan to lure him back. Perhaps a new internet program or 3D strategy game. Something.

"Ah'll think about it," she said teary-eyed, as her lip quivered, "tomorrow."

•Ralph J. Luciani• <ralph@mymac.com>

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•By Barbara Bell <barbara@mymac.com>•

Hello all!

Thanksgiving... can you smell the turkey in the air? Halloween is over and with it, the last of Indian Summer (if you were so lucky!). Now, the weather inches noticeably closer everyday to the really cold weather. As much as I dislike it, at least I know my tulips and crocuses will grow again in a few months.

Now begins the really hectic time of year. Most of us can't escape from it. School has started, so now traffic is bad in the morning. Soon, the serious Christmas shoppers will start making traffic really bad in the evenings, too. We're running the kids around to after-school activities, getting ready for the holiday season, finalizing year-end documents at work, and still attempting to keep up with our everyday activities all the while hoping to maintain some semblance of a normal, or at least more relaxed, lifestyle.

So, keeping in mind you don't have a lot of time to read this month, I kept this column short and sweet. Enjoy!

Helpful Hints

Y2K stuff — Basically, you're on a Mac; you're okay! However, there may be a few glitches in the software or in macros and scripts you've written that can cause a few bumps in the road.

Probably the biggest offender will be databases or spreadsheets where the year is just a two digit number. Since you've never specified whether it is 19xx or 20xx, the program has no choice but to guess. A good habit is to always use the four digits in a year. A pain? Yes. But a problem solver? Absolutely.

Geoff Duncan wrote an excellent article on how Y2K affects Macs in the

October 99 (whoops! I mean 1999) issue of *MacWorld*. It's titled "At the stroke of Midnight on January 1, you won't have to worry about your Mac — or will you?"

While I wouldn't lose any sleep over it, I suggest you take the time to follow his precautions to ensure a smooth transition into the new millenium. I certainly am. And then I can gloat over all the poor, suffering PC users. I may be freezing 'cause I won't have heat, but at least I can use my Mac! (Or will, when the power is back on!)

Failing aliases —Possibly you deleted the original file. One of the few irritations of aliases is when you delete a file its alias remains. If you are absolutely certain the original file exists, that means the alias became corrupt. It's easy enough to fix: delete the offending alias, do a Find File for the original, then create a new alias.

Unfortunately, maybe the file exists, but it's now on a floppy or Zip disk. If you know this to be the case, again, delete the offending alias. Insert the floppy/Zip/Syquest/SuperDisk/whatever, and make a new alias from the file on the medium and drag it to the desktop. That way, when you insert your floppy (or whatever), the alias pops up for you but is also removed when you remove the floppy (or whatever).

Easy Scroll — In OS 8.5.x, you can activate a little hand that grabs your open window and lets you scroll in any direction your heart desires. Simply press the Command key, click in the window, and move your mouse. This does not work with document (unless it is an application specific thing). It works with the open folders/windows on your hard drive.

[URL alert]

Opening DOS files ending in .exe — .exe stands for executable. Don't you love DOS shorthand... NOT! If the files are compressed, you'll need to decompress them first. StuffIt Expander will usually do the trick. There's shareware product called Dropstuff with Expander Enhancer that also works well. Both are from Aladdin Systems <<http://www.aladdinsys.com>>

Once unstuffed, however, you need DOS emulation software to run the darn thing. Connectix Virtual PC, which I have, is fine <<http://www.connectix.com>> Or, Insignia SoftWindows will also do the trick <<http://www.insignia.com>> I've never used SoftWindows so I can't compare it to Virtual PC. (And, frankly, comparing the virtues of DOS emulation software turns my stomach.) Virtual PC has worked well for my very minor DOS needs, such as opening files from my goofy friends who haven't yet figured out that Macs are so much better!

Internet Site of the Month: The Online Sex Offenders Registry, at <http://www.apbonline.com/safestreeets/sexoffender/index.html>. This is a great resource, right at your fingertips. 'Nuff said.

Have a safe & Happy Thanksgiving!

•Barbara Bell• barbara@mymac.com

Websites mentioned:

<http://www.aladdinsys.com>

<http://www.connectix.com>

<http://www.insignia.com>

<http://www.apbonline.com/safestreeets/sexoffender/index.html>

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Wall Writings

•By Mike Wallinga <mikew@mymac.com>•

NT and Linux Are Both Knocking. Will Apple Answer?

I've had a great opportunity this school year to help administrate one of the computer labs on campus. The lab is pretty small—about a dozen computers total—and has a mix of Windows NT and Red Hat Linux operating systems. After about three months on the job, I've come to one conclusion, which ties in nicely with the time of the year:

I'm more thankful than ever that I use a Mac.

Now I Hate Windows AND Have a Better Understanding Why

Windows NT is an even more complex cousin to Windows 95/98, and of course, in Microsoft-speak, more complexity means more possibilities for things to go wrong. In hindsight, I wish I would have begun making a tally at the beginning of the year of how many days all of the NT-based computers in the lab were up and running at the same time. I seriously doubt I would run out of fingers. Granted, not all of the problems have been NT-specific; there's been a motherboard go bad, a video card go bad, and other hardware-specific problems that can't honestly be blamed on Microsoft. But the number of times that there have been problems whose easiest solution seemed to be "wipe the hard drive clean and reinstall everything" has still been insanely high.

I've also been asked to do some troubleshooting and setup for students who bring their computers in to Computing Services offices. Most of the incidents I've handled have involved hooking students up to the campus network. I've had to install PCI-, ISA-, and PCMCIA-based Ethernet cards, as well as the Novell Netware networking client, and properly configure system settings. This experience has taught me that, regardless of what they claim, the PC industry does not know what the term "plug-and-play" means. I do chalk a lot of my initial problems up to my own inexperience working with PCs, but nevertheless, the steps required are insane when compared to how easy it is to install hardware and drivers on the Macintosh. You don't just install the card, install

the drivers, restart, and go; you install the card, add the hardware profile, add the networking protocol, add the networking client, reboot, and pray. This usually involves about three different disks, and occasionally multiple reboots. Even on the occasion that it all works right away, the process is unnecessarily complex: right-clicking on the network neighborhood icon, navigating through the proper tabbed windows, and wading through a series of dialog boxes asking such things as "which disk is the proper driver on? Please tell me because I can't find it on my own." To be fair, after a while you get used to the process, and you don't always find yourself wanting to pull your hair out. But every time I need to do something on a Windows computer, I find myself wishing I was working with a Macintosh instead.

Linux Is Really Good, But It's Still Really Geeky

Of course, it's not just Mac users who are fed up with Microsoft. Plenty of PC users are making the switch to running Linux on their computers. Even my computer science professors got the dreaded blue screen one too many times over the summer and made the switch to running the Red Hat distribution of Linux. They encourage computer science majors to use Linux, too, or at the very least be acquainted with it. While the department still maintains several Windows NT computers, it has totally moved away from Windows 95/98. (Too bad the entire campus can't be convinced to do the same! ;-)

Working so closely with Linux recently has caused me to appreciate its power and features, and acknowledge that it has several temporary advantages over the Mac OS. If an application crashes, that's the only thing that crashes—just the application, not the entire system. I have never experienced a forced restart of Linux, unless I have chosen to restart manually. Linux doesn't freeze, doesn't hang, doesn't crash—and I spent a whole week setting up the lab before school started trying to make it crash! I've had application conflicts, numerous application crashes, core dumps, and so forth, but never anything that hung the entire system. Linux also features protected memory, better virtual memory, multiuser support, and other enhancements that make it an attractive alternative OS. In fact, one of my professors directly told me that the reason he didn't even consider Mac OS when switching to Linux was because of its lack of many of these features. He appreciated—and was impressed by—Apple's new hardware offerings, but felt that Apple needed a most robust "modern" operating system before it could be a true contender in business, higher education, or other networked environments.

Even though Linux offers many features the Mac OS doesn't, it does lack Apple's traditional trump card: ease of use. For the end user, Linux has made great strides in adding a graphical interface to its UNIX-rooted command line; desktop managers such as Gnome and KDE imitate the Mac/Windows desktop

metaphor fairly well. However, setting up necessary system functions such as printing, dial-up Internet access, and mounting drives is still a complicated process. I won't even get into the problems I've run into as an administrator; once everything is up and running, Linux is great, but getting it to that point can truly be a daunting task. Dozens upon dozens of .ini and .config files almost make Windows' .dll and .bat files seem friendly! Another problem Linux users face is that few peripheral companies directly support Linux as an operating system (although more are starting to do so). This means that you have to rely on hacked drivers or patches to get some devices to work, and are still limited to what types and brands of devices you can use.

The bottom line? Linux is a good PC alternative to Microsoft-branded operating systems. If you are computer-geeky... er, I mean technically oriented enough, aren't afraid to play around with potentially dangerous system settings, and have the time and patience to set it up properly, Linux can be an outstanding, powerful OS. The same is true if you are just a regular user but have a system administrator or knowledgeable friend to help you out. But, despite all of its robust features and capabilities, it will be a while before Linux makes it as an everyday operating system; I would never recommend it to an average home user unless I wanted to scare them.

Apple's Golden Opportunity

This situation puts Apple in a prime position to deliver another industry-changing product: Mac OS X. Many "power" users prefer Linux because of, among other things, its memory management, crash protection, command prompt, and multi-user capabilities. But, it can be hard to configure and get running. Mac users love their OS's ease of use and simplicity, which is combined with a good deal of power, but it lacks the advanced features of a so-called "modern" operating system like Linux. If Apple can successfully combine the two, it could cause everyone—Mac and PC users alike—to "think different."

I just hope Apple doesn't drop the ball here. They must maintain their stellar interface to have a truly easy-to-use product, and they have shown signs of abandoning this, even in the regular Mac OS. Many people have complained about the lack of intuitiveness in the QuickTime 4 Player, but that interface seems to continue to spread throughout the Mac OS, such as in Mac OS 9's Sherlock 2. Also, there have been several reports of a more NeXT-like file browser system in Mac OS X, which seems to be either a love-it-or-hate-it feature. I truly hope Apple comes back to its roots in terms of graphical interface design, or else the multitude of enhancements and features that Mac OS X promises may end up seeming like a powerful, revved-up engine inside a car without a good steering wheel.

I've seen firsthand the problems associated with Windows NT and Linux, and I know that there are plenty of people who WANT a killer operating system with a good interface to come out of Cupertino and give them a true alternative. Here's your chance, Apple, make good with it!

•Mike Wallinga• <mikew@mymac.com>

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My Mac

Magazine



The Last Page

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Credits

Tim Robertson <publisher@mymac.com> is the creator and reigning Publisher of **My Mac Magazine**, at least until the people below rebel and kick him out. Working full time as an IT specialist with one of the world's largest graphic studios (working on Macs and PCs all day long) Tim also assumes the

role of the super-hero "Galactic Avenger" in his spare time. When even that is not enough to keep him busy, he spends much of his free time with his five-year old daughter, Raechel. Email Tim today about your Mac problems, critiques of the magazine, or if you've seen the nefarious "Evil Galactic Mongrel" in your vicinity of the cosmos.

Russ Walkowich <editor@mymac.com> is the Editor of **My Mac**. He also works for the government full-time, is a freelance writer, and is **My Mac's** editor for production and submissions. Russ is currently on a leave of absence, and we miss him dearly!

Adam Karneboge <webmaster@mymac.com> is **My Mac's** Webmaster, and a second-year graphic design major at Dominican University <<http://www.dom.edu>> in River Forest, Illinois, just 2 miles away from the Chicago city limits. When Adam isn't hard at work on an assignment or diligently working on the **My Mac** website, he can be found playing tennis, his favorite sport. Adam is also the proud owner of an original "Wallstreet" PowerBook G3, and loves to see desktop users fumble with trackpads :-). Adam loves email, so write to him anytime at <webmaster@mymac.com>.

Jim Moravec <copyeditor@mymac.com> is **My Mac's** Copy Editor. Jim lives in Darien, Illinois, and is the proud father of two wonderful children. He's also the recent recipient of a new My Mac iMac!

Barbara Bell <barbara@mymac.com> is **My Mac's** Public Relations Director. Barbara grew up on the Mac and while she struggles with Windows at work, she glides on her Bondi Blue iMac at night and on weekends (that is, when she can wrest it away from her computer-savvy stepdaughters!). Barbara works as a Meeting/Convention Coordinator for an endoscopic device manufacturer 30 miles north of Boston. What are endoscopic devices? Trust me, unless you're a doctor, you don't want to know! She loves email and helping folks work out their Mac issues, so don't be shy about emailing questions! She can be reached at <barbara@mymac.com>.

Mike Gorman <NYCGORMAN@aol.com> is a hard-core Mac fan, lives way up north in Waterville, Maine. He's a freelance cartoonist whose work has appeared in such prestigious publications as **My Mac**, the **NY Press**, the **New York Times**, **Entertainment Weekly**, **Mac Addict**, and many others. Visit the Scum Worm—his playground of vices—at <<http://members.aol.com/nycgorman/home.html>>

Lonnie Houghton <lonnie@mymac.com> is an art director for an educational publisher in Portland, Maine. He and his wife raise their son (2 years old) and

daughter (6 months) in the lovely countryside of rural Maine, over an hour's drive from his office. Lonnie's hobbies are traveling to and from work, changing diapers, playing with large Legos, watching children's videos, and playing on his Mac whenever he's willing to trade-off sleep. He would love to hear from you regarding the Macintosh or any other creative topic.

John Nemerovski <nemo@mymac.com> is a musician, photographer, outdoorsman, and Mac consultant residing in sunny Tucson, Arizona. John's an enthusiastic participant in the local and international Macintosh and Internet communities, and welcomes reader comments.

Mick O'Neil <mickoneil@mymac.com> is a former columnist for **PCW Magazine** in the UK and a freelance writer contributing articles to a number of periodicals including **Byte Magazine**, **MacUser** and **MacWorld** (UK and Australia), and the **Journal of Computing in Higher Education**. Mick's has a home page at <<http://www.geocities.com/CollegePark/3423/mick.html>>

David E. Price <GCSPhotoBug@WWBChat.com> is a Senior Consequence Analyst in the Nonproliferation, Arms Control, and International Security Directorate at one of the USA's national laboratories. He is also a professional free-lance photographer. His favorite pasttimes are photography, long-distance bicycling, and roasting Wintel machines. He is the **World Without Borders** host/moderator for **My Mac Magazine Presents...** and several other Macintosh-related conferences, and is the author and host for a weekly interactive photograph tutorial. You may sample his photography tutorials on his website at <<http://home.earthlink.net/~davidprice>>

Lyn Price <GCSNormira@WWBChat.com> is known affectionately to her friends as Normira. She is a Program Coordinator for exchange students from all over the world (teaching English and American Culture). She is also a full-time student and a free-lance photographer. Her favorite pasttimes are distance bicycling, photography, and watching her husband "roast Wintel machines. She is the host for **Kitchen Kapers** (a weekly kitchen chat), **The Meeting Place**, **Apple Learning Connection**, and several other conferences on **World Without Borders**. You may sample some of her photography on her website at <<http://home.earthlink.net/~davidprice>>

Mike Wallinga <mikew@mymac.com> is a Mac-loving Computer Science major, and has just returned to college from a fun-filled summer vacation (we hope). Reportedly, he still hasn't beaten Tomb Raider II, which is probably why next month's column will be late again...

Fenton Jones <manavesh@mymac.com> known to his friends as Manavesh,

lives in beautiful Santa Cruz, California, and works mostly in landscape construction with some design work on the side. He wants to do more designing in the future to justify spending more money on computer graphics. He's a single father with two girls.

Mark Marcantonio <markm@mymac.com> is a parochial middle school teacher in the Portland, Oregon area. He spends much of his free class time trying to keep the school's Windows machines running. In the meantime, the Macs at the school just keep going and going... One day he hopes to have Steve Jobs actually buy one of his advertising ideas. In the meantime, he'll keep spending his miniscule paycheck five minutes after getting it.

Ralph J. Luciani <ralph@mymac.com> is Operations Manager at a medium-sized firm in Toronto whose job duties include cleaning toilets, removing garbage, graphic design, and invoicing customers—in that order). Ralph lives in the quaint and picturesque small town of Oakville, Ontario, where he's rabid in his devotion to all things Macintosh, much to the chagrin of his long suffering wife, RoseAnne. Other family members are: Christian, a film major and mini-Mac fanatic; a G3MT; and an SE/30. He uses his own IIVx at work in place of the "other" OS. ("Productivity is important to me!")

Bob McCormick <mccnow@rocketmail.com> Born and raised in Oregon, he is a "divergent thinker" who used a Mac for the first time in 1985. (If only he had used one of those before he purchased his Commodore 64!) While not a techie himself, he does work with them in his job as a subcontractor for a major PC manufacturer (and yes, they also use Macs!). His first Mac was a PowerBook 150 (school would have been twice as hard without that!), next came a 7100/80, and he now uses a MacTell XB Base Series 604E and dreams of getting a PowerBook again. (Hmmm... WallStreet II, or wait for the new 101s?) Bob recommends Macs, helps friends and family with their Macs, regularly haunts the rumor sites, and tends to "Think Different" all on his own.

Jay Timmer can be reached for comment at <jtimmer@tuna.net>. He has experience using and maintaining both Mac and Linux systems, and is dying to get his hands on a copy of OS X Server.

Beth Lock, <beth@infowest.com> Aquarius, Capricorn Rising, Moon in Libra, Mercury in Aquarius, Venus in Aries, Mars in Pisces. Mary uses two Macintoshes: a rebuilt PowerMac 7200/75 with 60MB RAM, System 8.5, 56K Global Village modem at home; and a PowerMac7200/120 with 96MB RAM, System 8.5, a 4 Gig external hard drive, and Sportster modem at work. She is currently writing a book and trying to buy her first house. She's also a Hospice volunteer and co-founder of Special FX Lighting, Inc. To quote Mary: "My life:

I go to work, I go home. I am supremely happy and content. Life has never been better, and I'm grateful daily that I was born of this day and age."



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