ello, and welcome to this month's edition of A Spider Speaks. This column is dedicated to tips, tricks, and other information for use by every type of Mac user. If you have any comments, send me an email at erik@applewizards.net. Note: Picture captions are available by clicking on the pictures. Click everywhere!

piderism #1 — Wasting your (Quick)Time

QuickTime technology has won so many patents that it's almost unbelievable. It's used on so many websites and multimedia applications that they can't be kept track of. It's used by countless individuals in countless fashions. The question is, are you wasting your QuickTime?

Starting Point: http://quicktime.apple.com/

Everyone should start their journey to QuickTime enlightenment here. Load up on the latest goodies (if you don't have them already), including the full complement of QuickTime extensions, control panels, and applications. These include:

Control Panel
• QuickTime™ Settings

Extensions
• QuickTime™
• QuickTime™ MPEG Extension
• QuickTime™ Musical Instruments
• QuickTime™ PowerPlug
• QuickTime™ VR

Browser Plug-In
• QuickTime™ Plug-In

Application
• MoviePlayer 2.5.1

Now that you've gotten the goodies... it's time to begin experimenting. Visit the QuickTime website after you've installed the plug-in and jump on over to QuickTime-enhanced websites. Find an Enhanced CD and use MoviePlayer to watch the movies.

piderism #2 — Getting the Most out of Your (Quick)Time

Now that you've installed all the QuickTime goodies you could find, let's run through a simple experiment. Our goal is to convert a MIDI file, which is a very small sound file (for more information on MIDI files, visit http://www.midi.com/) into a QuickTime movie (.mov) file. Why would you want to do this? Well, you may want to do this for cross-platform viability, perhaps on a web page or in a multimedia presentation. See this month's HTML Toolbox for the web page information.

For your testing, I've included seinfeld.midi. This is a MIDI file of the opening theme for the television show Seinfeld. It's a small 8K file that would load quickly in any presentation.

The Easy Way to Multimedia
You're on a Mac, so this will be easy. Just follow along.

1. Open MoviePlayer
Fire up MoviePlayer. Nothing will happen, and that's fine.

2. Import the MIDI file
Use the File menu's "Import..." Locate your .midi file and press the "Convert..." button. You will be prompted to enter a name for the intermediate file. The suggested name, "seinfeld.midi Movie" is fine for now. Remember that this is an "intermediate" file that will be trashed eventually and save this converted file to the desired location. Your "movie" should look like this:

. Play Around with the File
There are so many things you can
do with this file it's unbelievable.
Let's mess with the instruments, however. This will bring you some

enjoyment. Visit the "Movie" menu and choose the "Get Info..." command (command-I).

After choosing this command, a simple window will appear. Choose the "Music Track" from the first pop-up menu in the top-left portion of this window. From here, you can control many aspects of your MIDI/Movie. Let's mess around with the instruments in this track. From the pop-up menu on the right, choose "Instruments." You should see a window similar to the one pictured at right.

s you can see, this MIDI file has 8 instruments embedded into it. Let's change some of them! Double-click on the instrument you wish to change. A new window will appear. From here, you may choose the instrument family and specific instrument that you wish to play that part. Go nuts! Change the entire ensemble to reflect your liking! I changed the instruments in my movie to all sorts of odd things! No doubt you will want to make your own neat sound! When you're done, listen to your Movie again. If you like it, move on to the next step. If you don't, then keep experimenting until you get the sound just right.

4. Save the File
Now it's time to export the file to some cool format. From the File menu, you have two choices:

a. Export... — From this menu, you can save the sound as an AIFF file or as a standard MIDI. By using the "Options..." button, possible to modify the rate, size, and stereo options (44Khz, 16-bit, and stereo are the defaults).

b. Save As... If you'd like to save this movie as a cross-platform file, choose "Save As..." A dialog box will open. You want to check the radio button that says "Make movie self-contained" (approximate file size is still only 6K). Also check the box that says "Playable on non-Apple computers." This does not increase the file size at all, but it does allow PCs to read the file without any conversions. Name the movie "seinfeld.mov" or something similar. I've included my "seinfeld.mov" file with this issue of Apple Wizards so that you

may hear what can be done!

5. Brag to your Friends
Find some friends (especially PC friends!) and brag about how easily you converted a MIDI to a .mov file, changing instruments in the process. It really is this easy!

This really is by no means all that can be done with QuickTime. Virtual Reality movies are fast-becoming quite cool, and QuickTime's right at the heart! In fact, QuickTime 3.0 (scheduled for release in January, 1998), offers so many cool new things that I can hardly wait. Imagine clicking on water in a virtual reality movie and watching ripples appear! QuickTime 3.0 will make that a (virtual) reality!

piderism #3 — Some(Times) Bad Things Happen

Sometimes bad things happen, even on Macs. Many people, however, are unaware of methods to ease the pain that pierces through your body when your Mac stops acting as you'd like. There are three key combinations that every Mac user should know.

1. Command-Period (.) — This is the "stop" command. If your computer seems to be processing something (you may see the spinning beachball or the watch icon), try pressing command-period a few times. See if it helps. This is the most minimal of the three key combinations.

2. Command-Option-Escape — This is the "force quit" command. It is used to "force quit" an application that may be behaving badly. Suppose your cursor still moves around on the screen, but your Mac isn't responding to clicks or keys. Press command-option-escape and choose to "force quit" the troubling application from the dialog box that will appear. Save work in your other applications and restart your computer to be safe.

3. Control-Command-Power — This is the three-fingered salute. Use this key combination to restart your Mac when it has frozen (i.e. you can't even move your cursor). It is much safer than yanking out the power cord!

In addition to the other 5 trillion key combinations you must memorize, these should be known as well. They are sometimes very important, and nobody's going to have the patience to look them up if their computer is frozen. In other words, learn 'em now because you'll need 'em all eventually.

Fact of the Month:

• Over 20,000 sites on the web now offer QuickTime content
• Used by over 1,500 leading CD-ROM developers
• Over 200 new QuickTime-enhanced CD-ROM titles every month

From the QuickTime website (11/97)

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