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## Tools of the Trade

Just wanted to say how much I enjoy reading your publication every month. Keep up the good work. The other great thing is that in your list of tools used to put it out there is not a single Microsoft product listed. Truly great things are created when truly great products are used! Thanks for doing your part to show that the computing world does not revolve around Bill's crap.

Dave Hartrum  
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## Whatever Works Best

Dear Michael:

Nice review the Word Whale. ["Microsoft Paragraph" in ATPM 4.06] When I have to use MS Word at all, I still work with 5.1a. On my 120 MHz machine, it's plenty fast enough. Other than that, I won't have MS on my machine. Far too buggy to fool with.

But I've fallen in love with ClarisWorks 5.0. Very nice product, accelerated for PPC and uses a little less than 4 MB.

Keep on punchin'.

Eric Barnes  
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## To Upgrade or Not to Upgrade

I've been scratching my head for the past few weeks about upgrading Microsoft Office in my company. We've been using Office version 4.2.1 for several years and we've all moaned repeatedly about the many flaws in Word as well as the whole nasty Windows port thing.

But we have to use Word 6.0.1 in order to remain compatible with the needs of our clientele and have also managed to stay up with the Windows cousins by frequently downloading Microsoft's converter (which does work, surprisingly).

I have instituted one installation regimen that does help me out in troubleshooting Microsoft's intensive System Folder bloat: After a clean System Software install, I use the Mac OS "Label" feature to "paint" all of the OS icons. My next installation is Microsoft Office. All new icons are immediately visible and I "paint" them with label colors that I have labeled "Office." That improves conflict resolution.

I'm still unsure why Microsoft has to examine and load every font in your system when Word, Excel or PowerPoint start up. Most Mac users I know have tons of fonts because Mac users tend to be more aware of how fonts make the document. Heck, I even use expert sets in standard letters!

Knowing that Mac users are total font collectors, the folks up in Redmond should prepare their program for that. But once again, the Windows paradigm rules: When you add fonts to a Windows PC, it slows down the load of the OS. The word processor starts up faster in Windows because of this. For some reason, Microsoft feels that just-in-time loading of font sets is inappropriate. So Mac users have to wait for Word to load.

I also note that the new Macintosh G3 PowerBooks (as reviewed by Ziff-Davis) "do well with graphics applications that are optimized for RISC architecture, but they lag far behind in business and other applications." PC Magazine: First Looks Online  
<<http://www.zdnet.com/pcmag/firstlooks/9806/f980603a.htm>>

I'm not really sure what ZD is saying here, Office 98 won't run on a non PowerPC Mac, so presumably the applications are optimized for RISC architecture, unless ZD knows something about Office 98 that Microsoft would just as soon nobody else know. Or perhaps the authors thought it important to insert some banal technical phrase at that point to "prove" that they are hard-core technical types.

But perhaps the reason why productivity applications, as "tested" by ZD "labs" don't run as fast on the G3 PowerBook as they could relates to the font load issue. Since this is an OS issue for Windows and an application issue for Microsoft applications on the Mac, there is a very real reason for slower performance.

Many of the "look and feel" issues you brought up are easily answered by Microsoft. In the Office Suite, they have decided to define their own "look and feel" based on "real world

issues” brought up in Microsoft’s highly touted “Usability Labs.” As an example, you state that Apple’s HIG requires the placement of the Preferences dialog to be in the Edit menu. Microsoft moved “Options” (their version of Preferences) under the Tools menu back in Office 4 (Word 6). This matched the Windows version exactly. What you’ll probably find is that Office 98 and Word 98 carries the same user interface as Office 97 (or 99, I suppose) for Windows, allowing people who know the Windows version or the Macintosh version of the Microsoft Office Suite to transfer their knowledge easily between platforms.

I’d generally be in favor of that, were Microsoft to transfer more of the Macintosh HIG to Windows (but didn’t we have a lawsuit a while back about just that?)

Your article allowed me to justify putting off an unneeded upgrade. We can still get temps who know Word 6 and Excel 5 and I have made macros in both that require a spell check before you can do a printout (something that is really important in this day when a secretary will “axe” you a question). Perhaps Microsoft will “slipstream” an upgrade that will work faster and better. We’ll remain happy with what we have.

Thanks again!

Mark Hollis  
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## Macintosh—Comfortable Computing

Thanks for the usual great e-zine. (ATPM 4.06)

What is it about Macs that turn normal people into Mac lovers!! I loved reading about the new iMac and how its getting big pre-orders. Its a bit like barracking for a football team, and about as logical as well.

I use a Mac by choice and a DOS box by necessity. The PC is newer, quicker, and has a faster modem, yet it doesn’t feel as good. My old Mac is like that pair of tennis shoes that you wear, a bit old and in need of an upgrade, and the new Nikes or whatever must be better, yet those oldies just seem comfortable.

Thanks again for a great read.

Charlie  
Perth, Western Australia

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## Early Exposure

I am a 57 year old female who moved from a Chicago suburb to a small town in Tennessee with my husband who is newly retired (1 year ). Last January, February, March, I was allowed to sit in on some basic Mac classes offered to the teachers at a local high school. At the last class the teacher announced the school system decided to purchase new computers for the school, PC's. The teacher was very upset as she started in the school system as a typing teacher. When computers came to the school they were Apples, very easy to learn and very easy to teach. She will have to spend most of the summer learning Windows so she will be able to teach Windows the students in the fall.

My children are ages 36 and 38, when they were in high school computers were not in very many homes. Many of the parents who were in the market for a computer and who did not know very much about computers bought Macs because their children were using them in school. Times have changed, many of the parents are using PC's in the workplace, but the students still have some input into the purchase of the household computer. I have been told that the incentive program that Apple had with the schools is no longer in effect, I am very sorry to hear this.

I bought my first Mac in 1994 after falling in love with one that my friend had. I could only afford a used Mac IICx and started learning all of the wonderful programs that were available for Macs. Last fall I bought a new computer, a Power Tower Pro 225 with 128 MB of RAM, I am learning Photoshop, Office 98, Director, and Premiere. I have a scanner and a great printer. I am having a really great time but I am selfishly worried about the future of the Mac and of the software companies that cater to Apple. Other than the Mac catalogs (those of us who receive them) and CompUSA, who has a small Apple section in the back of the store, I don't see Macs being advertised to the common people. If the students are not getting any exposure from Macs in the schools who is going to know about Macs? There are a some parents who work for companies who use Macs but if their children are using PC's the parents will be more likely to purchase a PC.

I'm worried, how about you?

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Dear Diane:

Thanks for your e-letter! We should compare notes after the Expo and the release of the iMac. The G3 product line has a very attractive price/performance ratio. The real cost of a Wintel box isn't just the purchase price. One must factor in the high cost of technical support and long-term maintenance.

Buying a Wintel box and expecting years of happy computing is analogous to the proverbial dog that's constantly chasing its tail. A Macintosh works for years without the need of costly add-on cards and upgrades. Wise computer buyers know the value of using Macs. We're glad you're among them!

The ATPM Staff

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We'd love to hear your thoughts about our publication. We always welcome your comments, criticisms, suggestions, and praise at <editor@atpm.com>. Or, if you have an opinion or announcement about the Macintosh platform in general, that's ok too.

