

ast issue I wrote about the new Find File 2.0 renamed Sherlock. As I said, Sherlock is part of Mac OS 8.5. This issue I'm going to take a look at what else is in the new OS offering from Apple. Quite some time ago this magazine contained a psychic preview of the features of Mac OS 8.5. I'm going to be looking back at that article to see just how accurate it turned out to be, mimicking it in part.

The first big news is that Mac OS 8.5 shipped in 8 countries simultaneously. This means the UK version was released at the same time as the US version on the 17th of October 1998. A long awaited facility.

The preview article started off by saying that, starting with Mac OS 8.5, support for the 68040 range of processors has finally been dropped. Support for other 68K processors was dropped in July 1997. This sadly, for 68K users, is true as it has been nearly four years since Apple had a 68K machine on its list of current Macs. Also note that no 68K to PowerPC upgrade card will be supported by Apple and we are told that Mac OS 8.5 should not work with these cards at all. Noticeable evidence for no 68K support is in the fact that many system components are now PowerPC only. Finder 8.5 is around 1MB smaller than Finder 8.1 with a mere 1K of 68K code which will probably tell 68K users that it doesn't work on their machines. Finder 8.5 now also includes scalable list views, Standard View settings, new alias icons similar to Windows 95/98 and more.

AppleScript 1.3 provides up to five times the performance of previous versions on PowerPC computers because it too is now PowerPC native. This can be observed during compilation and execution of scripts. Much of the System is now scriptable. You can now add script functionality to folders, so that when you put files into a folder, you have set up, then a script is run on that file automatically.

The new version of Appearance would provide Kaleidoscope-style theme switching, however Apple withdrew providing 2 additional themes during the beta testing stage. This was a highly irregular and an unexpected thing to occur at the beta stage with no reason being given.

Apparently upper management spoke and the rest obeyed. For now Mac OS 8.5 still features the “Apple Platinum” theme, but with the addition of sound effects. It is expected that the Appearance Software Developer’s Kit 1.1, when released, will allow third parties to create new themes. Apple may provide new themes and sound effects in the future. The features of the shareware control panel DoubleScroll have been integrated. Although another strange thing occurred during beta testing...the features were restricted much to the displeasure of the testers. Using a special secret script the Mac OS 8.5 windows can be made to appear like previous systems with DoubleScroll installed.

Simplified installation processes and network “push” installs have accelerated system installations.

Network copy performance is now faster than that available to Windows NT users and twice as fast as Mac OS 8.1 on 100 Base-TX Ethernet. A new application called Network Browser makes it easy to navigate through your networks with a Finder-like interface.

Support for the new Euro Currency symbol has been added to the System and the standard fonts.

Navigation Services replaces the good old Open/Save dialogs...but only in applications upgraded to support it. This provides a scalable Finder-like list views interface and adds a shortcuts, a favourites and recently used files buttons.

The Application Window is indeed included in Mac OS 8.5 and is accessed by dragging down past the bottom of the Applications Menu. This creates a floating window with application switching buttons. Clicking one of these buttons switches to its application. This feature is adjustable via certain keyboard-mouse combinations or via AppleScript. The Applications Menu can now display the whole or most of the name of the current application. This feature can be deactivated by dragging the new 3D thin button, on the left of the Applications Menu, to the right.

AppleGuide is still available to older software however the new Apple Help Viewer replaces the main system help facility. So far only the Mac OS and AppleScript have converted their help documentation to the new system.

PlainTalk makes a come back and is now fully compatible with the G3 ranges.

The Date & Time control panel does provide automatic changing of time for Daylight Savings/BST and clock synchronisation with network time servers which can be set automatically or manually.

File Exchange replaces PC Exchange and Mac OS Easy Open using Internet Config for file mapping.

Internet Control Panel provides easier and faster set up for Internet connectivity in conjunction with Internet Config.

Open Transport 2.0.1 has several, extensively technical, new features. Open Transport's implementation of the Dynamic Host Configuration Protocol (DHCP) has been improved to support a number of requested features to address concerns about OT's DHCP compatibility with Windows NT DHCP servers. Support for the Simple Network Management Protocol (SNMP) has also been introduced. Support for version 2 Management Information Base (MIB II), instrumentation for AppleTalk and TCP/IP protocols and transports, administrative tools, and system agent support for the PCI bus is now provided. It now supports AppleScript, through the use of the Network Setup Extension. Apple Remote Access 3.1 replaces OT/PPP and includes a Remote Access Control Strip Module.


QuickDraw 2.5, The Mac OS' graphics engine, definitely accelerates window drawing and redrawing.

Apple System Profiler 2.1.1 is totally revamped, providing more info on your system than ever before.

If you've not got it already QuickTime 3.0.2 comes as standard as do Netscape Navigator 4.05 and Internet Explorer 4.01 in the Mac OS 8.5 Internet Access package. Multi-lingual Internet Access provides character translation when viewing a variety of non-english texts.

The entire Mac OS experience feels much more stable and responsive. This is often the cry of Mac OS reviews, however this time it's true...honestly. This is primarily because of the extraction of most of the 68K code that had been dogging the System for years and the QuickDraw overhaul. Testing was extensively expanded which meant more bugs were identified and fixed than ever before.

like my recommendation for Mac OS 8.1, you simply must upgrade to this new version of the Mac OS. There is no question about it. Simply research this new OS for yourself, via the Mac OS web site at <http://www.apple.com/macOS/> and you cannot deny Mac OS 8.5's worth. We've come a huge leap towards the promised Copland operating system with this release.

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