y Top Five - A Personal Choice.

I must get asked about twice a week 'what's your most used applications' or 'must have' software.

To tell you the truth there are so many, I can't always give a good answer.
So, for this month I've made 'under the bonnet' a personal column and I've taken the time to carefully choose my top five.

1. The supreme combo of Ram and Speed Doubler

If you have an LC or a screaming PPC, Ram Doubler gives you that extra Ram you can't afford or in some cases gives a machine that otherwise can't be expanded, that extra bit of life.

ld LCII's can have 12Mg Max fitted but will only read 10, so with a virtual 20Mg, the old dog can wag the tail a little longer or give your trusty 7100 with 104Mg a spluttering 240Mg. The new advanced features in Ram Doubler 8 make managing your memory simpler, yet still giving you the power to boost your applications. [go on give Photoshop 100Mg it still won't be enough].

ver the last two years the respective packages have developed alongside operating systems and bug fixes are quickly released, the stability of both packages has significantly improved, but still, Speed Doubler can cause unbecoming chaos with certain apps and OS's.
Contact: www.connectix.com

2. StuffIt Deluxe, Drop Stuff, StuffIt Expander and Shrink Wrap

Every Mac user has heard or uses one or more of these. I have opted to use Just Drop Stuff and StuffIt Expander. If you're on the Internet then this is the biggest 'must have' you'll need.

hether it's cramming graphic files on floppies or saving space on that 4Gig hard drive StuffIt has the answers. I'm a fanatical space saver and I have been using StuffIt files for about 4 years. Compact Pro and the rest have their advantages and such, but they always seem to be playing catch-up to StuffIt's suite of practical solutions. Remember that all the above [except StuffIt Deluxe] are Shareware and strongly rely on people's honesty to purchase their copy.

t's now available for the PC clan so they can see that ZipIt is not the only option they have. Contact: www.aladdinsys.com

3. Yup we all know PhotoShop
I just can't live on my Mac without it! Constantly improving and embracing the needs of the user, Adobe is trying [sometimes]. The multiple undo features in version 5 are welcomed like a win on the lottery. The better-equipped Action controls are quickly making productivity faster.

or myself everyday spent in PhotoShop yealds a new short cut or command. It is also nice to see Adobe making a more unified user interface with their other products [if at times confusing]. Users of Illustrator and PageMaker will find the usual tools easy to find without a three hundred page manual.

on't be totally fooled though, just like most of the BIG software packages it has its weaknesses. The colour management can leave a little to be desired. For me I'd love to see a better file saving native feature to PhotoShop formats. Sometime the files are about 4+ Meg, it would be great to have native files compressed to about a two thirds less, so when StuffIt does its compression too I could send small bundles a fraction of the size I presently send, saving me time and, more importantly, money. This would make life easier from a users point of view as Internet and email are my lifeline.

Contact: www.adobe.com

4. Mac OS

What would a Mac be without one?

I could babble all day about the greatness of the Mac GUI [Graphical User Interface] but it's an open and shut affair. If it was a soccer match it would be MacOS United 3 - Windows Wonders 1, at full time.

S 8.1 and 8.5 are the warp jump Apple needed to find the edge in the operating system wars, backed up by new machines such as the iMac and the G3 chip. Apple at last has come from the wilderness years and back in to the light with an even friendlier OS.

.5 reviewed this month takes yet more wind from the slowing Wintel sails.

Contact: www.apple.com

5.PPP Timer

A Massive must, I have to know how long I'm online otherwise I can't stop myself browsing until 5am in the morning.

he PPP Timer is a visual deterrent to stop those £400.00 [$640.00] phone bills every quarter.

just leave the little guy sitting in the corner of my screen constantly reminding me to disconnect.

ontact: www.bigplan@tiac.net

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