

## reetings and Salutations

I would like to thank all the readers who wrote to me last month — the email was great encouragement. It is good to see that the topics I am picking are indeed useful and interesting to you.

## ou Say Tomato I Say Double Whopper

Ronald Oshiro wrote to me saying:

SCSI actually stands for Small Computer System Interface. I double checked this by going to <http://webopedia.internet.com/> .

This brings up an interesting discussion about what SCSI really stands for. Shugart Associates originally developed SCSI and they had dubbed it SASI for "Shugart Associates System Interface." This was before it became a standard. Delving deeper into mystery, I noticed that many different sources couldn't agree whether it was 'Systems' or 'System.' The one thing I did notice was that more sites referred to the first word as 'Small' rather than 'Standard.' In conclusion I'd like to quote the infinite wisdom of my 12th grade sociology teacher: "Pay your money, take your choice."

## arpal Tunnel Syndrome and Other Joys of Computing

Occupational Overuse Syndrome, Cumulative Trauma Disorder, Repetitive movement injury, or whatever you call it, can hinder the enjoyment of using

a computer. Carpal tunnel syndrome is generally accepted to be caused by the constant rubbing of the tendons against the carpal tunnels in the wrist. If your wrists are in a straight position, the tendons don't rub against the walls of the bony tunnel found in your wrist. If your wrists are bent, they rub. Because I've decided to spare you the gritty

details, I've listed below some websites that list therapies and products that aid sufferers of RSI, CTD, etc.

These websites contain good advice and help.

Amara's RSI Page:

<http://www.amara.com/aboutme/rsi.html>

Typing Injury FAQ Home Page:

<http://www.cs.princeton.edu/~dwallach/tifaq/>

Newsgroups:

[misc.health.injuries.rsi.misc](mailto:misc.health.injuries.rsi.misc)

[misc.health.injuries.rsi.moderated](mailto:misc.health.injuries.rsi.moderated)

[misc.health.therapy.occupational](mailto:misc.health.therapy.occupational)

## isclaimer

The main topic of Shop Talk this month is "Windows-equivalent terms" (for Mac OS terms). Ronald Golnare suggested this topic after inquiring about a related item. As you read the rest of this column, some of you will no doubt fire up your email applications and fire away messages which will intend to point out small inconsistencies between the platforms. I expect problems like this: this is nothing more than a guide for beginners who are trying to become OS bilingualists.

Ronald Golnare wrote to me asking about various Windows equivalent terms. He noticed that when he was working on the Windows side, people were constantly using the word directory, and he wondered if it was the same thing as a folder, which he was already accustomed to from his Mac. My answer: yes, they are the same. Both hold files, programs, and organize your data.

When you wish to install new software on a Mac, you are told to boot with "extensions disabled" (Windows equivalents to extensions are the dreaded dll files, roughly) by holding down the shift key at startup. The equivalent terminology on Windows is Safe Mode. They aren't exactly the same in some senses, but when Windows is started in Safe Mode, most of the extra

features are disabled, much like a Mac without all of its extensions and control panels.

Now let's take a field trip to the control panels. Similar to the Mac OS control panels, analogous Windows items are located in the Control Panels directory (folder) in the Settings portion of the Start menu. The Start Menu is generally where programs are launched from on Windows, and it has a comparable item on the Mac OS: the Apple Menu. Organized users use aliases to place things in more accessible positions such as the Apple Menu or on the Desktop (also called the Desktop in Windows). On the Windows side, shortcuts have the same functionality as aliases, though their links are much more fragile (shortcuts break far more easily than aliases).

Are you working with individual files and folders? On the Mac (OS 8 or later) you can control-click on a file and a contextual menu. Choose Get Info and you can see various information regarding to the item you clicked on. In Windows, a right-click brings up a contextual menu, and choosing Properties will also bring up a new window which contains information on the item that was clicked on.

Banshee \ ban she \: While Banshee technology has been around for quite some time, it was just introduced on the Mac platform a few days ago by VillageTronic. Banshee is a single PCI board which contains technology that allows for 2D and 3D acceleration.

The Banshee is a 128-bit 2D accelerator and it is excellent for speeding up window-drawn events (such as Quickdraw stuff). The 3D part of the board is based on the core of Voodoo2 technology. Though Banshee is good, it is not as good as a standard Voodoo2 board in most senses. The Banshee only has one CPU capable of processing textures, to the Voodoo2's pair of processors. The Banshee has been upgraded recently, though, and it does have a 128-bit interface with VRAM that runs at 100 MHz. The Voodoo2 boards available now have only 64-bit interfaces with 90 MHz VRAM.

For a complete list of Banshee features, check out 3Dfx's Banshee Features page at [http://www.3dfx.com/docs/vb\\_features/vb\\_features.html](http://www.3dfx.com/docs/vb_features/vb_features.html) .

### Question:

Most desktop/tower Macs come with 2 MB of VRAM, expandable to 4 or 6 MB. 3D boards extend video capabilities much further.

I currently have 2 MB of VRAM and am considering upgrading, but would like to know more about how far to go and for what. Can you provide any useful detail on this, and discuss any other choices in addition to the above there might be?

Dave Chapmon

### Answer:

Well David, in my last column (Oct/98) I defined VRAM as being "similar to regular RAM, except it used only for video applications. Each pixel must have its information stored in VRAM. More VRAM means more colors and larger resolutions."

I would like to point out that there is a difference between VRAM used on 3D boards and VRAM used on the motherboard. VRAM on the motherboard is used only to hold the color palette that is being used by the Mac at that moment. VRAM used on 3D boards can be used to hold entire textures, polygonal information, and other information of that sort. When you add VRAM to your motherboard, you can increase your resolution and/or the color palette.

VRAM added to the motherboard doesn't increase speeds at all. VRAM added to 3D boards could have an effect depending on the game, but generally all it does is make the game look better.

My advice is that if you want to increase your resolution and increase the number of colors that can be displayed, you should add more VRAM. If you are playing 3D games and they don't look very good (or they are slow), you should get a Voodoo2 3D board. Many of them have a whopping 12 MB of VRAM, and they are really fast.

Did you like this month's column? It wasn't as technical as the last two, but several people sent submissions via our website that steered the column in this direction this month. Next month, I plan to speak more on networking, perhaps with a discussion on how data packets are transmitted. Do you have any suggestions or thoughts? Please send me some email! The address is listed below!

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