

elcome to Macintalk, my series of monthly interviews, (normally) with people who make a difference in the Mac world and beyond.

This month we break our stride a little bit to stop and interview three "typical" users. We've included a short bio of each person and asked the three of them the same ten questions. What they have to say may surprise you.

Check out this month's interview, then email me your ideas, comments, and suggestions for who you would like to see interviewed in an upcoming issue at [bruce@applewizards.net](mailto:bruce@applewizards.net) . Oh, and before I forget, thanks to Aaron and Erik for covering my butt this month!

Interview conducted: 22 November 1998

## Meet The Interviewees

### Sean Kelley

A junior in high school, he is very computer literate. He can build a computer and has some knowledge of programming (mainly what they have taught him in school). His current computer is a PC, but Apple Wizards staffer Aaron Linville has evangelised him. For college he wishes to buy a decked-out G4.

### Mike Litzenberger

A extremely competent computer user, he has Linux (slackware distrib) and Windows installed on his computer. He has his CNA and is an excellent programmer. He is a freshman at R.I.T.

## Crystal Hutton

A professional mother of three, Crystal spends a few hours each day with her various Macs, patrolling the Internet and maintaining a small graphics design business. Currently hooked on General Hospital, Crystal aspires to learn more about computers in general, but is pretty happy with her Macs.

Keep these bios in mind as you read the responses. They may be enlightening. While we at Apple Wizards balk at calling these three people "representatives" of their respective groups, we do find their comments interesting. We're sure you will as well.

## he Questions

**Apple Wizards:** What are your opinions on the Microsoft vs. Department of Justice trial? How do you think it will end?

**Sean Kelley:** Microsoft should pay the consequences for trying to manipulate every single tech company they can get their hands on. In the end, Microsoft will be broken up into "Baby Bells," so to speak.

**Mike Litzenberger:** I believe that it is a type of necessary point that needed to be brought up because it is the dominating OS for the x86 architecture. They have prevented other companies from prospering because they simply were a threat. (It should be noticed though that Mac OS used to be the only OS for the 68k and PPC chips and is at least the dominating one today as well.)

**Crystal Hutton:** You know, I don't know if it concerns me. I think that this judge is mean enough, and has taken enough lying and other kinds of BS from Sir Bill, that Microsoft will lose this first round. However, then they'll appeal and years from now we may see a binding decision. I'm doubtful...

**AW:** In the Sun vs. Microsoft trial over pure Java, Microsoft was ordered by the Judge to conform to Sun's definition of Java. How does this affect you? What are your concerns?

**SK:** This Java ruling doesn't affect me personally, but it affects Microsoft. Programmers can adapt, while companies that have to distribute a code patch to millions of coders within 90 days can not. Microsoft should've seen this one coming.

**ML:** It doesn't affect me. I have no concerns besides that something will

finally not be poisoned by Microsoft.

**CH:** I hadn't heard about this at all, but I was aware that Microsoft had to remove some labels from some packages about Java, or something like that. What I know is this: Sun developed Java to be cross-platform (platform-neutral, whatever), and Microsoft decided to "enhance" it to add things that affected (worked on) only the MS platforms. Non-monopolistic? Puh-lease!

**AW:** Should a web browser be integrated into an operating system?

**SK:** A web browser can be integrated into a system as long as it doesn't crash the computer.

**ML:** For an Internet computer yes, but keep it an option, not a requirement.

**CH:** I don't want to upgrade my operating system every time a new version of my favorite browser (Navigator!) is released, so I say no. If you can remove Internet Explorer from Windows without breaking Windows, as many people did, then it just goes to show how stupid Microsoft is and how many lies they've been telling.

**AW:** What do you think of Apple's iMac?

**SK:** Apple's iMac is a good, non-expandable computer for old people. PPCs are nice, but expensive. Go AMD.

**ML:** It's ugly and it's stupid as shit. Everyone knows that a computer needs expandability. Plus USB isn't all it's hyped up to be. It may be slightly faster than parrallel, but it is way slower than SCSI and "Firewire."

**CH:** You know, I bought one the day they came out. My kids love it — and I can finally get some work done without being interrupted with "can I play Sesame Street mommy?" all day long. It's not the machine for me, or 80% of computer users, but the sales it's generated prove that some people will love it. It's great for those people, and my kids. And as for that other guy, didn't Apple invent FireWire? I think they did...

**AW:** What are your concerns about Microsoft's plan to start licensing Windows for a monthly or yearly fee in the year 2001?

**SK:** If I have to pay for Windows on a subscription basis my money would be better spent on a porno magazine subscription.

**ML:** Didn't hear about that one. I doubt that it will actually work. The crackers and hackers out there will solve that one in a jiffy.

**CH:** This raises an interesting point. Sure, people can fork out \$99 or whatever to walk away with Windows 98, because by the time they realize what crap it is they've paid and it's all over. But, if after they reformat their hard drive for the eighth time in a month, they're sent a bill for the next month's use, they may react a little differently. Right?

**AW:** Do you think Microsoft's business practices are predatory or merely competitive?

**SK:** Microsoft is extremely predatory. And yet also competitive. I bet if they were penalized enough, they'd be forced to make a stable product.

**ML:** Well... they are not merely competitive, but I'm not sure I'd go so far as predatory.

**CH:** Predatory? Is a Velociraptor predatory? Sorry, too much Jurassic Park with the kids... To carry the analogy on further, Microsoft's a dinosaur, and dinosaurs eventually become extinct. Apple's a new breed, and always has been.

**AW:** What are your feelings and concerns on open-source software?

**SK:** Open source is great, sure, but it doesn't benefit commercial developers one bit. Open source is great for students experimenting with code, and willing to improve upon it to make it professional-grade.

**ML:** It evolves faster but there tends to be a more variety of the same program available. By having it open to the public, everyone has a look at it and can report something wrong and how to fix it instead of simply noticing a bug. It's like having a permanent white box testing instead of black box testing, if you know what that is.

**CH:** I'm not a programmer, so I can't say for sure. With Mozilla, Netscape had a good reason to go open-source. However, should Apple release the source code to, oh, Cyberdog or something, a little bit of hell would break loose. I'll just say that there are good sides and bad sides to open sourcing, but I don't know what they are for sure.

**AW:** What do you know about Mac OS X Server (Rhapsody), and what do you think about it?

**SK:** Mac OS X Server is supposed to be good. If it can't run my programs, then I won't bother. Pah.

**ML:** I've heard some things about it but nothing concrete. It sounds like it will be a better OS than the current Mac OS by far.

**CH:** If it'll make my work easier, I'm all for it. If it's too complex, I'll stick with what I've got for as long as I can. Basically, I can't say. There are no real details. I'll see when it comes out and evaluate it at that time. It really does sound good, but for that matter so does NT 5.0, and I'm certainly not waiting on that to arrive.

**AW:** What do you know about the differences between x86 and PowerPC architecture? What are your opinions on the CPUs based on those designs?

**SK:** Yes, I understand the differences. PPC CPUs are faster and better than Intel CPUs. Intel needs to change their instruction architecture, though.

**ML:** Don't know a PowerPC so I can't compare x86 vs PowerPC. I know that one is RISC while the other is CISC, but I'm not sure which is which. x86 is the familiar architecture used in a Windows PC while the PowerPC is used in Mac OS systems.

**CH:** Can I make another dinosaur comparison? CISC is a dinosaur, RISC is not. CISC chips (Intel), well, suck, plain and simple. The interesting thing is that, as I understand it, everything will have to be rewritten when Intel finally moves to RISC, whenever that is.

**AW:** What are your beliefs about Apple and Microsoft, their future, and how they have influenced the computer industry?

**SK:** Apple will eventually become strictly a web entertainment company — they're not helping the computer industry much. As much as I hate Intel, their shared monopoly with Microsoft is yet another nuisance. I just want a machine that can emulate every single kind of binary, and it'd have to be lightning fast of course.

**ML:** Apple influenced the industry alot back in the early 80s by having a GUI and a mouse. Albeit it wasn't the first of that. Another computer was more advanced at the same time period but the brand died out for some reason... I don't know why. I think it was called something like Cammodore or Comanche or something... started with a 'c.'

Microsoft has just influenced the market greatly the last couple of years (decade) because it has been the main OS of the common computer. It expanded it's market to just about everything. Apple is influencing the market again with the iMac, among other things. It has caused many accessory vendors to make clear products as well as USB products. Due to the iMac, the USB market may finally expand. For the future... I think that Microsoft is going in for some rough times. In the OS area... there are many good OSes out there. Among them are Linux and BeOS. All that these other OSes need is the software support (drivers, games, apps, etc) from companies. Apple has been making a bit of a comeback in the market the past year and will most likely increase their standing as long as their goal isn't to dominate the market. If they simply work at certain parts of the market at a time and not the entire thing at once, they have a better chance of eating away at the now big timers.

**CH:** Apple's an innovator, Microsoft's a copier. That's pretty much true. While Apple is refining its operating system, Microsoft is trying to reinvent the wheel with each new release. Unfortunately, they've yet to figure out that wheels don't have flat sides to them.

**AW:** Any parting shots?

**SK:** Apple has a good sytem. Intel has yet to catch up. I wish I had an Apple machine so I could even emulate Intel stuff. But Apple is stupid and makes their stuff too damn expensive. Therefore Apple isn't going to last much longer. Their iMac is simply the bright flash before the flame is extinguished. Steve Jobs doesn't care, because he still has Pixar and his other startups to play with.

**CH:** I think it's odd that PC people are so scared right now. They really are. It's almost like they know their platform sucks — they can feel the tide turning. The next 12 months will be pretty darn interesting!

any thanks to our three guests for taking time out of their busy schedules to answer these questions. We wish each of them well in the future. Okay, we wish that they'd use Macs, and we wish that their PCs would blow up so long as nobody's hurt, but you know what we mean.

If there is a well-known person in the Mac community that you are dying to learn more about, please let me know. We would love to hear your suggestions and your comments about my column.

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