he Year 2000 Problem and Your Mac

1999 is under way and this in many terms 'IS' the year for computers! With all the hype it will either go off like a truckload of Chinese firecrackers come New Year 11:59pm or slip by mostly unnoticed [personally my money is on the firecrackers].

Instead of me pounding you with useless and unstructured facts I thought I'd just answer some of our readers questions I have been emailed since September last year.

"Does my Mac handle the date change when the clock strikes 12 December 1999?" - Allan Hase, UK .
Those cheerful chaps at Apple back in the 70's and 80's thought forward and well beyond 2000. All Apple's chips and date software will handle the date change without a hitch since the Mac128k. I'd ask your local electricity provider if their computers that run your network could do the same; otherwise you'll have a Mac that can handle the change but no electricity to prove it!

"I have been told my Mac is Year 2000 bug free but what about my Microsoft software?"- Ben Persman, Scotland, UK
When a software developer designs software that needs the date reference i.e. FileMaker or Excel for instance. They address this from within the MacOS itself, which is safe. BUT if a software package installs it's own date utilities you can't be sure. From what limited information the guys at Microsoft gave me their products are save. You'll have to check your own control panel and extension folders for any discrepancies with older software.

"What is the problem PC's have with the date when we enter the next millennium?"- J.Paris CA, USA
Newer MMX and other respected PC chip makers have to their knowledge addressed the problem. The older machine will need upgrading and in some cases scrapping. The problem can be found in the RTC [Real Time Clock], which happens to store the date

values. Because PC makers were in a bit of a rush to catch up with Apple they followed a cheaper and easier route by using the old IBM template which now fails to address anything past two digits for simplicity. So older PC's address the year 2001 as 0001 and believe it's 1901 again.

"Do you know what is the last date a Mac can read?" - Karen Fleatcher, Canada
Hmm can't quite remember which OS does what BUT I think it goes something like this: If you use system 6 and lower you'll only go as far as 2040AD. If you're running system 7 plus you'll get as far as 29,900AD. It mainly has to do with the MacOS storing the values of the date change as 64bit information. [If I am wrong I'm sure there are Apple tech-heads reading this and will correct me for a re-print, either way your Mac is YK2000 friendly].

For more information on the above and everything else year 2000, ask the pro's at http://www.year2000.com They can answer ALL your questions or point you in the right direction at least.

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