

elcome to the March edition of About This Particular Macintosh. In honor of our legal system and in light of the sensational Microsoft anti-trust trial, we've dubbed this our special "Tell the Truth, the Whole Truth and Nothing But the Truth" edition of ATPM.

In keeping with this month's theme we've searched the Macintosh world to bring you the best information available in any monthly Internet magazine. There is no room in our e-zine for crazy reports about fly-by-night new products, outrageous tales about back room merger meetings or secret projects known only to the purveyors of these awful stories.

For example, we do not believe that Elvis is alive or that the former writers for the Seinfeld sitcom have scripted Microsoft's legal defense. We don't believe that the Walt Disney Company is interested in acquiring Apple Computer or that the Pentium III will excite buyers any more than the Pentium II.

What we do believe is that Apple is on track for another quarter of significant gains in year-over-year net income and gross revenue. We believe new PowerBooks will be released... eventually. The World Wide Developers' Conference will see the debut of the much-rumored consumer portable. It will be available for sale in time for the new school year.

Intelligence Reports and Prognostications

Retail reports indicate that iMacs continue to sell well. The original iMac has continued to sell well to first-time buyers. How many of the original iMacs sold this quarter were shipped to distributors last quarter is unknown to our staff. However, the continuing quick pace of iMac sales bodes well for Apple's first calendar quarter retail and mail order market share.

If you are in the market for a new PowerBook now is an exceptional time to buy one. Prices have dropped dramatically. Apple is first and foremost a for-profit enterprise. Squeezing every possible sale from its current inventory of parts is a top priority. With the exception of USB and other modest improvements, indications are that the next line of PowerBooks will be similar in design to the current version. It's our understanding that all G3 Macs will be

certified to run Mac OS X. With this in mind, the current crop of PowerBooks should provide you with years of mobile computing bliss, if USB is not a factor in your purchasing decision.

We know there are 290 or so shopping days until Christmas but if you're interested in buying the best computer gaming machine on the planet start saving your pennies. The G4 desktops should be available in ample supply for the holidays. AltiVec and other hardware improvements, coupled with Mac OS X (it's easier for game companies to port software to OS X than OS 8.x) make for an exciting combination for gamers. All said, we're very impressed with Apple's product road map.

We now turn our attention to more pressing matters of Macintosh Domestic Policy...

Best Buy or No Buy?

We've heard many reports about Mac buyers having horrific shopping experiences at Best Buy and other large retailers. We're disturbed by the many tales of bad sales help and erroneous information about Macs being provided to potential buyers.

It's our view that Macs will normally sell themselves if they are presented properly to the consumer and the sales people are informed about the advantages of the platform. In fact, it shouldn't take more than a cursory introduction to the Mac to enthuse consumers and store employees. The fact that store employees resist selling Macs or don't care about their presentation says as much about the stores as it does about the employees.

Mac buyers are very loyal to our platform of choice. We tend to patronize stores that carry Mac products and provide a pleasant "Mac experience." What these retailers fail to realize is that most people buy a new computer once every two or three years. However, the same people purchase consumer items every day of every year. Losing a Mac buyer's business means the loss of hundreds if not thousands of dollars in unrelated sales each year. It's too much business for Mac users to keep quiet about.

Mac users need to be more vocal about our dissatisfaction with poor sales help and the lack of accurate information. If you've had a bad experience at Best Buy or another computer retailer, please pick up a customer response form before you leave the store. Detail your experience and why you left the store unsatisfied. Explain that you will not return to the store until you receive a written response about how the particular problem will be corrected.

If you purchased a Mac from another retailer after leaving that store, send along a copy of the purchase receipt to document that you planned to make a major purchase but that the sale was lost because of poor or uncooperative assistance. If you purchased an extended service warranty from the retailer where you bought the Mac please be sure to mention that in your letter too. Mail your complaint to the president of the company or mail it to the address on the customer response card. Money does talk. Especially if you want a retailer to listen.

Bonkers in Yonkers?

The superintendent of schools in Yonkers, New York has wisely chosen to replace aging

Wintel PCs with Macs. While the decision to purchase Macs has caused quite a stir in the city, we have only words of praise for the superintendent's forward-thinking decision. He has given the district's students a big lift in their pursuit of higher education.

We don't believe the superintendent in Yonkers is in any way bonkers. The decision to replace old Windows boxes with new Macs is evidence of the end of reverse migration in US education. Apple Computer remains the #1 computer hardware vendor in the K-12 education market. Some of the good things in life need not change.

Please Copyright, Do Not Copy Wrong

It's estimated that over 40% of the software in use today is an illegal copy of someone else's licensed software or a pirated copy manufactured by a criminal third-party. This level of software piracy reveals a shocking lack of respect for copyright and intellectual property laws. The lost revenue to the software companies from piracy is partially recouped from consumers via higher software prices.

It's uncool to give copies of your software to friends and co-workers and it's more uncool to ask others to give you the same. To stem the flow of illegal software distribution, the software industry is looking at a variety of solutions. There may come a day in the near future when software will not be useable on a computer until the serial number is verified by the manufacturer via the Internet. Only one authorization will be issued per serial number and the authorization code will not be revealed to the end user. In the end we all pay a price of one kind or another for illegal copying and software piracy.

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Inside Our Latest And Greatest Issue

Each month our talented staff provides readers with a unique look at the state of Macintosh computing. Whether you've used a Macintosh for fifteen years or fifteen minutes, each issue has something for everyone.

In this month's Personal Computing Paradigm, Michael Tsai looks at Integration Technologies such as AppleScript, XML, and Java. Several years ago Apple made many promises about OpenDoc, an early Apple effort at Integration Technology. Veteran users may remember Apple's promises about OpenDoc. Michael's column compares and contrasts today's technologies with the promises of the past.

ATPM Wants You

We'd like to know more about you and your favorite Macintosh products. If you have a humorous story, discovered a unique way to use a Mac, or simply wish to share your insights and experiences, please consider writing a Segments column for ATPM. Please e-mail <editor@atpm.com> for more information.

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