September 1999

contents

Customise Your Mac

OLM ISSUE SEVENTEEN

A call to arms my friends

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(First off sorry for being late this month but we needed to get the G4 infomation packed in to this issue, otherwise what's news if it's old news?)

The computers kids use at school largely dominates what they want at home. They see the name they want that name. If one child buys a Mac, chances are another will too. There the loop starts again.

So what, my friends and readers, does this have to do with you and why bother?

Doing something for a greater cause will always stand for more than self gain. How many of us (and don't start to reach for the mouse button to click to the next page, just because I've got all serious) have old Macs or just Macs they don't use as much anymore sitting about the house or garage. Probably about 80% of us.

So out of that large number, I've picked out of thin air, who will listen and seriously think about my next thought.

Instead of just talking about Macs to your friends, or in the local bar, why not make a difference. Have a dig around and get Mac other users to use their old clutter to the advantage of primary school kids, because primary schools are an area where there aren't many computers, and Acorn have just stopped producing computers. There's a niche and we must try to ensure Macs (and not PCs) get to fill in the gaps vacated by old Archimedes computers!

Try to get Mac users to join together and do something inspiring. Rather than singing from the same song sheet about how good Macs are to each other, why not try and get them to sing to a wider audience? They should be doing something useful with their energies (and skills)!

If we think Macs are so good why are we throwing away the old stuff, or trying to sell our clutter for a few quid? Why aren't we donating it to schools and getting a nice warm feeling that'll help Apple penetrate the education sector better? Macs in education are under pressure. We can do something about it!

So, I'm asking you to think about promoting the idea we're currently pursuing to other Mac users and other Mac user groups... Donating Macs to primary schools and following it up with tuition and technical support. This is a way to get Macs into schools and to help keep the PCs out.

Here are some of our thoughts worth acting on:

1. The world is full of idiots that only shop at PC-only emporia so never hear about Macs. Sadly some are teachers and others are school governors. Is it any wonder that they buy PCs through ignorance?

2. The world is also full of 'expert' PC users who've never used a Mac but are somehow convinced that Windoze PCs are the best for education. After all, that's what they bought (yet only half understand). Sadly some of these 'experts' are teachers and others are school governors. Worse still Local Education Authorities constantly push Mac-schools to buy PCs and will not support Macs. Is it any wonder that they will buy PCs as a consequence of misguided advice and pressure?

3. Something even as humble as a SE, Classic or LC teamed up with a StyleWriter is adequate for teaching computer literacy and for lesson preparation. It would be foolish of a school to pass over something like this. From the information Tony Spendel gave me about Key stages 1 and 2, even a Mac Plus and an ImageWriter would cope!

4. Old Macs and printers are almost worthless to us. Why are we hoarding them or wasting our time trying to sell them for a few quid? Get a buzz from watching your donated clutter turn into something really useful is our answer!

But to ensure the donations don't gather dust in the corner, or turn schools away from the Mac, there's a catch...

5. Teachers will only ask for more Macs if they become familiar with them and like them. Some teachers will need encouragement, guidance and technical support, otherwise they may turn to PCs in a vain hope that they're easier to use than a Mac.

If anyone in your area has memory, mice, keyboards, Macs, printers, cables or other items for donation that may be useful to your local school then do something about it. Start a group contact friends, make a difference, remember we are 'thinking different'.

You should be bullying other Mac users to do likewise!

As Mac users we pride ourselves on our passion, operating system, community spirit and loyalty. It's about time to use those skills to a much wider audience, believe me there are many that will listen to you. Go on give it a go, you really will help others and sleep better at night.

If you have more thoughts on this subject email me directly.

Also I'd like to say a big thank you to www.macoszone.com for voting us as the Mac site of the week recently, thanks guys.

With a little help from Frank Brook of MACus for starting me thinking on the above idea of giving Macs to schools UK and worldwide... and why not?

The Foster File

The trouble with Macs

Lee Foster

You know, the trouble with Macs is the rate new speed bumped versions come out together with various configurations – with zip, without zip but bigger drive, smaller drive but more RAM etc, etc. I bought my G3 thinking it'd be a safe bet for at least a year, but what happened, a couple of months later, not only did Apple speed bump the G3, but redesigned the whole bloody thing from the ports up.

I know, I know – Apple needs to keep up with the game. I know it needs to push technology forward, but it just ticks me off when they do it without any prior announcement. If I'd held back a month, I could have bought a b&w G3 complete with all the initial problems. My first Mac, an LC630 I bought in 1994 is another example of too late. I bought that and a month or two later out popped the Power Macs! On I chugged for the next 4 years screaming at the screen for progress bars to progress.

But anyway, life goes on. I just feel annoyed that my bank loan will run on until November 2002 for something no longer worth a fraction of what I paid for it. But again, that's life.

Steve Jobs may indeed love revealing new highly secret products at the events he attends (Expos and such) but on the whole, is this fair to the consumer? Many like me want the best money can buy because it's going to have to last for quite some time. Going out on a limb, lying to the bank about your monthly income in order to get a new computer was for me traumatic enough, but knowing a month later the Mac world would be turned completely upside down tends to rub salt in the wound, especially when they are cheaper than the machine you just bought and yet have a higher spec!

Apple is not a government, a missile manufacturer or a space agency. So why does it insist on the Area 51 style protection? Apple is a computer manufacturer, nothing more. It doesn't have to reveal everything about future products, just let the buying public know that something is on its way very soon, or not for a while. Let the consumer have the satisfaction of enjoying a new product for a least a few months.

Right, that's got that off my chest. So, until next month I bid you farewell.

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by the way

Hindsight is a wonderful thing.

Matthew Johnston

Apple's stock is up well above 64 at the moment. I can remember when it had dipped so low that you could have bought several shares for fifty quid. Now you can barely buy one.

So any people out there that bought AAPL back when it was in it's teens have now reaped quite a packet from it. If you sell.

Someone who bought four shares at $15 each would now have 240 dollars worth of shares. Quite an increase.

And you know what? Warburg Dillon Read today raised its price target and outlook on Apple's fiscal 2000 earnings, noting that a "recent meeting with Apple's management suggests that sales could be materially more robust in fiscal 2000 than we had previously forecast." It raised its estimated earnings by $0.05 and raised the target price to $75.

http://biz.yahoo.com/rf/990827/le.html

From less than $15 to $75 dollars. That's quite a turnaround. But it could be higher. A lot of companies, Microsoft included, have stock that rises so quickly and so high that they have to split each stock in two just to keep the price down. Of course this means that you have twice as much stock and therefore when the stock rises again you should see twice the gain.

The irrationality of Macphobia and Macphilia

Richard Sarson

I never cease to be amazed by the virulence of people rubbishing another computer platform. I was reminded about this by a recent correspondence in the Guardian.

On February 25 Fay Godwin grumbled, on the Guardian Online Feedback page, because she had just bought an iMac and couldn't get it to talk to her Epson Stylus 740 and zip drive and Apple technicians had been no help at all. A fortnight later, the Guardian printed over a page of readers' letters, "turning the air blue" with complaints about the same problem and other iMac connectivity problems with scanners. There was also something about a paper-clip being the only way to restart the machine. Despite an end-note on that day from Fay Godwin, saying that Apple had solved her problem, Guardian Online's letter page returned to the attack on 18 March. This time it did print some pro-iMac letters from Mac fanatics, among the hate mail.

The love-hate correspondence has rumbled on through the Summer, fueled recently by a tepid review of the iBook by Jack Schofield. What puzzled me, and some of the pro-Mac letter-writers, was why the Guardian chose to cover so many column inches with a Mac glitch, when PC glitches happen every day. There has to be a conscious or subconscious Macphobia here.

I have studied the Guardian's attitude to the Mac for many years, and I think I have an answer. The phobia stems from the early decision by Apple to charge a high price for the privilege of using an operating system so much superior to MS DOS. This offended the view of Jack Schofield, the estimable long term computer editor of the Guardian, that the price of computers must go relentlessly downward. He has never forgiven Steve Jobs and his successors for not opening up the Apple world and making it more "flexible". Jack hates Steve more than ever now for stopping the short-lived cloning phase, when he returned to Apple.

The iMac has been a problem for Jack. Its USB-only port, no floppy and integral 15" screen brand it, in his eyes as anarchetypically inflexible Jobs machine. The fancy colours are another irritation. The thing was destined to fail. But, goddammit, the iMac has sold nearly 2 million. I hate to say this, because Jack is a prince among the frogs who edit the computer pages of the other national newspapers, but I believe he printed those pages of anti iMac letters because he wanted to do something to curb the success of the iMac. Because the iMac was proving his theories about price, flexibility and openness to be wrong.

Jack has since, perhaps affected by the violence of the Mac-lovers who attacked him in Feedback, changed his tune. In his column in Computer Weekly a few weeks ago, he describes the iMac as just a piece of Internet-based consumer electronics, like the Commodore 64 and Amiga 500 were consumer electronics based on games. Apple, therefore, is no longer a computer company. The implication is that iMac and Apple will go the same way as Commodore, into oblivion. Hmm, I wonder. I see the iMac blossoming in all sorts of "flexible" directions in the future, and becoming a proper computer, not a fashion accessory.

Jack's Mac-phobia does have some basis in reason, unlike some PC-warriors. My favourite was someone on a bulletin board a year or two back, who described the Mac way of deleting files by dragging them to the Wastebasket as "childish and naff". I suppose the "grown-up" PC way of doing this at the time was to type "delete, slash, slash, something". I am sure readers will have many more choice examples of irrational PC myopia.

But, having tried to analyse Jack Schofield's Macphobias, I ought in fairness probe the Freudian depths of my own Macphilia and PCphobia, to check whether it is at all rational.

It all started in 1982. I was working an a Commodore/Apple dealer at the time, and I saw the publicity material for the Lisa, the over-priced forerunner of the Mac, and was entranced by the GUI, which seemed to me the only way over-50s like me would ever understand how to use a computer.

Then, in 1985, an American neighbour bought a Mac to write geological software. His deep reason for getting a Mac was revealing. He was raised in Poughkeepsie NY, IBM's home town. Therefore he bought an Apple rather than an IBM PC. Clearly he had had nasty experiences at school from the sons of IBM executives. I started to realise that choice of

computer was deeply embedded in childhood experience, and had nothing to do with reason.

My next encounter with the Mac was a trip to cover the 1990 Macworld Expo in San Francisco for… Jack Schofield's Guardian! It was a difficult time for Apple. System 7 was taking a long time to come out, and John Sculley, trying to turn Apple into a normal computer company, had just fired Jean-Louis Gassé, his inspirational technical director. So, my

against a PC with Windows 3.1. I had been seduced by the sheer wackiness of the Apple world. And other deeper influences were at work. I had spent my formative years selling computers against Big Blue, and I had no intention of throwing my lot in with Microsoft, the new Rulers of the Universe. I like being in a minority. It's in my blood.

My loyalty to Apple has been tested since. I would dearly like to talk to my computer, but Dragon and IBM have

me what a bag of worms Windows still is. I choose to believe them. I find that people I admire seem to like the Mac. Stephen Fry, when asked in the Independent last week "What makes you happy?" answered that "There are things I just could not do without: Apple Macintoshes, for example… I just plain adore the kitteny darlings." Just so.

And I note that the creative, beautiful and rich artists, writers, musicians and thinkers who contribute to

"I just plain adore the kitteny darlings." Stephen Fry

first impression of Apple management was tepid.

But, for me the wild-eyed enthusiasm of the Mac-faithful at the Expo opened up a New World. On one of the stands the Professor of Music at the University of California was testing software for a CD-ROM on Stravinsky's Rite of Spring. I wondered how many British Arts Professors would spend time on a software stand.

A couple of years later, I bought my first Mac. It was not a rational choice. I did no cost-benefit comparison

been slow to release their Voice software for the Mac world. I reckon the PC world is at least three years ahead in Voice recognition. I would like to do home banking, but my Bank is PC only. I edit a magazine for which 90% of the contributors send me their articles in PC format. Conversion software handles 95% of this, but I hate having problems with the remaining 5%. Here are good rational reasons for defecting to PCs.

But I remain loyal. Whenever I show signs of wavering, friends who have a Mac at home and a PC at work tell

the Guardian's "Working it Out" column every week nearly all admit to being Mac users. Just last week, Ted Grudowski , a multimedia photographer, said that he had always been a Mac aficionado. "Doing graphics work on a PC is like writing with your left hand if you are right-handed." I wonder whether Jack has ever pondered why the brightest and best in his paper prefer the Mac. They, like me, are all absolutely irrational. That"s for sure.

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It's official; Macs are better than PCs

Alan Smith

If you are a long term PC fan you may ask, "Why?" Having previously owned a PC for several years, I recently received an iMac for my 18th birthday.

I had alittle experience with Macs at high school, but these were Classics and you can imagine that I wasn't really impressed, quite frankly I thought my PC running MS-DOS and Windows for workgroups was more impressive.

'So why did choose an iMac as a present?' you may be thinking. I saw the computer in my local PC World computer superstore. The price was reduced to £749 because Apple was launching it's newer 333MHz range, after playing around with the computer for a while I decided I wanted it, the hard part was trying to convince my father, a long term PC fan, to buy it for me.

I talked the idea over with my father, but he said it was a bad idea, as I have no software for the machine and all the games I have are for my PC. I decided to look for new PC's, but any PC I looked at couldn't compare to the shape and uniqueness of the iMac, or the blue and white G3 for that matter. To cut a long story short I convinced my father to buy the computer. That was only the start of the tale!

When I got the computer home all I had to do was plug in the keyboard, the mouse and the modem cable. When the machine was turned on it took 3 minutes to setup the OS and a further 5 to connect to the Internet. My father's jaw dropped. Windows 98 takes

The most annoying thing about the Mac, however, is that Microsoft's programs seem to be more reliable than on a PC.

about 40-60 minutes to install; a full installation of the MacOS, not that I have ever needed to do one, takes about 10-15 minutes on my 266Mhz iMac.

I was impressed how much MacOS had changed since system 6, on the high school Classics. It looks more graphical with better colour schemes and not having to hold the mouse button down as you select menu items. My sister was very keen on the iMac, as she has a very unreliable PC; she liked the simplicity of installation.

After a few hours I discovered software which I didn't want on the hard disk, such as Sammy's Science House, as this was a bit young for me. Having previously owned a PC I looked for the Add/Remove or Uninstall application; there isn't one. Jaw dropping time again!

The concept of having self-contained folders was good news to me, no troublesome vxd's or dll's clogging up memory, Microsoft should pay more attention.

A magazine I bought said that the Mac should have a start menu like the PC. I preferred the uncluttered appearance of the task list in the top right corner. You wouldn't believe how messy the Windows task bar can get!

I recently decided to splash out on more memory for my Mac, upgrading its memory from 32MB to 96MB, I also

got Insignia SoftWindows98 so that I could run Microsoft Office and Visual Basic. SoftWindows98 was slow before I inserted the memory module. My father and older brother were quite annoyed as they witnessed Windows running on a Mac at comparable speed and only taking 10 minutes to install. My father finally admitted he was impressed with the machine and would recommend it to anyone.

The most annoying thing about the Mac, however, is that Microsoft's programs seem to be more reliable than on a PC. How can this be right, didn't Microsoft write Windows? However, I can forgive them partially as I can imagine that writing an operating system is very hard to do, I'm simply saying they should leave it to the professionals.

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An iBook and nothing else will do.

Matthew Johnston

The iBook sells for £1039 + VAT [$1662.4], PC laptops for £899 + VAT [$1438.4]. And PowerBooks for £1699 + VAT [$2718.4]. So what does this mean?

It might be a little premature to judge the iBook or make any meaningful comparisons but it's easy to see the differences between these cheap PC laptops that you see in Tescos/PC World or other cheap PC store and something like the iBook, which is essentially aimed right at the consumer.

iBook has 4 MB of VRAM, Rage Mobility on AGP, 10/100 BaseT ethernet, 56K modem and the guts of wireless networking built-in. It also comes in a colourful (personal aesthetics aside) and bump-resistant case made of rubberised plastics and LEXAN.

The common PC laptop sometimes sells for £899 + VAT ($1438) but what do you get for your money.

A 56K modem is pretty standard but ethernet? Anyone who was at the recent Saturday network games event we held would know that even 10BaseT is essential these days and 100BaseT is what we'd like to see more of!

Screens are usually the same size but the graphics chip is often far inferior. The RAGE Mobility is currently the most powerful laptop graphics chip (rumours still abound of a Voodoo2 chip in development). Commonly on these sub-

£1000 PCs you don't get a separate graphics chip. It all tends to be done by the main processor. Anyone who has seen the difference between software rendering and RAVE rendering in Myth II will

Wireless networking. Who needs it?

know what that means. I couldn't find many cheap PC laptops from reputable manufacturers (ones that I'd heard of) that even had TFT screens never mind that type of graphics chip.

Wireless networking. Who needs it? I didn't until I thought about it. At the moment a wireless PCMCIA card costs about £200. Apple will sell you one for iBook for about £70. A base-station for a common PC card wireless access costs about a £1000 more. Apple sells AirPort base stations for about £200.

The guts of the wireless networking is built into iBook and this undoubtedly put the price up by about a hundred pounds but like USB, who would use it if it hadn't been there. If iBook had just left

you with a PC card slot, would anyone be thinking about entire wireless networks?

iBook isn't cheap but it certainly falls into the realms of inexpensive if you want a modern laptop. For similar features and performance I couldn't find a PC laptop for less than £1,900. Sure iBook doesn't have a built-in floppy. But I thought we dealt with that argument this time last year with iMac.

http://welcome.to/nimug/

iThink differently

A closer look at the iBook

Thomas Ash

Well, the iBook has been released with all the standard fanfare. Now the fireworks are over and the dust is starting to settle, it's time to take a look at what Apple has done with the final component in their four model strategy, and what its prospects are.

The first thing you notice about the iBook is its striking iMac-like appearance. Mind you, that's no great surprise - the one thing everyone knew for certain about the iBook was that it wouldn't look conventional.

The most hotly rumoured feature of the iBook was wireless Internet access, and this appears in a form. The iBook comes with aerials built in and you can slot in an AirPort card, from Apple, which will in turn communicate at a distance of 150 feet with either another AirPort equipped iBook or a bizzare UFO-shaped AirPort base station which comes with ports for 56Kbps modem and 10/100 BaseT Ethernet for cable modems or local networks built in.

The iBook's other specifications are very similar to the iMac's: 300MHz G3 processor, 32MB RAM, etc. Indeed, Apple is touting the iBook as an "iMac to go" and that's clearly what Apple's engineers have been told to design. The iBook is aimed at homes, Mac users for whom a portable had previously been out of reach, students and academic institutions where the wireless mobile net access and rugged case design will be invaluable. These features come at a price, however: $1,599.

This price is around standard for consumer portables

(though maybe a bit on the steep side) and you might well think that with the iBook's innovative features it may even be better value than the iMac. But what do you know, there's a catch. The AirPort card costs $99. The base station costs $299. So an iBook which can remotely access the Internet costs just shy of 2 grand.

Yikes! That kind of price tag means that only wealthier consumers, who are willing to pay for the convenience, and academic institutions will get to use wireless Internet, the iBook's main selling point.

I'm not saying there aren't plenty of people who would love the iBook as it is: a cheap, more or less fully featured and good looking portable; I'm just saying wireless Internet was the kind of ground-breaking feature which could have made the iBook a mega hit, rather than just a great product for a small group of people.

Coffee and stupid people

Cai Feasby

Stress! It's a killer baby, and something that most of us have to deal with on a day-to-day basis, especially if you actively work in the computer industry.

Coffee is the last bastion of justice in this world that helps get our heads together and prepares us for the worst to come. Coffee and Pizza are to computer hacks, what the Force and Lightsabers are to a Jedi!

Recently however, my stress levels have been intensified everytime I need a coffee, because everytime I walk into the kitchen at work, there's always 3mm of coffee left in the jug! It's the last thing you need, really. When deadlines loom, people scream at you for data and demand progress reports on progress reports, a good cup of coffee can sort you out, pep you up and get you ready for some serious work!

But some bugger couldn't be bothered to change the filters and add some more water, I wouldn't mind if it was a cup full left, but it barely can fill the bottom of my mug!

What in the world are people thinking when they leave this amount of coffee in the jug, don't they know that within 20 minutes the coffee turns to sludge and spot welds itself to the jug, can't people figure out how in the world to put another jug of coffee on the machines?

Then it hits me… it's usually "us grunts" who change the coffee jugs (it seems like recently it's always been yours truly!) which leaves "them upstairs" (I'm sure you know exactly which group of individuals I mean!) to drink the coffee "we" make!

"Them upstairs" seem to think they are above making coffee, for some reason.

However, what they don't know is that they are angering the coffee gods, and as we all know, to anger the coffee gods is bad. They'll get what's coming to them in the form of Karmic Coffee Justice…

And as we all know… Karmic Coffee Justice is a terrible, terrible thing!

In the meantime it would be interesting to find out why these "gifted" individuals can't figure out a simple mechanism like a coffee machine. I mean, c'mon guys (and gals!)… it's not rocket science!

Jug. Water. Coffee. – Water in Jug. – Coffee In Machine. – Water in Machine. – Jug on hotplate. – Wait. – Pour … and drink.

Simple, easy and damn hard to forget.

Maybe I'm wrong… I've seen people on different levels of authority with a glazed look on their faces when I'm making a fresh pot of coffee!

They ask silly questions… questions that require healthy levels of sarcasm scanning before answering… but, indeed, they are serious questions. And usually not to be answered, apart from a wave of a hand and a healthy quote from Star Wars ("These are not the droids you're looking for", usually does the trick!)

Now, does this mean I'm some kind of closet genius, waiting to be discovered by the aliens from the 10th dimension, so they can whisk me away from the primitive constraints of this tiny little mudball in a dark, stinky corner of the universe?

No!

It means certain people within the organisation are thick as a plank of hardwood!

And when you look at exactly who these people are… managers and "team leaders" (I always loved the expression "team leaders". I always had this incredible visual from Aliens of that whimpy commanding officer dude was sat nice and snug in his little APC while all the real boys and girls went out and got a right royal shoeing from tall, black and nasty creatures from another planet! – quite apt, really!)

So, can you trust "them upstairs" leading you?

Can you trust these people who "have your best interests at heart", even though you may not be trusted to surf the Internet at work responsibly, or enter and leave the building without signing a little register, raising your hand and saying "yes sir!"?

It's decision time folks. Would you trust a person, potentially with your career, who couldn't perform a task as simple as changing the coffee jug?

Don't ask about who's got their finger on the big red button, 'kay?

I'm beginning to sweat over here!

It's all yours

Adam Shutes

Do you customise your Mac? I bet you do. You've pulled it out of its box, and plugged in the leads, booted up and your away. But what many people don't know is that there are different types of Mac user, all dependent on the amount of customisation they let rip on their Macs. See if you can spot your type from the list below:

1. Efficient über alles

They strongly deny any form of customisation exists on their Mac at all. No pasted icons, no sound sets, simple beep as the alert sound, hard disk called 'Macintosh HD' (ultra-efficients use just 'HD'), and no desktop picture. Indeed the only customisation you can squeeze out of them is their File Sharing User Name (First and Surname) and proportional scroll bars.

The real truth though is that they are in denial. They actually have a folder buried in the Printer Descriptions called 'Freak Power' with a CND symbol pasted on top. It contains a host of INITs and Cdevs which turn the screen into a psychedelic realm of which most people can only dream through which they live their second childhood.

This type of user is to be watched carefully, since they are on the verge of a spectacular nervous breakdown. Well, you wouldn't want to miss it would you?

2. Chuckler

A type to be wary of, since they show extreme mental instability. Generally they like a tidy desktop, with icons lined up along the right hand side of the screen, and windows popping up from the left. Varied icons are used only very rarely, and desktop pictures are also quite rare. However, they have a soft spot for a particular piece of software which makes them laugh out loud at irregular intervals and renders the Mac virtually unusable to the casual user – be it a row of continuous blinky lights on all sides of the screen, or a Trash icon which, when emptied, bellows 'I love it because it's trash!' at full volume.

Use extreme caution when dealing with chucklers, since in one moment they can turn from lollipop loving furbees to serial killers.

3. Newbies

New to the Mac and possibly new to computing. Just like a young child everything is a source of wonder, as well as a source of confusion. Customisation initially begins by removing the Finder from the System Folder, because they didn't like the little smiley face, and continues by hiding the Trash because it looks out of place. Yet there is a point in the learning curve where everything clicks into place and stopping the Mac from running is no longer the prime concern, rather getting a nice desktop picture is. Several hundred hours of Internet time later, they settle on a small picture of 'The Sunflowers' by Van Gogh. This is rescaled by the Finder so it looks ridiculous on screen, but it stays since it's their first real achievement in the digital age.

Use and abuse Newbies while you can, before they learn the real ways of the world.

4. Loony

Every office has one. Bright ties, big glasses and trousers that are just too short so you can see their odd socks. Their Macintosh is treated in the same manner. Customisation is heavy, yet selective, and generally leaning on the side of garish. Folder icons are all bright pink, green or yellow, yet are on the top level only. The hard disk is called 'Big Bad One' or 'Hairy Monster' – whatever size it actually is, it's always LARGE – and the desktop picture is some Kandinsky abstract art or a really hideous desktop pattern which makes your eyes ache and head swim.

Shoot on sight.

5. Obsessive

Similar to the Loony in some ways since they love to customise, but it is not limited to fluorescent colours, but rather an anything goes approach. Every icon on their HD has been changed, the actual desktop is scattered with a multitude of aliases, pop-up windows cover the bottom of the screen, and the menu bar is so full of icons sprouting from the right hand side of the screen that all the Finder is able to display is 'File, Edit, View and Spe...'. The desktop picture is on 'change every 5 minutes' and has a library of 500 pictures to choose from. Location Manager has at least 20 different sets which vary the alert sound and the

sound set used, as well as changing between their 5 different IP addresses because 'they can'. The Trash can not only sings, but it dances and walks across the screen as it's emptied, and if there's no activity for 30 seconds a host of different screen savers fight for control of the screen.

Invariably their Mac crashes every half an hour anyway, and on reboot (which takes a good 5 minutes) the length of icons which stretch across 3 layers of the screen sends the head of IT Support into an instant coma.

Place obsessive in the local park for the kids to stare at.

6. Cynic

Cynics are cautious creatures who have seen what can happen to an overloaded Mac and keep customisation to reasonable levels (sound set/desktop picture). They check VersionTracker every couple of days, and see a new version of some Extension they used to have on their Mac. It was quite useful wasn't it? A quick download and install later, the desktop icons begin to rotate and

move. The next day, after realising that the damned piece of software slows the G3 Mac down to a MacPlus speed, the software is junked.

Only to be downloaded again when version 2.6.1 is released.

7. You?

or

Back To The Future

It's always good to look back to see how good predictions were! So, for your delight, here are extracts from an article by David Bunnell in the US edition of Macworld, way back in December 1987.

We need to take a look at some areas of possible concern for people who use the Macintosh, as the old year draws to a close and 1988 begins. Here are some potential trouble spots in the Macintosh world that could escalate into major conflicts in the coming year.

At the recent Seybold Desktop Publishing Conference, Apple's arch-nemesis Steve Jobs predicted that Macintosh technology would peak by 1991 and be replaced by a new breed of workstation, as exemplified presumably by his own NeXT Inc.'s future product offering. "The Macintosh software architecture will reach its limits then", Jobs warned. Apple has shown that it can take the existing Macintosh technology, extend it, build on it and make it much more sophisticated. But can Apple create a whole new technology of computers – and make the right choices?

Or will Apple be stuck in the same bind that IBM is in today – where everything has to be compatible back to the old software base? Is that going to be the ultimate limitation?

It will be interesting to see what choices Apple makes vis-a-vis NeXT Inc. – or for that matter, how it stacks up against the company I perceive to be its real contender Sun Microsystems.

In fact, I think that Sun could emerge as a much bigger player than it's been in the past. Its strategy of using different processors and building its own RISC chip could turn out to be very effective. One major difference between Sun and Apple is that Sun has taken the RISC technology and has opted to share it with developers so that other companies

can build computers that are compatible with the Sun system. This too, could be an important lesson for Apple Computer. It reminds me of the early days when IBM shared its PC BIOS with other manufacturers, thereby ushering in the age of PC clones. That established the PC as the industry standard.

I asked Sun Microsystems' president, chairman and CEO, Scott McNealy, what he thought about Apple's prospects in this growing field. "I think that over time, customers could get very frustrated with the closed, proprietary Apple user-interface," McNealy observed. "A couple of things could go wrong for Apple in the long term. One is that it wouldn't be able to get the whole personal computer industry behind it. Second, the software venders might decide that they can be more successful with a non-controlled, non-proprietary interface (This doesn't mean MS Windows!).

Time will tell whether that will happen. "It has happened in just about every other area of computer technology," McNealy noted. "It's happened in networks, it's happened in CPUs, it's happened in

operating systems, it's happened in graphics. I see no reason in the world why the industry won't move to a non-proprietary look and feel in the long term. History has shown that this, not competition, is the real pitfall."

One of the obvious drawbacks

industry, Apple does not feel compelled to bring out a low-cost machine. He suggested that the Mac plus and the Mac SE were, in fact, Apple's low-cost Macs.

Well, l don't buy that. They are not low-cost Macs. And at the rate Apple is going in

I have concerns about Apple's pricing policy. Apple may be making a serious mistake by ignoring the low end of the market.

to Apple's proprietary system is that since other companies aren't able to make Mac clones, there is no low-cost Macintosh. In my opinion, this is possibly the biggest Black Hole in Apple's strategy.

At Stewart Alsop's Agenda '88 personal computer industry symposium, which was held in San Diego recently, T/Maker president Heidi Roizen asked CEO John Scully when Apple was going to come out with an affordable Macintosh. He replied that since the power users are the ones who are financing the

its pursuit of the corporate market, it can't possibly build a big enough customer base to reach its goal of becoming a $5 billion company. To do that, Apple will need to have an installed base of 5 million – not the 1.2 million or so that it now has.

I have concerns about Apple's pricing policy. Apple may be making a serious mistake by ignoring the low end of the market. By building more expensive, more complicated and more advanced Macs, it runs the risk of cutting off a lot of potential customers.

That is really a strong case for having a low-cost Mac. And given Apple's incredibly high profits, I think the time for one is now. Otherwise, Apple runs the risk of letting Tandy and the PC clone makers take over the low-end market. A lot of first-time customers will be tempted to buy a MS-DOS Tandy computer for under $1000 just to get started. And once they begin to make an investment in MS-DOS software and develop more sophistication, they will be inclined to buy more powerful MS-DOS machines. Gradually, they'll work their way up to a 386 machine – and not to a Mac II. And Apple will have missed out on this market.

Other clouds on the happy Macintosh horizon: as I say, I don't want to be a naysayer, but when 90 percent of the personal computer world is clamoring about Apple's infallibility, that's when l feel compelled to step back and offer a contrarian's view.

I believe that the Windows/386 operating environment, which was recently announced by Microsoft and Compaq, represents a truly formidable challenge to Apple – because suddenly the 386 machine has some

power capabilities the Macintosh currently lacks. As good as the Mac II is it can't really compete against machines that use Windows/386, a programming break-through that allows to take a 386 PC and divide it up into any number of 640k work-stations. (Note: In those days the "Multifinder" we use now wasn't widely used.)

Although the challenge of Windows to Apple has been almost a joke in the past, at this point it's not exactly clear who is going to have the last laugh. The threat of Windows/386 once again touches on the question of future power pathways for the Macintosh line.

Whether or not Apple has the foresight to do these things isn't clear yet. We know that Apple is working with RISC architecture in its labs, but does it have the marketing wisdom to implement that correctly in a consumer machine? That will be the do-or-die test for Apple as it moves into the post-Macintosh era that Steve Jobs foresees.

www.macworld.com

www.macworld.co.uk

Although the challenge of Windows to Apple has been almost a joke in the past, at this point it's not exactly clear who is going to have the last laugh.

The customiser is not always right

Mark Tennent

Captain Kirk used to live in our Macs. Whenever we stopped work he would take them off around the universe, boldly splitting infinitives. So what if his adventures got a bit jerky if we were printing at the same time. When Kirk first beamed onto our screens we sat watching him instead of terrestrial TV and not because it was preferable to the real thing. This was in the days when the BBC were showing programmes for the first time instead of broadcasting endless repeats.

Before Kirk arrived we'd had armies of flying toasters and a particularly noisy lawn mower that was highly effective as a neighbour-annoyer if they held another 4am kareoke session. But if there was one thing that made our friends sit gobsmacked it was the sight and sound of our Star Trek screen saver. Kirk still lives in an old IIci upstairs, along with Spock whose voice is often to be heard mind-melding with a silicone-based life-form, or Scotty telling us the engines won't stand it.

In addition to Kirk, we had a little creature living in our wastebaskets who kept reminding us how much he loved emptying the Trash. A talking moose inhabited our top menu bars and every so often his head would pop up as he related some witticism about our ineptitude. We had friends whose Macs developed head colds and sniffed and coughed their way through the day. Other Macs were the home of dinosaurs or Walt Disney creatures that would stomp around the screen at times of keyboard inactivity. Computing with Macs at the start of the decade was noisy, colourful and above all it was fun. The Windows of the time was stultifyingly boring in comparison.

Then the first PowerPC's arrived. Apple were amazingly successful in transferring from the old 68000 series of chips to the first PowerPCs. Most software written for the earlier generation of computers ran with no problems, often faster and more stable too. There were some teething problems so to make sure these were kept to a minimum we temporarily shunted Kirk and all our other Mac customisations off to a spare external hard drive. Which is where they remained, never to be installed again.

Gone were the screen savers, the dictionaries, the noises, the creatures, the eyes following our mouse movement, the menu bar enhancements. Gone too were the unexplained crashes, the slowing down of our Macs, the unexpected glitches. We learned that customising your Mac can slow you down, lose your work, freeze your Mac, so we now run the bare Bones (ha!). A good thing too, this G3, albeit with oodles of RAM and large caches, has a System needing over 40MB to run in. Add further customisations to it and that could easily jump to 60MB or more. Back in Kirk's time we didn't even have hard disks that big, let alone the memory to absorb more than a 2MB System and leave enough RAM for applications.

When we look at our computers now, have we really lost anything? They start automatically in the morning and shut themselves down at midnight. In between they can catch up on sleep if we let them. Our Apple Menus drop down with hierarchical side-shoots that allow access to the innermost reaches of any hard disk included in the menu. Favourite applications, documents and devices can appear in the open and close dialogue boxes of every application. Sherlock can catalogue any storage device you ask it to. The Control Strip has great potential for customising your Mac without needing memory-hogging, problem-inducing System Extensions.

Apple have been trying to move developers away from using System Extensions to writing faceless (invisible) applications instead. It is inevitable that many Extensions will not work under OS X so Apple needs to push even harder. Otherwise there are going to be a whole new generation of Kirks shunted to the sidelines, never to be run again.

Gone too were the unexplained crashes, the slowing down of our Macs, the unexpected glitches.

Some of the customisations you most need to operate your Mac could be among the casualties. FontReserve is a classic example of a faceless application, controlled by another little program instead of a Control Panel and dependent on Apple Events rather than changing the basic operating system. Compared with Adobe Type Manager and

Extensis' Suitcase, both using Extensions and Control Panels, FontReserve is most likely to have a seamless transition to OS X and be able to take account of all the benefits the new operating system will bring. The only other similar faceless application most Mac users will come across is Kodak's colour management Precision Startup.

Customising your Mac can be great fun but unless you are careful, adding Extensions and Control Panels can also bring problems. The question to ask yourself is how much you are prepared to put up with to get the benefits of the customisations. Once OS X is with us things will settle down again and a whole new bunch of customisations will appear. Until then we are sticking with our bare bones Macs and hoping that the few non-Apple Extensions we run will make the transition smoothly.

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Is this the end my friend?

Thomas Harvey

After a year of waiting, Apple have finally got what seems to be a full product line. All this just a matter of years since they were in a not so favourable financial position. It seems that Steve Jobs has done good, Apple is back on track.

Since he arrived, his position at Apple has never been clear. At first posing in a small consultant position, later to be seen as having a much greater influence on the direction of the company, including the outward direction of Gil Amelio, his predecessor. After Gil's departure Steve stepped in as an interim CEO, a temporary position. After all, regardless of what hits the fan, it tends to rebound towards the CEO. At the time everyone's question of the day was about this "interim", as in interim CEO, but after his 'blunt' response to the question on a television interview few people have asked it since. But now it seems to be rearing its head again.

The question has been resurrected by the release of the iBook, completing the product line up announced by Steve Jobs last year. But does this mark the point where Steve considers his job to be done? First his iBook brainchild had to be released, I couldn't have imagined him leaving before the iBook saw the light of day. Has the professional line matured

beyond the perfectionist eye of Steve Jobs? Not quite. There is the release of the G4 machines coming up, finally giving Apple a high end range, with the G3 receiving the mid-range status it was originally created for. Not until then will Apple have a fully comprehensive hardware product line up. Not to forget MacOS X's roll out, the reason for Steve's return to the company after the purchase of NeXT.

Does this mark the point where Steve considers his job to be done?

MacOS X stands up there alongside the iMac and the iBook as Steve's brainchild. The iMac and iBook, infiltrating the consumer market, the traditional domain of the old Mac. When Apple bought NeXT for their operating system, to be used in a next generation OS of their own. It seemed to be Gil's big idea to bring about

Rhapsody, an idea all but scrapped by Steve.

So far, Steve has managed to get Gil to cough up $400 million to buy his failing company, "NeXT". He even managed to get his old job at Apple back, after which he preceded to slash everything, giving the company the shock it needed and the press the story it needed, to start the abuse which contributes to why nobody wanted the helm of a deficient Apple. Employees and Employers alike were to flee, business partners were to become distant relatives and sworn enemies to become close friends. Old ideas were dropped, including the one Steve had convinced the old Apple to pay him $400 million for. The final chapter in this coup cannot possibly come before Steve's idea of a next generation OS hits the shelves. And after that, who knows, while Jobs is at the helm.

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world mac news

More news and thoughts brought to you by:
Matt Johnston NIMUG – Northern Ireland Macintosh User Group. http://welcome.to/nimug/

Apple Sues
eMachines get slap for Illegally Copying iMac Design

August 19, 1999 Apple filed a complaint against eMachines, Inc. for illegally copying the industrial design of Apple's award-winning iMac™ computer. The complaint, filed in U.S. Federal Court in San Jose, California, seeks to enjoin eMachines from distributing computers that illegally copy Apple's designs, and asks for actual and punitive damages resulting from such illegal conduct.

"There is an unlimited number of original designs that eMachines could have created for their computers, but instead they chose to copy Apple's designs," said Steve Jobs, Apple's interim CEO. "We've invested a lot of money and effort to create and market our award-winning computer designs, and we intend to protect them under the law."

Apple filed a similar lawsuit against Future Power and Daewoo on July 1, 1999.

A well needed boost
Apple Likely to Speed Bump iMacs in September

There are strong indications that an upgraded version of the iMac will debut next month. Sources at two major US-based mail order companies have confirmed to MacUser a new model is on the way and they will start taking advanced orders in late August.

Sources at New York's J&R Electronics Inc and MacWarehouse said shipments of new iMacs are scheduled for delivery in September and that new catalogues will reflect the new models by the end of August.

Sources were unable to confirm specific features of the new model, except that it retains the same design as the current model, has a faster processor and includes a slightly bigger software bundle.

This reported speed bump would make sense for the upcoming holiday buying season, as well as catching the tail end of the US education purchasing period.

Some sources indicated the main logic board of the iMac may have been significantly redesigned for this upgrade. In line with the company's policy of reducing the number of specialised components in each different model, this may mean the iMac will share many of the same features as the new iBook. If reports of a September delivery target are correct, it is likely the new iMac model will debut at either the upcoming Seybold Seminars in San Francisco or the Apple Expo 99 in Paris.

The Seybold show, targeted primarily at Web, print and prepress professionals, takes place 30 August to 3 September; the Paris Expo runs 15-19 September. Apple's interim CEO, Steve Jobs, is scheduled to appear and make keynote speeches at both events.

According to Apple sources, Jobs' keynote at Apple Expo Paris is scheduled for the morning, and there no Apple press conferences planned for the afternoon. The iMac has already gone through three revisions since its debut a little over a year ago. The original Bondi-blue iMac had a 233MHz processor running Mac OS 8.1 and was then upgraded to Mac OS 8.5 with a new graphics card and more video RAM in November 1998.

MacTuner
MacTuner Release 2.1: Live Internet Radio, TV, and Scanners from around the world at your fingertips! Trexar announces the availability of MacTunerT 2.1, a significant advance over the previous 2.0 release. MacTuner is the only Macintosh multimedia program that lets you enjoy more than 1800 worldwide live and recorded Internet radio, scanner and TV stations on your Macintosh. Using the Internet and your computer's built-in sound, you can watch and listen to news, talk, sports and information programming. A fully-functional 20-day trial version can be downloaded from Trexar's MacAlive Macintosh software store at http://www.macalive.com/. MacTuner is an exceptional value at $22.95.

WordPerfect: Free at last
WordPerfect 3.5 for the Macintosh, the long-lived word processor from Corel Corp., officially moves into the ranks of freeware late Wednesday. Ottawa-based Corel said it will release a complete version of WordPerfect as part of its WordPerfect 3.5 Enhancement Pack for Macintosh, which will be posted on the company's Web site for free download.

http://www.corel.com/products/macintosh/wpmac35/pack_freedownload.htm

A different look
Bart Van den Broeck has posted a prototype release of bKinderFinder Home. "This prototype is the first (and very small) step of a project (the bKinderFinder project) that's aimed at improving the current Mac OS Finder GUI (and eventually maybe the GUI as a whole)." Van den Broeck is looking for feedback and help.

http://www.geocities.com/ResearchTriangle/Station/2475/

Free Portfolio
Extensis (www.extensis.com) has released a free version of its graphics catalogue/database software. Called myportfolio is available to download from Extensis's new site for graphic and digital media professionals, creativepro.com. Working in conjunction with the major players in the digital arts field the site has links to all the best sites as well as all the latest news. Once signed up you can subscribe to your own personalised information service that will keep you informed on the developments in your chosen area of specialisation.

http://www.creativepro.com

3D bundle offer
Metacreations is offering three of its 3D products, Raydream 3D, Bryce 3D and Poser 3, for an amazing £99 + VAT. This offer is only available in the UK for a limited period, so contact your favourite dealer now. All of these can be upgraded to the latest versions.

http://www.metacreations.com

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The second coming

Darren Edwards

Well what was to have been the Customising your Mac issue seams to have landed right in the middle on the release date of the G4s.

Take a pen and write the following down somewhere safe: "August 31st, 1999. The day Apple computer gave its competition a major heart attack." Preferably in bold, highlighted and most importantly where you can see it.

Well I spoke a few months back about the G4 chips. Apple has had to make important and responsible decisions over the last 18 months. Drop product lines and concentrate on the two most important issues close to Mac users' hearts, the OS and the computer itself. They have done just that. Bang went FileMaker, eMate, ClarisEmailer and many more. Apple has done what millions wanted it to do. Produce great machines again and bring us an OS we could again be proud of.

The quiet and turbulent start to the 90's have been washed away with the phoenix like Steve Jobs and his new philosophy.

I was lucky enough to get an up close look at betas of this machine some months ago. I used the 500Mhz machine on that day and boy it was quick (really damn quick). As I have said before there is more to come from Apple in the next year, this time next year you can expect 550 and 650Mhz machines ready for our desktops (I know people who have seen them and are working on them, so don't worry there's more in the bag yet).

For those of us that have just bought G3s stay calm, it's never easy to have just bought a machine only months later to see it devalued and replaced. Third party vendors will catch up soon and you'll see a flush of G4 booster cards by Christmas. Not too sure you'll see any for NuBus machines, alas I think the G3 card was the last upgrade you'll get.

The G4s are shipping with Apple USB keyboard and mouse, Mac OS 8.6, Microsoft Internet Explorer, Netscape Navigator and other software to be arranged.

The Case

Apple being Apple you don't get a half cooked machine you get a full blown style statement. OK so the case is just an upgrade on the G3's but this is the next external casing they have adopted, just like the old 8500 and 9500's.

More highly polished and with new funky clear handles it really looks the part. What can only be described as gun metal gray with a splash of graphite thrown in, the results are very natural and aesthetical to the eye. Gone is the G3 style writing, we all know what they are now, so only the Apple logo stands proudly on the sides of this purring tiger.

I wish I could tell you more about the look and feel as I did the iBook but the machine I tested had the old half cut G3 case. This new grey colour scheme was as much a shock as a joy to me also.

Based on the G3 case design it therefore maintains the easy open one sided door, for quick and simple upgrades. No need to pay a small fortune for someone else to fit RAM and cards. You have no excesses as it is child's play.

Power/specs

As we all know looks don't just make a great machine…

power and performance, however, does. Although the three new Macs will be introduced in a staggered release schedule they will be received with a few more whoa's than the iMac. The 400Mhz machine is being sold as you read this. The 450Mhz will be ready in just over a month and the 500Mhz powerhouse will follow a few weeks later.

The welcomed 100MHz system bus supporting up to 800megabits per second data throughput will be met with ultimate joy from 3D, Video Media and designers all over the world over.

Just look at this spec sheet from Apple:

400Mhz processor Velocity Engine vector processing unit with 162 integrated Single Instruction Multiple Data [SIMD] instructions;
Full 128-bit internal memory data paths;
Powerful new floating-point unit supporting single-cycle, double-precision calculations;
1MB backside level 2 cache running at half the processor speed;
800-MBps data throughput

The machines can take a maximum of 1.5GB of PC100 SDRAM (YES ONE AND A HALF GIG!!)

A choice of a 10Gb, 20Gb or 27Gb internal hard drive. DVD-ROM drive with DVD-Video playback can come as standard on your configuration if you so choose.

Then there is the graphical capabilities of the machine such as the ATI RAGE 128 graphics card with 16MB of SDRAM graphics memory installed in a dedicated graphics slot with either a 66-MHz PCI slot or a 133-MHz AGP 2x slot-pin mini D-Sub VGA connector.

Not forgetting the 10/100Base-T Ethernet and optional 56k built in modem for quick home or office transfer of your hard work.

It really is a build your own system with so many great specs to choose from such as, Apple Studio Display or the new Apple Cinema Display, optical drives, zip drive, 56K modem, AirPort wireless networking, SCSI support and many more options. Without wishing to over hype the whole affair why not go to Apple's site and check the prices and choices at the store.

More to come

Steve Jobs announced the 400Mhz system to the world's media only to whip them up in a frenzy once more with the expectation of the 450 and 500Mhz Sawtooth systems will be ready for Christmas. More info on these machines next issue.

I just wish the 400Mhz was based on those expected Sawtooth machines rather than the Yosemite logic board it has to cope with for now. Don't get me wrong about Yosemite systems but Apple should have waited and released the whole G4 range with same boards. I know picky... picky, they still leave PC Wintel machines standing. Now that's great news.

These new Macs are setting benchmarks in realtime Photoshop tests that are more than double that of the crippling Intel chips.

The G4 chip is quick off the mark and Photoshop filters will zip across the screen. I used Poser and Bryce 4 on the test model and I really noticed the difference if you are upgrading from a PPC 604 and I'm glad to say G3. I was impressed with the G3s but did not notice the big difference from a fast 9500, BUT that all gets blown away when you get a day on a G4 – believe me.

I'd love to go into the ins and outs of my rendering and 20Mb Photoshop files but who cares what I do, you'll just have to try one for yourself.

Overall Apples gets a large A+ for this the next generation of Macs.

The perfect partner

Just as Cagney had Lacey and Starsky had Hutch the G4 needs a perfectly balanced partner. It comes in no other than the shape of the mouth watering Apple Cinema™ Display, with a spectacular 22-inch LCD flat panel viewing area. For quality power you need a quality screen, 1600 x 1024 pixels and 16.7 million true colors. Pin sharp vision is here, yet more proof of Apple's reinvention of itself. The stock is up, interest is high and Mac's are shifting faster than a fly in a thunderstorm. If you are thinking of buying a CRT screen DON'T. The Cinema display is one of the biggest LCD screens on the market.

Following closely on the heels of the Studio Display the Cinema is another astounding leap of design and forward thinking. You can't have the fastest Mac in the world without the display to view your imagination. True colour and no flicker and DVD never had it so good.

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All photos of the G4 courtesy of Apple

Power needs no introduction

Darren Edwards

OK. Move the furniture over to the wall, lock the front door, unplug the phone and don't worry – you've filled the fridge and the coffee is on. What's all the fuss?

You've just bought a G4… damn you!!

Oh all right that's slightly dramatic but when you get one of these you'll own one of the fastest machines made for the consumer market. Feel good, you should… if you buy one.

Well to business (technical bit coming). The PowerPC G4 is yet another great joint venture from Apple, Motorola and IBM. The new processor is deemed for a place in the hallow halls of ,not only Mac history but, computing history. Some of the many reasons could be the new Velocity Engine (you'll need to listen to this bit as you'll hear a lot about it over the next few months). The Velocity Engine processes data in bundles of 128 bits. To us it means the 32 bit addressing and the new Intel 64 bit will just not cut it. Double the power, twice as fast. The G4s will wait for you, not the other way around anymore. The math processing is multiplied and the G4 chip is well suited for high end realtime rendering, scientific applications, number crunching, vector animation and stunning games.

Let me quote Apple's own cheeky tail:

"So how does the G4 with its Velocity Engine stack up against Intel's brand-new Pentium III processor? To find out, we went right to the source: We used a set of Intel's own performance tests published on their web site.

Using six of Intel's tests, the 500MHz G4 was, on average, almost three times as fast as the 600MHz Pentium III (2.94 times, to be exact).

For example, typical Photoshop tasks run twice as fast on the Power Mac G4 as they do on the fastest Pentium III-based PCs, with specific Photoshop filters running up to four times faster. Compressing QuickTime files is also twice as fast."

So there you go. Maybe I'll get some quality speech software at last.

The bit I am trying to get my head around the new 'swing door' theory behind the new chip. This new through power makes the G4 chip the first consumer 'super computer' and that's exactly the way Apple is billing it. To be classed as a super chip there must be over one billion FPU processes per second. So you get the fastest computer on your desk to the same price you would have bought a G3 this time last year.

The competition better get a new day time job.

One last quote from Apple:

"…you've never even heard of a gigaflop before. But very soon you won't be able to live without at least one on your desk."

How true. For more info pay a visit to: www.apple.com

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With 8.6 established as the best update for your system yet, the flood of books on the OS are just appearing on the market. This month's competition is to win one of three guides.

The MAC OS 8.6 Book: The Ultimate Macintosh User's Guide by Mark R. Bell

Master the basics and hot new features of 8.6 with this packed book – work efficiently with files and folders, organize the desktop, convert files and much more. Streamline the Mac OS – juggle multiple tasks, maximize the hard drive, add power through memory management and virtual memory and speed up tasks with sample Applescripts included with the OS.

Discover the Internet – use built-in features to connect to the Internet, browse the Web, exchange email, publish Web pages and much more.

Power up a Powerbook – smooth the road to mobile computing with print queuing and battery management, learn how to easily add a modem or a printer and increase connectivity efficiency.

From the publisher and author team of the highly successful books, Mac OS 8 Book and Mac OS 8.5 Black Book, which sold over 50,000 copies.

Includes a much-asked-for troubleshooting chapter to assist beginners in getting the most out of their OS. Covers multiprocessing, the newest feature with this OS.

So what do you need to do to win this I hear you ask, simply answer this question…

What date were the G4's released?

1] 31st December 1999   2] 24th January 1984   3] 31st August 1999

Email me with your answers (darren@1984-online.com) and good luck.

Last month's answer was 1] AirPort and the winners of the CH Products' PRO THROTTLE were Michel Kyburns of Texas USA and Jeff Fords of Kent, UK. We only had one but ended up giving two away (don't ask).

ICONS

Muhammad Ali (b. 17/1/1942)

"Muhammad, you have a visitor," Lonnie says as she opens the door to the top-floor suite. "It's Davy."

Yeah, I like it. I really do like being called Davy. Going through life with a first name that's also a last name makes you feel you have something to live up to; a nickname like Davy allows me to dress down a bit.

Ali is sitting on a small white sofa near full-length windows that overlook the east side of town. He's wearing a pair of dark pinstripe slacks and a white V neck T-shirt that has a couple nickel-sized holes in it, one of which reveals whorls of thin white hair on the left side of his chest. He's munching a big muffin that looks small in his fist. He's the heaviest I've seen him. I'd guess he's at about 265. "My man," he says. "How's Loovul?"

I remind him that I don't live in Kentucky anymore. He seems not to take interest; his eyes go dull. He gets up from his seat and walks stiffly to the windows. The label of his white cotton Blue Knight briefs is sticking out of the top of his pants. He motions for me to follow.

"Look at this place," he says, whispering. "This big hotel, this town. It's dust, all dust. Steve Wynn, thinkin' he's some kind of pharaoh, buildin' this big tombstone like it'll make him immortal."

His voice is so volumeless that the words seem to be spoken not by Ali, but by a specter standing in his shadow. "Elvis, Kennedy, Martin Luther King. They all dead. It's all only dust."

We stare down at the sun-bleached town. In the middle distance, just before the edge of the Spring Mountains, a military fighter touches down at an air base. "Go up in an airplane," Ali is saying, his voice rattling with phlegm and ether. "Fly real low, we look like toys. Go high enough and it's like we don't even exist. I've been everywhere in the world, seen everything, had everything a man can have. Don't none of it mean nothin'." His tone is not cynical.

He shuffles awkwardly back to the sofa and drops heavily into his seat. "The only thing that matters is submitting to the will of God," he says. "The only things you've got is what's been given to you."

He gestures for me to join him by patting the cushion to his left. I take a seat. We touch at knees and shoulders. Lonnie is in a chair across from us and beside the TV.

"How you been?" Ali asks.

"I'm okay," I say, "but my dad died a few months ago."

I realize when I say this that I need to talk with Ali and Lonnie about Daddy. For the life of me, I don't know why.

The Champ jerks his head up, surprised.

"My father just died, too," Lonnie says.

Ali looks at me so empathetically you'd almost think we shared the same parentage. "How old was he?" he asks.

"Only fifty-nine. And I thought he was healthy. I thought I'd have lots of time with him. He was both my father and my mother. It's the hardest thing I've ever been through."

"How'd he pass?" Lonnie asks.

"A heart attack?" says Ali.

I nod yes.

"My father, too," Lonnie says in a tone not dissimilar to Daddy's near-voice. And with a note of connection to my loss.

"I'm sorry, Lonnie," I say, nodding.

Ali pats me on the hand. "I know you miss him. When I first won the title, people used to call me up, messin' with me, tell me my father'd been killed. Used to scare me so bad. Life is so, so short. Bible says it's like a vapor."

continued

Ali picks up the TV's remote control from the sofa's armrest and tours the channels.

Lonnie gets up, her eyes tearing a little. "You two visit while I change clothes," she says and leaves the room.

Ali stops on a music network that's playing an old Michael Jackson hit. He turns off the sound; we watch.

"Gandhi," he says, as the Indian spiritualist's gray ghostlike image flashes onto the screen. "Mother Teresa," a few seconds later. He obviously feels a kinship with the faces and their deeds, and wants me to recognize the connection. He intones the names as if they were incantatory.

When the song is over, he switches to a segment of a workout show. Young chesty women stylishly sweat in blue and pink and yellow Easter-egg-color leotards. "They call this exercising" Ali says. "This is what it's really about." He places his left hand near his lap and simulates the common male masturbatory technique. "It's hard not to be tempted by this, unless you got somethin' like I got, somethin' holy.

"Haven't messed around with women in almost five years," he says, low and secretive. "The last time, a brother in Saudi Arabia caught me with a woman. Asked, 'Would you do that in front of your mother?' I told him, 'No.' He pointed at me and said, 'You're doin' it in front of Allah.' Maaann, that's heavy. Powerful. He scared me. That's when I really began to get serious about livin' for God."

The Champ uses his right arm to reach across the chrome and glass coffee table. "Want to show you something," he says. When I last saw Ali, his left hand trembled. The right one did not; now it does.

He grabs his briefcase, which lies on the floor in front of us. He places it on his knees and opens it slowly, reverentially, as if revealing the contents of the Ark of the Covenant. When I see inside, I'm reminded of Gandhi's possessions at his time of death eyeglasses, a watch, two pairs of sandals, an eating bowl, a Bhagavad-Gita. Ali's briefcase contains thick stacks of yellow, green, and blue Muslim pamphlets, his own eyeglasses, a photo of himself with "Sugar" Ray Robinson on the left and Joe Louis on the right, a Koran, a Bible. He removes a copy of

a painting of Jesus, which he holds up, widening his eyes like he used to when challenging an opponent or the press.

"I carry this everywhere I go. It reminds me just how famous I am. If you had your whole life handed back to you right now, and your one goal, from the moment you were born, was to become famous as this man, how would you do it? If somebody told you some nigger boxer from Loovul, Kentucky, would become famous as Jesus Christ, you'd tell 'em, 'You crazy.' But I did it."

I don't expect to run into Jesus at a gas station or on a street corner, but this big-as-Christ talk makes me uncomfortable for Ali. "Did you?" I ask. "Or was it done for you?"

He grins and laughs like my three-year-old caught with a stick of candy he has been asked not to eat. "You got me there," he says. And then he drapes a bear's arm about my shoulders. "I still get arrogant sometimes. You really straightened me out."

Ali growls his growl and bites his lip. Then, with his thumb and index finger, he grabs my right leg just above the knee and sort of pinches it in a rolling, tickling kind of way. Giggling, I knock his hand to the side. This is the first time I think I've laughed since Daddy died. Leave it to Ali to help me feel better. I say: "Did I ever tell you I lost my virginity during the third Norton fight?"

"You serious?"

Yeah, man. I was at my father's house with my girlfriend. Nobody was home. We're in my bedroom and we've been there for a while. All of a sudden, Daddy opens the back door. We hadn't heard the car drive up. Lyn jumps out of bed and runs bareass for the bathroom, clothes in hand. I flip on the TV, hop into a pair of gym shorts, and try to act like I'm absorbed in the fight. Man, I love you, you know I do, but I'll tell you the truth, I couldn't even see what was going on. You didn't matter at all to me right then. Daddy comes into the room and I'm trying so hard to be calm that I'm shaking everywhere, shaking all over, shaking like I've been

"**If somebody told you some nigger boxer would become famous as Jesus Christ, you'd tell 'em, 'You crazy.' But I did it.**"
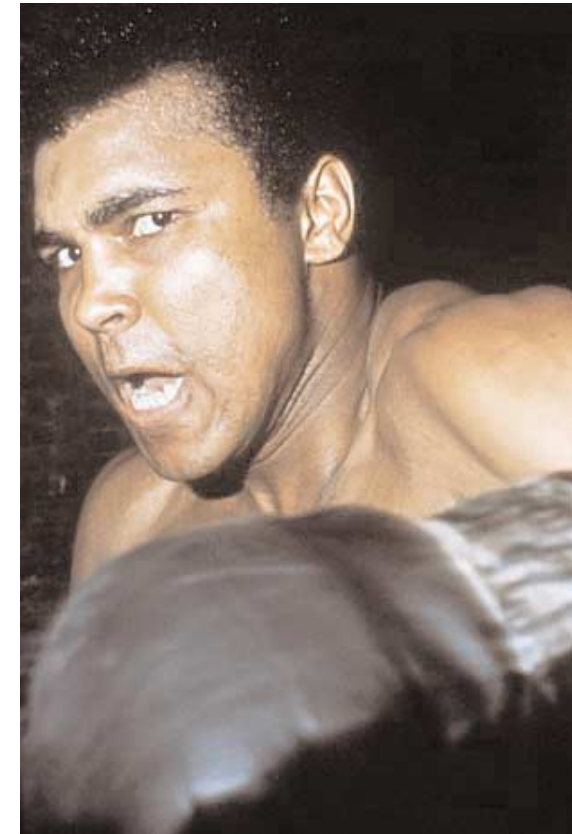
pureed in a blender. I know he knew exactly what was going on, but he never said a thing."

Ali laughs a long time, stamping his feet on the floor. As he wipes tears from his eyes, he says, "Your father was a good man."

He returns his briefcase to the floor, stands, moves for the bathroom, and when he gets there, slowly takes a starched white shirt from its hanger on the door and slips it on, then struggles a little with the buttons. Without tucking the shirt in his pants, he pulls a royal-red tie over his head that has been preknotted, I'm sure, by Lonnie. He looks at me through the mirror and nods slightly, which I take to mean he'd like my help. In this moment, the most talented athlete of the twentieth century looks so eggshell fragile that I find my hands shaking a little. I might have imagined performing this service for my dad, had he lived to his seventies. But never for Muhammad Ali.

Ali is so large that I have to stand on my toes to reach over and across the huge expanse of his back to slip the tie under his collar. He tucks his shirt in his slacks without unsnapping or unzipping, then tugs on his jacket. Without being asked, I pick a few motes of white lint from the jacket's dark surface and help him straighten his tie. He grabs cookies and an apple from the glass dining table and points to his briefcase. I pick it up. We head for the door.

I shout down the hall, saying good-bye to Lonnie. "It's good to see you, Davy," she yells.

In the elevator, Ali leans to me and whispers, "All these people gamblin'. It's important to come to people where they are. Watch how people react."

When we reach the ground floor, he crams cookies in his jacket pocket, pushing the flap halfway down inside, then places the apple core in an ashtray, takes his briefcase from my hand, and, as the elevator door opens, clucks his tongue across the roof of his mouth. The sound is repeated from about twenty feet away. Within a few seconds, a face appears in the doorway. It's Howard Bingham, Ali's personal photographer and best friend for nearly thirty years. Bingham looks basically the way I recall from the seventies: angular, balding, bearded, and a little hang jawed like the old MGM cartoon character

Droopy. No one – not wives, not children, not even his mother – has been closer to Ali than Bingham.

I introduce myself to Bingham and we walk from the elevator, Ali in the lead; Bingham follows me. We don't get more than fifteen steps before a crowd of probably a hundred people surrounds us, wanting to touch Ali or shake his hand. Cameras appear from women's purses, as do pens and scraps of paper. "Do the shuffle, Champ," an older man shouts.

Ali hands me his briefcase, gets up on his toes, and dances to his left. He tosses a few slow jabs at several people. The crowd, ever growing, erupts into laughter and applause. A space clears behind him and he uses it, knows it's there without turning to look. He walks backward, moving toward the far corner of the wide hallway, waving his audience forward, then turns to take his briefcase from me, pulling out a thick blue stack of Muslim tracts. Bingham reappears with a metal folding chair. Ali sits, places the briefcase on his lap, and produces an inexpensive pen from the pocket of his jacket.

Two minutes later, there's every bit of five hundred people in the hallway. A Mirage security guard uses his walkie-talkie to call for reinforcements and directs people who want autographs into a line.

I stand at Ali's right shoulder, against the wall. Bingham is to my left. We're in those positions for nearly an hour before I ask Bingham, "Is it always like this?"
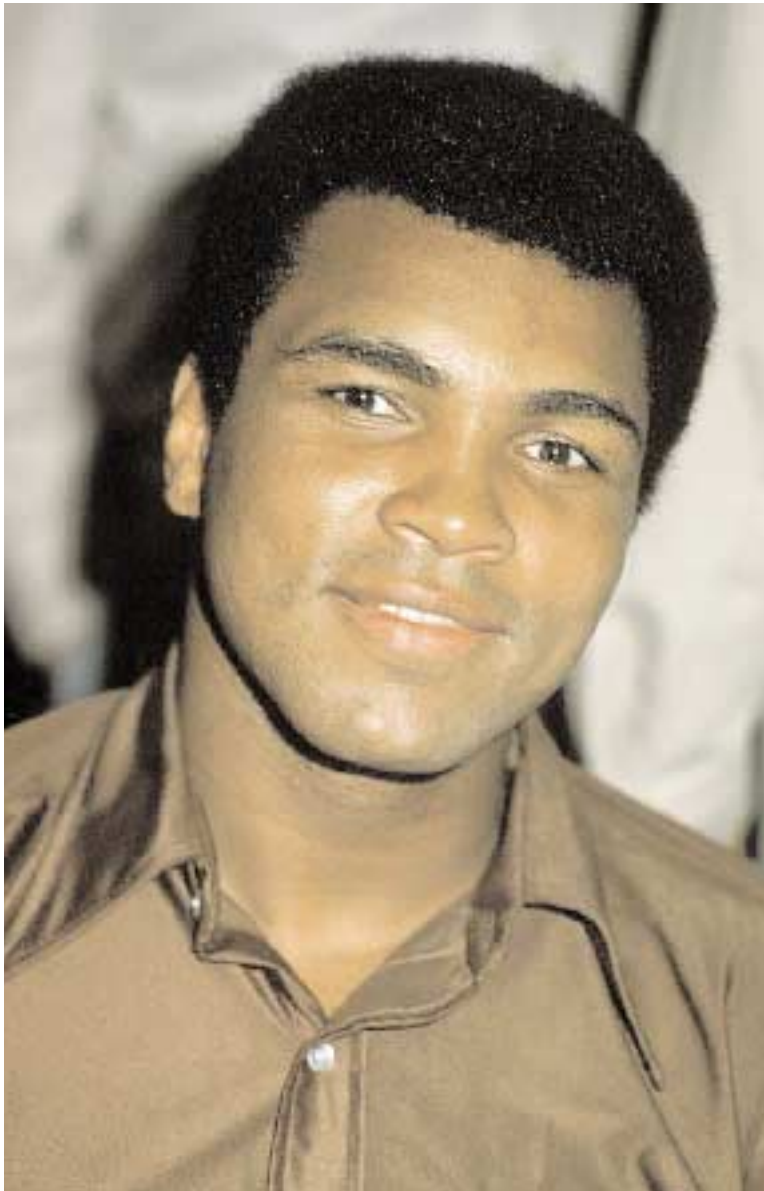
"Always," he says. "Everywhere in the world. Last year, over two hundred thousand came to see him in Jakarta."

"How long will he do this?" I want to know, meaning today.

Ali gives every person something personal.

"I'm more human now. It's the God in people that connects them to me."

"Until he gets tired. For hours. All day."

Ali gives every person something personal. He talks to almost no one, yet most everyone seems to understand what he means. He gestures with his hands, fingers, head, eyes. He signs each person's first name on the Muslim literature and hugs and is hugged by everybody from three-year-old tykes to their eighty-year plus great-grandmamas. Whenever kids are near, he goes out of his way to pick them up and snuggle and kiss them, sometimes more tenderly than one could imagine their own parents doing.

Women and men in line openly weep upon seeing Ali. Many recount stories about his impact on their lives. Some tell of having met him years before. He often pretends to remember. "You was wearin' a brown suit," he jokes with men. "You was in a blue dress," he tells women.

A huge, rough, Italian-looking man in his mid-forties takes Ali's hand, kisses it, then refuses an autograph. "I don't want anything from you, Champ," he says. His mud-brown eyes are red and swollen. "We've taken too much already."

I feel a need to touch Ali's shoulder. When I do, I'm sure he notices, but he doesn't react.

I stay with Ali a couple hours, but eventually have to leave to do a radio interview that my editor scheduled for me. Several times during the day, I pass Ali on the way to or from my room. Until late at night, he's signing and hugging and kissing and posing for photographs. There's always a line waiting for him that stretches around the corner and out of sight.

I have breakfast with Ali and Lonnie the next morning. He's wearing the same suit and tie. This isn't a sign of financial need or that he doesn't remember to change clothes. Even when he was fighting and earning tens of millions of dollars, he didn't own more than five suits. He seldom wears jewelry and his watch is a Timex.

I ask why, unlike the old days, everyone, everywhere, seems to love him. "Because I'm baadd," he clowns, then holds up his shaking left hand, spreads its fingers, and says, "It's because of this. I'm more human now. It's the God in people that connects them to me."

history of HyperCard

[the legend of a killer app]

The dream that was.

Edited by Darren Edwards

Bill Atkinson is a legend in the computer business as the author of MacPaint, the graphics program which came bundled with early versions of the Apple Macintosh.

Although technically he might be described as a programmer, many people would describe him as a software artist, or at the very least an artist whose medium just happens to be software. Indeed, this is sometimes how he describes himself.

There is another respect in which the artistic stereotype fits Atkinson. Whereas many of his contemporaries talk about the market for their products, Atkinson talks about the audience for his. The most important, most exhilarating thing about MacPaint from his point of view was that it was (initially) bundled (i.e. given away free) with every Macintosh sold. And, like many artists, he is acutely sensitive about getting proper recognition for his work.

One of the reasons he left academic life in 1978, for example, was because he felt that the publications emanating from the project on which he worked had not given him due credit for his contributions. Later, when he worked on the Lisa (the precursor to the Macintosh), Apple management chose to highlight the role of the Lisa project managers rather than that of the hackers who created its software. Atkinson was so disgusted that he defected, and joined the small team of programmers who were designing the Macintosh.

After the launch of the Mac and the triumph of MacPaint, Atkinson was made an Apple Fellow by the company – a post which effectively paid him to sit around thinking. He used his new-found freedom to embark on the most ambitious project of his life, and in so doing joined the elite club of which Bush, Licklider, Engelbart and Nelson were founder members – an association of those trying to realise the dream of harnessing computing power to improve the human condition.

Atkinson's name for his dream was 'Magic Slate'. In part, it was derived from Alan Kay's earlier (1975) concept of what he had christened the 'Dynabook' – a computer so useful and easy to use that its owner could not bear to be parted from it. It would be no bigger than an A4 (paper-based) notebook, have a high-resolution screen, accept handwritten input and be so cheap that a user could afford to lose one without being becoming unduly distressed.

Magic Slate was what Atkinson thought Apple should do next and he was desperately upset to discover that the company's new management under John Sculley – a former Pepsi-Cola executive – was no longer interested in the realisation of dreams. Atkinson withdrew to his house in a deep depression and stayed there for several months, unable to work, too dejected even to turn on his computer. Eventually he came out of the depression, gave up on Magic Slate, but translated some of the ideas behind it into software which could be delivered on a real machine – the Mac. He exchanged the page metaphor of Magic Slate for that of the oldest information-handling tool of all – the 3x5-inch index card found in every library in the world. Atkinson realised that if you added computing power to these cards they could be transformed into something quite magical.

Given the right software, a user could instantly install a link from one card to another. A series of such links could set up an information 'trail' of the kind envisaged by Vannevar Bush. Thus was born the concept which eventually became HyperCard.

According to Atkinson, the ideas behind HyperCard sprang from several sources. One was a Rolodex program he had written some years earlier to keep track of his own references. Another was some work he had done on compression algorithms, while a third source was his experiments with more efficient searching algorithms.

> Atkinson realised that if you added computing power to these [3x5" index] cards they could be transformed into something quite magical.

The core of HyperCard was the card. Each card could have user-installed 'hot spots' which, if clicked upon, would instantly cause a jump to another card (like links on a web page). In one of the demonstration stacks, for example, clicking on the image of a hat took one to a set of cards about hats.

A collection of linked cards was called a 'stack'. The key card in the stack was called the 'Home' card. And while links which involved just simple branching could be set up by pointing and clicking, discussions with an Apple colleague, Dan Winkler, led to the idea of integrating user-definable functions and building in a programming language (called HyperTalk) which would make HyperCard a whole software environment enabling the construction of quite complex programs.

With Alan Kay's help, Atkinson sold the idea of HyperCard to John Sculley. A key factor in persuading Atkinson to overcome his suspicion of Apple's management following the rejection of Magic Slate seems to have been Sculley's agreement to bundle HyperCard with every Mac – just as had been done with MacPaint in the early days. Using his home as a programming lab, Atkinson and a team of several hackers created a robust implementation of HyperCard which Sculley himself launched at the August 1987 Macworld Expo.

Atkinson himself saw HyperCard as a logical extension of the Macintosh mission – something which would give power to users that had previously belonged only to professional programmers. The Macintosh dream was about putting the power of the personal computer into an individual person's hands without requiring them to become computer experts. But, paradoxically, in order to do that its designers had created a relatively closed machine in both hardware and software terms compared to the IBM PC. In order to write applications for the Macintosh, for example, programmers had to be intimately familiar with the Toolkit which Atkinson and his colleagues had crafted and embedded in a chip inside the machine.

To make the most of Macintosh's features you had to spend months studying the Inside Macintosh handbook to understand how to use all the Toolkit features, the graphics, menus, etc. The result, thought Atkinson, was the dilution of the Macintosh dream because the individuals couldn't get all the power of the personal computer. They could only use 'canned pieces of power'. He saw HyperCard as a sort of software Meccano set which would enable non-programmers to create their own customised applications. "It takes the creation of software", he said "down to the level of (copying) MacPaint images that you like, then pasting buttons on top of them to make them do what you want. HyperCard puts this power into the hands of any Macintosh user."

HyperCard was a truly fresh idea: it was completely original, and it seemed to offer a new way of using computers for important and difficult tasks. It was – and is – a wonderful piece of software which gives people who know nothing about programming the 'freedom to associate' – to organise information in ways which match or suit their own cognitive styles. It is also a terrific 'erector set' (to use Atkinson's phrase) for mocking up ideas about interfaces or presentations or databases. But although it has had a great impact on those of us who think about such things, it has not had the seismic impact its creator expected. "It's the largest thing I've attempted", he once said, "and I think it's the most significant in terms of what it will do to the computing community as a whole… HyperCard is going to open up the whole meaning of what personal computers can be."

The sad truth is that it didn't – and for one very simple reason. It was rooted in the notion that the computer was a standalone device, complete in itself.

I have found you some URLs to help you get more connected with Hypercard.

http://www.glasscat.com/hypercard/

http://members.aol.com/hcheaven/links/links.html

http://yeamob.pci.chemie.uni-tuebingen.de/HyperCGI.html

http://www.complang.tuwien.ac.at/alex/Programs/stacks.html

http://edvista.com/claire/hypercard/index.html

http://www.apple.com/hypercard/

http://www.chepd.mq.edu.au/boomerang/TeachHC/

HyperCard was a truly fresh idea: it was completely original, and it seemed to offer a new way of using computers for important and difficult tasks

F/A-18 Korea

Brian Collins

I woke up that morning expecting the worst and hoping for the best. I gave the Hornet the usual once, then twice over before climbing into the cockpit for the mission before me. Strapped in I taxied over to the foredeck catapult on the Enterprise and took off.

I came in over the coast at 1500 feet and started toward the target area. Fifteen miles out I ran into some hotshot SAM operator who almost got the best of me if it weren't for the pair of HARMs that I had slung under my wings. Five miles out from the target railyard I armed my Mk-83 high-explosive bombs and made dead sure that I stayed above 5000 feet or the words Swiss-Cheese come to mind.

Coming up on the target I lined up the crosshair in my HUD over the most important looking building in the area and let all six of my Mk-83s do the talking for me as I punched the afterburner and headed back to the Enterprise.

Four miles out from the coast and many more back to the ship I pick up a flight of three MiG-21's coming right at me when one of them shoots his pathetic Russian excuse for a missile right at me. He was the first to go via one of the AIM-120 AAMRAMs strapped to my fuselage.

The other two and I make a screaming Mach 1.3 pass on each other. However when I looked back one of them was smoking heavily due to the 50 odd 20mm cannon shells I pumped into him via my M61 Vulcan cannon.

With only one MiG left I turn my active radar off and arm the two wingtip AIM-9 heat seeking Sidewinders. After some high G-force turns I was able to get the best of the 35 year old Russian shitbox and let my Sidewinder fly right up his tailpipe.

Three miles out from the Enterprise I get the plane ready for the landing. Finally after 45 minutes of flying I land the Hornet on the deck of the Enterprise and most other Navy and Marine pilots will agree that it's akin to having sex

during a car wreck. There is just a few catches, first I'm not in the Navy or Marine Corps, second I'm not a pilot, third the closest I've come to Korea is my local Hundai/Isuzu car dealer.

This is F/A-18 Korea by Graphic Simulations Corp. (www.graphsim.com) Now I do have to acknowledge the fact that, yes F/A-18 Korea and it's predecessor F/A-18 Hornet 3.0 have been out for some time now but I want to have the last word on what a cool simulation this is. Now while I am not and never will regrettably be a Naval aviator due to a knee injury, I do know a more than a few former U.S. Navy and Marine Corps pilots who will tell you that this is as close to actually flying the jet itself.

In Korea there are a couple ways to play. The first is the campaign where you pick a mission one after another to advance in rank. The second is the instant action where you just pick one of the premade GraphSim missions

and go hog wild. Third is mulitiplayer, but this is sorely lacking on the Macintosh because the only way you can play is through AppleTalk while the PC version supports TCP/IP, IPX, and Modem play. And, yes there is a way to play Korea over the internet via a utility that will send AppleTalk signals over the internet, it is mind numbing how slow this is.

Other features include the mission editor that is very slick. Unlike other game makers like Bungie who just ship their editors as stand alone applications, GraphSim has incorporated theirs into the game. This is very powerful and very easy to use once you've read the few pages in the manual on it otherwise it seems more complicated that it really is. The editor will let you control all aspects of the mission from time of day, and weather, to having the B-52 wait for the Blackhawk come back from the enemy airbase before it heads off to nuke it.

Korea was also one of, if not the first game to support 3Dfx's Glide (VooDoo/Voodoo2) on the Macintosh. This adds a whole new element to the game, it brings a level of detail that I think is now necessary in any flight simulator. If you are like me you've played for years and years with the same shaded polygon set-up. And, if your like me you've flown right into the deck because you were higher than you thought you actually were. Or, you were on the wrong end of a SAM launch because you couldn't see the missile contrail until it was too late. With the 3Dfx support in Korea all of this is a thing of the past with the advanced texturing and improved frame rates (over 45fps with a 3Dfx V2 1000 at 800x600 resolution versus 29 software rendering) it's a real boon to anyone who enjoys gaming.

Another thing that I liked about Korea is its very in-depth manual written by Major David Pooch Putze USMCR. This manual is 230 pages long and covers everything someone would want to know in a well written easy to understand manner. My thumbs up to Major Putze.

To wrap up here I have to give F/A-18 Korea my approval for its accuracy, Glide support, and Mission Editor. It all combines to create one outstanding game that is very hard to beat. Plus now GraphSim is selling a package deal which has both F/A-18 Korea and F/A-18 3.0 that goes for $US29.95.

collins1707@uswest.net
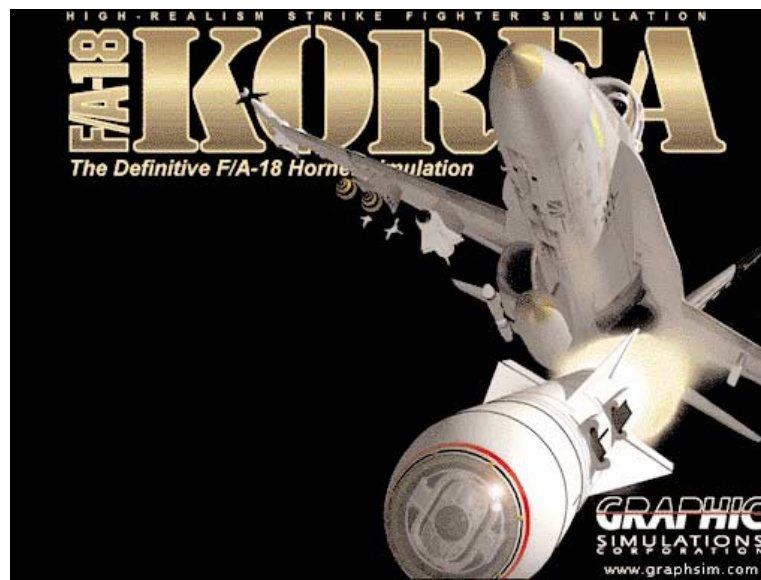
Age of Empires

Thomas Ash

It's hard to pigeonhole Age of Empires, but I'll give it a go: it combines Civilization II's extraordinary depth and replayability with Command & Conquer's adrenalin drenched excitement.

As I said, it's hard to describe such a mongrel game. That came out sounding like something you'd read on a game's blurb – too good to be true. I'll give it another go: Age of Empires is somewhere halfway between Civilization II and Command & Conquer. It doesn't quite have the depth of the former, neither does it approach the adrenalin levels induced by the latter. What it does achieve is a terrific balance between the two. That sounds more like it...

Age Of Empires is a beautifully made game. The graphics are delicately drawn and smoothly animated. The music and sounds add greatly to the atmosphere of the game. The four built in campaigns are wonderfully balanced: challenging but not impossible. But the most important thing about any game is gameplay, and Age of Empires has it by the chariot load. The civilization building is
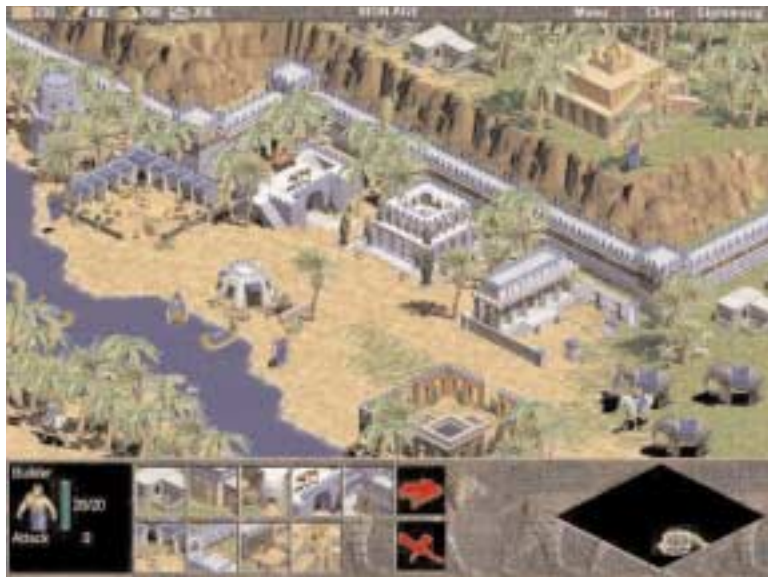
absorbing – there are nearly 40 units and 20 buildings as well as many different buildings. There's even a certain strange satisfaction to hunting out gazelle, elephants, lions or alligators (some of which even fight back.)

But Age of Empires also shines in combat. Your armies need to be well balanced, with ballasts to take out towers, archers to snipe at troops from behind the vital infantry.

You have to seek out the best route, and try and find elevated positions where you can attack the troops below far more effectively.

Age of Empires comes with a fantastic scenario editor, which lets you specify anything you want, will quickly generate excellent random maps. You can set up to twelve unique victory conditions for each player – from standard conquest to possession of a certain object to killing a certain hero to retrieving an ancient artifact, to building a wonder of the world in a certain place. You can make custom AIs and city plans for your computer opponents. It's a testament to a power of this scenario editor that the built-in campaigns were made with it.

Rating: 9 out of 10

www.ensemblestudios.com

Half-Life

Jackson Knopfler

Half-life has been voted game of the year by most computer magazines and now Mac users are about to get what PC owners have been playing and loving for quite a while, Half-life.

Half-Life is a 3D action shooter from the 1st person perspective where you play Gordon Freeman. The single player scenario is the most interactive I have played. It really makes you feel like you are in there with its advanced graphics and superior artificial intelligence. What makes it really good is its untiring story. As you play through the game it doesn't become in the least bit tedious when you venture through the games world. The landscape is also pretty stunning and also varies throughout the game. There are a wide variety of enemies and weapons ranging from the Pistol to Aliens that you throw at your enemies . In playing it you have to think a lot more than you would in other titles such as Quake and Doom.

games pad

The Gravis Game Pad Pro

Chris Band chris.band@virgin.net

If you are looking for a device to compliment your iMac or new G3 then the Gravis Game Pad Pro USB could be for you, read on and find out.

Let's face it, the iMacs tiny keyboard and mouse are pretty much useless when it comes to gaming, so that's when I decided I would get a game pad. I looked through various catalogs seeing what was on offer and when I saw the Game Pad Pro I instantly loved it. It was simple, cheap and colourful, not to mention the fact that it looked just like a PlayStation controller so would be great to use with emulator programs such as Connectix Virtual Game Station or SNES9X. I had to order it right away. One sunny afternoon it turned up at my door, I immediately opened it and looked at it. It looked better than the picture! I installed it which was very easy and after a quick restart I was playing within minutes. First impressions – I loved it, it handled brilliantly and I could see my game improving already. Great!

Getting a multi-player game going is very easy, assuming you have Internet access, all you need is the latest patch for Half-life and a game over the Internet is only a few mouse clicks away. There are lots of custom game types you can play too, like Counterstrike and the hugely popular Team Fortress Classic where you and your team have to work with objectives rather then just shooting at anyone you see, you also get to use different player classes like the Spy or the Pyro, different classes are often needed to support other team members. Some of the Team Fortress Classic scenarios are simply brilliant and new maps are coming out all the time! it will take a long time for you to get bored with this one.

Unfortunately on the World Opponent Network, (what you would normally use to play Half-Life multi-player), there is no ranking system, so if you do really well one game it won't be recorded and you won't get any points for the game. Equally if you do badly in a game then I guess it wouldn't matter so much. Half-life is the most intelligent game I have played of its gender and I think most people who buy this would like it so much that they will play it all the way to the end, I know I will!

Visually, Half-Life is stunning even without a 3dfx card and you really have to play it to believe its brilliance. This is an excellent game, multi-player and single player! For more details visit:
http://www.sierrastudios.com/games/half-life/mac/

The Gravis Game Pad Pro is a USB game controller that takes advantage of Apple's Input Sprocket Technology. This means that you can create customised sets of game pad configurations for any game that supports Apple's Input Sprockets. I found that most of the games I tried supported them but for games that don't however I found a neat little program called USB overdrive which tricks the computer into thinking that it is using the keyboard but it is actually using the input device, this is brilliant as it means that you can use ANY joystick or game pad with any Mac game. You can download this shareware program at www.usboverdrive.com

Altogether, there are 10 different buttons on the Gravis Game Pad Pro and 14 separate actions that can be controlled. Under your left thumb you will find a circular directional pad which can additionally accept a small plastic "joystick" fixture included in the package. The middle of the device is home to the essential 'select' and 'start' buttons, and there are 4 small circular buttons on the right side of the game pad. On the top of the Game Pad Pro, there are four more buttons which are easily operated using the index fingers of each hand. The shape of the Game Pad Pro makes it extremely comfortable to hold for long periods of time, as the oblong protrusions on the device fit nicely into the palm of a gamer's hands although personally I think

they could be a bit small for people with very large hands.

In order to configure each of the game pad's buttons to work with your favourite games, you will need to launch the game and configure the Game Pad Pro within the preferences dialogs of each of the games separately. You can set up and save multiple configurations for each game that works with the game pad which is very useful if you share your computer with other people as you can each create your own set.

I evaluated the Gravis Game Pad Pro using SNES9X a Super Nintendo emulator, Future Cop LAPD, Nascar racing and F/A-18 Hornet Korea. Future Cop and SNES9X supported input sprockets but Nascar Racing and F/A-18 Korea did not so I used USB overdrive with them. All the games run flawlessly as expected and I could never see myself going back to gaming with the keyboard and mouse. But the best thing of all was that not only did it feel better to play with the game pad, it also made my game better, I could see my scores improving within minutes of pluging it in!

I noticed similar improvements in just about every game I tried. Much as I tried, I could not find anything wrong with the game pad which just shows how good it really is. I am a very happy customer and am sure you will be too if you buy this game pad, it is a present any USB equipped Macintosh would love to have.

http://www.gravis.com

TextureMagic PRO 1.1

David Knopfler

Vendor: ARTIS Software http://www.artissoftware.com/texturemagic/

*If design is your work, then Photoshop is likely to be your most used application. Texture Magic Pro is both a time saving addition to your armory of useful Photoshop add ons or a stand alone application, as preferred.*

It is, as the title suggests, an instant provider of copyright free, background textures for montage or other use, packaged with, it says, 250 sample textures, though I only found 230, which are broken down into four distinct categories – artificial textures, natural textures from photos, natural textures from scratch and scripted textures. Several are immediately "ooh! Useful!!", some are quite simply dull and one or two curiously look borrowed from other applications. The samples can however be edited and although the bitmap editor itself lacks somewhat the sophistication of Phototexture, (part of Phototools 3.0 by Extensis) it nevertheless does allow you to play around with the basic images to some degree. You can also, if preferred, create samples from scratch using the texture bitmap editor.

My first impression is that if you already own Phototools and several other plugins like the excellent Greg's Factory Output Filters vol 1 and 2 (freeware/ shareware), Unplugged Colors (shareware), Xenofex (commercial) then this on top of those might not be necessary. If, however, you just bought Photoshop and are looking for your first low cost, additional commercial Plug-in, this little application from Artis software could be ideal.

The textures themselves can be stored on the Hard disk or retained on the CD, if memory is a problem. As with all Plug-ins you'll also need to allow a little extra RAM to the main Photoshop application to accommodate it. It's extremely simple to install – so again five minutes tops – and you'll be browsing, using the BrowserMagic application to look through the various images.
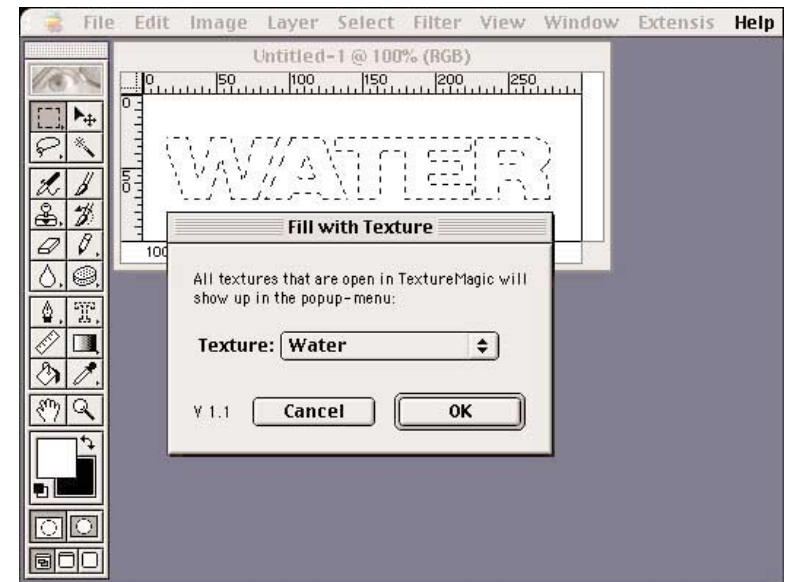
Using the TextureMagic Pro filter in Photoshop and the resulting image.

As you can download and try it free from http://www.artissoftware.com/ texturemagic/ there's no need to commit prematurely. If you need textures and you don't like spending time messing around creating your own from scratch – this application might be exactly what you're looking for. Priced at $98.00 (£59) direct from the web it undercuts its more sophisticated rivals like Xenoflex $129.00 or Phototools $149.95 to make it worth the relative limitations I'm not so sure.

Xenofex from Alien Skin Software $129.00 http://www.alienskin.com/

Phototools $149 from Extensis at http://www.extensis.com

Greg's Factory Output and other assorted filters can be downloaded free from various places on the net.

Also of interest: Blade Pro from Flaming Pear Software http://www.flamingpear.com/ blade.html

Free filters at http://hem2.passagen.se/ pshop/freefilt.htm

david@knopfler.com

Bootable RAM

Making a RAM disk

David Buxton

Some disk utilities are unable to fix the startup disk. In that case, you have to startup your Mac from another disk and then use the utility. This is easy if you happen to have a spare disk connected to your Mac or if you have an Apple CD-ROM drive, but for many home users with older Macs this is not an option.

A RAM disk is often the only means available.

A RAM disk is a portion of your Mac's RAM set aside for use as a Mac volume, and for most purposes it behaves just as a physical disk would. Most importantly, most Macs are able to startup from a RAM disk.

Alsoft's DiskWarrior is an example of a great utility which cannot operate either on the startup disk or the disk on which it resides.

The following walkthrough shows you how to create a bootable RAM disk specifically for the purpose of fixing your internal startup disk.

1. Open the Memory control panel.

2. Turn RAM disk on and make it a suitable size.

The amount of built-in RAM and the total size of the files to be placed on the RAM disk will decide the size of your RAM disk. For every megabyte of RAM you set aside for the RAM disk, you deny a megabyte of RAM for your system.

With Mac OS 8.x, the essential system files occupy at least 10 MB of disk space, and require at least 12 MB free RAM to run, meaning you must have at least 24 MB RAM installed if you intend to build a Mac OS 8 RAM disk.

Try placing an earlier version of the system software on your RAM disk if RAM is scarce. You can also remove alert sounds and keyboard layouts from the System file itself.
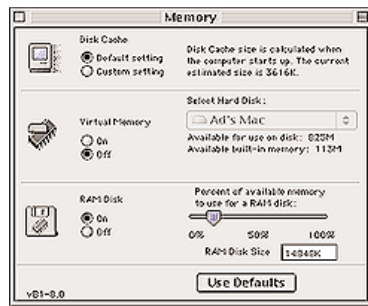
3. Restart.

After you restart, you will have a new disk icon on your desktop. This is your RAM disk.

4. Build your System Folder on the RAM disk.

Start by creating new folders on the RAM disk for the System and essential folders. Then copy across the Finder and System from your hard disk to the System Folder on the RAM disk. This is the bare minimum required for a startup disk (you will see the folder icons change to System Folder icons when both these files are placed in the System Folder on your hard disk). Some Macs require specific software called an enabler in order to startup with certain versions of the system.

If you will need to use a CD-ROM or other extension-dependent devices, then copy across the relevant extensions. In addition, some software requires other extensions (e.g, DiskWarrior requires the Text Encoding Converter in your system).

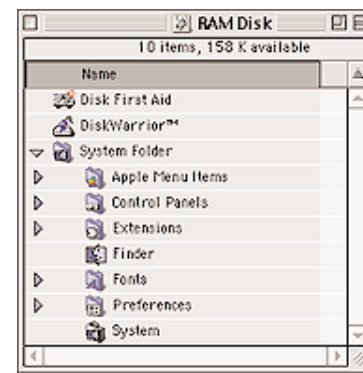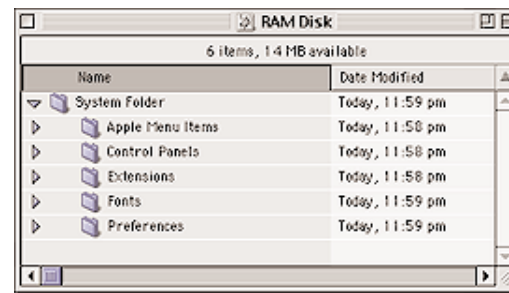### 5. Place your chosen disk utilities on the RAM disk.

Now copy across the utilities you will be running from the RAM disk.

Because disk space will be tight, remember to place just the essential files on your RAM disk. If you find that you have run out of space already, try removing items from the System suitcase. Alternatively you may need to increase the size of the RAM disk.

6. Open the Startup Disk control panel and select the RAM disk.

7. Restart.

It is important that you restart after choosing the RAM disk as your startup disk. Do not shut down, and then startup, because the contents of RAM to do not survive a shutdown, and not all Macintoshes preserve the contents of a RAM disk after a shutdown.

8. Fix your internal disk.

If all has gone to plan, your Mac has used the RAM disk as the startup disk, allowing you to then use other disk-fixing tools on your internal hard disk. You can then restart from the regular disk when you are finished, and turn off the RAM disk to free memory. The memory will be available next time you startup the Mac.

9. Thinking ahead.

To save yourself the trouble of building a fresh System Folder every time you want to do this, you can either copy across the entire contents of your RAM disk to your hard disk, or use Disk Copy to save the entire disk as a disk image on your hard drive, ready for easy restoration next time.
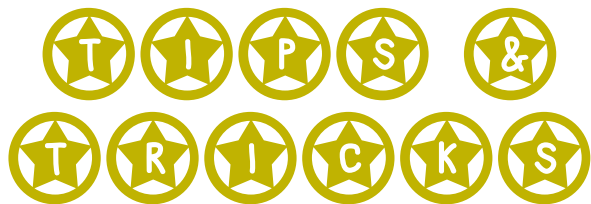
Disk Copy 6.3.3

http://asu.info.apple.com/swupdates.nsf/artnum/n11162

Disk First Aid 8.2

http://asu.info.apple.com/swupdates.nsf/artnum/n10318

poopages@dircon.co.uk

T I P S & T R I C K S

Inside out: Hard Drives

Kyle Alexander (editor of dotmac ezine)

Even though hard drives can hold far more data than ever before in a much smaller compact space, the technology behind them is the same.

A hard drive is very similar in principle to a floppy disk. It relies on aligned magnetic particles, much like a cassette tape, to store data. These particles have two states, they're either aligned to the north or south poles. It's these particles that represent the digital zeros and ones; it doesn't really get much more complicated than that at this level. In effect, these particles are like tiny magnets storing each tiny bit of information.

Magnetically polarised particles are physical. They're on the hard drive's platters – they don't disappear when you turn your computer off. To use the information they hold, a computer needs to turn them into electrical impulses and signals. Magnets induce an electrical current when passed over a wire or coil. That's how generators work.

The read and write heads, controlled by the head positioning servo (a very precise motor) hover on a cushion of air around 0.00025mm above the hard drive's platters. That's less that the width of a hair or smoke particle. The read and write heads have to be close to the platters so they can be induced by the magnetic particles to create a tiny current, or when writing data, close enough to polarise particles.

The read and write heads are very small coils of wire. When reading data they are induced to create a tiny current by the magnetical particles on the hard drives surface, this current is then amplified before being sent to the computer's processors. When writing data, tiny currents are sent to the heads to polarise the particles, therefore physically storing the data.

If you really want to destroy the data on your hard drive (don't ever do this!) a few strong magnets will realign all of the magnetic particles. The data will have been lost.

The average hard drive is between 2-4Gb. For just a 500 megabyte hard drive that's a total of:

500 x 1024 x 1024 x 8 = 41,943,040,000 bits (see workings out at end of article)

That's nearly 42 billion bits of data the hard drive would have to store, on between 2 – 8 platters. For a 4Gb hard drive that would be 336 billion bits of data on one hard drive!

As technology has improved, the number of platters can stay the same, and so can their size. The improvement of technology has been the precision at which the read/write heads maneuver over the platters surface, and the speed at which the data can be read.

The platters in a hard drive are spun at between 3,500 and 7,500 revolutions per minute. If you were to attach the platters of a hard drive spinning at those speeds to a car (if they'd support it) that car could go between speeds of 70 - 150 miles per hour!

To set up factories where hard drives are made costs millions. Only a few manufacturers can afford to do this, such as IBM; other manufacturers buy these hard drives and stick their own logos on them.
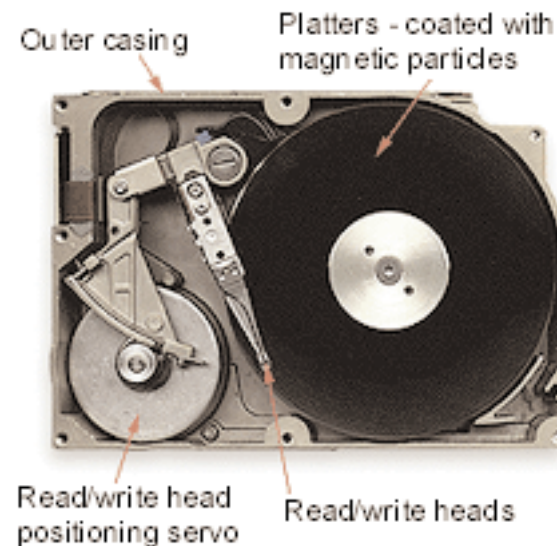
The factories are four times cleaner than a hospital operating room – and they have to be. Even smoke particles that land on a platter's surface could cause it to crash. To reduce this risk, hard drives tend to be filled with an inert gas such as argon. If you break the seal of a hard drive not only do you invalidate your warranty, but you practically destroy the hard drive making it useless because of the risk of contamination.

The information I used to work out the number of bits of data in a 500 Mb drive

8 bits makes a byte	(8 bits)
1,024 bytes makes a kilobyte	(8,192 bits)
1,024 kilobytes makes a megabyte	(8,388,608 bits)
1,024 megabytes makes a gigabyte	(8,589,934,592 bits)

www.dotmac.com

If you really want to destroy the data on your hard drive a few strong magnets will realign all of the magnetic particles (don't ever do this!)

Outer casing

Platters - coated with magnetic particles

Read/write head positioning servo

Read/write heads

XPhiles

XPress tips and XTension news and reviews by Chris Patmore

Updater

With no date for the release of even the beta version of XPress 5, Quark is releasing a free upgrade to version 4.1. This will be sent to all registered users later this year, and also be available from their website. Codenamed Elvis (does this mean it is rumoured to exist but we are never going to see it?) it is reputed to have over 100 bug fixes to the current release. It will be offering better integration with Adobe's (seemingly omnipresent) PDF technology and also HTML export. It will also have a scissors tool, enhanced step and repeat (check out Badia Duplica for a top commercial XTension for this – www.badiasoftware.com), more accurate guide placement, access to recent documents, direct RGB output and the ability to customise page bleed. Many of these features are currently available as free XTensions from Quark's updated website - http://www.quark.com

The one feature that they seem to be pushing with this upgrade is an XTension called QuarkLink that will connect to the 'net to give info on conflicts, updates and other news and tips.

As for version 5 that is anyone's guess. The latest rumour is that they may be incorporating a lot of features of their highly rated, but under supported, multimedia XTension QuarkImmedia. There has been a lot of talk that Immedia will not be developed beyond its current release, which would be a real shame, but if it was built into the core program Quark would be able to offer something far superior to Adobe InDesign for multimedia/web design, especially if they also incorporate robust HTML and PDF export facilities as well.

XPress to XML on the avenue

Hot on the heels of the release of AtomicXT (www.atomic-xt.com), a British developed Xtension that converts QuarkXPress files into XML (eXtensible Markup Language) for Web publishing, Quark has released a beta version of avenue.quark to perform a similar function. I haven't had chance to try it out yet but will try to get a report for the next issue. Download it for free from www.quark.com A further example of Quark trying to keep its product on the frontline of Web technology.

Adobe conflicts resolved

For those of you having problems with XPress and ATM Deluxe 4.5, and more specifically Type Reunion 2.5 (which does not work at all) then Adobe has posted fixes on its website. The cause of the problem was reported in Quark TechNews as "In the regular font menu listing, QuarkXPress calls for fonts with the standard font name method. However within pop-up menus, QuarkXPress 4.0x calls for fonts by their ID number, rather than by name. This was done to circumvent a problem in Type Reunion 2.0. When Adobe upgraded Type Reunion to version 2.0.3, they fixed the problem QuarkXPress was circumventing. Later, in the update to version 2.5, Adobe also changed ATR to recognize only font menus. Since Quark 4.0x uses font ID numbers rather than font names in its pop-up menus, ATR ignores them." The ATR patch is at http://www.adobe.com/supportservice/custsupport/LIBRARY/5a36.htm

and the ATM patch can be downloaded from
http://www.adobe.com/supportservice/custsupport/LIBRARY/5a42.htm
Whilst you're at it you might as well download Font Manager Update 1.0 from Apple's site (http://asu.info.apple.com/swupdates.nsf/artnum/n11489), which fixes problems in the Mac OS 8.6 Font Manager that have affected several applications, including QuarkXPress. Corrupt FOND resources, under certain circumstances, could result from the Font Manager creating a corrupt resource inside some applications or fonts. This caused some third party font management tools, such as ATM or Extensis Suitcase 8, to be unable to move fonts, and also caused some crashes. This patch is currently only available for US English version of 8.6, but if you are suffering from the symptoms described above it may well be worth trying it. (Remember to backup before and regularly after!!)

All these little problems together can be a real pain in the proverbial when you are working with large numbers of fonts during the day and it does make you wonder whether upgrading is always such a good idea. But to me the most incredible thing is that the problem was never discovered before Adobe released the software. It's not as if XPress is some obscure program that hardly anyone uses (although Adobe would like to see that scenario a reality). In my comparative review of ATM 4.5 and Suitcase 8 in Issue 14 I gave the nod to ATM on the grounds of aesthetics and features, but for stability and speed whilst working with XPress Suitcase certainly holds its own. Let's hope that these patches resolve the problems and we can get back to trouble free work.
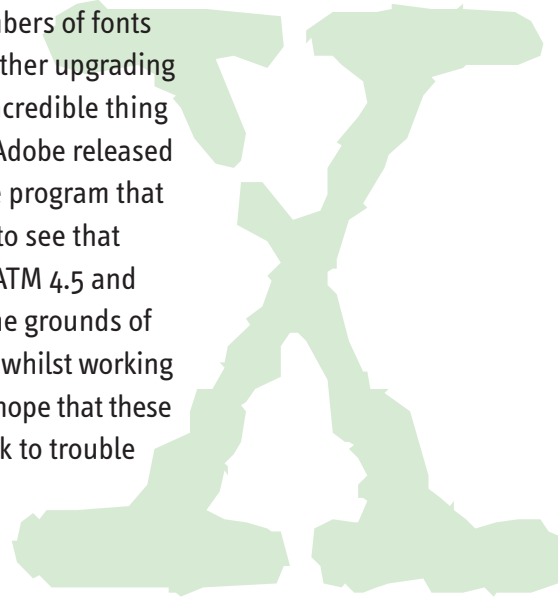
Customised service

This issue of 1984 Online is about customising your Mac. Most software can be customised, or personalised, in the preferences or in the case of most graphics software, with plug-ins. XPress is no exception with its XTensions technology. There are hundreds of XTensions that allow you to perform almost any function you could think of performing with a page layout program – from making multimedia presentations or getting documents online to the accurate placing of guidelines on a page. If you can't find an XTension that does what you want then there are places that will create a bespoke XTension for you, at a price. In the last issue we ran a list of the major XTensions developers and suppliers, many of whom have free (and useful) downloadable XTensions.

Quark has been incorporating many of the functions of the XTensions into each release, but I would like to see Quark make a more modular (and thereby cheaper) XPress that can be customised to suit the way the operator works rather than weighing it down with features that are not really needed. XPress 3.3 was, and still is, so popular because it was extremely stable and there were plenty of XTensions that could make it work how you wanted.

As for the personalisation of the Preferences – this was covered in the XPhiles way back in Issue 9, if you are interested.

If anyone has any specific area of XPress usage they would like covered do send me an e-mail and I'll do my best to put something together.

chrispatmore@innocent.com

Robots

Gang Xu

I have decided to share with everybody how an Apple Macintosh enabled a 15 year old boy to pass an art exam. I decided to learn how to model using 3D programs. I've always fancied building my own robot but I didn't see the point on spending a small fortune and a great deal of time when I could build one inside my Mac.

I had a PowerMac 7100/66 at the time with 16megs of ram and a 250mb hard drive. It seemed to me that to recreate the full atmosphere of up to five robots was going to be a little hard given my hardware, but I'm a Mac user so I gave it a go anyway. I needed to pass my art exam and there was no other way to do it given my poor course work. I decided the best way to learn was to start with the simple. I knew how to create basic 3D objects like spheres and cubes, and how to stretch and rotate them. So given my very basic abilities I set out to design a robot which I could "build" in the program.

As I sketched down some ideas trying to see how I would go about building it in 3D. This meant that I would be able to build roughly what I sketched down. I still use this technique because if the sketch looks good, the 3D model should look just as good.

The robot I designed was VERY simple, based around a simple deformed cube with other cubes and spheres sticking out of it. The result was a odd looking thing, the sketches reminded me more of my computers gray CPU box with balloons stuck on the side than of a big battle ready robot, the only consolation was the knowledge that at least I will be able to model it roughly using a 3D program. The program I used was extreme 3D, given away free on a magazine cover CD. It was a relatively old program (hence the fact it was free) but it did have all the tools I needed. I took me nearly half a week of searching through the PDF
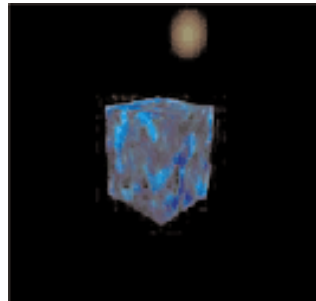

manual, starting at the greyish diagrams for me to complete my model. It wasn't the most complex, or aesthetically pleasing robot there is but it was good enough.

Having promised samples of my work to my teachers I was pleased that at least I had something to show. But then I realized that my robot was not a robot but just a mass of grey boxes cylinders and spheres, it needed textures. Using the right textures, and texture maps you can transform a model from a grey box, into an alien life form.

However at the time my texturing skills were less than adequate, the best I could do was to was colour the wheels black and just about everything else grey.It took about a half a week to create my first 3D model, thanks to some free software, a trusty computer and a rather important art exam. In the next issue I will explain fully how to texture a 3D model to create the atmosphere you want.

Until next month, keep 3D'ing

gxu@wxumac.demon.co.uk
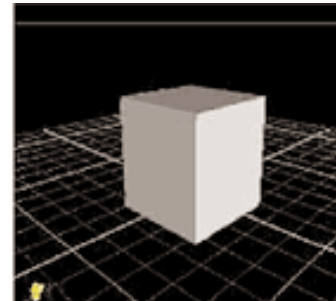
Your working environment

Olafur Sindri olioli@islandia.is

Have you noticed just how much a simple poster, a photo, or custom paint-job (read: Tipp-Ex in the corners) can make your office cubicle look a lot nicer? Well, me neither, but I'm sure I will notice once I acquire an office cubicle. Until that time arrives, we will have to do with customising our Macs. For that matter, I'm here to help. Read on children, read on.

As I was trying to think of a subject for this excuse-for-an-article of mine, I wondered just what is the purest expression of Mac users' creativity. Games? Hardly. Writing? Most certainly, but not very much related to organising your Mac. Customising? Indeedy. So I sat down, a few hours before the deadline would strike, to show you how to make your Mac much more comfortable for work or play.

First, you'd like to come up with a nice and soothing desktop picture or pattern to ease those eyes, tired of looking at Geri Halliwell's private parts that decorate the desktop. What, you DON'T have Geri Halliwell photos on your desktop? Peculiar. Anyway, what works is different for each individual. In my case, I like simplicity. Simplicity and dark-looking colours. Instead of spending hours pumping up the paper amount used for my phone bill by browsing the big ugly, ever-growing stew we call the web to look for one, I just made one myself. And 10 minutes later, I had a nice looking desktop, involving dark-blue colours, gradient, and an apple. Wow, it's that easy. Just look at this.

Nice. But what shame. All those grey icons and that multi-coloured Apple menu just didn't seem to fit in now. So, using all my web techniques, I found a nice little utility on the web. Called 'iMacolor', and by none other than icon guru Hide Itoh, it can change your Apple menu icon and/or Trash can to resemble any of the six iMac colours, and more! If you're interested, just do a search on VersionTracker www.versiontracker.com. I can't be bothered with looking up the exact URL for it. But it's nifty. Using that nifty utility, I was able to add to the blue theme of my Mac by turning the before mentioned items blueberry blue. Now all I needed were replacement icons for my grey hard disks and my Work folder on my desktop. Another web search was needed. Using 'IconDropper' from the IconFactory (www.iconfactory.com), the sweat of changing icons has been shrunk down to a contextual menu call and choosing 'Change Icon#'. And that's not all. IconDropper's icons are stored in space saving packs, which are available by the dozens on many icon sites out there. Just check out IconFactory's links, if you don't believe me! Anyway. I, as you can see, chose two iMac icons for my HDs, blue (of course) for my startup/programs disk, and green for my documents/games disk (Latin titles not required). A finishing touch was a nice toaster icon for my Work folder and the Mac's customisation was completed. Oh, wait! Let us not forget my custom soundset. From one of the

many soundset archives for Mac OS 8.5+ out there, I downloaded a nice 'Water' soundset. Very soothing.

An extra tip: If you do a lot of web designing, then you probably know how tiring it is to switch resolutions to see how the site looks for those not as lucky as you with your 21" monitor (bastards). An easy way is to incorporate guides for different resolutions in your desktop pictures. For example different sized squares for 640x480, 800x600, etc. Then all you have to do is to resize your browser window to match those guides!

I hope this story from the real life can help you improve your working experience. Until next month, stay cool, and if you get the change, go and see the movie 'Fu**ing Amal' from Sweden. One of the latter time masterpieces, I tell you.

What, you DON'T have Geri Halliwell photos on your desktop?

HTML For Technophobes

David Knopfler and Willa Cline

Chapter Five: JavaScripting

Things I don't know: I don't know what the Common Gateway Interface means… but I know that its initials are CGI and that I have a cgi-bin… so that's something. With my CGI bin I can extend the possibilities of what can be done with HTML by using automated UNIX scripts (lots of big words there) – but who wants to know that? One has, I suppose, to resist the feeling that these grand sounding things were designed to make us poor non techie creative types feel insignificant. CGI truth told, is basically a pain in the butt and so is Java… but JavaScript like cgi scripting is kind of too important not to at least mention in passing. So, erm, sorry about that.

Java is not without its problems either. It is a programming language. Don't you just HATE the sound of that? It's as impossible to learn as C++ so don't get your hopes up too high. JavaScript on the other hand is a scripting language and is as impossible to learn as C++, so that's a lot more comforting isn't it? However it's quite easy to nick large chunks of it at a time, so all is not lost. Applets are little bitty Java applications that can be embedded into your HTML as can JavaScript but JavaScript is long stringy mess – whereas Java Applets are tidy little suckers, because the long stringy mess is hidden from even the source HTML page. Confusing isn't it? And if you want to create Java Applets (little mini applications that work right there on your web page regardless of which platform the viewer is looking at your page with, UNIX, Mac, Windows, Swimblesnoot… okay I made this last one up just to see if you were still listening) you might even have to know how to compile them. Eek!! Icky stuff isn't it and I'm way out of my depth. HOWEVER lets at least try to make some muddy, muddled progress… in the kingdom of the blind…

At this stage, most books on the subject usually bottle the issue, by providing you with an URL which is three years out of date like http://java.sun.com and wish you bon voyage wouldn't that be tempting.

I guess now that you already know what a tag is… you do know, honest, trust me on this… remember that stuff you've seen inside the funny shaped <> brackets? <tag></tag> ? Remember <P>
 etc. … those were tags and the first attribute (isn't there a less pompous word than attribute?)… the first thing you might as well learn is that your HTML page will not know you have any JavaScript in it unless you tell it to look for it… and the way you do that is by writing a script tag – <SCRIPT language = "JavaScript"> You have to pop it fairly early on in your page for it to work optimally and then when you've finished writing out the script (yes, we're coming to that) you need to add the tag </SCRIPT>. Some folk just put <SCRIPT></SCRIPT> and don't bother to mention that it's JavaScript but the browser seems to know anyway – so if they can get away with this shortcut maybe you can too. I make no promises.

Now here is another piece of the jigsaw which can be helpful, especially to any of you who have thoughtfully nicked a web page with a script in it only to find it wouldn't export to your "This is a picture of Fido eating my husband isn't he cute?" homepage. You can, if you like, simply write your JavaScript in a text file somewhere else and tell your page to look for that page. You missed that didn't you? Let me say it again: You can, if you like, simply write your JavaScript in a text file somewhere else and tell your page to look for that page. Finally, your first useful piece of information. To do this you need to know the following:

<SCRIPT src = "URL to your script file"></SCRIPT> … job done. Of course if you simply slavishly copy "URL to your script file" then you'll find the effect somewhat unhelpful – if however you are bright and discerning you'll realize that it should look more like this:

<SCRIPT src = "http://www.mysite.co.uk/javabollox.txt"></SCRIPT>

More commonly you'll see a .js suffix rather than a text one and I'd recommend using the former, i.e. <SCRIPT src = "http://www.mysite.co.uk/javabollox.js"></SCRIPT>

Although if you are a lost cause and you've also copied that slavishly, I suggest you go back to making money and pay us to design your web page instead.

The TWO BIG advantages in popping your JavaScript elsewhere as a text file are:

1. Your HTML file remains reasonably well ordered and fast to load. If you use this system Java loads first. If you load it on the page it loads last.

2. You can easily use this script with any other pages without needing to add the code to each individual page.

So lets sum it up quickly

If you want to put your JavaScript into your page – expect it to look something like this:

```
<HTML><HEAD>
<TITLE>I Know Less Than Nothing About JavaScript … and I'm proud of it</TITLE>
</HEAD>
<BODY>
<H1> Alora .. this is some vacuous text invented by the author simply to use as pointless padding</H1>
<SCRIPT language= "JavaScript">
JavaScript program code goes here
</SCRIPT>
</BODY>
<!--this hidden message is completely pointless unless of course you are using the lavish Swimblesnoot OS --!>
</HTML>
```

If you want to put it elsewhere and call it up from your web page then it would look more like this

```
<HTML><HEAD>
<TITLE>
I Know Less Than Nothing About JavaScript (And I'm sort of Embarrassed)</TITLE>
</HEAD>

<BODY>

<H1>Alora .. this is some vacuous text invented by the author simply to use as pointless padding</H1>
<SCRIPT src = "http://www.mysite.co.uk/javabollox.txt">
</SCRIPT>
</BODY>
<!--this hidden message is completely pointless … unless of course you are using the lavish Swimblesnoot OS --!>
</HTML>
```

Comments Tags:

And if you've followed that closely, you'll have also learned that if you want to add hidden comments into your HTML you only need to put them inside…

<!-- gloop --!> <!-- Shh. You know who has not shown you any of their javascripts yet but they will--!>

explanation marks and dashes and they'll not show up on your final page. If you want to add them actually inside your JavaScript you can skip the second exclamation as long as you add the dashes i.e. <!--- This script is a pile of poop isn't it ... but it looks loads better than it did when I first deleted the credits and rearranged it -->. Some folk put their JavaScript inside comments tags because it prevents problems of the java script itself showing up on the web pages of browsers without Java... not too many of those around these days but it explains why some source pages look like this:

```
<SCRIPT language= "JavaScript">
<!-- Javascript program code goes here -->
</SCRIPT>
```

If you want to use several JavaScript codes within your page simply put each one within their own set of <SCRIPT></SCRIPT> tags.

I expect by now you'd like to see an example of a JavaScript – or even to try and embed one into one of your web pages. Well, here's an example of a JavaScript used to prevent people from downloading your images. We make no guarantees as to its functionality.

```
<!-- STEP ONE: Paste this code into the HEAD of your HTML document -->
<HEAD>
<SCRIPT LANGUAGE="JavaScript">
<!-- This script and many more are available free online at The JavaScript Source!! http://javascript.internet.com
-->
```

```
<!-- Begin function protect(e) {
alert("Sorry, you don't have permission to right-click.");
return false;
}

function trap() {
if(document.images)
for(i=0;i<document.images.length;i++)
document.images[i].onmousedown = protect;
}
// End -->
</SCRIPT>
<!-- STEP TWO: Insert the onLoad event handler into your BODY tag  -->
<BODY OnLoad="trap()">
<!-- Script Size:  0.81 KB -->
```

Anyone interested in locating other javascripts to have a go, could do worse than to start their search at www.webcoder.com

More HTML'ing next issue.

www.knopfler.com

Assessing your web site

An article by Control V Interactive http://www.controlv.com

Whether we are novice Web masters or Net vets, we all are guilty of neglecting key elements of site development from time to time. Below are five tips highlighting the more obvious areas of site functionality.

Tip #1: Watch Your Speed

Site speed is measured by the time required for a user to download and view your initial Web page at 28,800 BPS over a dial-up connection. Although many people use faster modems and T1 lines, it is important to keep this lowest common denominator in mind. The Internet community has adopted five to ten seconds as the optimal download time for a site's entry page. If your page takes too long to download, consider using a gif or jpg optimizer that can decrease download time.

Tip #2: Know Where You're Going.

Site navigation functions must be easy to locate, intuitive, logical in function and consistently applied throughout the site. Mouse-overs and image-swapping can assist in site navigation and are accepted by site visitors, provided the load times are not negatively affected and the effect is consistent. The number-one turn-off in site navigation is broken links.

Tip #3: Image is Everything.

Right brain vs. left brain. Creative vs. functional. Your site's image must visually and professionally reflect the nature of your site. Any site can be functional, but the more successful sites have an extremely attractive, high-end, often-subtle look and feel that leaves the visitor with an indelible impression of quality. Basic design elements can help improve your image. Appearances are greatly enhanced by using no more than two type faces on a given page and scaling down the font to an adequate size. The normal setting for font size is not always the proper size for site content; a smaller size usually works best.

Tip #4: Reel 'em in

Do your visitors stay or do they jump around briefly and leave? "Site Pull" addresses a site's ability to pull or attract guests. By incorporating proper elements and strategies, you can create "stickiness" to keep your guests coming back for more. The number-one draw for like-minded guests is a forum in which they can communicate. Does your site have a message board system?

Tip #5: Sell Yourself

Site "push", otherwise known as push technology, is concerned with whether your site proactively pushes your products or services to your guests. You can easily implement several non-offensive yet aggressive selling techniques. The number-one push technique is a "listbot" service. By offering your guests a product or service in return for their e-mail address, you generate a client database that can be mined with future products and services.

For a more in-depth look at other tools and techniques and how they can affect your site, visit the Control V site assessment at:

http://www.controlv.com/site.asp

Control V Interactive is a Web-design company that has been delivering high-end Internet development to companies around the world since 1995.

Night Writer

Chris Bunney

Here I am again, the Night Writer, ready to save the day with my trusty computer 'Mac'. Why the name Night Writer? Well for some reason I can only get inspired to write at night, maybe it has something to do with the fact my one year old son won't let me touch the computer until he has gone to sleep, which happens to be quite late in the evening, or is that early in the morning? I don't know, but I do know it's late, anyway I'm here to say...

Internet Explorer 5 and Outlook Express 5 for the Mac
IT'S NEARLY HERE

Yes, Microsoft are finally going to release Internet Explorer and Outlook Express 5 for the Mac. Now before you start sending me hate mail let me just say my piece, don't get me wrong I'm not a Microsoft lover, I don't personally like Windows PC's, and I was rolling on the ground with laughter when that guy got Mr Bill Gates with a custard pie, but I do think Microsoft have produced a good piece of software when it came to IE4.0 and IE4.5. I just hope IE5 is as good.

I say "hope" because just recently I had to use IE5 and Outlook Express 5 on a PC at work and although they had some good features, both programs were so difficult to use. Changing the preferences (or "Options" as a PC user would say), was near impossible to do. All I was trying to do was to change the STMP and POP address in Outlook and could I find it? "NO!" It took 20 minutes to work it out and even now, IE5 keeps trying to connect every time I turn on the PC, how come Microsoft can make an Internet Explorer and e-mail program that is so easy to use on a Mac, but when they put it

on their native OS ie Windows it becomes totally unusable? I suppose you just get used to it being that way, but me being a Mac user, I know different and I find it tough to work with such an awkward and clumsy piece of software.

So, if Microsoft follow the theme of their other Mac programs eg. Internet Explorer & Outlook Express 4.5 it should be excellent, especially with the added features of the PC version, like being able to add a background frame or picture to your e-mails (my wife especially would like that) but still with the ease of use you get with the Mac.

So there you have it, that's my Mac thoughts for this month, I suppose I should now be driving off into a dust strewn hazy sunset by now but "Mac" my trusty computer doesn't have wheels, so until next month this is me, Night Writer, signing off…

bunneys@btinternet.com

QUICK SNAPS!
SORT • SIMPLE • PRACTICAL TIPS

Hints of the month.

CD Audio to System sound

To record a song or audio clip on your Mac, insert an audio CD into your drive then launch MoviePlayer and select 'Open' in the File menu. Select a track from the CD, click Convert, then save the track as a movie file on your hard drive (allow 1MB for each minute of audio). Once saved as a movie file, you can play the track using any QuickTime player. Doing this with your favourite tracks means you can build up compilations. If you have a zip or jaz drive Iomega bundles a utility called RecordIt that will also do this for you. It is also available from their website www.iomega.com

(And as long as you OWN the tracks on their original media, there shouldn't be a legal problem. This means don't copy all of your CDs this way and then put them on the web or on a Zip or CD-R and distribute them. That will get you in serious trouble.)

Still useful

Lets say you have an older Mac and an older printer. For example a LCII and a StyleWriter 1200. And you've bought a new iMac. What do you do with the old stuff ?

1) Sell it.

2) Put it in the loft for Antiques Roadshow 2029.

3) Put it to work (by giving it to a school – if you want to go to sleep at night with a warm glow inside).

I'll not dwell on the merits of 1) and 2) but concentrate on 3).

The LCII, like many other older computers, can still take System 7.5. System 7.5 has a neat ability that has carried over into later systems. You can put the LCII on the network by tracking down an ethernet card or by getting a hold of Farallon's ethernet to localtalk solutions. If you want more detail we can help (just ask) but all is not lost for the older machines.

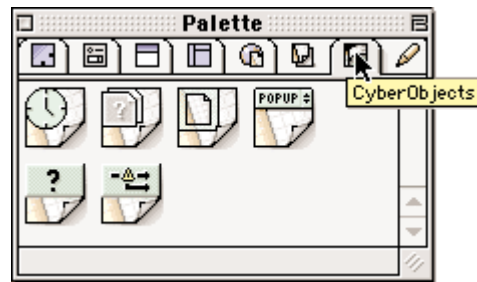# GoLive Tutorial
Conventional Rollovers

### David Portela

What is a rollover and how do I make one?

"Rollover" effects are becoming more and more common on the web, as powerful web development tools (such as GoLive) make their way into the average person's hands. A rollover happens when you move your mouse over an image and another image appears, either replacing the image you moved over or replacing an image on another part of the page.

This tutorial will show you how to easily create button rollovers in GoLive, using the Button Image CyberObject. To learn about rollovers that change an image on another part of the page.

Here we go! In GoLive, open the page you want to create a rollover in. Now choose the CyberObjects Tab from the Palette.

David Portela is Webmaster of GoLive Heaven (www.goliveheaven.com), a resource for Web developers around the world. When he's not teaching GoLive for GLH-Training's US-wide seminars (www.glh-training.com), he alternates among designing commercial Web sites (www.webdawn.com), writing his upcoming book "Short Order GoLive" (to be published by Hayden Books) and providing online technical support for GoLive. He can be reached at david@portela.com.

Drag the Button Image CyberObject from the Palette to the place where you want the rollover to be. The Text Inspector should become the Button Inspector.
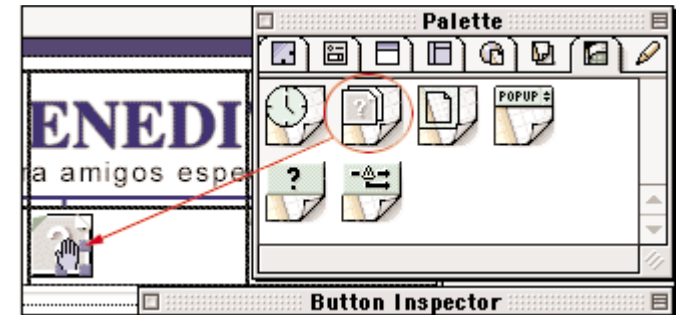
First things first: name your image in the Name field of the Button Inspector, and hit Enter.
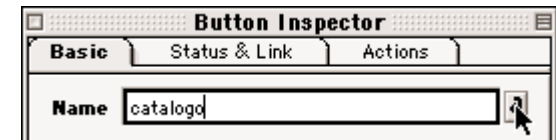
Now click on the Main icon in the Image area. Use GoLive's point and shoot or click the Browse... button to select the "main" image. This is the image that will appear when your page first loads.

Next, click the Over icon in the Image area. Check the box beside the field. Select an "over" image in the same way as you did the first one. This is the image that will appear when the mouse hovers over the first image.
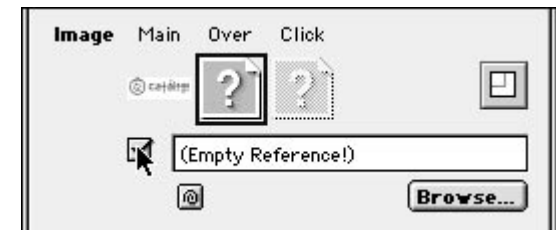
Finally, click the Click icon in the Image area. Check the box beside the field.

Here you have two options: displaying a different effect when the user clicks your rollover, or returning the image to its original state. This is the image that will appear when the user clicks your rollover. In the example below, I made the "click" image the same as the "main" image.
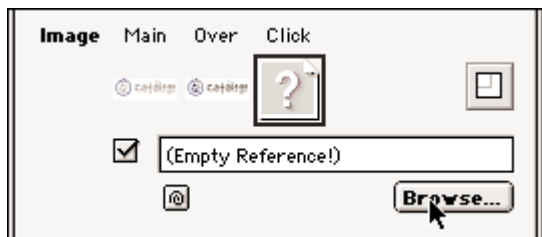
Choose the Status & Link tab from the Button Inspector. Check the Status box if you want to display text in the browser's status bar when the mouse is moved over the image. Type in your text. If you don't want to use this option, leave it unchecked.
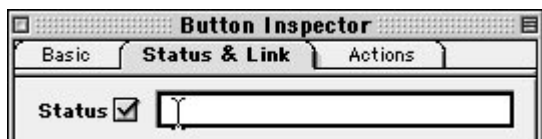
Check the URL box and type in the URL you want your image to link to. Hit Enter. If you want the image to link to a file, select the file. Use the Target field only if you want the URL to open in a specific frame or in a new window.

You're done!

Remember that both images need to be the same pixel size. Also, the rollover images can be preloaded. Refer to the Preload Tutorial for more info.

Keep in mind that rollovers only work in version 3.0 and 4.0 browsers and above, with the notable exception of IE 3.0. Therefore, be nice and provide textual navigation links on your site, for those with older browsers and slower modems!

More next month

david@portela.com

Apple Web Help

If you have any questions about Apple Software Updates including all of the latest updates of Apple software, including most printer drivers, System Enablers, updates to utilities and networking and communication software. Currently, Apple Assistance posts Apple Software Updates to the following online services:

1) Internet: Apple World Wide Web and ftp sites: http://www.info.apple.com
2) ftp URL: ftp://ftp.info.apple.com
3) America Online (keyword: applecomputer)

Internet: Apple Web Sites

All Apple software updates are posted to ftp servers, but you can also get to the software updates collections from one of Apple's web sites:

http://www.apple.com/support – Apple Support Information – Apple's USA based web site. Choose Apple SW Updates from the pull-down menu to go to the Apple software updates collection, where you can browse for, search for, and download all US and Worldwide Apple SW Updates. Here are a few handy URLs:

http://www.info.apple.com/ftp.newfiles.html – list of newly posted Apple software updates.

http://swupdates.info.apple.com/Architext/AT-SWupdates_USquery.html – Search page for US Apple software updates.

http://swupdates.info.apple.com/Architext/AT-SWupdates_Worldquery.html – Search page for Worldwide (localized) Apple software updates.

http://swupdates.info.apple.com/cgi-bin/lister.pl/Apple.Support.Area/ Apple.Software.Updates – Browsing page for all Apple software updates.

Internet: Apple ftp sites

You can use either an ftp client (such as Fetch or Anarchie) or a web browser to go our ftp sites directly:

ftp.info.apple.com (multiple servers, handles 15,000 concurrent users) When using a web browser, use the following URL: ftp://ftp.info.apple.com.

ftp.apple.com (multiple servers, handles 1000 concurrent users) When using a web browser, use the following URL: ftp://ftp.apple.com.

ftp.info.euro.apple.com (one server, handles 250 concurrent users) When using a web browser, use the following URL: ftp://ftp.info.euro.apple.com.

You Can Save Money!

Paul Hughes

As web administrator of 1984 OnLine, I have heard a lot of thoughts about 1984 and a host of other Macintosh ezines. The response I have had from cover CD users is that when trying to read specific issues or articles, they have to search through many different CDs to find what they want — wasting time and energy. From the internet side of things, comments go along the lines of "Downloads are too big", "This download is very slow", "I can't afford to download this", which makes me worry. Is 1984 losing readers or are the 1984 readers not getting what they need as easily as possible?

1984 back – PDF 1984 back – DocMaker

We listen to our readers and I have decided to solve this problem by publishing the 1984 CD. This CD is available to all 1984 readers, world wide for a small fee.

Note: 1984 is a NON-profit ezine and all the proceeds of this CD will go towards the maintenance fees involved with our site and improvements to our services.

On the CD you will find every issue of the ezine, right back to Issue 1 (latest issue will depend on order date).

You will also find special offers on Shareware and Freeware. On the current CD we have offers on Food Chain (10% discount), Think Different (Free to 1984 readers), Scorpion BarCode 1.40 (10% discount) and Mac Gloss.

Food Chain Installer Think Different Mac Gloss Scorpion BarCode 1.40

To order the 1984 CD simply, print out this page OR copy the details and send it to the address shown below: IF you are in the UK it is £10 per CD BUT if you order two CDs or multiples there of it's £8 per CD (hey, saving even more money). US price is $20. Price includes postage.

Sorry, we only accept US bank notes as we cannot cash American cheques. Please send cash by registered/certified mail.

Please make UK cheques payable to: "Paul Hughes" .

For more information you can contact me on the following:

email: paul.h@1984-online.com

Phone: (UK Number) 070 4403 8783

Please send all correspondence to the following address:

Paul Hughes,
1984 Online - CD Order,
12 Golf View,
Cardenden,
Fife,
Scotland,
KY5 0NW.

Thank you for your support once again.

Subscribe

After the large number of requests from last issue, you can now email us and get yourself added to our subscriber list.

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This is NOT a mailing list. You will ONLY receive your once a month email with our present issue. If you would like to subscribe send an email to:

pdf@subscribe.1984-online.com
or
docmaker@subscribe.1984-online.com

Name

Address

Postcode/Zip   Country

Number of CDs required

Total cash/cheques enclosed

Writer's kit

A new challenge

Right, for those of you out there who just can't hold it in any more, here's how you can let it all hang out and write for 1984 Online.

1984, if you have not already noticed, is a mixed bag of Mac dedicated folk who come from a variety of careers, related interests and hobbies, but all participate in the life of the Mac community to the fullest.

Anyone who enjoys this productive and mind enhancing platform can be a part of 1984's international line up.

Doing it with style

Writing for us is easy. All you have to do is tell us about your Mac orientated experiences. Although we have our regular in-house columnists we'll always have room for more (but space is limited). Our site expansion is on going throughout 1999.

Guest writers are always most welcome to ensure our variety remains alive and kicking.

Your work can cover any subject you wish so long as it is related to the Apple Macintosh and its competitors. Reviews on software, hardware and books are most welcome. Each article has its own merits, so from reading this month's issue you'll get a feel for the different subject matter we cover.

A good comparison would be the equivalent of about 1200 words or around 1 side of an A4 page of text maximum (although longer at a push).

Our readership

1984 readers are as varied as our writers. From the first time user to experienced Mac folk, they will all browse our work from time to time.

We are on the cover CDs of both Macworld UK and MacFormat magazines plus many internet postings announce our ezine release date each month.
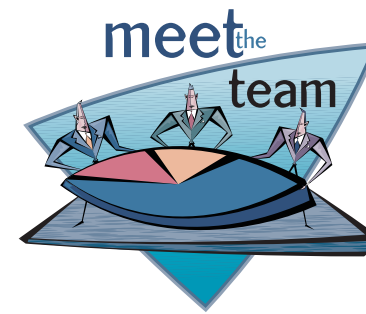
Always keep in mind that not everyone will understand certain terminology, so try to explain a complicated topic wherever possible.

So there you go. Simple guidelines.

If you wish to contact me further then please do. I look forward to welcoming you on board.

Darren Edwards, Editor 1984 online

new-writers@1984-online.com

meet the team

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Nick Klingaman • Mark Tennant • Darren Edwards • Alan Smith • Gang Xu • Olafur Sindri
Cai Feasby • Brian Collins • Paul Hughes • David Knopfler • Willa Cline • Chris Bunney

And more...

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This document was put together on a Power Macintosh 8500/160 120Mb/1Gb using QuarkXPress 4.04, Macromedia FreeHand 8.01, Adobe Photoshop 4.01 and Adobe Acrobat 3. Musical support for this issue came from Pat Metheney Group - Imaginary Day, Littlefeat – Waiting for Columbus, Tom Curren's Ocen Surf Aces, Santana – Caravanserai, Michael Franks – The Art of Tea, Romeo and Juliet Soundtrack and of course GLR (BBC's Greater London Radio, one of the best radio stations in the world)

Budding Writers and Reviewers:

If you have a favourite programme or something has got you all fired up, just start typing and email to us what's on your mind. We welcome the contributions from guest writers, and anyone with real commitment to joining our growing editorial staff and regular writers. Anyone interested with corporate and business issues would be welcomed.

Cover/Internal and Site Artists:

If you are interested in art please send us a short email outlining what you would like to do. We are always looking to improve our ezine and site art, so if you have any graphical ideas please feel free to put them forward to us. Let that art pad run wild!

Advertisers:

If you would like to advertise in this e-zine or on our web site please contact us and we would be more than happy to help. All we ask is you MUST sell or provide a service to Mac users, we don't want PC ad's thank you.

PlainTalk:

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Commercial companies and profit making ventures need to make a formal approach to use or reproduce our work in writing to our Editor.

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Paul Hughes (Web/Online Publisher) paul@1984-online.com

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