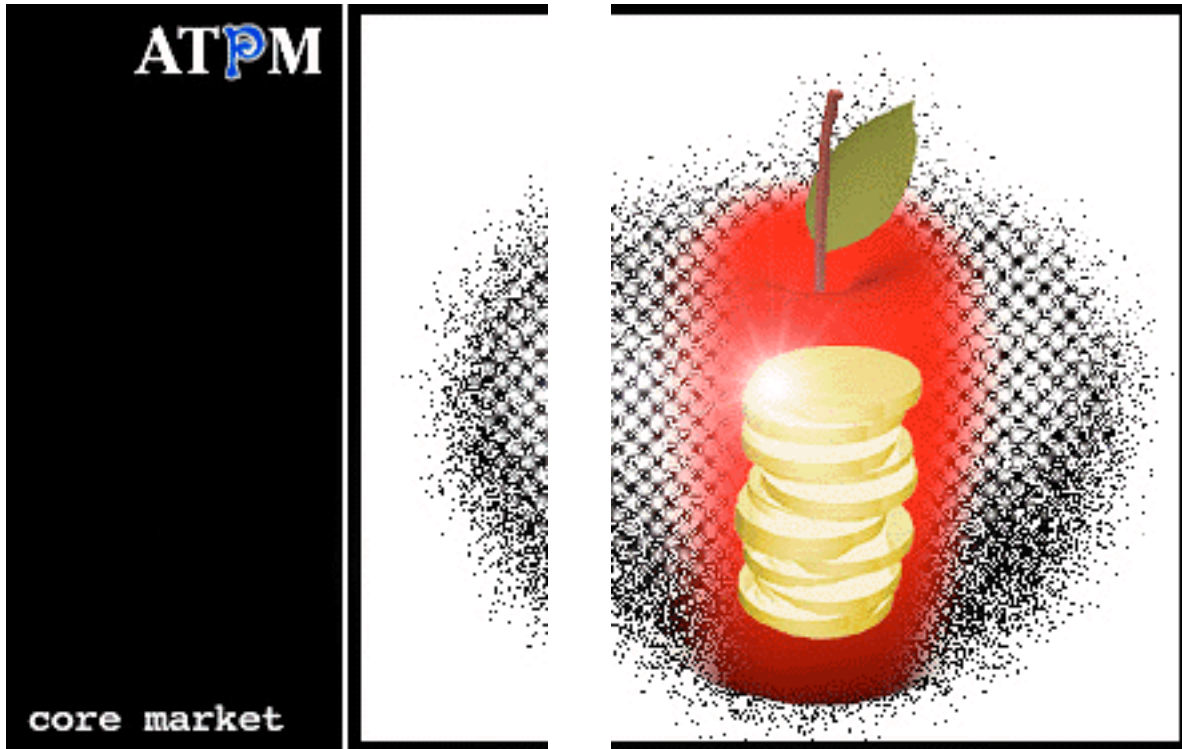


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*About This Particular Macintosh™ 4.03: About the **personal** computing experience™*

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Thanks for reading *ATPM*.

...



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Welcome

Wow! What a month! Claris Corp. becomes FileMaker. All other Claris software (except Home Page) is folded (not sliced) back into Apple! Before that, Newton is resorbed (not sliced) back into Apple! There's even talk of a new eMate that will run a variation of the Mac OS. In other words, the eMate might be pushed (not sliced) into Apple's PowerBook division. Talk about an Apple falling out of a tree! Can you imagine a PowerBook variation in a clam-shell case selling for under \$1,000? We can't either! It doesn't sound like the old Apple!

It sounds like an ex-CEO now interim CEO is reversing many changes made by the person who was responsible for the now interim CEO becoming the ex-CEO. To our eyes, it looks like the legacy of Mr. Sculley is getting "sliced" from this Apple, while the company is getting "re-peared?" What pun!

We're glad *ATPM* is a monthly publication. "Peeling" through Apple's daily rumors would keep us so busy we'd never get any work done...Now for *ATPM's* real news!

Not a Trivial Matter (or Ed and the Bermuda Archipelago...)

Just to the left of the "Bermuda Triangle" is the Bermuda Archipelago. It's a series of islands that have been seen but never found! **[Editor's Note:** It's said to be the place where Apple's huge unit sales reports mysteriously disappear at the end of each quarter.] Unknown to most people (except Ed Goss, our trivia column author, and a few of his closest friends), this island chain is the purported home of the legendary "Fount of All Knowledge."

Ed has an insatiable desire to learn and spends his days collecting books, especially lost

library books. Ed's collection of lost library books is awesome. It fills both stalls of his two-car garage. The problem is, the total bill for the accrued overdue fines would devastate the treasuries of most small nations.

Ed's lost book collection makes him happy, but it's also making him broke. He couldn't bring himself to tell his wife (Mrs. Ed) about the fines, nor could he face the prospect of losing his books. He was desperate. He had only one choice—to find the Bermuda Archipelago and the Fount of All Knowledge. If successful, he'd not only learn more stuff (according to legend, just a couple of sips from the fount would make Ed a genius), he'd become famous and make a lot of money selling the book rights to his story (an ironic tale, isn't it?). Ed's secret plan was cleverly hidden in one of his last trivia columns (see *ATPM* 3.11 and earlier).

We're sorry to say, Ed didn't make it. Reports are that he disappeared while searching for the fount. We fear the worst. At the time of his disappearance he was carrying a US Postal Service prepaid calling card, two air mail stamps, a Newton Message Pad, his Motorola cell phone and, of course, his library card. To our disappointment, he hasn't mailed, e-mailed, called or written. Should he find his way home, we'll tell his story here. In the meantime, the *ATPM* trivia section will be on hiatus. Our concerns are now with his family...

The Help Mrs. Ed Foundation

The folks at *ATPM* are a warm-hearted lot. We are concerned for Mrs. Ed in her time of grief. We support her legal position that Ed's lost library book collection was his sole and separate property, not a community asset or liability. **[Managing Editor's Note:** Ed and his wife didn't live in California.] As long as the courts rule that the lost books were Ed's sole property, she won't owe any money for the fines. However, she did offer to let the court take all the other stuff in the garage, including his collection of half-deflated, red, white, and blue ABA commemorative basketballs.

Please feel free to send your non-tax deductible contributions to the "Help Mrs. Ed Foundation." Another way to help is by advertising in *ATPM*. We are setting aside a portion of each month's advertising revenue to help Mrs. Ed pay her legal fees (and late book charges). More information about our rates is available by e-mailing [<editor@atpm.com>](mailto:editor@atpm.com). Special rates for the upcoming Mr. Ed Memorial Edition will soon be available. We'll stop our Mr. Ed story here, before our voices become "hoarse."

Build a Better Mouse Trap

Even with Ed's untimely disappearance, we think *About This Particular Macintosh (ATPM)* is one of the best Macintosh e-zines available and we'd like to tell the rest of the world our "story." We're looking for a dedicated Mac enthusiast from among our world-wide readers who will to accept the challenge of becoming *ATPM's* "Publicity Hound." This is the position we originally had in mind for Ed. The problem is, not only did Ed want to "think

different,” his search for the Fount of All Knowledge demonstrates he also wants to “do different.” We are looking for someone who will perform “due diligence” in an all-Macintosh, “tell the entire World Wide Web about *ATPM*” kind of way. If you’re interested in joining the *ATPM* staff and would like to help tell the World Wide Web about our Wonderful Web Work (Shhhh! We’re huntin’ Wabbits!) please e-mail us at <editor@atpm.com>.

Editor’s Choice Award

Have you been to the supermarket lately? Have you noticed the photo of the person being honored as employee of the month (or quarter)? Usually found somewhere between the cigarette rack and the cash desk, is the image of an exceptional man or woman receiving honorable mention for his or her on-time performance and consistently congenial attitude. It doesn’t matter if the employee looks a little awkward in the photo or is a bit embarrassed by the attention. What’s important is the amount of time he or she is ostracized by his co-workers for being the human standard by which management now gauges everyone’s performance. What really matters to these exemplary employees is how quickly someone is named to replace them.

We think of *ATPM* as a “supermarket” of reviews and commentaries. We’ve been called a veritable “monthly cornucopia” of Macintosh insights and ideas. The work doesn’t come easy. This month, the management of *ATPM* is highlighting an exceptional staffer: Tom lovino. At a time of transition at *ATPM*, he has consistently submitted his articles well before deadline. “Check out” his picture at the top of his monthly column, “Apple Cider.” Thanks, Tom!

[Staff Note: Tom, we don’t like you anymore. We thought you were our friend. Behind that clean-cut hair, starched shirt and silk tie is a real animal! Imagine trying to get ahead by submitting your stuff on time! Haven’t you ever heard of being fashionably late to the party? You just want to “rub elbows” with Michael and Rob at our expense. Hey, bud, we’ll see what happens the next time you want to be in the “e-mail loop.” As far as we’re concerned, no more electronic co-worker games for you!]

[Tom’s Note: Hey guys, you’re just jealous! I’ll let my column speak for itself! Scroll it and weep!]

[Editor’s Note: Cut it out! We’ll let our readers decide who has the most informative and entertaining column in *ATPM*. Now everybody back to work. The deadline for 4.04 is just days away!]

Take a look inside this month’s issue! You can even take a look at Tom! Please enjoy (the e-zine that is, we won’t comment on Tom).

The *ATPM* Staff







Email

Send your e-mail to <editor@atpm.com>. All mail becomes the property of ATPM.

I'm Gonna Switch

I had to write to someone there at Apple. I'm fed up with Microsoft. Right now I have an IBM with Windows 95...I **hate it!** Microsoft is so terrible. All my friends are so pissed at there machines. I've had enough. I'm going to switch to a Mac A.S.A.P. I love this Web site. You can actually find things on it. Keep up the good work!

Looking for a Mac Dan

FUELER20@aol.com

...

We'd love to hear your thoughts about our publication. We always welcome your comments, criticisms, suggestions, and praise at <editor@atpm.com>. Or, if you have an opinion or announcement about the Macintosh platform in general, that's ok too.





A Night on the Town

A long, long time ago in a land far, far away (a small town in Connecticut sometime during the first Reagan Administration), I worked as a part-time supervisor at my home town supermarket. I started working at the store in the late 70's and continued there through college. During my more than six year tenure, I'd say a few hundred employees came and went through the doors. Now, many years later, there are few people from the store I remember as vividly as my friend, Dan.

Dan was little more than 5 feet tall with short stubby arms and short stubby fingers. He had unkempt dirty blonde hair and a face that only a mother might grow to love. I guess the best way to describe Dan is as the person you'd get if you mixed the personality of a sedate James Cagney with the physical characteristics of a modern-day Barney Rubble. Dan was my friend. Or, as he put it, I was his friend. Dan's friends were important to him and a more loyal buddy would be tough to come by.

Dan and I were an unlikely pair. He, from what would have been the wrong side of the tracks (if we had tracks) and me, the son of an ambitious first generation American intent on realizing the American Dream. Dan's dad was a resident caretaker on a nearby estate. He was afforded free housing for his family in a run-down cottage on an adjoining property as part of his modest compensation. I don't recall ever meeting Dan's mom, but his younger brother, Aaron, was my age. I remember him as one of the "bad boys" of my eighth grade class. It may have been the last year of formal education successfully completed by Aaron, because I don't recall seeing much of him in high school.

Dan was hired to sweep the floors, collect the carts and help with bagging groceries during the early morning shift at the supermarket. I sometimes supervised the early morning shift on the weekdays I didn't have college classes. I was asked to keep a close eye on him. His reputation as a stubborn, combative young man had preceded him to the job. I was suspicious of him at first but over time we warmed up to one another. I soon realized there was a lot more to Dan than I initially allowed myself to see. The experience taught me something about prejudging others.

I grew to respect Dan as a man who lived what he believed. While his views on many matters might have been considered "more than one standard deviation from the norm,"

the sincerity with which he lived his life impressed me. His matter-of-fact style and his sometimes “in your face” approach to things would lead some to call him belligerent. But the store’s floors were never cleaner and the carts hardly ever straighter.

I remember seeing Dan one early morning as he was nursing a black-eye. Actually, it was more purplish than black. According to informal reports, his opponents the prior evening (and there were apparently more than one) fared no better in the melee. Dan spoke his mind. Although I had come to know him as someone who would give anyone a fair hearing, in places where alcohol freely flows his verbal candor about things was not as well accepted. If push literally came to shove, Dan would speak with his fists with equal candor.

I remember hearing a story about Dan that illustrated both his respect for life and his lack of reticence in speaking his mind. One evening he was out with his brother and a couple of friends. He overheard a man talking (more like bragging) about the people he had killed in war. After a few minutes of hearing the man speak, Dan rose from his chair, walked over to the man and said “Mister, I don’t know who you are or where you’re from. What I do know is that my father and my uncles were in World War II. I know my uncles killed some people. It’s not something they talk about. It seems to me, the people who have had to kill other people don’t talk about it. I don’t know why you’d want to talk about it.” Dan walked away. The man shut-up. Another night the same statements might have started a fight. That night it only meant a few moments of deafening quiet as Dan turned his back and walked to his chair.

Dan was happy to have me as a friend though I never really understood why. Perhaps it’s because I lived in a vastly different world than he and made an effort to find common ground between us. I genuinely enjoyed our friendship. Dan liked to take me out for a beer or spend time cruising his favorite haunts and saying hello to his pals. He introduced me to everyone he knew. It was as if I were “family.” One night I got an idea of just what “family” meant to Dan...It meant loyalty and a whole lot more. He saw more in me than I might ever see in myself.

On a cold winter’s night Dan stopped by the store and asked if I wouldn’t mind waiting for him after work. It was my normal evening shift and he had worked the early part of the day. He wanted to go out for a beer or two and “hang out.” It was a time in my life when I did that kind of thing and Dan was my “pal” (I was still too young to regret the foolish mistakes of youth). In the middle of the first or second round, Dan asked if I’d mind taking a short road trip. He wanted to take a ride. There wasn’t much else to do on this cold Connecticut night. I was game and he was driving.

We piled into his old, beat-up green station wagon and headed toward the New York State line. The roads were mostly clear and the little patches of ice didn’t stop Dan from speeding his way through parts of upstate New York. The small gaps in the windows whistled and howled as we sped our way into farm country.

The drive came to an abrupt end when Dan pulled the car into a parking space in front of an

old country tavern. Dan turned off the car, jumped out, slammed the door and said "I'm looking for someone. Back me up." Yep. In Dan's view I was "family." By the looks of things, it wouldn't have mattered to anyone on the inside of this tavern if I had just been adopted. By walking in behind him, I was his "kinfolk."

On stage at this local establishment were four or five middle-aged, pot-bellied men playing a mix of country and western music. They had a Confederate flag as a back-drop. They had big, shiny belt buckles and close-cropped hair. I don't recall for sure, but I think they were playing the theme song to the 1952 Gary Cooper film "High Noon" as we entered the place. This wasn't just "Think Different." This place *was* different!

Much to my relief, Dan didn't find his man. It's a good thing, because his car wouldn't start, at least not right away. Had he needed to leave in a hurry (with me in tow) it wouldn't have been quick nor easy. He told me he wasn't concerned. He said he had cousins who lived in the area. For whatever reason, Dan trusted me. I guess I had been "adopted" into a rather large extended family. I don't know. I wasn't around to attend a reunion. But I was Dan's friend and that night it's all that seemed to matter, especially to him.

From what Dan told me afterwards (I was a little more than just curious) it seems he had a friend of the opposite sex. Not a romantic interest, but a friend. She was a person Dan respected and, in his special way, probably loved. The man Dan was looking for had apparently questioned her "reputation" in public. Dan wanted to talk to the man about it, give him a fair hearing and try to set the record straight. That's Dan. Had push come to shove, like I said, Dan would speak with his fists with equal candor. It wasn't his desire to start a fight, but he had something to say to somebody and he knew they might not like what it was he had to say.

Back at home I could giggle in relief and laugh to myself about what happened. Although I was way out of my element, I was flattered (now that the danger had passed) that my friend thought so much of me. Dan and I remained friends but I was much more apt to ask questions before going places with him. He'd just smile.

A little while later I left my home town and headed to Washington. I'd think of Dan from time-to-time. In a town like Washington where many people change allegiances depending on which way the political winds are blowing, I'd think admiringly of my friend who would stick by what he believed, even when it was costly.

There wasn't anything particularly eloquent about my friend Dan, but he had an honest outlook on things. He told you what he thought and he'd listen to you before responding. He stuck up for what he believed and he respected others. He wanted to be respected, too. There was a depth to Dan that I don't often see in people. A more loyal friend I may never find.

I now live in a different world than I did back then. My ambitions are of a different nature than they were years ago and my views on many things have changed. Today's world is run by personal computers that use an operating system that I don't prefer. Some people think

I have to “get with the times” and stop being so “stubborn” about my affinity for the Mac. They think my OS preferences are “more than one standard deviation form the norm .”

I dare to speak my mind on the matter, though I hope I’m not considered belligerent, just adamant about my OS of choice. These days I hardly ever have a drink, but I don’t mind sharing my views over a rousing mug of iced tea. I’m loyal to my OS and I tend to be loyal to my friends. In some very strange ways, I feel a little like my old friend Dan.

I’ve heard a lot of people bash the Mac the past few years. Some have gone so far as to question the product’s “reputation.” I don’t mind setting them straight. I think everyone is entitled to be heard, but I don’t mind fighting for what I believe. Mac users have a way of looking out for each other. Maybe that’s one reason we’re willing to speak our minds so readily and defend our OS of choice. Sometimes I feel like I’m part of a large extended family.

I have only one question: Steve, Larry, back us up...would ya?

My friend Dan could never have said it better...The G3s and new ads are very good start!

“Apples, Kids and Attitude™” is © 1998 Robert Paul Leitao, <rleitao@atpm.com>.





A Rose is a Rose

Home ownership is really fun. You get to worry about all the things you took for granted when you used to live in an apartment.

Neighbors causing you troubles? No problem. Pick up and move at the end of your lease.

Air conditioner not working? Easy. Call the maintenance people. They'll eventually send a crew out to take care of business.

Leak in the roof? Piece of cake. The landlord has to send someone out pronto to tackle that one.

Ahh, but home ownership forces you to take an active role in the upkeep and maintenance of your house. Murphy's law dictates that soon after moving in, some major system—air conditioner, electrical system, roof, or any one of a thousand others—will go "on the fritz."

Once you have shelled out money to pay a qualified contractor to fix the problem, you will find yourself driving to the nearest home improvement center to locate one of their "How-To..." home maintenance guides. All the way, you'll be muttering, "How did that job end up costing so much? He was there for all of twenty minutes!" Don't worry, it becomes the homeowner's mantra.

After a year of home ownership and shelling out for repairs, my wife and I have forced ourselves to become fairly adept with "do-it-yourself" jobs. Electricity, plumbing, and carpentry don't frighten me nearly as much as they used to.

There are a few jobs we actually enjoy. For instance, I recently replaced our old, 1970's-style, carved, heavy, wooden front door with a handsome, straight-grained fir door featuring a fan shaped window. I found the whole project, from cutting and sanding to the final finish coat of varnish, quite relaxing. It was a welcome distraction from the computer, which seems to own my attention. Plus, the finished project looked really good. Our guests no longer feel inclined to don their leisure suits and present us with a six pack

of Billy Beer.

My wife has adopted gardening. Each day, she walks around the local neighborhoods and checks out the landscaping adorning the neighbors' properties. She'll rush home and tell me, out of breath, about this house that boasts a stately southern live oak surrounded by azaleas and decorative grasses. A discovery like that will send us packing for the garden center the following Saturday morning. It seems our house needs a bit of work in the landscaping department.

People have sometimes joked that our lot looks a little like a sod farm. St. Augustine grass covers the entire front yard with nary a break, except for the concrete driveway. My wife's mission is to make the place look a little more homey. Even though our property looks like a bleak stretch of needing-to-be-fertilized turf grass, it has one redeeming oasis of plantings.

Four rose bushes stand in front of a set of living room windows. When we moved in, they were terribly overgrown—seemingly just a tangle of yellowed leaves, spent blooms, and thorny canes. Roses are some of the prettiest flowers to look at, so we did some serious rose research after we were settled in.

Our first results left us both confused and discouraged about the concept of rose ownership. Every resource we found said that roses require hard work to produce prized blooms. Hard work? How could that be? It seems like every Valentine's day there's more than enough roses to go around. They couldn't be that hard to raise if people can produce them by the millions.

We soon discovered that, in addition to fertilizing, spraying, and mulching, pruning is a very important thing for keeping roses healthy. To me, it made no sense that cutting back a plant would make it grow. Some books even gave conflicting information on the pruning process. One said to prune only a small bit off the plant, being very careful to not to take too much healthy plant in one clip. Another book told us to cut the canes just about to the dirt. We were so confused, it wasn't funny. What were we to do to ensure we didn't kill the plant?

The moment of truth was soon upon us.

One Saturday morning, my wife faced the rose bushes, pruning shears in hand. "I hope you know what you're doing," I said, boosting her confidence. "Here goes," she said, as she knelt down and got to work. She sure cut a lot off those plants.

Apple Computer has gone through its own round of pruning recently. Steve Jobs and the rest of Apple's brain trust took a long, hard look at the resurgent company and decided to prune away some major aspects of its operation.

Up to this point, the cuts that Jobs has made are typical for a company trying to tighten up

its operations and help its bottom line. I was surprised, however, to hear of Apple's dissolution of Claris. To some Mac users, Claris has always been synonymous with Macintosh. In 1989, the first three Macintosh programs I learned to use were MacPaint, MacDraw, and MacWrite—all Claris products. I was actually surprised to learn that other companies besides Claris produced Macintosh software when I first saw version 3.0 of Aldus PageMaker.

These simple Mac software packages were soon eclipsed by more sophisticated offerings from companies such as Adobe, Microsoft, and Macromedia. However, Claris didn't just up and die. FileMaker has proven to be the company's flagship product. Claris' developers also created a winner with HomePage, the WYSIWYG HTML authoring tool which has stood shoulder to shoulder with such giants as Adobe PageMill. Claris Impact has been a go-to graphing software package for years. I use each of these three products at work, and have found them to be powerful and easy-to-use—a winning combination.

Since Claris' demise, their existing software titles are being split between two entities. The system software development and titles such as Impact will stay with Apple. It is believed that Apple's R&D department can optimize this software to take advantage of new advances in hardware.

The commercially successful FileMaker and HomePage titles have been placed under control of—what should be—a temporary corporation know as FileMaker, Inc. The goal is to entice a major software developer such as Oracle to take out their checkbook and purchase the software. As of February 5th (the date I'm writing this), no deal has been reached.

Is this a good idea? At first, I thought not. When Apple reported monumental losses quarter after quarter, Claris was a consistently good performer. Its profits, usually in the range of \$70 million a quarter, were ammunition against the tendency of DOS and Windows people to highlight Macintosh's faltering market share. FileMaker's widespread acceptance in the Windows community was also a selling point, proving that the folks at Claris were writing good software.

After careful reconsideration, I see where Jobs is going with this. Pruning away even healthy segments of Apple's operation (Claris) will force the company to concentrate on its core products. Operating system development now has a plan which is being executed. OS upgrades are being released on time and are real improvements over previous versions. What a change from the bad old days under previous CEOs, when Apple seemed to be adrift in a sea of products and services without a rudder to steer the way.

Claris was initially established to remove the burden of developing applications software. The eventual plan was to either spin off Claris as a separate entity or attract a buyer to purchase it outright. Maybe it's time for Apple to give up Claris as a security blanket and seek prosperity by continuing to improve upon the most user-friendly computer system available.

I'm often accused of being oblivious. For example, one day when I came home for lunch, I was surprised to see a beautiful rose standing in a bud vase on the kitchen table. I asked my wife, "When did you buy the flower?" "Buy? Oh no, Tom, I cut this from our rose bush. That rose over there," she pointed to a vase on our living room table, "came from outside, too."

"You have got to be kidding me," I said skeptically, but my doubts were quickly dispelled when my wife led me outside. There were our four rose bushes, lush with new foliage and bursting with brightly colored blooms.

The books were right. All of that drastic pruning caused the rose bushes to thrive. I wonder if it works the same way for computer companies?

"Apple Cider" is © 1998 by Tom Iovino, <tkiovino@aol.com>.





What do a new motorcycle and new laptop have in common?

I'll bet you didn't guess my answer: bruised limbs!

I've avoided jumping on the "Think Different" bandwagon. First off, as copy editor, I recoil at the poor English. Think is a verb. Different is an adjective. Adjectives modify nouns, not verbs. The phrase should be "Think Differently." That said, I've fulfilled my obligation to the "acAdemia" portion of my column!

Events unfolding in my life since Christmas have forced me to "Think Different." Since I've been busy "thinking different" about virtually everything from the definition of family to how to maneuver a motorcycle through an intersection, I'll jump on the bandwagon with this month's column.

My household is undergoing drastic change. I'm welcoming "Morticia," a 1996 BMW R1100RT motorcycle, into my life. People who are not motorcycling enthusiasts might think it heretical to consider a motorcycle as a family member, but true motorcyclists will understand. Perhaps some readers have some other types of not-so-inanimate belongings that they consider family.



My previous “steed” is a Suzuki Intruder, a cruiser bike. It’s a very different animal from the full-fledged touring design of the BMW as you can see from the photos. I will be learning many new things in 1998. I’ve already learned that it’s expensive to drop a BMW. Dropping a bike is an embarrassing experience under the best of circumstances. It’s already happened with Morticia. I think it was her way of informing me who is really “the boss.”

It was raining steadily the first time I “met” Morticia. Her owner and I had already talked about her extensively. A friend of mine who owns the same model bike had just ridden her about 15 miles. He gave her his seal of approval, mechanically-speaking. It was my turn to take her out for a test ride.

My first hurdle was getting her off the center stand.

Let me explain. Motorcycles have side stands that keep them upright when parked, just like bicycles. However, their extra weight makes relying solely on a side stand a risky proposition. Take parking on grass, for example. Lean a 550+ pound vehicle at an angle on dirt where the entire weight of the bike rests on a metal rod whose footprint is less than one square inch. It won’t be long before the bike is horizontal instead of almost vertical. A bike laying on its side gives the owner (and any other motorcyclist) a sickening feeling in the pit of their stomach.

To provide more secure footing when immobile, most sport and touring motorcycles (cruisers are a notable exception, probably because their centers of gravity are much lower) are equipped with center stands. When a bike is on its center stand, it is raised up about 2-3 inches. The back tire usually rests on the ground, while the front tire is elevated. The center stand and one tire form a tripod, which is why it is more stable than a side stand.

To get the bike off center stand, you have to roll it forward. There are at least two ways one can accomplish this feat. One is to sit on the bike and rock it forward. This looks a little like someone riding a stubborn mule who won’t budge. That first moment when the bike comes off the center stand is a dicey one if the height of the bike is at the rider’s maximum. Two-wheeled vehicles are most unstable when they are still or moving very slowly. Anyone who has ridden a bicycle knows that.

Here I was, with an audience of four extremely experienced male motorcyclists, taking a bike worth over \$12K off its center stand. It was only slightly intimidating. I rocked forward several times before I was successful, but the bike remained upright. My next challenge was to move the bike about 10 feet forward so that another bike could exit the garage.

I slowly let out the clutch. The gears engaged and I was moving. The driveway sloped downhill for about 12 feet, then turned very sharply to the left. The lot was wooded and the

leaves were deep right up to the driveway's edge. It was time to stop. Suddenly I realized I hadn't been paying attention to the position of the front wheel. Had I started turning? Was it straight? Darn!! I can't see it. The fairing's in the way!

On a cruiser, the front wheel is always visible to the driver. You're not conscious of this fact until it's no longer true. It's important that the front wheel is pointed straight ahead when you stop a bike. Why? Because if it's turned, the bike will tend to lean in the direction the wheel is pointing. With a short driver on a heavy bike, a turned wheel usually equals a dropped bike.

In my momentary panic, I forgot where my feet were about to plant. I braked, the bike came to a halt, my left foot went down and instead of pavement, landed on wet leaves. My foot slid and the bike went down.

I can still see it in my mind's eye. Like many accidents, the sequence of events seems to replay like a video in frame-by-frame editing mode. The hardsided saddle bag touched the asphalt first. Fortunately, the OEM bumper guarded its custom-painted surface from damage. Then the front mirror hit the ground. Fiberglass against asphalt makes a sound that's as piercing as fingernails on a chalkboard. The glass and the turn signal lens shattered as the full weight of the bike bore down.

Like it or not, Morticia was mine. If you drop a bike you're test riding, it's yours (after you hand over the purchase price, of course). I was unnerved and more embarrassed than I'd like to admit, but after we righted Morticia and checked out her components, I did take her out for a ride. Blemished, yet still beautiful, she is truly the "ultimate riding machine" in my opinion.

I'm writing this while driving home from Chattanooga with "Morticia" riding atop the trailer. She's a beautiful machine, shining bright blue under an equally beautiful cloudless sun-filled sky (now!!). If it were a perfect world, I'd be riding her and not typing on my laptop. It may not be a perfect world, but it's fine by me.

I've written in previous columns about my involvement on a committee at my academic institution that deals with the planned distribution of laptops to all our students entering this August as the Class of 2002. Besides distributing laptops (unfortunately, they're not Macs), we're actively revamping the entire curriculum. Our goal is to be one of the leaders in laptop education. Lotus Notes will be the groupware product through which content will be delivered and taught in a networked environment.

This means that the traditional desktop will become the place upon which our students and faculty use their laptops. I have been using a Powerbook 3400c for all of my work and personal computing for about eight months now. I use it everywhere. It gets booted up in the car, in the deli around the corner from the studio where my daughter takes dance, art, and drama classes, on the sidelines of the soccer practice and game fields, in campgrounds, on the sofa, and occasionally, on my work or home office desktop!

We're getting down to the nitty-gritty of training issues and infrastructure in committee meetings. Anyone who has used a laptop for any length of time knows that there are a few differences between laptop and desktop computing. There are the trivial things, like having a single command key instead of two (those command-P's really stretch the fingers!). There are also more annoying differences, which might be alleviated if someone would just build a better desktop!

I'm offering this column as a gift to some enterprising *ATPM* reader. What follows are my thoughts about what would be, for me, an oasis of laptop computing. I love the convenience of being able to work virtually anywhere, so I'm willing to put up with occasional discomfort. However, there is no place where I feel totally at ease with this wonder of silicon-based engineering. If anyone out there decides to build upon my idea, I would appreciate receiving at least a prototype as commission. It's an honor system. I have faith. Thanks in advance.

Three things annoy me most about laptop use in my existing office setup. First, my arms get uncomfortable. Even though those cute little feet that pop out of my PowerBook make my colleagues with Thinkpads terribly jealous, they don't solve the problem completely. Wrist rests designed for desktop keyboards don't work well because it's not my wrists that need support. My arms hit the edge of the desktop at a point about 3 inches distal to my elbows. Wrist rests aren't that wide and even if I put two side-by-side, they don't stay on the edge where I need them. Besides, they put my arms at an awful angle relative to my shoulders.

Second, valuable desktop space is taken up by my printer cable and surge protection power strip, because the computer is constantly being connected and disconnected. Third, logging onto the Internet is a real pain because the phone jack is in an inconvenient place for repeatedly plugging and unplugging my internal modem's special cord.

Clearly, a workspace design that's efficient for laptop use differs significantly from the more traditional format that blends well with desktop computer use.

If I could change the design of my PowerBook, I'd love to be able to unhook the monitor half of my folding laptop and mount it at eye level (Duo, a dear...a pun for all Mac-using *Sound of Music* fans). A pedestal that could accept the monitor and be adjusted for height, tilt angle, and swivel would be ideal. Mr. Jobs, if you're reading this, I'd appreciate it if you had a discussion with your hardware engineers...

Desktop design is more amenable to customization than the computer. Since the pedestal idea is not feasible (yet), I think a circular floating platform for the laptop would be fun. It would have to be round, so it could rotate side to side. The ideal monitor viewing position is rather limited and I don't want to be forced into sitting at a particular angle.

The front edge of the circular platform would be 12 to 14 inches from the front edge of the desk, so my entire forearm would be supported while typing. This edge would also be set below the rest of the desktop about 3/4 of an inch. There would be a thin, raised rim along

the circle, so the laptop would be positioned about 1/2" back from the edge. This would allow for easy mouse clicking. However, to keep the monitor from sitting any lower than it does currently, the back edge of the platform should be even with the desktop surface. This design also ensures that cords coming out of the back of the computer are not stressed (especially SCSIs!).

Speaking of cords, here's my ideal solution to that conundrum. I'd install a sliding door (it would open by sliding toward the back) on the desktop. When open, it would reveal a recessed compartment containing a phone jack and several surge-protected outlets with enough extra space to store the "brick" and extra cord from the AC adaptor. The printer cord could emerge from the compartment and be plugged into the back of the computer. The sliding door would have a notch at its front edge (which would be invisible when the compartment was empty) so the door could be closed while the laptop and/or modem were plugged in.

Wires to connect the compartment's phone jack and outlets to wall receptacles would emerge at the back of the desk. I envision a space about 4 inches deep along the entire underbelly of the desktop for power and phone connections. I'd install a metal bar along the back with holes, so that power cords could be coiled and secured with tie wraps (better yet, the desk could come with a selection of clips, like shower curtain holders, that could be repeatedly opened and closed).

I'd install a second sliding door for the printer. The plastic extension built into StyleWriter printers to catch outgoing paper is ugly and legal-sized sheets don't fit very well. Furthermore, it isn't deep enough to hold the number of sheets that can be loaded into the feeder tray. If you leave unattended a print job of more than 25 letter-sized (or as few as 5 legal-sized), the printer's outlet will become blocked. On my ideal desktop, a second recessed compartment would accommodate a minimum of 100 legal pages. The door shouldn't have to be opened fully to print. The printer could live in a slightly recessed space so the outflow of print jobs would feed into a partially open compartment.

There you have it. Please e-mail me with some sketches and I'll send the address where you can deliver the prototype. Please hurry. My arms are killing me.

"MacAdemia Nuts & Bolts" is ©1998 Belinda J. Wagner, <bwanger@atpm.com>.





ON A CLEAR DAY, YOU CAN SEE THE HOLLYWOOD SIGN...
BY MIKE SHIELDS

The Big Story

Well, you would think that the big story this month is, "It's working." Last month, we ran a Segments piece entitled, "Get a Mac." As our regular *ATPM* readers know, I've been recommending this as Apple's ad campaign for about four or five months now.

I remember that fateful day when someone walked up to me at work and asked, "What's the quickest way to get Windoze '95™ installed?" At that time, the fine folks at Ray-O-Hac, which was then Huge, were conducting what they called a pilot program. Our site manager liked to joke, "We've got more pilots than the Air Force!" These things happen when you work at the highest-rated desktop support site, to which I make a modest contribution every month.

To make a long story short, my response was, "Get a Mac." Laughter all around. When we got serious, I pointed them to our *ATPM* website. They liked what they saw. If you haven't been, you should visit it at <http://www.atpm.com>. I'll wait.

Back already? Good. Last month, I mentioned that Apple forgot to run an ad during the Super Bowl. I thought it was because they wanted to save money and put the finishing touches on the Snail ad. A classic, IMNERHO, which stands for, "In My Not Even Remotely Humble Opinion." Anyway, if you haven't seen it, you must. A snail sliming its way across the screen, with a Pentium II chip on its back. Richard Dreyfuss is still supplying the narrative, telling us that the latest benchmarks clock the PPC750 chip at almost twice the speed of a Pentium II. Someone's even gone so far as to create Snail Inside stickers. I suggest we all get a sheet or two of these and start plastering them on every PC-afflicted machine we find.

However, this is not the big story either. No, the big story this month has to be Bill Gates. Not his recent troubles with the Justice Department, which will follow him for the foreseeable future. I'm talking about the pie in the face he recently received in Belgium. Or should I say pies. The recent Compaq-Digital merger may have had enough cash reserve to finance such an intricate plot. Personally, I think they should use the money to bribe one of the DOJ judges.

Now, I'm not saying I advocate this type of behavior. Most of the perpetrators have been arrested. I just have to examine the events that lead to someone getting a pie in the face.

Some say it was the work of a lone pie thrower by the name of Noel Godin, who targets the wealthy and famous. Not too many people know that I'm famous, so I should be safe for now.

Let me offer an alternate conspiracy theory or two, not to be confused with the Mel Gibson movie of the same name. I knew I could get a Hollywood reference in here somehow.

The real "perps" have been caught, except one. No one is naming names. They haven't rolled over on their co-conspirator yet. There were four pies, which takes care of the lone pieman theory.

A bunch of people got together one day, and decided that Bill Gates needed a pie in the face. They put the plan in motion. Six months ago, they handed out propaganda fliers, in an effort to preserve Mac clones. They were partially successful. The Power Computing deal went through, as long as we're on that subject. Apple now owns a database and a marketing arm.

I digress. Embedded in the fliers was a secret message. Those that responded were promoted to Phase II. Find a grassy knoll and a book repository. These Mac users realized that they had their work cut out for them. After all, they hadn't yet experienced the snail commercial.

Checking Mr. Gates itinerary, they discovered he'd be in Belgium around the middle of February. They initiated Phase III. I know what you're saying, there wasn't a book repository or a grassy knoll involved. That's what made the plan even more devious! Mr. Bill wouldn't know what hit him until he tasted the pie.

Using Claris Draw, a map was made and trajectories calculated. Pies from all directions, all at once. The guy still at large broke with this strategy, a decision for which he should be applauded. A quick hit and run, and before Mr. Bill knew it, the first pie was successfully thrown.

It doesn't end there. Two more guys emerged from the building and got him again, just as he had almost finished wiping the first pie off his face. Bill was not happy. A video of the whole incident is available at <http://www.xs4all.nl/~ranx/gates/>.

Someone overheard him saying, "I should have bought a Macintosh." That's right. Bill says he should have bought a Mac. Well, it's not too late for even the PC-afflicted. Don't wait for the technology to get to where you want it, because you'll never buy anything. There will always be something better six months down the road. This is one case where I recommend you play the point and not the line, or the position and not the player. I should take my own advice here. My reasoning will be forthcoming next month. I've already alluded to it several times in the past.

The next time you walk into your local PC-afflicted computer store, be careful. You may get a pie in the face from one of the Mac faithful.

72 and sunny in El Segundo.

e Ya next month.

Disclaimer: Mike will accept praise, flames, and job leads at: <mshields@atpm.com>. He wants to stay in the LA area and would prefer some sort of Mac job in the entertainment industry.



Keyboard Shortcuts

One of the great things about Macintosh is that its interface scales to meet the user's experience level. It's easy-to-learn in the beginning, yet provides powerful features and shortcuts for veteran users. One problem users often encounter is how to make the transition from having a working knowledge about a software application to knowing how to use it efficiently. Many "advanced" features are hidden. They have to be this way, so that when a user looks at a Mac for the first time, it isn't a daunting experience. The question is, how do you find them once you're ready?

KPT Convolver (a Photoshop plug-in from MetaTools) watches you work. When it senses that you know how to use the Convolver tools you currently have, it gives you an additional "star," unlocks a few more tools for you to play with, and describes how to use them.

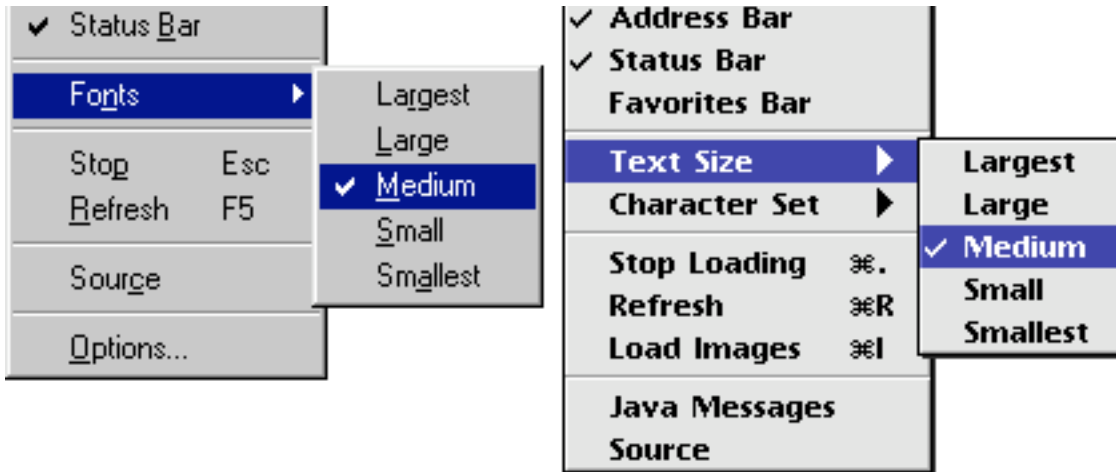


This system works great for Convolver, but I don't know how well it would work for Mac OS. In any case, it's a moot point. No such system is available. In this article, I'll explain some of the "tricks" I've learned for using Mac OS more efficiently. This month I'll focus on keyboard-related shortcuts. Future articles will deal with other topics.

Keyboard Menus

Many Windows users I know feel that in creating an easy-to-use computer, Apple neglected the power user segment of the market. Sure you can control the entire system with the mouse, but for that you sacrifice speed. With Windows you can control nearly the entire interface with the *keyboard*. Each menu item has at least one (possibly *more* than one!) keyboard shortcut.





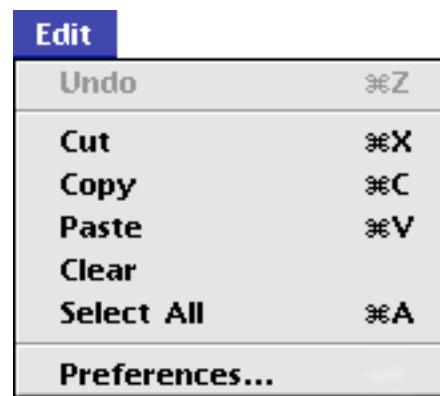
With Macintosh, only frequently-used items have shortcuts. I think this results in less clutter. A good thing to keep in mind is what the different modifier symbols look like. It can be pretty confusing sometimes to look at a menu and match symbols with keys. Hopefully the chart at the right will help.

- ⌘ **Command**
- ⌥ **Option**
- ⇧ **Shift**
- ⌘ **Control**

Remember, no matter how many modifier keys are in a keyboard shortcut, the order in which they are pressed doesn't matter. Just make sure all the modifiers are held down when you type the letter.

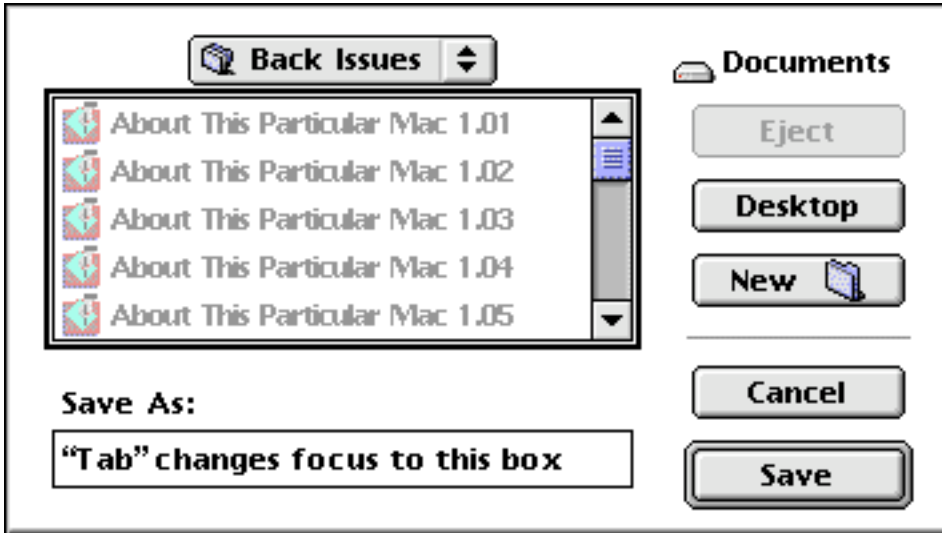
When the Macintosh interface was in the design phase, studies showed that people *think* they save time by using the keyboard. Actually, the keyboard is only faster than the mouse when the shortcuts are ingrained in the user's "muscle memory." If the user must think to remember what the shortcut key is, the mouse is actually faster. Interestingly, the brain doesn't notice the time it spends "recalling" the keyboard shortcut, so users always *think* that the keyboard is faster.

The Edit commands are five shortcuts everyone should commit to muscle memory. All are located close to the left command key. This means they are easy to use with just your left hand. Desktop users frequently have their right hand on the mouse and laptop users' keyboards contain only a single command key on the left. Their order in the Edit menu is identical to their order on the (QWERTY) keyboard, so your hand can associate them by position rather than letter. Others that are easy to type one-handed (and are more or less standard throughout applications) are Quit (Command-Q), Close (Command-W), Save (Command-S), and Find (Command-F).



Buttons and Dialogs

In the PC world, nearly every element of a dialog box can be controlled with the keyboard. Buttons and tabs have underlined letters just as menus do. You can also use Tab to switch between elements. For instance, you could type Tab to put the dotted focus rectangle around a group of radio buttons, then use the arrow keys to select the button you want. As with menus, not everything in Mac dialog boxes is keyboard-controllable, but there are more shortcuts than you might think.



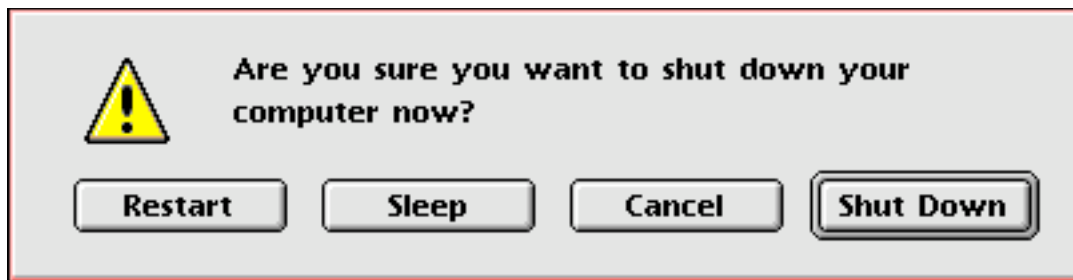
In the dialog above, there's a thick black border around the list of files, indicating that the list is the focus—the element to which keystrokes go. In an "Open..." dialog box with the list as the focus, you can use the arrow keys to change which file or folder is selected. If you type a letter on the keyboard, the first file whose name begins with that letter is selected. If you type a few letters in succession (quickly so the Mac knows they belong together), the first file with that *combination* of initial letters is selected. For instance, typing "a" might select a file called "Aardvarks—a study in alphabetical firsts" while "ab" would select "About This Particular Mac 1.01."

You can change the focus by typing Tab. In this case, tabbing will switch from the list box to the text box where you enter the file's name. Many dialogs have more than one text box, and Tab will cycle through them. Option-tab will cycle through them in reverse order.

You probably already know that clicking the popup menu in the "Save..." dialog lets you move up the disk hierarchy. However, it's often quicker to do this with the keyboard. Command-up-arrow will move one level up the disk hierarchy (another shortcut for this is clicking on the volume icon at the upper right of the dialog). If you have a folder selected

in the list box, command-down-arrow opens that folder (ie moves one level down). Using command-left-arrow and command-right-arrow, you can cycle between mounted volumes.

In every Mac dialog or alert, there is (or should be) a default button, distinguishable by its thick outline. To press this button, you can simply type Return or Enter. The Cancel button can also be accessed from the keyboard—just type Command-`.` or Escape. In many cases, other buttons have shortcuts as well. In some applications (like EMailer or BBEdit) the key equivalents become visible if you hold down the Command key. In others, there's no indication that they're there, but you can generally find them by experimentation. A good bet is the first letter of the button's name. For instance, in the "Save..." dialog above, Eject is Command-E, Desktop is Command-D, and New Folder is Command-N. In the alert pictured below (accessed by pressing the soft power button), Restart is Command-R and Sleep is Command-S.



As you can see, there are quite a few shortcuts hidden behind the Mac's user-friendly interface. In future columns, I hope to discuss more of them. In the meantime, I suggest you try them out. You will find that some are not worth the effort of remembering; but many are. Often, it's not so much a question of whether the mouse is faster than the keyboard, but where your hand is. The best way to learn more about your Mac is to experiment. If you find yourself saying, "Wouldn't it be nice if there were a faster way to ____?" there's a good chance it already exists. See if you can find it.

"The Personal Computing Paradigm" is © 1998 by Michael Tsai, <mtsai@atpm.com>. Michael doesn't have a real PC, so he used Virtual PC to take the above screenshot. The fact about the relative speeds of the mouse and keyboard is from Tog on Interface by Bruce Tognazzini.





BY JAMAL GHANDOUR, jghandour@atpm.com

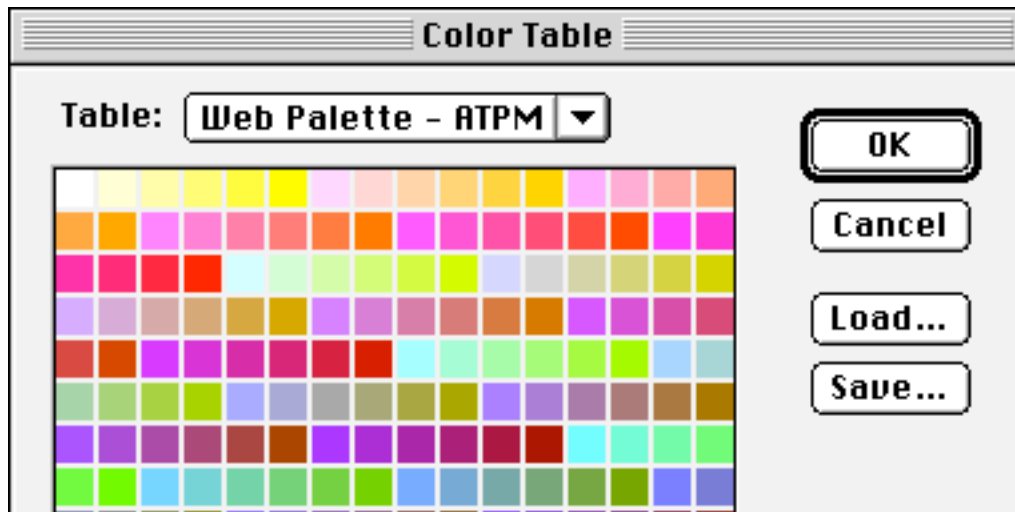
Web-Safe Colors

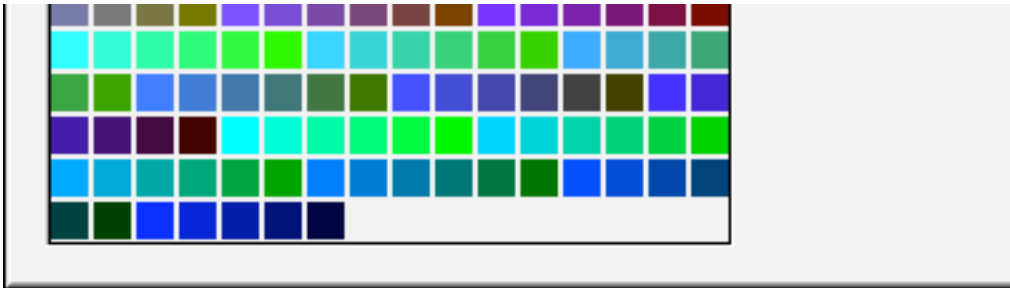
As promised, this month I will discuss how to get smaller, better-looking images on the Web by using the proper color tables. However, before I go on, allow me to thank A. Lee Bennett Jr. for his suggestion to mention the Photoshop Plug-in, "DitherBox." It is very useful for professional and amateur Web designers alike. You can check it at <http://www.ditherbox.com>.

Note: Everything discussed here about color tables applies mainly to GIF images and not to JPEG images, because JPEG doesn't support indexing.

Browser-Safe colors?

We said last month that different operating systems use different color schemes to display images. Although this does not affect designers, it does affect web designers. Images that will look good on the Web can only be achieved by using colors common to all operating systems. A scan of all color schemes used by operating systems revealed that there are 216 colors common to all color tables. Thus, the browser-safe palette was born:





How Safe is Browser-Safe?

Well browser-safe is as safe as you can get. Everyone who accesses your image via the web will see it as you do (relatively speaking). However, there is a catch. browser-safe colors were generated more because of math than adaptivity. Simply put, images will get dithered more often than not, even when all colors are from the browser-safe palette. Some third party applications, like DitherBox, try to avoid this by using advanced dithering techniques, but that's a different story.

Non-Dithered Images

Have you ever noticed that some people manage to post gorgeous graphics on the web that are not dithered? This is accomplished "adaptive indexing," a technique where the best (not necessarily browser-safe) colors are chosen. However, adaptive indexing has gremlins of it's own. If an adaptively indexed image is viewed with a monitor using less than 16-bit color, the browser automatically indexes the image to Web colors. The result is a badly-toned, dithered image.

Nowadays, a majority of systems are capable of displaying 16-bit or better. So, while dithering of adaptive images is a problem, it is not a serious one. In general, it should be quite acceptable to use adaptive indexing on your images. Below, I display an image which has been scanned and dithered both ways and illustrates the differences between the two processes.





FCSF: Fewer Colors Smaller File

Obviously, when you have fewer colors, there is less information encoded with the image. Even an insignificant file size reduction can result in much faster loading of your web page. The proper use of color tables can lead to as much as a whopping 40% file size reduction, and here is how to do it:

1) Open your file.

I will take the *ATPM* logo as an example here. It is a 260 x 95 pixels image with a file size of 37K (Photoshop format).

2) Convert the image to indexed mode (Adaptive).

Now, here is where you cheat... <grin>

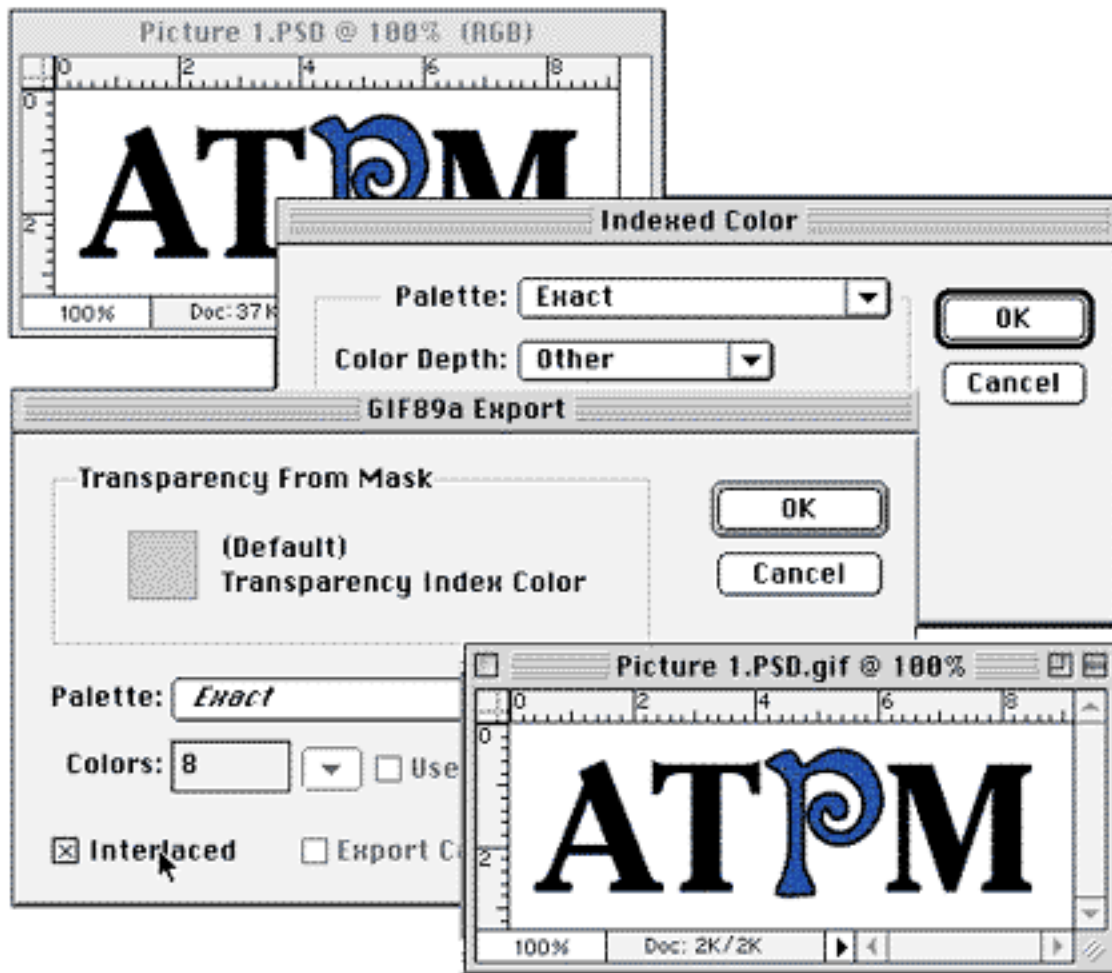
3) Convert the image back to RGB mode.

4) Convert the image again to indexed mode, this time choosing the exact palette. In this example I had eight colors.

5) Export using the GIF 0.89a format. Make sure you choose the interlaced option, unless

the image is small.

The image now is 2K. This is a dramatic savings compared to the Photoshop format and an impressive saving of 1.7K over GIF format using a full color index scheme.



I should also say that there are no hard and fast rules (including the technique discussed above) for making Web images. Each image is an challenge by itself.

Before I finish this off, I have a question to ask. I was thinking of ideas for *ATPM* 4.04. Any ideas, *ATPM* readers? “Transparency on the web—the pitfalls,” how does that sound?

Copyright © 1998 Jamal Ghandour, <jghandour@atpm.com>. Jamal Ghandour is currently the Executive Manager at SwiftAd international. His motivation for completing his masters degree in computer science was to research a



device to clone many Guy Kawasakis! The research continues...



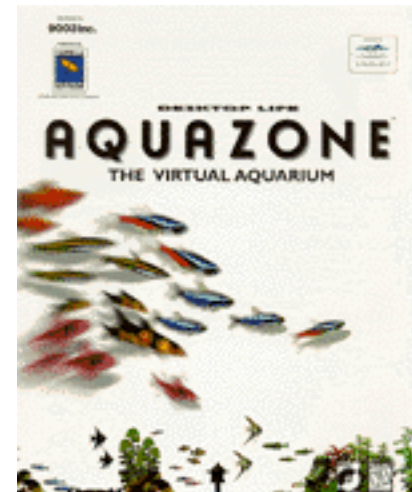
Aquazone

Product Information

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Suite 305
Toronto, Ontario, Canada M4P 1J4
Phone: (416) 487-1777
Fax: (416) 483-20004
Email: [<dean@9003inc.com>](mailto:dean@9003inc.com)
Web: [<http://www.aquazone.com>](http://www.aquazone.com)
Street Price: \$30 US

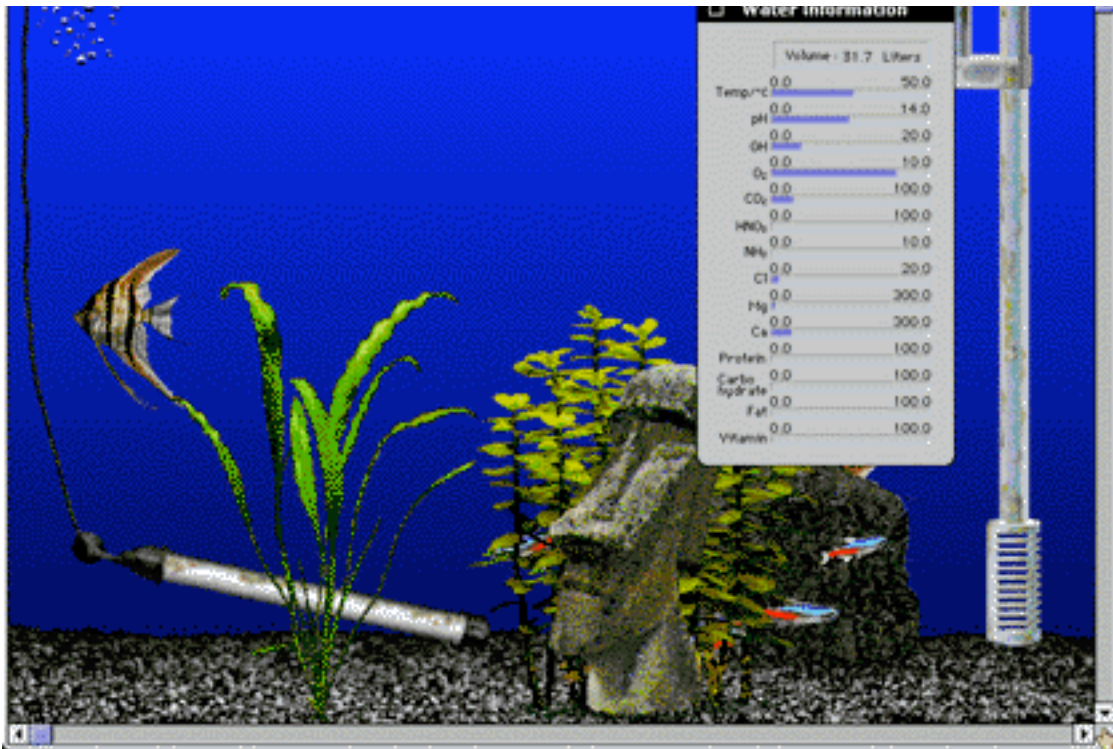
System Requirements

Macintosh with 33 Mhz 68040 or Power Mac
256 color-capable monitor
8 MB RAM
CD-ROM Drive
System 7.0 or higher
9 MB available hard disk space



As a child, I had an imaginary friend. I presume that other *ATPM* readers could make the same admission. I avoided the “Pet Rock” phase of decades past. I am a bit too old to become attached to a Tamagochi key chain pet. These attempts at artificial life and companionship will seem trite next to the “Virtual Reality Aquarium” designed by two Canadians. Arka Roy and Ron Dicarlantonio have returned triumphant from Japan, where their product that has become a cult classic. For the record, **Aquazone**™ is not to be confused with the moderately convincing “After Dark” aquarium screen saver originally developed by Berkeley Systems.





Aquazone™ is a user-generated aquatic environment where a variety of species of fresh water tropical fish are selected to exist, school, be born, fight and die. The fish are there for you to nurture as you would live fish in a real world aquarium. The **Aquazone™** CD-ROM offers you the option of building a full screen aquarium from the gravel on up.

Our fascination with “artificial life” ranges from Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* to HAL in Stanley Kubrick’s film *2001:A Space Odyssey*. Given this rich history, attempts to develop “Digital Life” on the personal computer are not that difficult to accept. Electronic Arts, a software company that offers **Mendel Insectoid™**, has attempted to create an artificial life situation called “Galapagos.” Be aware that this product is more of a game than an exercise in cultivating artificial intelligence.

Installation of **Aquazone™** is a snap. Insert the CD, double-click on the “Installer,” and a dialogue box pops up for you to choose a folder. Currently, my aquarium occupies 16.2 MB (for 44 items) on my hard drive. The hard drive space needed for your aquarium will depend upon how many fish and accessories you choose when creating your special ecosystem.

You can choose among six predetermined aquarium scenarios or build your own customized environment from a variety of interesting backdrops, aquatic plants, driftwood, gravel types, and other interesting accessories. Next, you release fish into the tank. The original CD contains four species of fresh water tropical fish. Mainstay species are *Neon Tetra* and *Leopard Catfish*. The CD offers two “bonus” species: *Angel Fish* and *Black Molly*.

A set number of fish for each species can exist in the aquarium. Once that number of individual fish have died, that is it. There is no resurrection. Nurture these fellows with tender care! Other species and accessories can be purchased and downloaded from the **Aquazone™** Internet site. No more bringing home goldfish in water-filled plastic bags from your local pet shop!

According to the developers, each fish has been engineered with "...Digital DNA, ensuring that every fish will behave with individual characteristics." No two fish are alike and no two owners can have the same aquarium. Furthermore, each species requires specific living conditions. Food, heat, water changes, medication, filtration, and light conditions must be altered to fit the needs of each species of fish your aquarium harbors.

Aquarium activities continue around the clock, 24-hours a day. Whether or not your computer is on or **Aquazone™** is up and running, life in the watery depths continues unabated. Heaven forbid that you have to take a vacation! If so, be prepared to return to an aquarium replete with fish exhibiting the "belly-up" behavior.

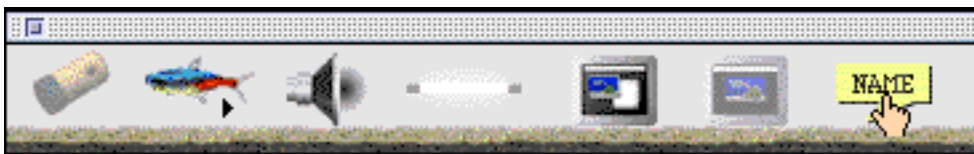


In case you are clueless about raising and caring for fish, the CD contains an "A-Z Library." Books in the Library include: The "Aquarist's Dictionary," which deals with the nitty-gritty physical aspects of the ecosystem you have created; and "Breeding," which provides insight into creating fish from the egg stage. Several books on "Aquarium Setup, Layout and Maintenance" are integral to setting up the conditions and aesthetics of your fish tank. The topics covered in "Fish Feeding" and "Disease and Medication" are rather obvious. The latter is invaluable. The "A-Z Tropical Guide" lists the species of fish available, with good coverage of their origins, history, ease of breeding, and maintenance. The books are all well-written and well-illustrated and are valuable for their easily accessible educational content.





Minor nuances add to the attraction of **Aquazone™**. You can increase the speed of the program if you want to view accelerated development of your fish and their progeny. The water filter makes a soothing bubbling sound (although it can be turned off). The cursor becomes a tiny hand when you position it over the aquarium “glass.” You may then tap on the glass to attract the attention of your fish. As in real life, they scatter as quickly as possible or just ignore you!



This is definitely not a software title for those with little patience or a low attention span. You have to learn which fish are compatible with other fish and differing environments. **Aquazone™** offers both an educational and emotional experience. You can name your fish and follow their progress, breed fish from eggs, and enjoy a peaceful break from the trials and tribulations of everyday life. It is easy to see why this product is a smash hit in Japan, yet such a slow starter in North America. Traditionally, Japanese culture has valued pure aesthetics, beauty, and psychological satisfaction, whereas we North Americans always want to know what it can do for us or want lots of action. Perhaps we can learn to slow down, smell the roses, and watch our water-bound companions live out their lives in serenity.

Copyright ©1998 Robert Madill, <rmadill@atpm.com>. Mr. Madill is a Professor of Art and Architectural History on the faculty of Architecture at the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg, Manitoba.



Bubble Trouble

Product Information

Created by: Alex Metcalf and David Wareing
Published by: Ambrosia Software
Email: [<help@ambrosiasw.com>](mailto:help@ambrosiasw.com)
Web: [<http://www.ambrosiasw.com>](http://www.ambrosiasw.com)
Shareware Fee: \$15 US

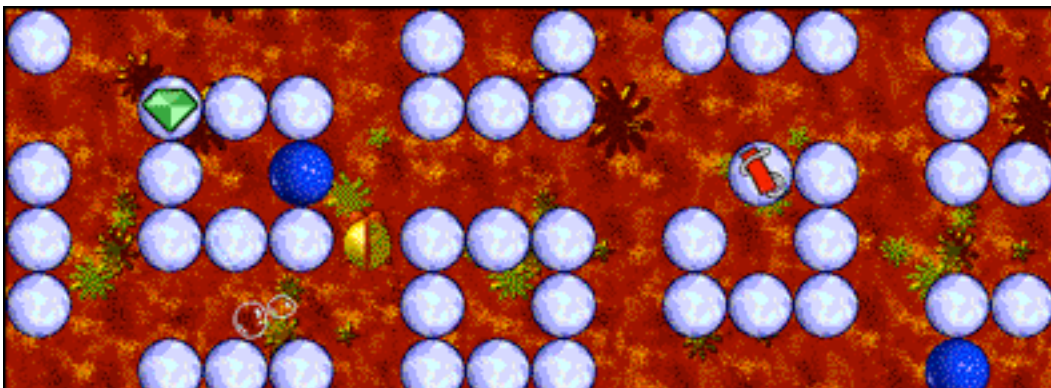
System Requirements

68040 or PowerPC recommended
256 color monitor at 640 x 480



If you browse the software aisle at CompUSA or Best Buy, it seems that all the exciting games are much too graphic for a small child, while all the games designed for small children are “snorers.” What’s a parent to do?

In Bubble Trouble, the player is Blinkie, our young fish protagonist. The object of the game is Blinkie’s survival in the cold, cruel ocean. Each level is a maze of bubbles that Blinkie can push around. Blinkie uses the bubbles to “pop” the bad guys. Blinkie’s enemies range from fairly slow fish, to speedy sharks, to even faster starfish. They all want to get Blinkie.





You have to be careful, because some foes can also push bubbles, which can crush Blinky quite effectively. There are many different tools to use during your adventures. Bouncing balls bounce around one or more times. Dynamite can blow up enemies who are close by. If used improperly, it can destroy you, too. Additionally, you can earn time bonuses and extra lives.

Bubble Trouble is a game of reflexes, skill and strategy. That's saying a lot, and the realization snuck up on me, but these reasons keep bringing me back. Some call the game addictive and I can't argue with them. At times, I found it hard to pull away from Bubble Trouble.

Bubble Trouble's graphics are bright, colorful, non-violent, and fun as heck. These make Bubble Trouble a cool game for your kids. My friend enjoys playing Bubble Trouble for hours, and so do his boys (ages five and six). They play together as a group. I believe this is one of the few games that parents can truly enjoy as much as their kids.

Perhaps the most dynamic aspect of the game is the cool, included music, which was written by the authors. The music is also cool because its based on the MOD sound format, an old Amiga Computer format. If you don't like the included soundtrack, or want something different, you can download one of thousands of files available on the Internet, rename the file, and use it as Bubble Trouble's soundtrack. It's pretty cool and it works.

There is also a High-Score contest, which is taken quite seriously by many players.

In summary, the interface and controls are delightfully simple. The graphics and sound are rich. Difficulty is enough to hold adults' interest, yet it's still enjoyable for children. Bubble Trouble is well worth the purchase price of \$15.

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ClockSync II

Product Information

Created by: Jeremy Kezer

Published by: Jeremy Kezer

Email: [<jbkezer@kagi.com>](mailto:jbkezer@kagi.com)

Web: [<http://www.kezer.net>](http://www.kezer.net)

Street Price: \$5 (3 User, sliding scale for more)

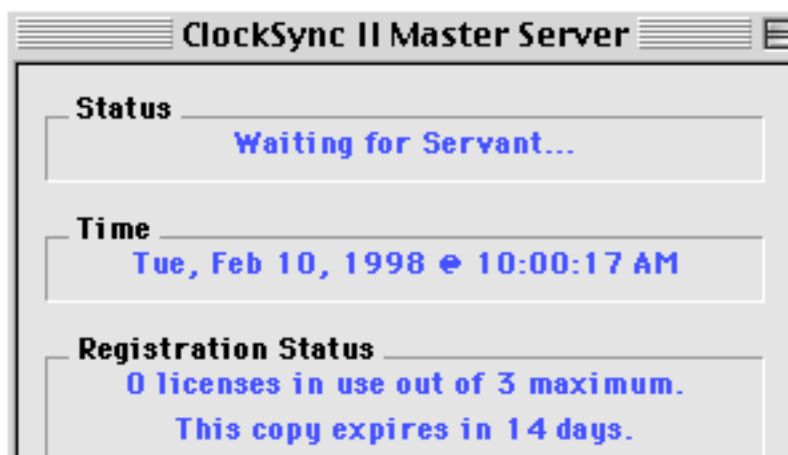
System Requirements

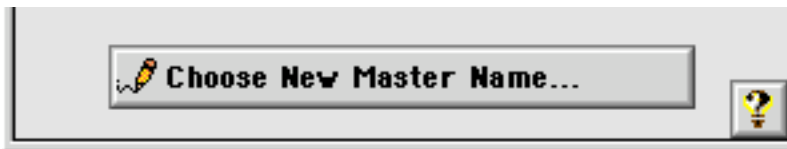
68020 Processor or better

Connection to an AppleTalk network

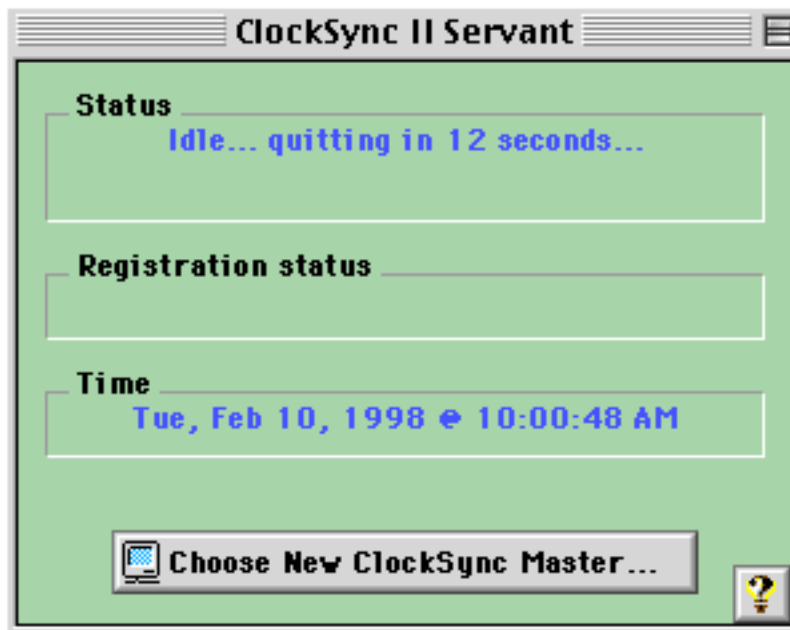
In some respects, my job is easy. All I have to do is keep all the Macs (among other things) running smoothly all the time. In our business, we pass files back and forth all day long. One guy uses it here, another guy uses it there, all day long.

If all the machines' clocks aren't identical, it's hard to know exactly when a file was last modified. System clocks can sometimes differ by as much as 15 minutes, so this is a bigger problem than it might seem. Well, finally I have a solution. It's an inexpensive one at that.





ClockSync is exceedingly simple to configure and use. On your Master computer, you set your geographical location in the Map control panel, turn on “Program Linking,” set the proper time, and launch the ClockSync Master application. The true beauty of ClockSync is that it uses so few resources; there’s no need to have it running on it’s own Mac. I had it running on my Mac while I worked, for several days, with nary a crash.



The next step is to launch the ClockSync Servant application on one of your target Macs, and tell it where the Master is on your Network. The Servant then sets that Mac’s time to the Master, counts down 15 seconds, and quits itself. Every time you launch the Servant after that, as long as the Master is up and running, the Servant will do it’s job “auto-magically.” You might even want to put a Servant alias in the Startup Items folder, so it can set the time at each start-up.

In conjunction with a freeware program like Vremya (an application that uses the Internet to set your Mac’s time to the Network Time Protocol), your networked Macs never need to be out of sync again.

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Settlers II

Product Information

Published by: BlueByte Software
870 E.Higgins Road, Suite 143
Schaumburg, IL 60173
Phone: (847) 995 9981
Fax: (847) 995 9956
Email: [<hotline@bluebyte.com>](mailto:hotline@bluebyte.com)
Web: [<http://www.bluebyte.com>](http://www.bluebyte.com)
Street Price: \$40 US

System Requirements

68030 processor (68040 or PPC recommended)
System 7.1 or higher
16 MB RAM
10 MB disk space (25 MB recommended)
CD-ROM
256 colors, 640x480 display
QuickTime 2.0 required for optional movies

Veni, Vidi, Vici

Once upon a time, there was a mighty ship called the "Torius," on its way to deliver cargo to the Laetonic provinces. Nothing seemed to stop its run through the smooth surface of the ocean. But then, just four days shy of its destination, a strong wind came up in the "Treacherous Sea of Storms." It blew the Torius far off course. The Torius then ran aground on an unknown island, far away from popular trading routes. Your role is that of "Octavius," Captain of the Torius. Your goal is to establish a temporary settlement, explore the island, and find a way home to Rome.

Don't let the name of the game fool you. You didn't miss anything. There is no Settlers I; at least, not for the Mac. It came out for the PC some time ago and was a huge hit. It was so popular that BlueByte decided to come up with a Mac version of its sequel "Settlers II—Veni, Vidi, Vici," the Latin form of, "I came, I saw, I conquered," oft attributed to

Julius Caesar.

Once you start the program, it is easy to tell that Settlers II is a “PC port.” Actually, the evidence comes even earlier. There is no installer. You have to create a new folder on your hard drive, then copy the application, map, and data folders into it. Nowhere is this process explained. The authors assumed that users would run Settlers II from the CD-ROM. You can do that, but it limits your options. For instance, command-Q ends the current game, but doesn’t quit the program. The interface is a collection of a main window and smaller tool windows that behaves like a mixture of windows and palettes. Overall the interface is weird, but it is possible to get acclimated.



The manual is short and not very helpful. It mostly says **how**, but not **why**.

One thing that distinguishes Settlers from other strategic simulations is that you don’t command units. Instead, you give orders by setting priorities and guidelines. Your units try to follow them, which seems confusing at first. Basically, you don’t select a worker and tell him to build a house at a particular location. In Settlers II, you order that a house be put at a certain position. Your units will do what is necessary to build it. You don’t select a soldier and tell him to attack a building. Instead, you click on the enemy building and choose attack from the floating window. You specify how many soldiers should attack the building

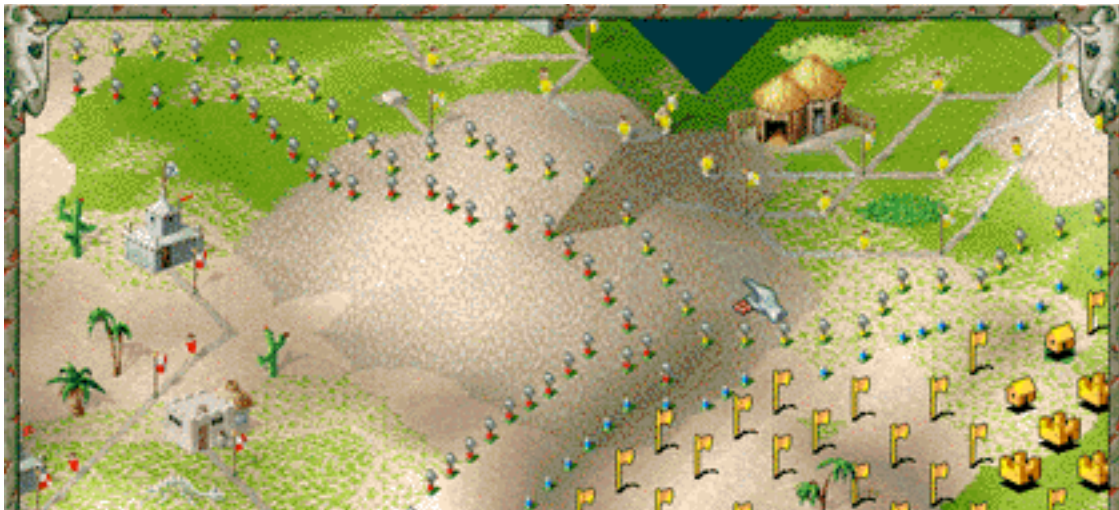
and whether to use experienced warriors or new recruits. Other units (e.g., woodcutters, hunters, and foresters) do what they want, but you can guide them by building their homes close to resources. You can specify a flagged destination for your scouts and geologists, but once they get there, they take off in whatever direction they want.

Transportation is the most important concept in Settlers II. Without roads, nothing moves. For me, this was a painful lesson. I played before reading the manual and put buildings all over the screen. Then I waited. For about five minutes. Nothing happened. As it turns out, you have to connect buildings with roads to your headquarters before your units can do anything. Once roads are in place, your units can start transporting resources from headquarters or the storehouse to the next flag down the road. There, the next unit takes over and brings the material (e.g., stones or food) to the next flag, and so on...This chain system is your major means of transportation.

Flags and building squares are the second most important concept in Settlers II. There are three different types of buildings: small, medium and large. You can only build a large building in a square that allows large buildings. How that is determined is a total mystery to me, but if you press the space bar, you'll see an overlay of flags and building squares on your territory. The overlay shows where you can build what. You can build small houses in large squares, but the converse is not true.

Be warned! Building a street or a house changes the flags and building allowances around it. If you build a street right next to a large square, it will probably be reduced to a medium square. The best thing is to put a large building there first, then construct the street. Streets can only be placed between buildings or between a building and a flag.

There is one helper per flag. This helper carries goods to the next flag one by one. Therefore, it is more efficient to put many flags on a road to shorten the distance between two flags. This way, the helper carries more efficiently. A heavily used street is converted automatically to a donkey trail, provided you have donkeys. If not, you have to build a donkey farm.





Zones of control are another important concept (see picture above). Building is limited to within your zones of control. How do you get a zone of control? By building a military building. This is a bit of a paradox. How can you build a building that is needed for building? Put a military building on the border of an existing zone. You extend your zones of control piece by piece.

Military buildings house your soldiers. They are the only buildings you and your enemy can attack. Military buildings can hold different numbers of soldiers. There is even a catapult that destroys enemy buildings in a certain range.

When a military building is captured, all the opponent's buildings within that zone are destroyed and their units flee retreat to their remaining territory. You cannot attack civilians, only military buildings. Your patrols can attack incoming soldiers. The military system is very simple. Soldiers are the only military unit, but they come in six different flavors, i.e., strengths. The strength of a unit depends on how much beer and gold coins they get.

The military system is simple, but the economy consists of numerous goods.

For construction and tools, you need stones, trees chopped, delivered to the saw mill, and lumber produced. You need to mine iron ore, coal, granite, and gold. Raw materials are converted to finished metals, from which weapons (swords and shields) are produced, tools (around 15 of them) crafted, and gold coins minted.

Your fishermen need the line and hook tool to catch the fish that feed your miners. Your farms produce the grain for the mill, brewery, and bakery, and for feeding livestock. The slaughterhouse makes ham out of the poor pigs. For some reason, miners are the only "units" that need food.

Playing Settlers II is frustrating at first, but once



you have figured out how everything works, it is a lot of fun. The graphics are nicely done. The background music plays right off the CD. Your citizens are very cute; you can just lean back and watch them do their jobs. You can zoom in on the window, however that merely magnifies the graphics pixel by pixel without adding detail. The game has an "accelerate" key (2x), should you feel hasty.

In an attempt to keep the game interesting, there are multiple missions and custom scenarios.

However, I found them a little boring over time.

Settlers II is great for children. There is little or no violence. However, it will take them some time to understand the whole game. I'd advise parents to assist their children in the beginning.

Settlers II is a good game. The idea is excellent. Implementation is good, but could be better. It has an in-game help function that can occasionally spare you some consultation with the printed manual. I doubt it can compare with giants like Civilization II or Warcraft II, but it is certainly worth a try and the new concept is quite entertaining. Adding multi-player games in the future would be a huge plus.



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ABOUT THIS STUFF



REVIEWED BY DAVID HUSTON, dhuston@drfast.net

Teach!

Product Information

Published by: Acrux Software
Kromboomssloot 53
1011 GS Amsterdam
Netherlands
Phone/Fax: +31 20 6261899 (Europe)
Email: [<info@acruxsoft.com>](mailto:info@acruxsoft.com)
Web: [<http://www.acruxsoft.com>](http://www.acruxsoft.com)
List Price: \$99 US (site licenses available)



Why Can't Instructional Software Be Fun *and* Useful?

Each week, scads of new software titles greet us. They promise to deliver both fun and instruction. A closer look at the most popular titles reveals that they are long on entertainment and short on instruction. What's a software developer to do? Fun sells. Education is "boring."

What's a parent or teacher to do? We know, better than our children, that fun isn't enough, so we search for software that will both teach and delight them. Occasionally, we find a title that evenly balances these two objectives. However, if their grades fall below our expectations, we revert to grabbing a title which emphasizes drill and mastery. Frustrated, we sit our kids down at the computer and let them know this will be good for them—or else!

Why is it nearly impossible to find interesting, attractive software that actually helps our kids learn? In desperation, I have often said to myself, "I'd write the software, if only I knew how!" However, as anyone who has tried their hand at authoring instructional software will tell you, that is easier said than done.

Teach!'s New Approach to Instructional

Multimedia

Until now, Teach! has taken a fresh new approach to designing instructional software. The newcomer to Teach! will find the familiar elements of multimedia: text, graphics, animation, video, music, sound, spoken text, navigation buttons, and transitions. Features are organized and arranged for the express purpose of providing helpful, interesting instruction. Instead of feeling bewildered, as one often feels when using overly-complicated multimedia programs, one finds that Teach! is easy to learn and fun to use. Newcomers will produce effective, appealing lessons within a few hours. For instructors of all kinds, Teach! is a dream come true.

HyperStudio (reviewed in *ATPM* 3.10) has been the long-reigning champ of multimedia in schools, for good reason. Teachers have used this versatile, easy-to-use, and economical tool with great success for multimedia presentations and reports. However, HyperStudio is limited as an instructional tool. It fails to equip a course designer with a complete set of creative tools necessary to produce interesting, effective, instructional multimedia.

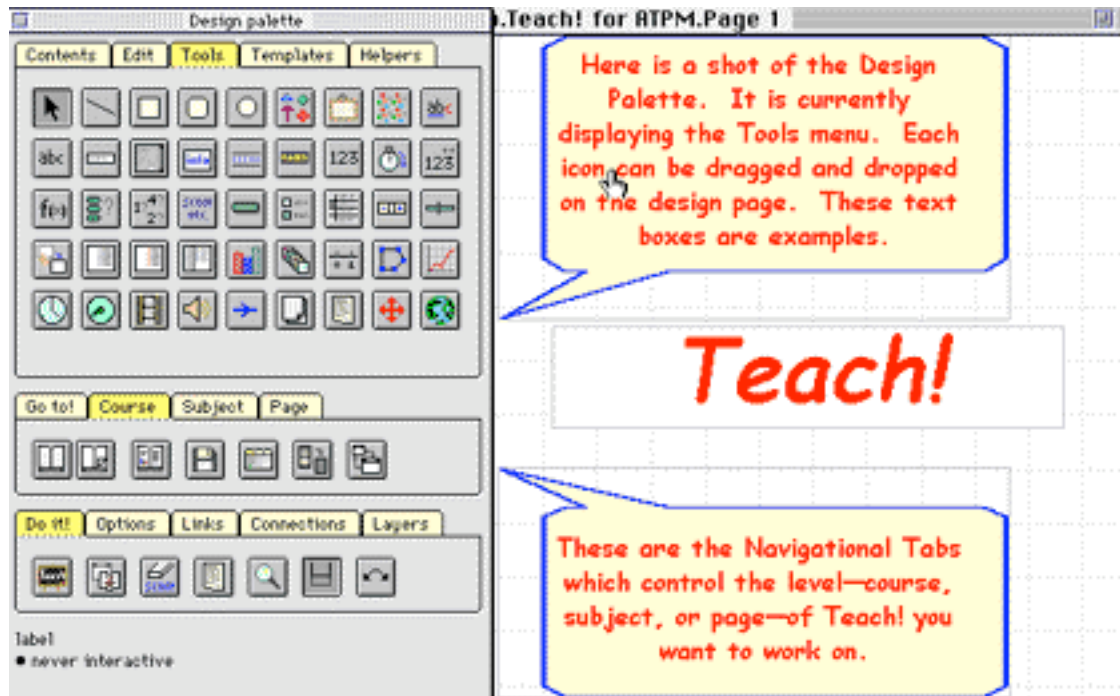
Teach! begins where HyperStudio leaves off. By utilizing its Stationary templates, Teach! users can set up the framework and structure of an entire course—complete with tables of contents, index, glossary, and navigational buttons—with the click of a single button. The course designer can concentrate on developing lesson content. Teach! handles most of the complicated rigmarole of organizing multimedia environments. Teach! provides a wide array of pre-made templates for interactive presentations, testing, linking, and reporting. Although it is possible to duplicate these effects with other multimedia authoring programs, Teach! makes the process quick and easy.

Teach! is based on the metaphor of a book. This is a natural format for instructional multimedia. It makes authoring with Teach! easier than using most multimedia software—especially for real teachers! After all, what is more familiar to them than a book? Each “stack” of cards is referred to as a “course.” Courses are subdivided into subjects and pages. The traditional framework of books—including tables of contents, index, glossary, and page numbers—are provided automatically. The traditional tools of instruction—text, images, speech, and graphic aids—are added easily to pages via a simple drag and drop process. No scripting or programming of any kind is required.

Key Features

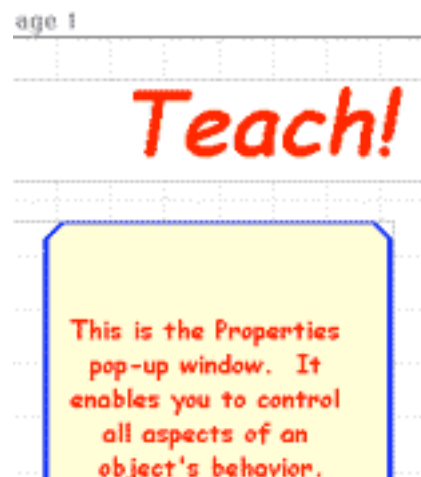
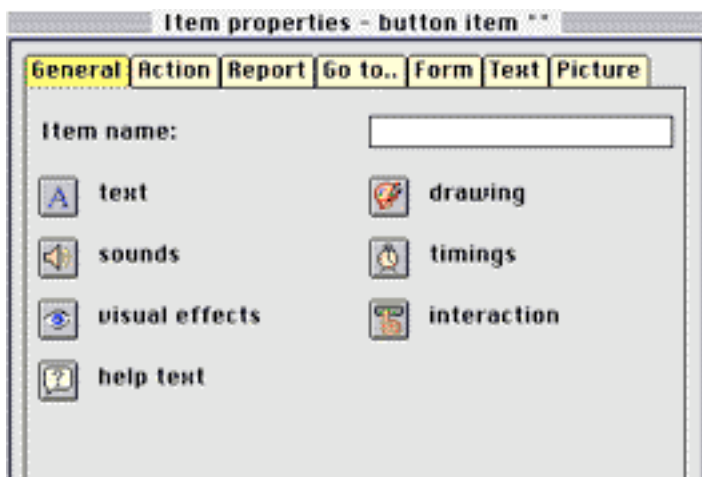
An ingenious design palette is the key to Teach!’s simplicity. If you have worked with HyperStudio, Supercard, or some of the high end, professional multimedia authoring tools (e.g., Director, mTropolis, or Authorware), you know how demanding it is to keep track of the many elements of a multimedia presentation. Whether these tasks are accomplished by scripting, icons, flow-charts, or dialogue boxes, every multimedia program greets its user with a screen cluttered with a confusing array of boxes and palettes. Traditionally, authoring tools trade off between a simple interface with lots of commands hidden in menus (e.g., HyperStudio) or lots of easily-accessible commands cluttering the screen and

obscuring your view (e.g., mTropolis).



The Design Palette

Teach! has found a way to eliminate clutter while displaying all its tools by using a shrewdly programmed Design Palette. It contains icons for more than 100 separate commands, yet takes up only about a third of your screen. This design may seem daunting, but actually it is very easy to use. The secret lies in the tabs. At any given time, only 25 icons are displayed and they all relate to a single aspect of the course. Single clicks cause the Design Palette to either shrink or vanish from the screen altogether. Designing and viewing your work is fast and easy. After a few hours with the Design Palette I was completely at ease with the available tools and commands.





A second great feature is Teach!'s pop-up properties window. Like mTropolis, Teach! is an "object-oriented environment." After adding an item or object (e.g., images, animation, video, text, voice, music, or sound) to a page, you can customize its properties via a pop-up window. For example, text properties include: color, font, size, and style. Additionally, you can customize the color, shape, and position of frames and backgrounds, choose whether the text will be read by Apple's Text to Speech feature, choose the speaking voice (e.g., Fred, Bubbles, Princess), and define when and how the text will appear and disappear from the screen. All this can be designated from one simple window!

The Design Palette also includes an Edit window which lists all items on the current page. Items added to the page are arranged according to the time they were added. The entire contents of a page can be seen at a glance. Identical properties can be assigned to several objects at one time from the Edit window. Properties can be easily copied and pasted from one object to another. If you like, you can copy entire pages, subjects (groups of pages), or courses with a single click. The order of items, pages, and subjects can be changed easily in Teach!. Getting all the pieces to fit together properly is often the most difficult aspect of authoring multimedia. The Edit window gives you a simple, yet powerful way to accomplish this minor miracle.

Like most of today's multimedia authoring tools, Teach! comes with a full array of support for audio-visual elements. Teach! supports AIFF or AIFC sound files, QuickTime audio and video, PICT, JPEG, and GIF graphics, and provides compression and proportional scaling. Audio-visual elements are added to a page via drag and drop or dialogue windows.

Special Instructional Tools

Teach! comes equipped with over thirty templates, each with many variations—all geared to typical educational needs: multiple-choice, true-false, completion, and essay question templates are provided for quizzing and testing purposes. These allow for on-screen correction and feedback. Reports of student answers can be generated with networked versions. There are templates for an incredibly wide variety of uses. Teach! has templates for questions I haven't even thought of asking—yet! There are templates for shapes and banners, flashing neon signs, tickertape messages, labels, buttons, counters, sliders, steppers, containers, block graphs, sequences, scales, linear, coordinate graphs, dials, clocks, and animations. All the designer has to do is drag and drop these templates onto a page, make minor adjustments, and they are ready to go. Easy availability of these clever pre-programmed objects makes designing interactive multimedia instruction a breeze.

Text to Speech

My favorite templates are those for Text to Speech. Teach! makes effective use of this Macintosh feature. Hearing instructions in addition to reading gives the student another modality. A student can observe the drawing, video, or picture while it is being discussed. This is a great aid to concentration and retention. Teach!'s spoken text templates are arranged so that four separate blocks of text are programmed to appear on the screen sequentially. You can even have female and male voices speaking alternating blocks of text! Both the visual appearance and the specific voices of spoken text boxes can be altered in any way. Synthesized voices are advantageous because they do not take up scarce memory resources, which allows for extensive use of voices without fear of bloating the course's memory requirements.

Text presentation is another outstanding feature of Teach!. While this might seem pretty mundane, handling it well is crucial to the success of instructional multimedia. For example, viewers get discouraged when they see more than 50 words on the screen at any one time. They often skip over important points. Often, the viewer must click to the next page too frequently, which disturbs their concentration. Teach!'s strategy is nothing short of brilliant. Any number of text boxes, pop-up windows, and graphics can appear or disappear on the same page and they can be sequenced or timed in any manner the designer wishes. Any or all text boxes can be scripted to include Text to Speech. Enormous flexibility, control and sophistication over course presentations is achieved without any programming.

Teach! pages can contain a high degree of interactivity. Hypertext links can connect pages to other pages within the same course, pages in other courses, other programs and files, and—through the designated browser—to the WWW. Teachers can direct their students to specified sites on the Web instead of setting them off on wild goose chases. These “Web-expeditions” can be folded into a complete lesson.

Teach! enables classroom teachers to record and monitor the use of courseware by students. Teach! assigns each user their own “briefcase” file (there is a cute icon of a briefcase in their user file). The program records where a student left off working on a course and automatically sends them back to that spot when they return. In addition, Teach! records student answers and send reports—individual or a grouped results—back to the instructor. It will even send reports back to the instructor over the Internet!

Teach! comes in two versions. The complete version is fully-enabled for course design, while Teach!Lite functions as a freely-shareable demo and player. The Lite version has a partial list of commands—called “basic design level”—and saves up to 25 pages. Courses can be distributed via disks, CDs, or by downloading from the WWW. Although many multimedia programs are touting their Internet-ready capabilities, loading times for most teachers are still too slow to make it a practical venue for interactive instruction.

Teach! accomplishes all this with an astonishingly small footprint. This makes it very

attractive for schools or families with older Macs. Teach! runs on a PPC or 68020 processor or greater. It requires 3 MB free RAM (5 MB preferred), a color monitor with 640x480 pixels, and System 7.1 or later (Mac OS 8 preferred).

Very Affordable for Families and Schools

Teach! is an exceptional value. The full version of Teach! lists for \$99, which includes printed (and very clear) documentation and very prompt, helpful e-mail support. Free updates are available for one year after purchase. Acrux Software has an especially generous website. Visitors may download Teach!Lite, which comes with a tour and an introduction to the design capabilities of the program. In addition, there are many free templates, tutorials, sample courses, and stationery files available for downloading. Acrux Software offers a network site license to schools for 20 users which costs less than \$400.

I have worked with and examined lots of multimedia authoring programs over the last few years. It is a crowded field with many capable competitors. Teach! stands out for its clarity of purpose, simplicity of design, ease of learning and use, the power of its tools, and its exceptional value. If you need to use computers for instructional purposes—and these days, who doesn't?—you can't do better than Teach!

Copyright © 1998 David D. Huston. Mr. Huston is a 20-year high school history teacher from Cleveland, Ohio. He is a long-time Mac user and an avid student and user of multimedia.



Guidelines

The Official *ATPM* Guidelines

The Official *ATPM* Guidelines page is the place to go when you have a question about our publication. We can't imagine that you simply wandered in here. That's because the information on this page is very dry and mostly unentertaining (which is why it's on this page and not included in another part of our publication). We guess you could call this the "Relatively Boring But Occasionally Important Page of Information." OK, enough already with the extraneous syntax, now onto the stuff.

What is *ATPM*

About This Particular Macintosh (ATPM) is, among other things, a monthly Internet magazine or "e-zine." It's published by Michael Tsai and Robert Paul Leitao (who are still looking for a cool logo for themselves that depicts their joint effort). *ATPM* was created to celebrate the personal computing experience. For us this means the most personal of all personal computers—the Apple Macintosh. *About This Particular Macintosh* is intended to be about your Macintosh, our Macintoshes, and the creative, personal ideas and experiences of everyone who uses a Mac. We hope that we will continue to be faithful to our mission.

We'd Like Our Readers To Be Involved

Here, at *ATPM* worldwide headquarters, we're interested in hearing from you, our loyal readers. We're especially interested in stories about you and Life With Your Particular Macintosh. We guess we could have called this publication LWYPM but it just didn't sound quite right. So we called it *ATPM* and decided to ask for your stories and anecdotes about our most personal of personal computers. *ATPM* is also looking for people interested in joining our editorial staff. We currently need a [Shareware Reviews Editor](#), a [Publicity Manager](#), and an [Interviews Manager](#). Please contact us at [<editor@atpm.com>](mailto:editor@atpm.com) if you're interested.

Cover Art: We enjoy the opportunity to display new, original cover art every month. We're also very proud of the people who have come forward to offer us cover art for each issue. If you're a Macintosh artist and interested in preparing a cover for *ATPM*, please e-mail us. The way the process works is pretty simple. As soon as we have a topic or theme for the upcoming issue we let you know about it. Then, it's up to you. We do not pay for cover art but we are an international publication with a broad readership and we give appropriate credit alongside your work. There's space for an e-mail address and a Web page URL, too. Write to <editor@atpm.com> for more information.

We Want To Hear From You

E-Mail: Got a comment about an article that you read in *ATPM*? Is there something you'd like us to write about in a future issue? We'd love to hear from you. Send your e-mail to <editor@atpm.com>. We often publish the e-mail that comes our way.

Segments—Slices from the Macintosh Life: This is one of our most successful spaces and one of our favorite places. We think of it as kind of the *ATPM* "guest room." This is where we will publish that sentimental Macintosh story that you promised yourself you would one day write. It's that special place in *ATPM* that's specifically designated for your stories. We'd really like to hear from you. Several Segments contributors have gone on to become *ATPM* **columnists**. Send your stuff to <editor@atpm.com>.

Let Us Know That You Know What You Know

Hardware and Software Reviews: *ATPM* publishes hardware and software reviews. However, we do things in a rather unique way. Techno-jargon can be useful to engineers but is not always a help to most Mac users. We like reviews that inform our readers about how a particular piece of hardware or software will help their Macintosh lives. We want them to know what works, how it may help them in their work, and how enthusiastic they are about recommending it to others. If you have a new piece of hardware or software that you'd like to review, contact our reviews editor at: <reviews@atpm.com> for more information.

Shareware Reviews: Most of us have been there; we find that special piece of shareware that significantly improves the quality of our Macintosh life and we wonder why the entire world hasn't heard about it. Now here's the chance to tell them! Simply let us know by writing up a short review for our shareware section. Send your reviews to <reviews@atpm.com>.

Your Stuff: If you or your company has a product that you'd like to see reviewed, send a copy our way. We're always looking for interesting pieces of software to try out.

Wishful Thinking

Wishful Thinking: Is the space for Mac enthusiasts who know *exactly* (if you do say so yourself) what Apple should do with its advertising campaigns and product introductions. Have you come up with a great advertising tag line? What about that Mac campaign that has been stewing in the back of your mind? Send your big ideas (or your art) to <editor@atpm.com>.

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That's It

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