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About This Particular Macintosh™ 4.01: About the **personal** computing experience™

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Cover Art

Contributors

Daniel Chvatik
Jamal Ghandour
Edward Goss
Tom Iovino
Robert Paul Leitao
Robert Madill
Barry L. Ritholtz
Mike Shields
Michael Tsai
Belinda Wagner
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Belinda Wagner

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Welcome

This issue marks the fourth calendar year of *ATPM's* publication! If only our personal computers lasted that long! For many of us, the endless array of upgrades, improvements and new computer products has our heads spinning more quickly than a DVD on fast forward!

The good news for computer users is that Apple's "G3" machines are so hot and in fashion, they'd 'd be on the cover of "GQ" if they were men's apparel. Speaking of suits, have you been following the Microsoft mess? We are a "hi-brow" publication so we'll ignore the latest "low-down" on the browser "imbroglio" (we love this word — please see below).

The Official *ATPM* Word of the Month

On occasion, our editors recommend a special word that's featured as "*ATPM's* Official Word of the Month." Readers may remember the word "amelio•rate" that was featured several months ago. Unfortunately, the good Dr.'s swift departure from our favorite Cupertino company did nothing to increase this word's popularity outside of *ATPM*.

In honor of Apple's interim chairman and the company's recent history, a three letter word spelled with the first letters of Steve's last name has been selected as this month's "*ATPM* Word of the Month" (imbroglio was a close second and may be chosen for a future issue). This month's word is: "Job." A reasonable person might ask why we chose the name of a tragic character from biblical history as our Word of the Month. Here's our reasoning:

Mr. Job (we added the sir title to his biblical name out of respect for all he endured) was afflicted with just about everything imaginable (except an Intel 486 box trying to run Windows 95 on 8 megs of RAM). Even the fleas on Job's camel had fleas! This poor guy, through no real fault of his own, was used by the Creator of all things to emphasize a few

very important points to humankind.

Although even his most well-meaning friends blamed Job's troubles upon something he did, events were basically outside of his control. Among other things, Job's story teaches us about patience, perseverance, and about not being judgmental of others, their circumstances, or the sources of their difficulties.

Many critics try to pinpoint the cause(s) of the Macintosh market's successes and failures. Some people spend countless hours analyzing subtle nuances of every Apple event (pun intended). We never know why many things happen the way they do and no one ever knows when someone or something bigger-than-life might just "turn the tables." By the end of the biblical story, Job was restored and given far more than he lost. Please draw your own conclusions. Next month's word could be Justice (Department). Go figure!

Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star

Do you remember this nursery rhyme? Nothing seems to stir the imagination more than a shooting star or a night sky filled with "celestial lights." This childlike sense of awe and wonder prompted many of us to purchase our first Macintosh, pursue a new career, or get involved with a favorite charity or personal interest. No matter how distant, shimmering stars have been known to inspire great artists, young lovers, and children of all ages.

We begin 1998 with renewed hope, fresh dreams, and a continued confidence in ourselves and our fellow Mac users. What has brought us all together is less a collective fascination with a particular piece of computer hardware than a mutual interest in exploring the depths of our human creativity and imaginings.

We are coming ever closer to the threshold of a new millennium; a time when all of humanity will turn its gaze toward the heavens. May the little boy or girl in each of us take pause this month to gaze skyward and perhaps, if only for a moment, remember the words of that little nursery rhyme and allow ourselves once more to be filled with a sense of awe and wonder.

A piano is deafeningly quiet without its musical Maestro. The Macintosh is also an instrument. It needs a "maestro" to give it "song." It's the beauty and creativity of the human mind which gives the Mac its "music." May your New Year be filled with "sweet songs" and pleasant surprises. Please enjoy our New Year's issue!

The ATPM Staff

Email

The Clone Message

Just read the copy of *ATPM* 3.09 which I got distributed with the January issue of *MacFormat*. Thanks for an excellent e-zine. I like especially the articles from "Segments…" My heart goes out to Victor Wong for his recent trouble with cloning after reading what he had to write on that subject. Somehow I think the message with regards cloning is just not getting through to Apple (Steve Jobs?).

Keep up the good work.

Chik Foo
yimcf@post1.com

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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 announcment about the Macintosh platform in general, that's ok too.

Two Worlds, One Heart

I've written this first-of-the-year column several times, at least in my mind. Each time the column has a new perspective and a different area of focus. For me, it's not difficult to come up with ideas for a column. My fragmented dreams and lonely musings could fill volumes. Ideas are as close as a nearby street sign or as far-away as a shooting star on a midnight clear. What these varied ideas have in common is a desire to communicate, to be understood, and to share human experiences with thousands of readers all over the world.

The World Wide Web has turned much of the world into a single electronic community similar to the way sea, air, and surface transportation has transformed Los Angeles into a microcosm of the Western Hemisphere. Here, in this desert metropolis, only a few scant miles separate vastly different cultures. On the Web, only small language barriers and nano seconds separate me from millions of my world wide neighbors.

The World Wide Web is a surreal environment and Internet communication is immediate and convenient. Living in Los Angeles, I also have many different customs, cultures and languages just outside my front door. I enjoy electronically visiting the world. I also appreciate the rich traditions, foods and customs I can physically explore in one of world's largest and more ethnically diverse cities. But sometimes all this connectivity and closeness makes me want to close my doors, seal my windows, flop on the couch, and dream of living in Avonlea at the turn-of-the-century.

As a dreamer and a writer, I fantasize about open expanses of land, rolling hills, covered horse bridges, and the romance of steam engines winding their way through mountain passes. As a citizen of what will soon be the 21st century, I'm adapting to a world that is ever seeking to pierce the remaining human vanities of privacy and a moment's pause for composure. We live in a world where each moment of the day is filled with either work or entertainment. In short, we're compelled to be either coming or going, but rarely allowed to stand in the crossroads, take a deep breath, and patiently choose our direction.

My life requires me to play many different roles. It's the melding of these roles that has become a challenge. Thankfully, my children are more adept than I at moving between their different worlds. They move quickly between video games, edutainment computer games,

picture books, board games, and their Dad's extemporaneous bedtime stories. My children and I do share a favorite time: after lights out, in the quiet of the night, we dream of far-off places and visit a mystical land of hope. But, my life is more segmented than theirs. I have to consciously set aside time to have fun. I admire the easy way they change their mind set, their passions, and the focus of their play. It will serve them well in today's world.

Traveling the highways and byways of Los Angeles County can also be a mix of experiences. To travel 30 miles in the weekday morning rush, you might pack breakfast and an audio novel. You will most likely finish both before reaching your destination. You might even arrive just in time for lunch. On the weekends, I can travel at least that distance in less time than it takes in many restaurants to sit down and order lunch.

The Internet (or Information Superhighway) and its graphical counterpart, the World Wide Web, are no strangers to traffic jams and slow downs, especially during information rush hours such as when business men and women typically arrive at their offices or about an hour before they leave. Here, the surreal world of the Web meets the reality of limited infrastructure.

Ironically, our two worlds — the tangible, physical world around us and the electronic world we explore — are brought together not by creative commonality but by an indifference to proper industrial planning. Web access will have to catch up to demand in much the same way millions of people waited for full service cable TV or expanded highway capacity. More ironically, those of us living in major US cities have no shortage of Internet options. We might spend hours sitting in traffic, but getting our e-mail is hardly ever a problem. This amusing contrast only illustrates the increasing intensity of our already busy lives.

This year's Christmas shopping highlighted the many and varied worlds in which we live. Sony and Nintendo battled for electronic supremacy in the video game world. Ironically, with all the concern about video game violence, the most ravaged portion of my local toy store was the "Barbie" aisle. In Southern California, parents (and perhaps their children) seemed to be yearning for more traditional toys. Stores were loaded with old-fashioned wooden wagons and other nostalgic items. Many purchasers didn't own these toys as children, but wish they had. Maybe it was a way for many of us to meld what we think should have been with the way we would like things to be.

Most ironic about the different worlds in which we live is the way we choose how to travel in them. No one I know brags they bought the same car as most everyone else. However, people seem to prefer to buy the same computer and operating system as their neighbor or co-worker.

Our cars get most of us to and from work. In LA my car might take me to Chinatown, too. Or, to that little restaurant that prepares the best Mexican food this side of the border. They don't take checks or credit cards and not everyone speaks the same language. That's OK. The food speaks for itself. But, to see the rest of the world, I use my computer. It's

logged more miles than my car ever will. My largest client uses Windows. I much prefer the elegance of my Mac. People like comfort and performance in their cars. It's a wonder they don't choose the same for their computers. When I electronically travel the world, I want the best seat possible.

In a couple of days my kids will be back in my care. My daughter will be doing her homework, my son will be playing Nintendo, and I'll be making dinner. After dinner, they'll work with their educational CD-ROMs. After bath, we'll read the next chapters of some excellent books. At bedtime, it's Dad's extemporaneous stories about the mystical land of elves, dwarfs, unicorns and special children who are strikingly similar to my own. Our time together is spent sharing, learning, talking and laughing. It's the human experience called, "Family."

My kids use a Mac. So do I. After they fall asleep I'll explore the world. I might make a stop in Avonlea or visit a friend's Web site located on the other side of our planet. I don't know. I do know I want the best equipment to get me there. As a writer, I want the best equipment, too. I'm glad I have a Mac. It makes melding my worlds a little easier. The G3s are in stock. Check them out!

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The Promise of Things to Come

Ahh, yes. A new year. A time to look back on the accomplishments of the year past and forward to the upcoming year's promise. It's no accident that January was named after Janus, a Roman god who was guardian of portals and patron of beginnings and endings. Janus is depicted with two faces: one looks longingly into the past; the other stares boldly into the future. Janus' insight was thought to be especially keen because he constantly monitored time in both directions.

Personally, there are several events my wife and I fondly recall about 1997. We purchased our first house, took a relaxing and adventurous vacation to New England, and I coached some really good kids during my first season with youth basketball.

Of course, there were some events we'd rather forget, too. One is the time my wife fell ill with a particularly bad strain of stomach flu and ended up in the emergency room. Another is a night when I consumed too much scotch and tried to pass off the next day's after effects as a particularly bad case of stomach flu. Oh, well. Live and learn, right?

I'm sure the gang at One Infinite Loop has much to remember as well. 1997 started out alright. Dr. Amelio was at the helm. The Power Book 1400 was a big hitter. MacUser. MacWorld. Newton was still a bit of a joke, but bigger things were promised for 1997. Clones ran amok. System 7.6 ruled the roost. Microsoft was the "bad guy."

Then, all hell broke loose. Dr. Gil — out; Steve Jobs — in. Powerbook 3400 and 2400 made the 1400 look pokey. MacUser + MacWorld = MacWorld. Newton finally got teeth, then departed from the Apple "umbrella." Cloners made a big stink, then were subdued (my apologies to UMAX, the lone holdout). System 8 debuted, but not in the form Mac users were led to expect. Steve Jobs negotiated a truce between Apple and Microsoft.

Recalling these incidents makes my head swim. I am flooded with memories and find myself wondering, "Where was I when the news of the Microsoft deal broke?" It's almost as if it was as momentous as the Challenger disaster or the assassination of John F. Kennedy. Oh, by the way, I was wearing my khaki dress pants, dark green shirt, and deep blue tie with multi-colored swirls while sitting at the breakfast bar of my kitchen on my lunch break,

eating a ham sandwich with hot deli style mustard on a hard roll, and drinking a coke over ice when I saw Steve Jobs announce the deal on the midday news. But who has a memory that can recall every detail?

One downside to the past is that you can't change it. How many of us have thought of a glib putdown for that surly bank teller or obnoxious co-worker a week **after** the incident occurred? That kind of thing always burns me, but in the end we have to move on with our lives and look to the future to see the promise of what's to come. The new year is like a blank word processor screen in ClarisWorks — it begs me to begin writing another exciting chapter of my life.

During 1998 my life will change dramatically. Our first child is due in early April. Talk about a life-altering event. You see, right now, we leave the house whenever we wish. Movies? No problem. Dinner out? No problem. Grocery shopping in under an hour? No problem. But all of that is going to change after April 3rd, our due date.

There's a lot of promise embodied in an infant. My wife and I saw one such promise a few weeks ago during a tour of our hospital's maternity floor. We passed a new father holding his newborn and walking from the nursery to his wife's recovery room. His eyes had a dreamy, misty look. A newborn is the ultimate blank slate. Lots of things will happen in this person's life, but how will they shape the individual?

Every parent wonders, "What will my child be when he or she (my wife and I don't know what we're having) grows up? Will she grow up to become a politician? A captain of industry? A famous athlete? Or will he grow up to be a shyster? A con man? A used car salesman?" These thoughts make me dizzy.

Apple Computer has much to ponder during the new year. The new G3 chip introduced in November 1997, on-line purchasing of computers directly from Apple, and the store-within-a-store concept at CompUSA are all in their infancy. They also hold a lot of promise.

I stopped by my local CompUSA in Clearwater last week to see what was happening. The new Mac "boutique" has not yet been constructed in this particular store, so its Macintosh selection was meager at best. Three models of 604e Power Macs sat on the shelves. Two of them were running System 7.6.

But I could see the promise. The place where the Mac store would be had been marked out. Some displays had been rearranged to make room for the impending renovations. I looked to my right and saw a kids' software department, featuring a multitude of games for all ages. I really admire the store-within-a-store concept. It takes very little effort to imagine what this scheme can offer different segments of the computing consumer market:

The **Die Hard User** will see a new commitment to retail sales of Macintosh products and grin. Finally, the Apple Computer line will be featured in a major retail setting. Others

will finally be able to see what this person has been advocating since the 1984 commercial hit the airwaves.

The **Computer Newbie** will finally be offered a choice of computer platforms in a side-by-side comparison. Mac catalog retailers have historically done a booming business, but it has been difficult to attract new users to the MacOS platform. Can you honestly blame them? Imagine if you were buying a car. One company makes great cars, but you can only buy them, sight unseen, through a catalog. Another company has showrooms on every corner. The cars may not be perfect, but they are adequate for transporting you from point A to point B. Which car do you think you'd buy? With a selection of Apple products available in the store, the computer newbie can comparison shop, get hands-on experience with the pros and cons of each platform, and make an informed decision.

The **Education-Minded Parent** will see a section devoted to Macintosh hardware and software which compliments the experience their children encounter in the classroom. This equating of Macintosh computers and education could be a real boon to sales. In fact, Apple should encourage CompUSA to have a Mac-savvy educational consultant in the store at all times as a matter of policy.

The **Creative Content Wizard** has often found herself at the Mac, needing an important piece of software to complete a job on time. Now, instead of waiting until the next morning to receive a shipment from a catalog purchase, she can race down to the nearest CompUSA and be back to work in minutes.

The **Educated Catalog Shopper** has often seen something in a mail order catalog that he wanted to try just once to see if it was what he needed. By scooting over to CompUSA, he can now give the product a quick test drive and do some comparison shopping while he's at it.

Will there be growing pains with the new set up? Of course there will. As with parenting, you need to expect some setbacks. If Mac sales come up flat at the CompUSA locations, it won't take a rocket scientist to figure out what will come next. No one wants to lug around a losing proposition just because it feels good.

But, if things start to move in the direction predicted by the brain trust in Cupertino, you may see a Mac "Renaissance" as people rediscover what this machine can do.

Many interesting and exciting things await the Mac community: Rhapsody, faster chips, new displays, new software, and new output developments. Apple's renewed commitment to market their products should add up to better days and exciting times for the Mac. While I can guarantee you that I'll be happy, my feelings about Mac's fortune won't even come close to the joy I'll feel in that delivery room when I hear my child cry for the first time.

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

Apple Blossom or Lotus Flower?

Some of you may be wondering where I've been during the last few issues of *ATPM*. Rumors have surfaced about motorcycling and I can't completely refute them. I logged over 7500 miles on my trusty Suzuki Intruder 800 between May and November.

Motorcycling is an important part of my life. It's hard to describe to those who don't ride. I think Mac users can empathize if they think about times when they try to describe what it's like to use a Mac to someone who's never used one.

It's funny. I get a rush of "home sweet home" when I get on my motorcycle after having to travel by car for any length of time. I get the same feeling when I "come home" to my Mac after "driving" a Win95, WinNT or UNIX box.

One of my personal goals is to combine motorcycling and Macintosh computing. However, the raw power and performance of my PowerBook 3400c seems to dwarf the capabilities of my trusty Intruder. Never fear, trusty *ATPM* readers! I will soon be the proud owner of Morticia, a 1996 BMW R1100RT. Maybe I should name the PowerBook Gomez?

Actually, I've been preparing for R1100RT ownership since before they were available for purchase! I read a pre-release review of the bike more than 2 years ago. I quickly poured over the specifications and found the one most important to me — seat height. Eureka! The lowest setting on the adjustable driver's portion of the seat was 30.5 inches, my limit. Unabated lust ensued.

For those of you that don't ride (or those bikers over 5'11" tall who never had to worry about it), seat height is terribly important to a vast majority of women motorcyclists. We tend to be shorter, on average, than men. That's why cruiser models are popular among women bikers; they're low to the ground.

Actually, seat height means nothing as long as the bike is moving. It only becomes important when you're starting the bike or coming to a stop. In order for any two-wheeled vehicle to remain upright when motionless, it needs support. If your bike is too tall for at least one leg to touch the ground, you spend a lot of time hoisting it back to vertical and

usually a lot of money on repairing fairings, windshields, mirrors, foot pegs, saddlebags, etc.

The Intruder is my first bike. It has a seat height of 27 inches, which means I can flat foot that bike under almost any conditions. It survived being ridden around a parking lot, mostly in first gear, for more than 60 miles. Then I passed the MSF course, received my motorcycle endorsement on my driver's license, and began a spiritual trek which continues to this day (much like the cyber-journeys I take with my Mac).

OK, enough about motorcycling. In future installments, I'll relate some of my more interesting biking experiences. By the way, if any of you are thinking of joining the ranks of motorcycling enthusiasts, let me take a moment to plug the MSF courses:

I strenuously, strongly, most emphatically recommend that you take at least the beginner's course before you ever hit the road. If you consider yourself an experienced rider (more than 3000 miles in the last six months) without benefit of even one MSF course, sign up for their ERC course — ASAP! To find the nearest offering, visit your local motorcycle dealership (any brand will do) and ask them for the MSF course schedule. They're usually given in conjunction with the state's community college system.

Even if you don't own a bike yet — take the beginner's course (they give you a bike and the experience will help you know what to shop for when you do decide to buy one). If you ride as a passenger on a bike — take the course (it will help you judge whether you really want to entrust your life to the driver or maneuver the bike yourself in some emergency situations). Personally, that course has saved my life at least eight times. During three of those incidents, my daughter was a passenger. It's impossible for me to recommend taking the MSF course too strongly.

End of plug.

Actually, motorcycling isn't the only thing "eating" time I might otherwise devote to writing MacAdemia columns. In addition to my heroic efforts in reviewing Palimpsest (see *ATPM* 3.11), I've been involved in a major project at work whose goal is to totally revamp the way medical students are taught. It involves laptops and unfortunately, they're not PowerBooks, they're ThinkPads.

An increasingly popular marketing ploy (or recruiting tool, depending on your preferred choice of phraseology) at institutions of higher education is to hand each incoming student a laptop computer (usually accompanied by a hefty increase in tuition). Several universities (including our parent institution, Wake Forest University), have embarked on this path toward a brave new world of networked education. The basic idea is that the laptop will serve as a nexus for self-directed learning and continuous, interactive discussion among and between students and teachers.

The key to success is not merely offering a light, powerful laptop pre-loaded with lots of great software for writing, researching and managing information at a competitive price.

If that were the case, Apple computers could easily garner a good chunk of market share among colleges and graduate schools by offering competitive pricing on PowerBooks. The key is **interactivity**.

One leader in the market of "laptop learning" is IBM. Yes, "Big Blue" is beginning to make a dent in the education market traditionally dominated by Apple products. Their ammunition is a one-two punch of hardware and software. The hardware is a ThinkPad. The software is a server/client groupware application pairing known as Domino/Lotus Notes. Domino is the server software and Notes is the client application.

On the hardware side, Apple could easily sway some opinions. I have a ThinkPad to use in conjunction with my work on committees assigned the task of choosing software to be loaded onto the machines given to the class of 2002. I also have a PowerBook 3400c. Personally, I prefer the PowerBook. It's processing power beats any PC clone laptop hands down. It's noticeably lighter (an important consideration to the student who will be required to tote their laptop to every class and study section). Plus, it's a Mac.

The software solution is where an Apple solution falls short. Some of our readers may protest, saying, "Wait just a minute here! Lotus Notes comes in a MacOS version!" This is true. The Notes client software is designed to be cross-platform compatible. Ancillary products important for integrating laptop computers into higher educational curriculums, such as Lotus Mail and Organizer, also come in MacOS versions. "So," you may ask, "What's the problem?"

The problem is that "Big Blue" is still "Big Blue." IBM is a huge corporate conglomerate that is still very conservative and traditional in its organizational structure and philosophy. Sure, their marketing departments may talk a good game, but look closely at their products.

My philosophy in science and education is one that delves into the intimate relationship between structure and function. Define an ideal function and you've gone a long way toward designing the structure and vice versa. Scratch the surface of IBM's software line and you'll discover an infrastructure that functions best in environments where personnel relationships can be rendered into a top-down organization chart.

So why would freewheeling environments like college campuses choose an IBM solution over Apple? The sheer power of Notes makes it the hands down choice for groupware to facilitate interactive learning and develop a new paradigm for student/teacher relationships. Its power also renders Notes daunting to the new user.

When campuses switch from traditional pen/paper learning to laptop/server solutions, it is important to consider the comfort levels of both faculty and students. When Wake Forest was preparing to integrate laptops into campus life, they began (in conjunction with IBM software designers) to develop a "template" that would sit over top of the client software whose look and feel would mimic with the natural flow and organization of campus life.

At some point, the Wake Forest designers and IBM people parted company. Each had their own ideas about how the template should "look." Two products have resulted. The IBM offering is LearningSpace. Wake Forest's template is their own proprietary product.

LearningSpace comes in a MacOS version that sits over top of the Macintosh Lotus Notes application. However, LearningSpace, in my opinion, is woefully inadequate to support essential structure-function aspects of an interactive, self-directed, learning environment. It perpetuates a traditional structure of learning where teachers deliver and students consume content. The structure imposed by LearningSpace feels too confining to me as an academic. It is often said that managing academics is like trying to herd cats. LearningSpace feels more like a yoke used to harness oxen.

The Wake Forest template is a far superior product whose structure supports the dynamic relationships between students and teachers. Its simplicity and ease of use encourages teachers to creatively integrate the template with laptop, intranet, and internet technologies for design and delivery of truly interactive, problem-based curriculum content. Unfortunately, because it was custom-designed for Wake Forest's Thinkpad project, their template is a Windows 95 application. Cross-platform compatibility is only achieved by accessing Notes databases mounted on the Domino server via a web browser application. However, some template features are only available via the Notes client, so Mac users are left out in the cold.

What I would like to see is a closer partnership between Apple and IBM to enhance the competitiveness of Apple hardware and MacOS in laptop learning. Apple, with its greater understanding of how the structure of its operating system enhances the functions of learning and teaching, could write "templates" for various educational environments: elementary/middle schools, high schools, colleges, professional and graduate schools. If the Apple/IBM educational partnership created a cross-platform compatible product, students could choose the hardware and operating system with which they were most productive and comfortable.

A logo that combines the beauty of a Lotus flower and an Apple blossom would be exquisitely beautiful. Maybe I'll design one on my Mac. It's my way of hoping.

Happy New Year, *ATPM* readers! Until next time, keep the rubber down and ride safe!

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

The Last Column of 1997

All the good columns have been taken. In my continuing effort to increase the Mac's market share, I've been seeking guidance and advice by reading other columnists' comments before forming my own opinion. This increases the likelihood that you, the home reader, get your money's worth. OK, I know this is a free e-zine, but you get the idea.

The problem with this grandiose scheme is lately, the opinions I've formed before surfing the 'net, are the same as others have formed and gotten to press first. Check out Don Crabb's latest from his Website, or last week's *MacWEEK*, for his take on what I touched on last month. **<http://www.zdnet.com/zdnn/content/mcwo/1209/262032.html>**

I give a short review. Apparently, Apple has abandoned its corporate accounts. To my mind, the corporate sector is a vast resource for Apple to tap. Furthermore, it's been my experience here, at what used to be Huge (I'll touch on that later), that the machine people have at home is what they use at work for compatibility reasons. By this equation, decreased office sales implies decreased home sales. Here at Huge, we have the unfortunate obligation of justifying any Macintosh purchase, as I'm sure you've read in my previous column. If you haven't, you should. I'll wait.

Back already? So, now that we've come to the same conclusion as Don Crabb, I'll try to come up with a variation on 'The Mac isn't Dead' theme. Just about the time I'm ready to put fingers to keyboard, I receive my February Macworld (which no longer incorporates MacUser) and read David Pogue's column.
<http://macworld.zdnet.com/pages/february.98/Column.4155.html> In it, he gives various and sundry reasons why the Mac won't go away. Required reading, IMNERHO. You may be wondering why I'm receiving a magazine dated February '98 in December '97. Frankly, it isn't any stranger than receiving the November, December and January issues in January of '98. It's a long story. I've probably already told it. If I haven't, let me know.

Of course, all is not rosy. At this time of year, it seems a good idea to do a "Year in Review" column. Again, I'm beaten to the punch, this time by. For those readers who don't live in California, this publication deftly bills itself as "California's Computer Magazine." Their

motto should read, "Computer Magazine of Everyone in California Except Mike Shields," because even their Mac columnists have a limited view about what's good for the Mac. Fortunately, their Year of Hell column is on the Web:
<http://microtimes/current/yearofhell.html>

Regarding things good for the Mac, the LA Times fairs no better than Micro Times. In their attempt to explain Myths and Facts about the Mac, their columnist got a little confused as to which are which. Now, newspaper articles on the web are a fickle lot, so you may jump to this article. **<http://latimes/HOME/NEWS/CUTTING/t000117810.html>** The one thing that stood out in my mind was their opinion that Apple copied Dell's online store. Excuse me, but when you are the company that actually created it in the first place (by virtue of purchasing NeXT, Inc.), how does that make yours the copy? (And some of you thought the NeXT takeover wasn't a good idea.)

There are a plethora of Mac sites out there. Ours is but one of many. The various columnists tend to agree. Get a Mac. So, when I finally come up with my own unique opinion for this month's column, I'll let you know.

Entertainment. Or, at Least Entertaining.

I haven't received a go ahead for the financing of "Diamond in the Rough," yet. Sure, this is personal and has little to do with the Mac. However, the script was written on a Mac using Final Draft 4.1.4, from BC Software. **<http://www.BCSotfware.com>** I reviewed this software in a previous issue. **<http://www.atpm.com/3.01/page11.html>**

I'd like to discuss Bill Gates' troubles with the DOJ. At a speech given by Mr. Bill at China's leading technology university, a student asked, "How did you make the most technically unsuccessful product into the biggest marketing success?" He was referring, of course, to our old pal, Windoze '95.

As you may or may not have heard, Microsoft requires all computers shipped by the various Wintel manufacturers to have Internet Explorer pre-installed. Mr. Bill believes that IE is an integral part of Win '95. We Mac users know better. IE is a stand alone program. At least it is on our platform (unless all of you IE users have also installed Windoze '95 and forgot to tell me). Personally, I prefer Netscape. Apparently, many of the PC-afflicted do, too. PC clone manufacturers feel the same way. When they tried to remove IE from their pre-install, Mr. Bill cried, "Foul!" The DOJ responded by slapping a restraining order on Mr. Bill. Currently, *Wired* magazine online has the best take on the situation. **<http://www.wired.com/news/news/business/story/9178.html>**

I No Longer Work for Huge Aircrash

Actually, I never did in the first place. I'm an independent contractor, working for a sub-contractor, contracted by another company contracted by Huge. No, I didn't get fired. A

couple weeks ago, Raytheon and Huge merged, becoming Raytheon Systems Company. Soon, I'll get a tiny sticker to put over the Huge logo on my badge that says, "Raytheon," in nice block letters. For me, it's the end of an era. I worked at Huge from '83 to '86 as a programmer. These previous two years, I've worked as a Mac Tech. Some other Huge companies exist in addition to Aircrash. They promise nothing will change. We'll see. The same was said when GM bought the company about 12 years ago. I got laid off eight months later.

Happy New Year!

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.

The Year, it is a Changin'

I doubt anyone would describe 1997 as a boring year. We cloned sheep and landed on Mars. For Apple, 1997 is one year that will be remembered as a time of trouble. On the other hand, if the general public finally decides that Apple isn't "going out of business," 1997 will be the year credited with the turnaround. Regardless, the company did some fantastic engineering in 1997 that will remain invisible until sometime in 1998.

The year began with Gil "Buster" Amelio at Apple's helm. The Dr. invited company co-founder Steve Jobs to fill the mysterious role of "Special Advisor." During the summer, Amelio and most of the Board of Directors (who many blame for the company's amazing succession of bad decisions) departed. For a time, there was no CEO; then Steve Jobs decided to temporarily fill the gaping whole in Apple's executive lineup. He started implementing big decisions — an alliance with Microsoft — and encouraged us to *Think Different*. At the Apple Event in November, the company finally announced it's G3 machines — three months after Power Computing and Motorola machines (which are still faster than any machine sold by Apple) won Best of Show awards at Macworld Boston. Wherever they end up, the Power and Motorola engineers who designed the award-winning machines will have the honor of being the last such awardees, because the east-coast Macworld is moving to New York City.

Despite all its internal turmoil, Apple managed to release three system software updates on time. Mac OS 8 is solid and has sold well, despite falling far short of the original promised design. It's too bad the marketing slogan was so terrible: "An operating system so advanced it could only come from Apple. Or did it?" I can't wait for the press backlash once Rhapsody is released: "An operating system so advanced it could only come from Apple. Or did it? — Wait, it didn't come from Apple, it's UNIX!" I console myself by hoping that people will take a fresh look at Rhapsody's feature. If it even moderately resembles what Apple promises and NeXT users attest to, Mac users will be pleasantly surprised.

Pippin and the Apple Club are all but forgotten. Apple's inability to capitalize on what could have been the first viable Network Computer is a shame. A mechanism for buying subscriptions to Apple system software releases other than through the Developer CD series would have also been nice, but most people don't seem to miss them. I hope the

Newton group doesn't suffer the same fate, because that *will* be missed.

Macintosh manufacturing changed greatly during 1997. The cloners lost their licenses to build Mac OS-compatible machines. UMAX appears to be the "chosen one," but they're about to be sued by PowerTools. MetaCreations, the result of a merger between graphics powerhouses MetaTools and Fractal Design, is arguably the best example of software company consolidation the Macintosh world has seen of late. But, they're not alone. Companies ranging from the giant America Online to the no-longer-so-tiny Metrowerks have been parties to consolidation. Such are the realities of doing business in the late '90s.

Farewell to Some of the Best

Longtime rivals *Macworld* and *MacUser* merged into a single magazine — *Macworld*. **<http://www.macworld.com>** In addition, the magazine is tackling the cross-platform reality that many of us face. Beginning in 1998, *MacWorld* will contain coverage of Windows NT.

Apple canceled its programmer publications *Develop* and *Apple Directions*. The former was somewhat resurrected in *MacTech*, while the latter is now completely electronic. **<http://www.mactech.com>** Apple even stopped its free technical support hotline, formerly 1-800-SOS-APPLE, and, in a terrible press release, Jobs stated that he was going to bring Apple's customer service more in line with Microsoft's!

Thankfully, *MacWEEK* is still around; but my favorite column, Henry Norr's "The Second Decade," will no longer be published, apparently the result of cutbacks. Along the same lines, my free subscription was, in the words of a customer service representative, "Evidently terminated." So, I will probably read the magazine online from now on. As they no doubt say at Be, "C'est la vie." **<http://www.macweek.com>**

Finally, *MacSense*, perhaps the best DOCMaker e-zine there ever was, closed down. I'll miss the professional writing, the unique graphics, and the sharp layout. I wish Chris McVeigh, Alex Narvey, and the rest of the *MacSense* team all the best in their future endeavors. Many of them, it seems, have already found new online venues for their writing. I only wish that the *MacSense* Web site were still online. To me, it's an important historical record of Mac culture and the nascent era of online publishing.

The Rising Stars

Since its premier issue less that two years ago, *MacAddict*, has captured the hearts of many die-hard Mac users. **<http://www.macaddict.com>** With the tagline "A better machine. A better magazine," it fills a niche for an "alternative Mac publication," much like the role *MacUser* once played. It's undergone explosive growth, not unlike the *AppleWizards* e-zine that began this summer. **<http://www.applewizards.net>** Many Macintosh news and rumors sites have started up this year (and a couple have already disappeared). This

speaks well of the oft-mentioned Macintosh loyalty.

My favorite newcomer is *NetBITS*. It's sister publication is *TidBITS*, one of the oldest — if not the oldest — Mac publications. Both are available online in HTML format, as well as through setext (structurally-enhanced text) email subscriptions. While TidBITS covers general Macintosh news and software, NetBITS focuses on Internet issues from a Mac perspective. The writing is simply excellent. See **<http://www.tidbits.com>** and **<http://www.netbits.net>** for more information.

Onward to '98

Apple certainly has its work cut out for itself, but that's nothing new. Look for some new machines to be released this winter and spring, both in the high-end/server and the home/education arenas. We may even see some Network Computers. The Apple Store will be expanded and Jobs says we'll see a broader range of Apple ads; hopefully, there'll be some product-specific ones that really sell the Mac's advantages.

I'll be waiting for Rhapsody Premiere, which should be released early this year, as well as Rhapsody Unified and Allegro (the next major revision to Mac OS). In the meantime, I'm content with the about-to-be-released Mac OS 8.1. I hope you'll continue to use your Macs and enjoy the *personal* computing experience. It's going to be an exciting year.

"The Personal Computing Paradigm" is © 1998 by Michael Tsai, <mtsai@atpm.com>. Michael is still searching for the ultimate answer to the ultimate question of life, the universe and everything.

SEGMENTS
SLICES FROM THE MACINTOSH LIFE

BY BARRY L. RITHOLTZ, *ritholtz@aol.com*

Popular or Best?

I recently had a computer purchase discussion with my sister — She and her husband would like to have a PC so that Jake and Jamie (my niece and nephew — ages 2 1/2 and 4 1/2) can learn computers and have some fun. Every time the Js are over, they have a great time on my Quadra, playing kids' games I downloaded off the net.

The bad news is my brother-in-law — an otherwise decent fellow — is considering purchasing a Wintel machine for their home. The reason Sis gave for possibly making this egregious error was curious: "Windows is the most popular" computer option.

The phrase "most popular" not the "best" or "most useful," but most popular — stuck in my craw for a few days.

I was disturbed by the thought of my niece & nephews' first real computer experiences being Wintel; Disturbed enough to do a little research into some of the world's most popular (but not necessarily best, or even 3rd or 8th best) things:

• The single that spent the most consecutive weeks (54) on the US charts is "The Macarena," by Los Del Rio. "The Macarena" dethroned the previous consecutive chart topper, "Oh, What a Night" (by The Four Seasons)

• The world's most translated author is everyone's favorite commie, Vladimir Lenin. (3,842 translations). William Shakespeare is a distant fourth with 1,689 translations.

• The longest running Broadway play of all time is *Cats* (1982 to present).

• The U.S. President who was elected with the largest popular majority was none other than Tricky Dick — Richard M. Nixon won with 47.1 million to McGovern's 29.1 million votes.

• The most-watched weekly program in television history is *Baywatch*. Nielsen Media Research puts its weekly viewership in 110 countries at 2.3 billion (That is right, **billion**). At a distant second is Jim Henson's *The Muppets*. With barely 10% of

Baywatch's audience, a mere 235 million people in 106 countries enjoy Kermit the Frog weekly.

• The best selling novel of all time — at 30 million copies — is *Valley of the Dolls*, by Jacqueline Susann.

• The Number 3 Best Selling Music Video of all time is "Step By Step" by New Kids On The Block. The Number 2 best seller is "Hangin' Tough" by — that's right again — New Kids On The Block. Incidentally, Hangin' Tough was previously the number 1 best selling music video of all time, until it was displaced by (I couldn't even make this stuff up if I tried) "Hangin' Tough Live," by New Kids On The Block.

• The world's best selling prepared food is that gustatory treat, the Big Mac, at over 14 billion served.

• The world's largest daily circulation newspaper is neither the *Wall Street Journal* nor the *New York Times*, but *Pravda*, at 10 million copies per day.

• Though not a public corporation (with no accompanying public financial disclosure required), the highest revenue generating infomercial is believed to be The Psychic Friends' Network (1-900 Psychic).

• The final numbers have not been tallied yet, but it appears that Elton John's re-release of "Candle In The Wind:" Rose of England (Tribute to Princess Diana) is about to pass Bing Crosby's White Christmas for best selling single of all time.

• The world's best selling brewery is Anheiser Busch; makers of many fine products — most notably its biggest seller — Budweiser Beer.

• Not too long ago, "(Whoomp) There It Is" by Tag Team was the year's best selling single.

• 1996's best selling non-fiction book was *Make the Connection* by that literary lion herself, Oprah Winfrey (co-written by her dean of letters, Bob Greene).

• The most watched event in television history is Princess Di's funeral, which displaced the previous number one: The Royal Wedding of Prince Charles to Lady Diana Spencer. Man's landing on the moon is a bit further down the list.

• The best selling film soundtrack of all time is *The Bodyguard*.

• The fastest selling Debut Album of all time was Hootie and the Blowfish's *Cracked Rear View*, which sold 14 million copies.

Sources: Top Ten of Everything, by Russel Ash (DIK Publishing); Nielsen Media Research; The Book of Mosts, Aaron Cohl (St. Martin's Press); Guinness Book of World Records, 1997; Issac

Asimov's Book of Facts.

My purpose in putting together this assortment of "Best Sellers" is not to mock or humiliate people who are fond of popular things (Okay, maybe I can mock fans of Hootie and the Blowfish and tweak Nixon supporters a little). Rather, it was to gather some ammo to poke holes in the blind argument used by the Wintel crowd: it's the most popular platform, therefore, you should get it.

My apologies in advance if this comes across as too pretentious or condescending; obviously, it is a selective list. There are many fine products and services that sell well — the Beatles, *Star Wars*, and the Honda Accord are just a few examples. It just seems to me that, for the most part, people have a hard time distinguishing between qualitative and quantitative factors.

I hope my little diatribe provides you with a suitable response the next time you overhear some pinhead using this nonsense to talk someone out of getting a superior product.

If you have something interesting to say about life with your Mac, write to us at <editor@atpm.com>. *We're happy to publish opinions or stories from our readers in this Segments section.*

BY JAMAL GHANDOUR, jghandour@atpm.com

I kicked off this year with a curious bit of information sent to me by one of our dear readers, Mr. Arthur Kean, relating to the origins of our family. If he is right, we could just turn out to be scots . It is truly amazing how small the world can be sometimes. How that story ends, however, remains to be seen. In the mean time I would like to wish you all a very happy new year; may the best of last year be the worst of this year. Moreover, I would like to dedicate a special "Good luck" to my friend Louis, who has pitched for a new job.

Happy New Year!

On a more professional side, this month I am going to discuss the special animation techniques required for the Web. The reason these graphics are so special, lies in the fact that they have to be very small-sized, yet animated.

General Animation

Animation is basically the illusion of movement. By playing still frames at very high speeds, you can achieve what the eyes perceive as moving images. The rate at which the frames are played is called fps (frame per second). The higher the fps the smoother the transition between frames is (giving more realistic output). In the old days, making movies was a long process of putting screenshots after each other. With modern technology a lot of that process is automated by machines (Video cameras, Computers, etc.)

So what does that mean exactly?

Okay let's make a simple calculation. Suppose you were a designer on an Indy (Silicon Graphics) and that you were asked to produce a 15 minute animation to be added to a movie. Then that would mean (assuming standard fps to be 35):

15 min X 60sec /min = 900 sec
900 sec X 35 fps = 31,500 frames

Assuming each frame was 500k in size, it would take approximately 16 GB to save the 15 minute animation. Think that is impressive? Well, just suppose each frame took only 2 minutes to render, it would take approximately 44 days of raw rendering for the animation to finish. Computer animators use special compression algorithms, smaller sizes, lower fps and faster machines to over come these problem. Nonetheless, computer animators carry out a very tough job.

Hmm… Then what?

Apple introduced a very successful technology called QuickTime a while back. Although it was a huge success on personal computers (both platforms), it didn't really take off on the Web. The very simple reason was that even with a very low fps, compression and indexed color, the animation would still be relatively big (implying slow loading of Web pages). Moreover, it requires a special browser plug-in to run on the Web.

Animated GIF's however, have been very popular so far. With very small files sizes and integrated compatibility with almost all browsers, the GIF format for animation has been the format of choice for almost everyone.

Making Animated GIF's

This is not as hard as it sounds, first you have to prepare the set of alternating visuals. (Check out the following example.)

Tip: It helps to save files numbered according to their sequence. It is much easier to understand (disk1, disk2, disk3,…) than (disk_rotated, disk_rotated_more)
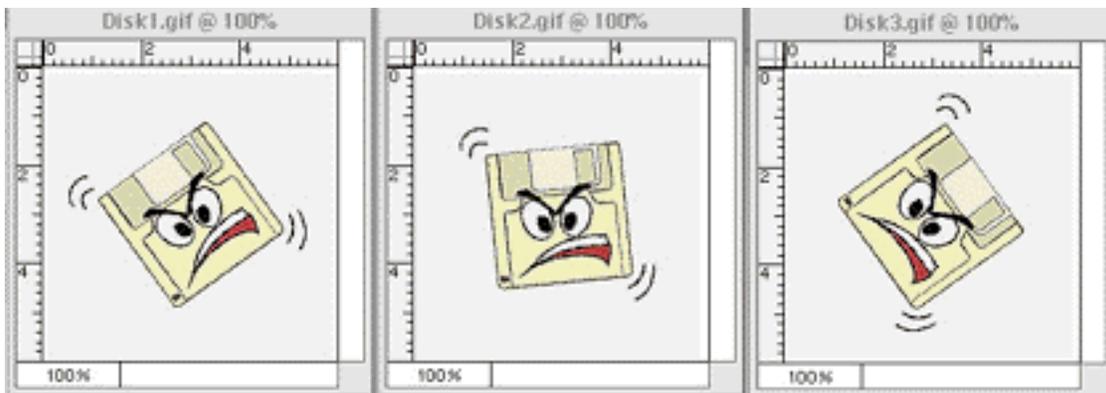

Export Images using the Gif89a format

Tip: Be very careful to choose the most optimized color palette for your needs. Normally an exact palette produces much smaller file sizes, but a Web palette is safer.
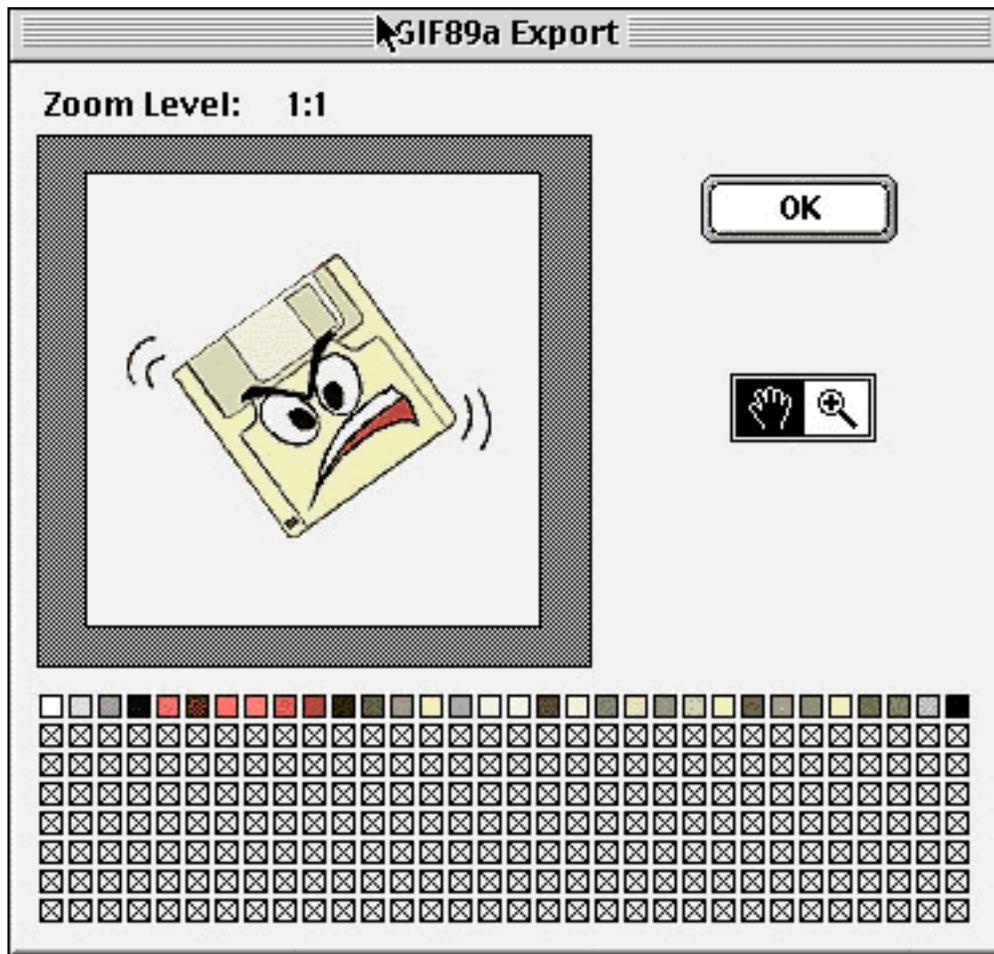
We are almost finished. Now you have to find a GIF animator that suits you; I personally love GifBuilder by Yves Piguet <piguet@ia.epfl.ch>. Although still in it's beta versions, this program has what it takes to make it.

Just choose "New…" from the File menu and paste your frames in sequence. (Alternatively, you can drag-and-drop them in.) After putting the frames in sequence, you can alter all the various settings, like the inter-frame delay (pause between frames), the animation's loop, etc.

Name	Size	Position	Disp.	Delay	Transp.
Disk1.gif	170x170	(0;0)	N	20	-
Disk2.gif	170x170	(0;0)	N	20	-
Disk3.gif	170x170	(0;0)	N	20	-

Untitled.gif

1/3

Looping

○ No
● Forever
○ [   ] times

[Cancel] [**OK**]
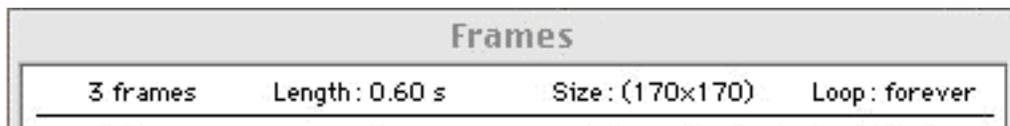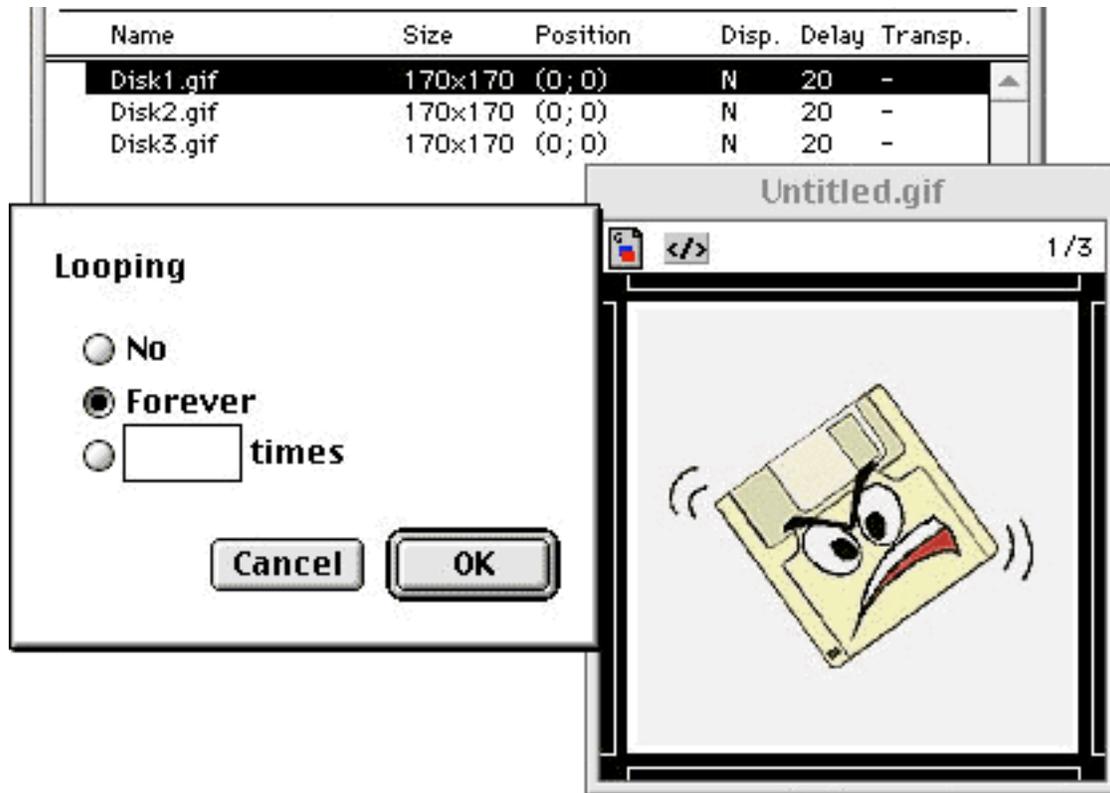
Saving results in a file that can almost be mistaken for a normal image, only it's animated. The example of the disk used in this article, took only 7K and loads quickly even on the slowest of machines.

Grand Finale

All that remains now is to test your animation, just choose "Open file…" from your browser, find the location of the animation and open it.
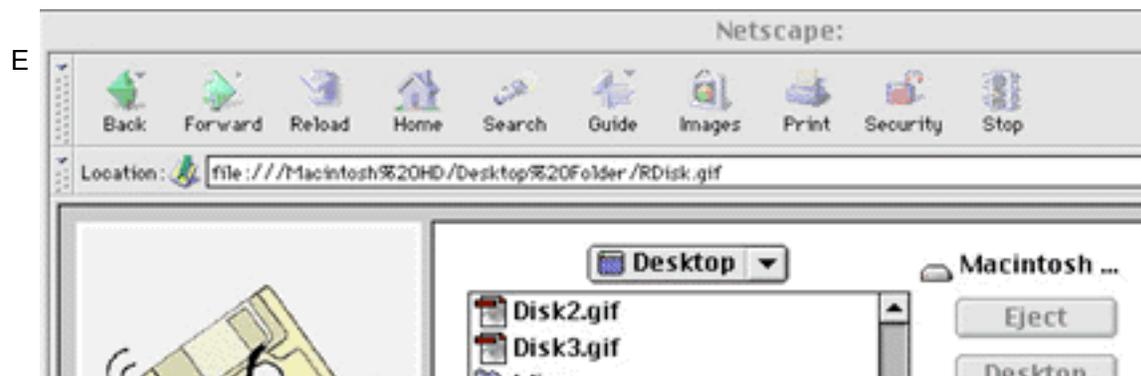
Netscape:

Back Forward Reload Home Search Guide Images Print Security Stop

Location: file:///Macintosh%20HD/Desktop%20Folder/RDisk.gif

Desktop ▼   Macintosh …

Disk2.gif   Eject
Disk3.gif   Desktop

Enjoy Web animations…

ABOUT THIS STUFF

REVIEWED BY DANIEL CHVATIK, daniel@callypso.com

ATPM RATINGS
EXCELLENT

Civilization II

Product Information

Published by: MacSoft
Phone: (800) 229-2714
Fax: (612) 577-0631
Web: <http://www.wizworks.com/macsoft>
Street Price: $55

System Requirements

Macintosh with 68030 or higher (PowerPC recommended)
8 MB RAM (16 MB recommended)
Color Monitor
CD-ROM drive

Those readers who liked Civilization will love its sequel, Civilization II. If you don't know Civilization but are interested in complex strategy games, this game is definitely worth a try.

Have you ever wondered what could have been done differently in the course of human history? Could we have coexisted without war? Civilization gives you a chance to do everything differently.

The game begins with you playing the leader of a small, primitive civilization. You choose your nation, or tribe, from among 21 different cultures which range from contemporary to ancient. The play is turn-based and requires you to perform a multitude of tasks.

Carthaginian Civilization with Settlers and Triremes at 490 AD

You can build various units and buildings. Each has its own specific function. For example, your settlers can build roads, found new cities, irrigate your fields to grow more food, or dig mines to increase production. Cities use surrounding resources to increase their population, trade, and produce goods. Trade revenues can be converted to luxuries, taxes, and science. Luxuries are needed to keep the people happy. Cities, armies, and science to produce new inventions are financed by taxes.

Whenever a new invention is produced, you get added benefits. For example, the ability to construct new buildings, units, bridges, etc. There are so many kinds of inventions, units, buildings, and landscapes that a flow-chart is included with the manual, which graphically illustrates how they are interrelated (e.g., inventing the wheel must come before building chariots).
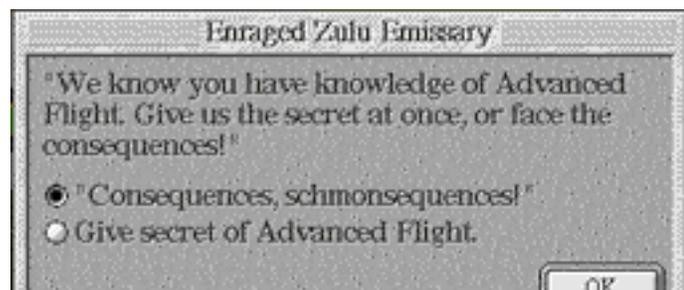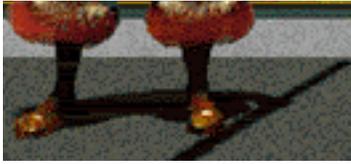
Talking to the Zulu

Units include many military types, from ancient to high-tech. Although it is possible to play without war, it is a good idea to defend your cities. Your government can assume many forms, from despotism to democracy. Each has unique advantages and disadvantages. Embassies established in your enemies' countries help you to stay current on their progress and foreign policies. Diplomacy is an important part of the game.

You can win the game in different ways: (1) kill all other civilizations (the brutal way) or (2) develop a high-tech society and launch a spaceship to colonize a new planet (the scientific and preferred way). You can also play "scenarios," which have different goals and are expandable with new graphics.

The game is very well done. Graphics and sound effects are good — remember, the focus of the game is strategy, not action. You won't see and blood and gore. Several spectacular video clips show you "Wonders of the World" after you build them.

Civilization II features an integrated help function which answers all imaginable questions about units or buildings. The CD also comes with a really nice background music.

Those familiar with the original Civilization will be a little disappointed. Civilization II is very similar to the previous release. Graphics were updated, video clips added, and many new units, inventions and buildings introduced. The new release features more tribes, the diplomacy is much better, and the spaceship is terrific. It is an improvement over the old game - and highly addictive. A must-have for strategy gamers — unfortunately it is not a multi-player game.

Civilization II is not for everyone. In this review, I didn't describe all its nuances. It is quite complicated and its manual is a tome. Learning the game takes some time, but once you master it, you can't let go. This is not always positive: an average game can last from 5 hours to a week! Don't have an important project due when you start playing! Overall, it is one of the best and most entertaining games I've played - and it is definitely educating.

FlashBack 1.0

Product   Information
Published by: Aladdin Systems, Inc.
165 Westridge Drive
Watsonville, CA 95076
Phone: (408) 761-6200
Fax: (408) 761-6206
Email: **<support@aladdinsys.com>**
Web: **<http://www.aladdinsys.com>**
List Price: $70
Street Price: $28

System   Requirements
System 7.0 or later
Hard Drive
Uses 660k of RAM

FlashBack, a new utility from Aladdin Systems, is aimed at overcoming one of the most cumbersome aspects of working with computers — the need to save. The save/backup paradigm has been forced on computer users ever since the early days of computing. It's perhaps the best example of how even user-friendly computers, like Macintosh, force users to think like machines, rather than the other way around. The saving problem is largely eliminated on Apple's Newton OS, but we Macintosh users are forced to develop "Command-S reflexes" or face the consequences of corrupted data.

Saving often isn't always enough to ensure the safety of your data. If a file becomes corrupted during a save, both the old and new versions are lost. I have personal experience with this reality. I had been "Command-S'ing" a PageMaker file every two minutes for five hours. Finally, it became corrupted and all my work was lost. Backups only let you restore a file to its state at the time of the last backup. I strongly recommend daily backups, but even they don't let you restore a file to the way it was, say, ten minutes ago.

FlashBack goes a long way toward automating the process of saving files while solving the

"corrupted file" problem. FlashBack saves *versions* of files. Later, you can restore the exact state of a file — from *any* time you saved it. Further, FlashBack is useful for writers, artists, and others who want an easy way to look at previous versions of their work. I used to save different drafts of files. This practice minimized potential losses to data corruption and let me browse revisions I'd made. It was also tedious, files occupied a lot of disk space, and directory browsing was complicated.

FlashBack is an application — not a control panel — so it doesn't conflict with other installed software. Unfortunately, it uses 660k of RAM, which could be too much for older systems. More importantly, FlashBack must be running for it to do its magic. The first time it's launched, a dialogue box offers to install an alias in the Startup Items folder. This solution works fine, but it's easy to inadvertently quit FlashBack and thus remove your files' safety net. For this reason, I often wish FlashBack were a control panel.

In order for FlashBack to save versions of your files, you must tell it which ones to monitor. It's easy to do this by dragging the the files into FlashBack's window or onto its icon in the Finder. FlashBack will continue to track files even if you rename or move them. It also can recognize whether tracked files are on unavailable volumes (unmounted shared disks or removable cartridges).
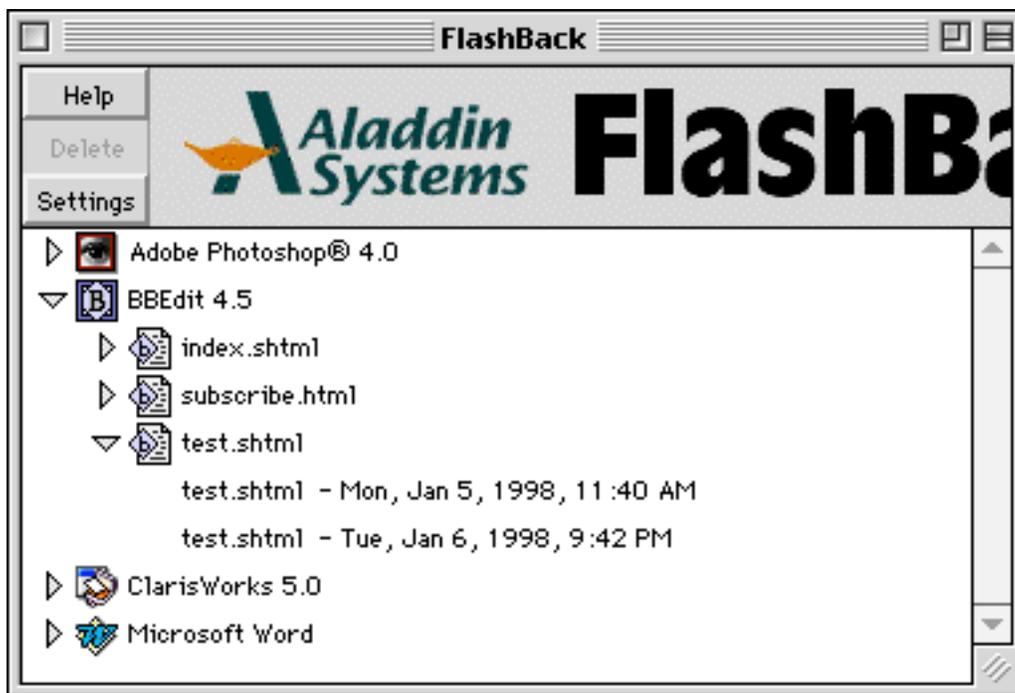
FlashBack's main window contains a list of all files being tracked. The list is organized by application; clicking on the disclosure triangle next to an application reveals a nested list of that application's documents. Clicking the triangle next to a document lists all time-stamped versions available for recovery. To recover a file, just double-click the

version you want or simply drag the icon to the Finder.

As you might expect, this flexibility comes at a price — disk space. Luckily, the folks at Aladdin have implemented a difference engine that saves only the changes between different versions, not entire files. The result? Much less disk space is consumed, but file size is still enough of an issue that it's a good idea to limit the number of versions that are saved — especially if you work with large graphics files. The settings panel helps manage this.

Default settings for new document types:

Save trigger:
⦿ When document is modified and saved
◯ When document is modified and closed

Max # of versions to be saved: 30 ⬍

Save frequency:
As often as: 00 : 02 : 00
(Days/Hours/Minutes)

Cancel

OK
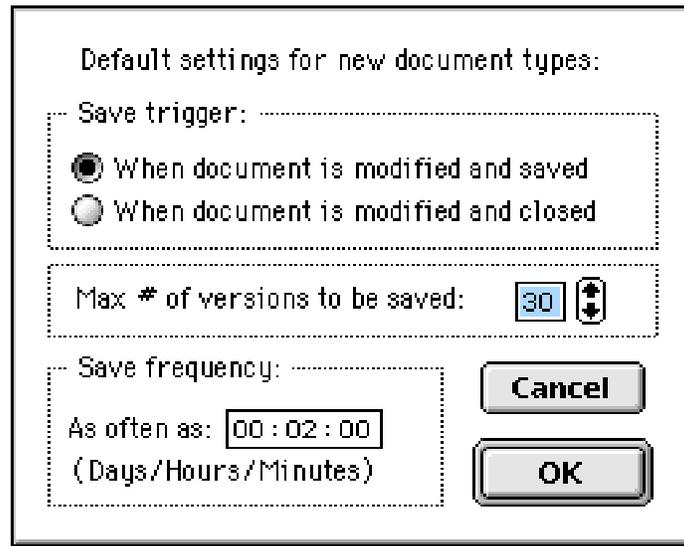
FlashBack can be set save a file version each time a document is saved or when it's saved and closed. To conserve disk space, you can define a maximum number of versions that are saved for each file and a minimum time between versions. Finally, you can select an application in the list to create settings specific to that application. Unfortunately, there's nothing in settings window to indicate for which application(s) you are adjusting preferences.

Conclusion

FlashBack is useful, easy-to-use, and reliable. It certainly gets the job done. However, there are a few problems which are most likely due to its "1.0" status; they could be fixed in the next version. First, FlashBack stores its version information in the Preferences folder of the startup disk. There is no mechanism for changing this, which can be inconvenient for users who partition their hard drives, work with large files, or carry data between computers on removable media. It would be nice to have the option of saving the FlashBack information in the folder of the original document, as some word processors do with their "backup" files. A second concern is that FlashBack 1.0 cannot track versions of stand-alone documents (which are technically applications), such as the one you are currently reading.

Finally, to make FlashBack track a file, you must first locate the file in the Finder, then drag it to the FlashBack window (or icon). This quickly becomes tedious. A better solution would be to let the user create a list of applications *all* of whose documents are automatically saved by FlashBack. Another possibility would be to allow the user to designate which files should be saved using filename suffixes or Finder labels.

FlashBack is a relatively inexpensive utility, which has streamlined the way I work with documents on my Mac. Those who work with many different documents may find the configuration process too tedious, but I recommend FlashBack to anyone who's willing to take the few extra seconds necessary to manually add files to FlashBack's list. While FlashBack is not yet transparent enough to fix the saving paradigm, it has certainly reduced my stress level.

ABOUT THIS STUFF

REVIEWED BY ROBERT MADILL, rmadill@atpm.com

EXCELLENT

The Mystery of Magritte

Product Information
Distributed by: Harry N. Abrams, Inc.
and Byron Press Multimedia Company Inc.
Phone: (800) 945-3155
Street Price: $30 US

System Requirements
Macintosh with 68040 processor or Power Macintosh
13" or larger colour monitor
8 MB RAM
2x CD-ROM drive or greater
System 7.0 or later

When I hear the phrase, "The Man in the Black Bowler Hat," I think of Agatha Christie's fictional detective Hercule Poirot, or the Belgian artist Rene Magritte (1898-1967). The CD-ROM, "The Mystery of Magritte," produced by VIRTUO, presents a beautifully crafted journey through the life, philosophy, and visual works of the illusive hero of Surrealism, a twentieth century artistic movement. People interested in visual arts will usually associate Salvador Dali with the Surrealist style. I tend to think that Dali was the Warhol, or populist, of the movement. On the other hand, the more reclusive Magritte could be seen as the da Vinci, or intellectual, of this style.

This multimedia presentation offers, for your puzzlement, over three hundred paintings, drawings, illustrations, and photographs by Magritte. Various videos of Magritte, voice-overs, quotations, and interactive opportunities serve to enhance what I found to be a very strange journey through an alternate reality. The experience is further enhanced by a musical soundtrack that balances disturbing overtones with mysteriously eerie, haunting counterpoints.

At the risk of getting too academic, it is important to realize that Magritte's works of art are puzzles. They are meant to be pulled apart in order to discover an underlying meaning. Hold on tight for a brief trip through "semiotics," or the language of communication. I promise it won't hurt! Magritte uses "iconic signs:" a pipe, tree, leaf, and so forth, as visually real "hooks" to grab your attention and interest. That's superficially fine until you realize, with a start, that all is not as it should be! Magritte is a master of "symbolic signs." These signs are enigmatic and not easily decoded. He invites you to cross the boundary between that which is beautiful and that which is thoughtful.

Upon start-up, the CD-ROM directs you to a main menu consisting of six categories. "Images" leads you to the main iconic signs in Magritte's work. The pipe, apple, clouds, and the trademark bowler hat are among five or six other objects which continually recur in Magritte's visuals. Normally, one would think such a limited visual vocabulary would tend to generate redundant and repetitive imagery. This is not the case. Surprises abound as the singular and combined images evolve and dissolve depending upon their contexts, scale, and relationships. A simple bell, associated with childhood innocence, becomes an eye, UFO, or other sign. Throughout the CD, thumbnail pictures can be activated to give an enlarged screen size picture. Occasionally, a narration offering some guidance for interpretation is available. Hyperlinks to the other five "Chapters" add to the unexpected surprise. Magritte would have approved. The production appears as one large labyrinth where you transport to a new vista, only to wish you could retrace your steps back to the initial screen.

"Biography" offers valuable insight into Magritte's life: the significance of his mother's suicide and the influence of Georgette, Magritte's wife, model, and muse. There are some rather strange and bizarre anecdotes which had a tangible effect on Magritte's visual imagery. Some of his images portray: a young boy who loved to run around his apartment walls with his feet never touching the ground; a child who insisted on crossing himself twenty times before dinner; or a household maid afraid to be in the same room as the young Rene. These images leave the impression that his was not the world of Beaver Cleaver.

One interesting aspect of Magritte's biography is the balance created by the inspiration and support of Georgette juxtaposed with the devastating suicide of his mother when Magritte was only twelve years old. These checks and balances keep Magritte's work from becoming too intro-spective, melancholic, or depressing. The details buried in this "Chapter" are as intriguing as European film noir.

"Craft" allows Magritte to discuss the technique and processes he used in the variety of media he chose to express his enigmatic messages. These media include painting, collage, sculpture, photograph, and publicity. The latter is of interest as it links Magritte to Andy Warhol. Both artists worked, out of financial necessity, in advertising and graphic design in their youths, a background which gave both men a powerful and energetic base for their work outside the field of commerce.

"Surrealism" describes the milieu within which Magritte worked, including references to artists such as Dali. This style of visual art stressed freedom from the control of reason and linear thinking. Aesthetic and moral concerns were tossed out of the window. The process was inspired by change, play, the subconscious, the spirit of childhood, and ultimately, for Magritte, THE PUZZLE. Initially, the movement hoped to change society and the world.

"Combination of Images" provides an intriguing demonstration of Magritte's dictum that "...a good image never stands alone." He was a master at visually manifesting concepts described by strange terms as "synecdote," "hypallage," "metonymy," and "syllepsis." If those words and their meanings boggle the brain, don't attempt the *The New Yorker*'s crossword puzzle!
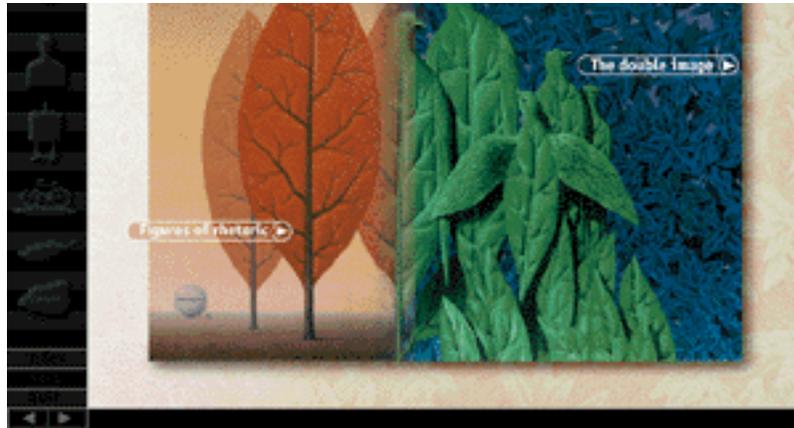
"Words and Images" reinforces the idea that Magritte's works consist of, "Vignettes of language and realty locked in mutual cancellation...If some part of the world can be shown to be irrational but coherent, Magritte's work argues...nothing is certain." (Hughes, R., *Shock of The New*, BBC, 1980). Magritte's "Academic Illusionism" and "Magic Realism" consistently used contradictory juxtapositions of elements or events that normally did not belong together. In his world, he pushed real space and events against spatial illusion and fantasy. One delightful feature to this "Chapter" is the opportunity to guess the titles of several Magritte paintings.
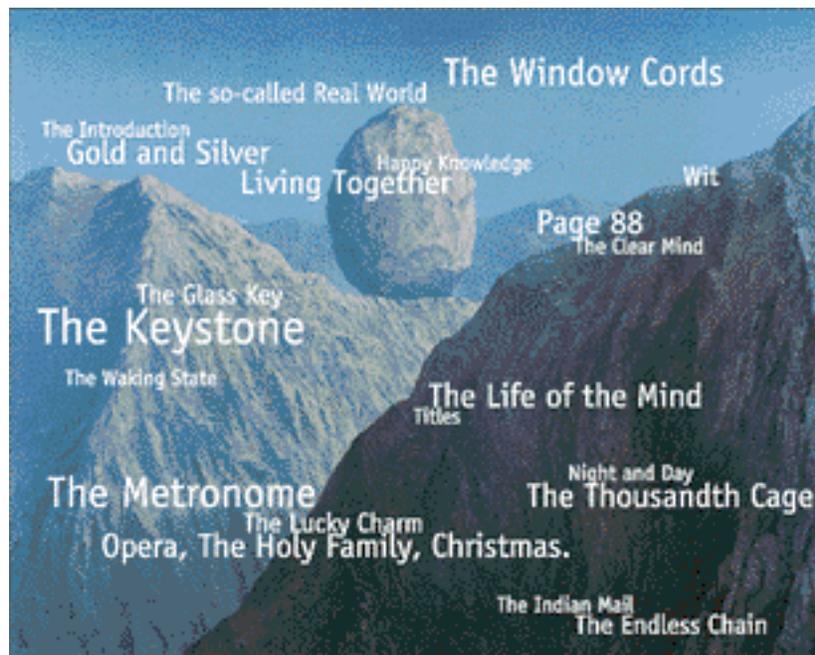
In "Words and Images," you can search for images by title, criteria, date, or keyword. Images that match the query are called up for you to examine. There is an extensive bibliography and Help section, offering a narrated description of the CD-ROM contents and

the basic navigational guides.

This production should not be taken lightly. Be prepared for hours of reflection, bewilderment, entertainment, and education. Any of the thumbnail pictograms can be enlarged to full screen size. The resolution is good at all stages. The video clips featuring Magritte are engaging. Their presentation in black and white Quicktime format is a subtle reminder that Magritte was fascinated by the early cinema melodramas and silent films of the 1920's.

In previous reviews, I have often mused about whether I favour print or electronic media for dissemination of information and education. In this instance, I can state with no hesitation that I would recommend this CD-ROM over any printed book on the life, work, and processes of Rene Magritte. I got more than my money's worth; an educational experience beyond my expectations. This CD-ROM is a must have for any art lover and a nice addition to the collection of anyone who enjoys an intriguing and thought provoking journey.

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**. Please contact us at **<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.

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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.

MacMan: Got a technical question? Mike Shields offers technical help in his column. While the opinions expressed in his column are his own, and the advice he gives is also his own (not to be confused with any 'official' or 'semi-official' or 'not official at all but might seem official' advice or comments from *ATPM*), he does think that he provides qualitiy answers to your e-mail questions. Check it out for yourself! Send your inquiries to: **<macman@atpm.com>**.

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 contributers 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 our 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

We hope by now that you've found what you're looking for (We can't imagine there's something else about *ATPM* that you'd like to know.). But just in case you've read this far (We appreciate your tenacity.) and still haven't found that little piece of information about *ATPM* that you came here to find, please feel free to e-mail us at (You guessed it.) **<editor@atpm.com>**.

This is the last in *ATPM*'s series of Trivia Challenges. I hope you have enjoyed them. Answers to this month's Trivia Challenge will be found in the next issue of *ATPM*.

Although Star Trek Voyager is definitely the "weak sister" of the Star Trek spin-offs, I'm sure it has garnered some fans. I had just about totally given up on the series, what with adding Jeri Ryan's bustline to "improve ratings", when along comes an episode like "Nemesis". It is on of the strongest Star Trek episodes ever, regardless of the series. If you missed it, I urge you to catch it in rerun. If the writers and producers of the show could come close to this episode once and a while, I would stay on board as a viewer.

Trivia Challenge #5 — Star Trek Voyager

1. Voyager is what class of starship?
  A. Galaxy   B. Intrepid
  C. Constellation   D. Yamato

2. "The Caretaker" originally stranded the crew of Voyager how many years from home?
  A. 50   B. 60
  C. 75   D. 85

3. What race suffers from the incurable disease The Phage?
  A. The Vidiians   B. The Talaxians
  C. The Haconians   D. The Kazon Ogla

4. Amelia Earhart and others were abducted to the Delta Quadrant by what race?
  A. The Sakarians   B. The Talaxians
  C. The Kazon Nystrum   D. The Briori

5. Seska proves to be a cosmetically altered spy from what race?
  A. Cardassian   B. Kazon
  C. Sakarian   D. Bajoran

6. Which is the home planet of Kes?

A. Varia III	B. Drema IV
C. Okampa	D. Talax

7. Who wanted Janeway to bear his child to stop a Civil War among his people?

A. Chakotay	B. Ford Prefect
C. Tuvok	D. Q

8. Janeway's favorite Holodeck program interacts with what famous character?

A. Jean-Luc Picard	B. Leonardo DaVinci
C. Albert Einstein	D. Professor Moriarty

9. To defeat species 8-4-7-2, Janeway must ally Voyager with whom?

A. The Talaxians	B. The Kazon
C. The Romulans	D. The Borg

10. B'Elanna Torres is half human and half?

A. Klingon	B. Cardassian
C. Bajoran	D. Ferengi

The Rules

Each question has only *one* correct answer. You may get help when needed. (Anyone who knows all of these answers is as sick as I am!) The answers are stored in a hermetically sealed envelope guarded by a fierce Lhasa Apso named "Hammerli" who lives in our house.

Last Month's Answers — #4 - The X-Files

1. What is Dana Scully's middle name?

A. Katherine

2. What is Fox Mulder's birthdate?

B. 10/13/61

3. Who warned Scully of a possible attempt on her life?

C. The Well-Dressed Man

4. Who is not one of "The Lone Gunmen"?

D. Van Blundht

5. The Mulder family summer home is in what state?

C. Rhode Island (Quonochontaug)

6. Who almost kissed Scully while impersonating Mulder?

```
            C. Eddie Van Blundht
```

7. Who healed the shooting victims at the fast food retaurant and then disappeared?
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   D. Jeremiah Smith
```

8. Who killed Mulder's father?
```
   B. Krycek
```

9. Who told Scully: "Trust No One"?
```
   B. Deep Throat
```

10. What is the hometown of Sheriff Andy Taylor, who was killed by The Peacock
Brothers?
```
   A. Home, PA.
```