



# Mouse Times

News, Views & Reviews from the Macintosh Community

SBMUG Newsletter

January/February 2001

Santa Barbara, California

## THE NEWS...

These are exciting times for the Santa Barbara Mac Users Group. With our new Board of Directors and more volunteers becoming involved, SBMUG will continue to thrive.

The topic for the January meeting was MacWorld! San Francisco! The World of Macintoshes—music to your ears

For February, Todd Clement of the Brook Institute of Photography will take you through and demonstrate the different phases from the input stage (scanning or capture) to the editing stage (Photoshop or other digital graphics editing program) to the output stage (website, printing, multimedia, etc.). This is a “how to” program and you will see and learn to get the picture out of the camera, fix it up, choose what file type to make it depending upon where you want it to end up!

My goal as the newest editor of the Mouse Times is to produce the newsletter monthly. You can help by writing articles. You don't have to be a Mac expert! We want to hear about your Mac experiences.

Let us hear from you!

Anita Donohoe, editor

## DIGITAL IMAGING

by Dibblee Hoyt

This week will mark a year since I took the plunge into digital photography. Having a darkroom, making my own prints and working for the last twenty years with 35mm film and cameras made it hard for me to step solidly into a new medium. But I made a modest step with a Nikon Coolpix 950.

The learning curve was steep, but since I had no publisher anxiously awaiting sharp digital images I was left with time to read and explore. While I continued to use my familiar cameras to do assignments.

The first lesson I learned was that the memory supplied with the camera was hardly sufficient. The 8mb compact flash memory card at medium resolution would barely hold fifteen images. So I had to go shopping once I got home.

I bought a 16 mb card and later a 32mb card. The price is roughly 2\$ per megabyte.

I was tempted to buy more memory but figured that if I needed more, I would just take along my powerbook and download then reformat the cards and would thusly have unlimited memory.

That solved, I ran into the next problem with digital cameras- they eat batteries alive! I quickly caught onto rechargeable nickel metal hydride batteries and a charger.

The other option is that you turn off the LCD viewing window and save some power.

A bit later I also purchased a Quantum rechargeable Battery for long lasting power under regular shooting conditions. advantages of digital imaging to use it's very sensitive meter to make exposures long after I should be able to...I just wish there were a provision on this camera for a remote shutter release for use on the tripod and copy stand.



Willy Chamberlain's Spur



**SPECIAL THANKS TO:**

**Shelley Crawford, Steve Hillery, & Santa Barbara County Education Office** for sponsoring our monthly main meetings at the SBCEO auditorium; **Justine Togami & Co.** at the refreshments table; **Guy DeMangeon** for donating the fruit from his business; **Howard Glenn** at the welcoming table; **Becky and Howard Davis** for clean-up; **Dan Logan & Santa Barbara News Press** for publicity; **Kinko's** for printing the Mouse Times; and many others...

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*(Digital Imaging continued from page 1)*

The Camera is small and I noticed subject to more camera shake than my heavier SLR equipment. When shooting in low light I made many blurry images and later rationalized this as a stylistic aberration.

Reading magazines, the manual many times, for the little camera is very mutable I realized that there is so much to learn. I often shoot both in color and black and white. All it takes is to switch the camera from automatic to manual. I programmed the manual to automatically shoot in black and white.

Essentially all images are produced in black and white and then the color is added with an RGB configuration. It is the strength and complexity of this ability to configure which separates some of the better digital cameras.

I usually print my black and white images using a color setting because it gets the color ink jets to fire on the printer and this means, more jets firing, better medium values-gradients are more forgiving and a better blend between high and low values exists.

One hint I got from attending a SBMUG meeting was the use of a PCMCIA card for downloading images. I had been using a cable to bring images from the camera to the computer and this seemed very slow, created heat in the camera, and frequently crashed the computer or I lost images.

Pia told me she had been using a 950 with the card with no trouble and I was lucky enough to buy one from the night's featured speaker for about \$10 bucks. Best purchase I ever made! Thanks Pia.

Using good quality Epson photo papers and an Epson Stylus 600 ink jet printer, I am able to obtain images that leave people in disbelief that they are actually only medium resolution, 2.1 megapixel digital photographs. I am fond of the heavyweight and supposedly archival matte paper, which I find at Staples for 12.95 for 50 sheets and I also use glossy Epson paper : 100 sheets for 19\$ at Costco. I find that the matte paper absorbs the inks better and often creates much softer, but more dramatic results.

With a copy stand, I am able to make images which often are better than the ones I would make with my flatbed scanner...It certainly is a lot faster.

Some nits about the camera. If I am photographing an event, I notice that the camera is slow to react in low light situations. I got a bracket and Nikon SB22s speedlight and, still find this to be a problem. Sometimes the camera can take 2-6 seconds before the shutter releases, which is an awful long time for subjects to hold a pose, or in action photography, it's already long gone.

Also, if I am really using the camera in rapid succession, the card will begin to fail and I get an error message which means that I have to turn off the camera after each shot and then turn it on again. (This is a fault of the memory card and not the camera) .

The accessory lenses are screw on rather than Bayonet mount and it takes longer to mount them. Also, they are wide and block the optical viewfinder and on-board flash.

Many digital cameras feature both optical and digital zoom features. The optical zoom is the only one worth using. The digital zoom utilizes interpolation which is like using Quaker oats to make more meat loaf...it puts stuffing between pixels to fatten the image, and to date, I've never shot a crisp digitally zoomed image. Never!

I love the way this camera interprets low light metering and have produced some really great and moody shots. I turn off the flash and allow the camera to use it's very sensitive meter to make exposures long after I should be able to...I just wish there were a provision on this camera for a remote shutter release for use on the tripod and copy stand.

The advantages of digital imaging to standard 35mm film is one mainly of expediency. I am able to make images, print them or email them overnight or if in a really big hurry, send them from any available telephone line.

Film takes time. But the nice thing about film is that one can make big images and they don't break down and pixilate. I currently have a show of large 35mm black and white images in Lompoc and the prints are beautiful.

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**FUTURE MEETING DATES:**

All are the third Thursday of the month unless they fall to close to a holiday. In that event, there is advance notification to all members. Watch for announcements.

February 15; March 15; April 19; May 17

(Digital Imaging continued from page 2)

I can print 8X10 images but to go larger might cause them to break up.



*Harding Grass in the Afternoon*

In Summation: I can see how the digital has become a valuable tool and one that I enjoy using, but I am not ready to shelve the SLRs just yet. I still like the way they feel, how they work, and speed they work at. Film takes a little longer, but I think may last a little longer. Though I am considering scanning all my 35mm negs some day.

Digital imaging is here to stay. The newspaper photographers are using Nikon D1s. But I am not ready to shell out \$5000 for a camera just yet....

As the technology progresses, the prices will come down. right now the market seems to provide some decent equipment from \$600- \$2000.

There will always be the latest and greatest stuff, but as soon as one becomes the standard, another will attempt to usurp it. So at some point, it's all a crap shoot and you just take the plunge.

Go ahead, it's worth it, and fun too!

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**MOSES KRAVITZ**

**MAC COMPUTER GUY** 

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## UPLOAD WEB PAGES AUTOMATICALLY WITH APPLESCRIPT

by Brian Carlin

For the original unedited version of this article, see the link:  
<[http://homepage.mac.com/kb6nvh/AS\\_uploader.html](http://homepage.mac.com/kb6nvh/AS_uploader.html)>

Most of us have some storage space on the Internet for storing web pages. We may want to upload a new page every year or so, or we may change the web page information often. It would be great to drop a web page file to an icon and have it go right into your web site without running FTP programs or mounting disks and remembering passwords. AppleScript can upload web pages for you.

Most Internet Service Providers (ISPs) provide some free web page storage space (an FTP site) with your account. Those of you with later model Macintoshes, running OS 9, can open a free iTools account at the Apple web site and use the iDisk to store web page files.

This AppleScript Program will upload a file to your ISPs web storage area (FTP) or to your iDisk, which is a "virtual hard disk" with 20 MB of free(!) web page storage.

The main lesson to learn from this article is how to mount a server from the internet (and put it away) and how to upload files to an FTP site.

To use our script, you will need to download the shareware application, Fetch 3.0.3, which uploads files to your FTP site in the background. To download, go to the Fetch web site at:

<http://store3.esellerate.net/store/Layout3/Catalog.asp>

You also need to download Jon's Commands, an AppleScript addition that adds important commands to the AppleScript language. After downloading and unstuffing the folder, simply drag the "Jon's Commands" icon to the Scripting Additions folder in your System Folder. You can find Jon's Commands here:

<http://www.seanet.com/~jonpugh/>

Copy and paste the AppleScript listing into your Script Editor. You can find the listing on the web page at

[http://homepage.mac.com/kb6nvh/AS\\_uploader.html](http://homepage.mac.com/kb6nvh/AS_uploader.html)

(Uploading Images/AppleScript continued from page 3)

Replace the "xxxxxx" values in the name and password variables with your own account information. My current ISP is Earthlink, but you can change the variable FTPhost to your own FTP site. Also replace the iDisk name with the name of your iDisk in the subroutine iDisk\_item().

Save the AppleScript as an applet. Then drag some files or a folder and drop it on the applet to copy the file to your FTP site or your iDisk. All the files in a folder will upload, but not the folder itself. The arrow on the applet icon means you run this script by dropping something onto the applet icon.

The program mounts your iDisk, copies the file(s), and puts iDisk away, but you could remove the line of code that puts away the iDisk if you want the virtual disk to remain on your desktop.

You could also separate the two main parts of this script and create separate applets for each web site and iDisk you have access to, and store the applets in the associated folders on your disk.

**IMPORTANT WARNING:** The iDisk virtual disk is very slow, especially on 56K dialup modems, so I strongly recommend you upload no more than a few files at a time.

The script listing follows:

```
--Replace these values with your own account information
before you save this applet.
property FTPuser : "xxxxxx"
property FTPpassword : "xxxxxx"
property FTPhost : "ftp-www.earthlink.net"
property FTPdirectory : "" -- usually blank. Use only if you want
to copy to a sub-folder.
property iDisk_user_name : "xxxxxx"
property iDisk_user_password : "xxxxxx"
```

```
-- This droplet processes both files or folders -- of files dropped
onto the applet
on open these_items
  global FTP_URL
  display dialog --
  "Upload these files to which site:" buttons {FTPHost, "iDisk",
"Cancel"}
  if the button returned of the result is FTPHost then
    set FTP_URL to "ftp://" & FTPuser & ":" & FTPpassword & "@"
    & FTPhost & "/" & FTPdirectory
    repeat with i from 1 to the count of these_items
      set this_item to (item i of these_items)
      set the item_info to info for this_item
      if folder of the item_info is true then
        FTP_folder(this_item)
      else if (alias of the item_info is false) then
        FTP_item(this_item)
      end if
    end repeat
  tell application "Fetch 3.0.3" to quit
else -- result was "iDisk"
  try
```

```
    set the disk_URL to "afp://" & iDisk_user_name & ":" &
iDisk_user_password --
    & "@idisk.mac.com/" & iDisk_user_name & "/"
    mount volume disk_URL
  on error error_msg
    display dialog error_msg buttons {"OK"} default button 1
  end try
  repeat with i from 1 to the count of these_items
    set this_item to (item i of these_items)
    set the item_info to info for this_item
    if folder of the item_info is true then
      iDisk_folder(this_item)
    else if (alias of the item_info is false) then
      iDisk_item(this_item)
    end if
  end repeat
  tell application "Finder" to put away disk iDisk_user_name
-- put away iDisk
end if
end open
```

```
-- this sub-routine processes folders
on FTP_folder(this_folder)
  set these_items to list folder this_folder without invisibles
  repeat with i from 1 to the count of these_items
    set this_item to alias ((this_folder as text) & (item i of
these_items))
    set the item_info to info for this_item
    if folder of the item_info is true then
      FTP_folder(this_item)
    else if (alias of the item_info is false) then
      FTP_item(this_item)
    end if
  end repeat
end FTP_folder
```

```
-- this sub-routine processes folders
on iDisk_folder(this_folder)
  set these_items to list folder this_folder without invisibles
  repeat with i from 1 to the count of these_items
    set this_item to alias ((this_folder as text) & (item i of
these_items))
    set the item_info to info for this_item
    if folder of the item_info is true then
      iDisk_folder(this_item)
    else if (alias of the item_info is false) then
      iDisk_item(this_item)
    end if
  end repeat
end iDisk_folder
```

```
-- this sub-routine processes files
on FTP_item(myUploadItem)
  global FTP_URL
  with timeout of 300 seconds -- upload file within 5 minutes
  -- Use the fetch application to upload file(s) to your FTP site.
  -- http://store3.esellerate.net/store/Layout3/Catalog.asp
  tell application "Fetch 3.0.3"
    set myBinPref to the add bin suffix
```

```

    set the add bin suffix to false
    put into url FTP_URL item myUploadItem text format Raw
Data binary format Raw Data
    set the add bin suffix to myBinPref
    end tell
end timeout
end FTP_item

```

**-- Important. Replace the iDisk name with your iDisk name in the old\_file variable.**

```

on iDisk_item(myUploadItem)
    set old_file to "BrianiDisk:Sites:" &
Get_file_name(myUploadItem)
    with timeout of 300 seconds -- upload file within 5 minutes
    tell application "Finder"
        -- deleteFile command is part of Jon's Scripting additions.
        -- http://www.seanet.com/~jonpugh/
        if alias old_file exists then deleteFile old_file
        activate
        set myUploadItem to myUploadItem as alias
        select myUploadItem
        copy selection to folder "Sites" of disk iDisk_user_name
    end tell
end timeout
end iDisk_item

```

```

on Get_file_name(x) -- Get the file name from the string
"disk:folder:file"
    set i to length of (x as text)
    set y to ""
    repeat until character i of (x as text) is ":"
        set y to character i of (x as text) & y
        set i to i - 1
    end repeat
    return y
end Get_file_name

```

## PIA'S PASSION

*by Pia Oliver*

When I turn on my computer in the mornings, I have a small butterfly in my stomach. It has been at least ten hours since I checked my email. I don't know what exciting message may await me, or what solution to a problem may have come my way, or what friend has written me, or what neat inquiry will result in a good sale I may have received.

As you can tell I look forward to reading my email, and without frequent doses of it throughout the day would often find the day dragging, or without excitement.

Somewhere around 1992 I began playing with the Internet and got my first email address. I began my internet surfing with AOL but very quickly realized that I wanted to see the World and that the AOL pond was too confining for me. I then got an account with a local ISP and got my first real email address. I have never looked back.

Today I receive about 400-600 email messages per day but I do not spend all day reading or responding. About 80-90% of them are from email lists to which I am subscribed, and I use filters to sort them into mailboxes. Then I can read at my leisure and in the order I wish to, or I can empty the entire mailbox without looking at a single message. (Filters are another topic altogether).

An email list is, in my opinion, a great vehicle for sharing information and conducting a discussion on many topics. I am subscribed to several email lists discussing rare books, and out of print books, some are for dealers only, others for everyone. I belong to a couple where one only posts messages about wanting to buy or sell certain books.

I belong to different software discussion lists, which I find extremely helpful, such as Dreamweaver, FileMaker and BBEdit, and a few others. When I have a problem (which I often do) I post a question, and usually I have a reply within minutes. Last year I had a situation that stumped me. I have developed a database in Filemaker for collectors of rare books, and I received an extremely urgent order for one for the Windows platform. It was a great opportunity for me, and although I was not quite ready I sent out a plea to my list. I needed someone to finish testing it on a Windows machine, and make a couple of changes specific to Windows, then do the binding (a method by which one can make it into a freestanding application) for Windows. I had the request on a Thursday afternoon, and they needed delivery latest Monday evening. I got my help, one guy in France did one part for me, and another in Lake Geneva in Wisconsin (?) did the rest, and all in time! Without my email list I could not have accomplished this.

I also belong to some Mac related lists, SBMUG of course (one of my favorites) and others. I was a member of the original Thunderlizard list, started by Guy Kawasaki when he was an Apple Evangelist. About a dozen of the members on that list got to know each other and decided they wanted to "put their money where their mouths were" with respect to Apple. We organized ourselves, and hired a stockbroker, got our money together and bought Apple stock as a group. We are still together, and have added some members, and lost some. Most of us have never met face to face, only on the list and in chat rooms. A small group of us decided to meet in New Orleans a few years ago, and had a wonderful time. If it was not for an unmoderated email list, I would never have become part of this wonderful group of people.

Since I like Guy Kawasaki's approach to the world, I belong to his email list, which discusses marketing, and find it extremely interesting. I have learned so much from all these various lists, found myself so excited about ideas, and made such great friends, I could not possibly envision a life without email lists now. For me it is more than the dry technical facts when discussing a software issue, or hardware particulars, it is the fact that there is a real person at the other end of that

message, and over time, I get to know that person a little. Inevitably we infuse our messages with our own personalities, and show our sense of humor, or the lack of it, and the list becomes a community of neighbors and friends.

In our own lives we have different roles, mother, daughter, wife, friend, teacher, author, nurse, cook, chauffeur, etc. The lines between these roles are not cast in stone, and are freely interchangeable, and often overlap. That's why I have no problem when they overlap on the email lists either - it adds energy, excitement and creative thinking in my opinion.

The way an email list works is quite simple. A piece of software is used which automatically receives individual messages sent to it (the list) and then sends the same message out to each member of the list (the email list members). People can subscribe to the list automatically, and delete (unsubscribe) themselves automatically. Some lists have different ways one can receive messages, either each message as it is sent, or in a daily digest where all messages for usually a 24-hour period are collected and sent in one package. If you have ever seen a comment like "I am in digest mode, so please respond to me personally," and wondered what that meant, it is simply because the person will not receive any messages from the list until the digest is sent out, and would like the answer before then.

There are different and varied software for email lists, some more sophisticated than others. Some email list software is web based, meaning it has a graphic interface and is maintained on the web, as for instance our own SBMUG recently was converted to. Others are entirely email based. Subscribing and unsubscribing to an email list is automated, and only in very rare instances does a human being participate in this. That is why it is so important to follow exactly the instructions, or you will end up completely frustrated. Do save the welcome message you receive when subscribing to an email list, since it will contain these instructions.

There are lurkers and there are posters, sometimes the lurkers become posters but rarely does a poster become a lurker. Some people like to just read the posts, and are quite content, or wait until they see a question they know the answer to, or an issue they feel strongly about. As long as the post is courteous and literate, and if containing factual material is correct, post it! I have found that the Internet is an extremely friendly and helpful community. Always bear in mind that the email list is on the Internet and what that means. The Internet is international - there are no boundaries and certainly no borders. That person who you think spells atrociously may have learned her English in Outer Mongolia and is posting her question via her LCII on a 300 baud modem!

Before you jump on her and tell her to spell check and clean up her grammar, take pause and think and see what clues you

can find. And then, answer the question politely and wish her well, instead of "flaming" her. Flaming never pays, only hurts people, mostly yourself. If someone is stupid, arrogant or annoying on a list, responding in the same way is not going to solve the problem. Realize also, that once you have sent that angry retort, it will forever be out there in cyberspace for all to see! The list owner will take care of it, be assured.

Now, the list owner does not "own" the list but is an administrator of it, and sees that the software is performing properly, takes care of any issues with it, and when asked, will look into issues on the list, like flaming. The administrator has the right to terminate someone's membership for breaking the posted rules of the list.

By far the majority of email lists are set up so that all messages go to all members when one hits the "reply to" key, and are un-moderated. This means that when I get a message and want to reply to it, my reply goes to the all the list members, not just the person who wrote the message I am responding to. Very few lists have a moderator who reads all messages sent to the list and then "censors" them, allowing those approved by him to be sent to the members of the list. It is a chore to be a moderator even on a fairly quiet list, and virtually impossible on a busy list. I have only ever come across one list which was moderated, a list for librarians to discuss the cataloging and care of rare books; incongruous in my mind when most public libraries allow free access to the internet via their computers for the public's use.

There are some guidelines or rules based on common sense and courtesy which one should follow. Do read the FAQ (Frequently Asked Questions) which are generally posted for a list. Do search in the Archives before posting a question, if the list maintains an archive. Our SBMUG list now does have an archive, and it will continue to grow.

Do try and proof read your message before you send it, is easier to read a correctly spelled and grammatically correct sentence. Try and stay on topic to what you are responding, and make your response reasonable in length. If your reply is lengthy, and sometimes this is warranted, warn people by saying so in your header, e.g. "Pia's problem—lengthy reply".

When replying, quote only what is necessary for the context. It is not necessary to quote all that has been said earlier. Sometimes I see messages where I have screen after screen of quoted material and I have to hunt for the reply. That takes up bandwidth only and does not make anything clearer for me, the reader. Most of the time I don't need lengthy headers, and signatures which carry on ad infinitum, the name of the original sender and the gist of the message is enough.

Most email lists request that you only use ASCII text and refrain from HTML formatted text. On an email list people use a variety of clients (programs) for their email. Some are simple and others very sophisticated. Some email clients cannot handle HTML formatted text, and it becomes

virtually impossible to read then. Plus the formatted text takes up much more bandwidth than the plain one, and both because people access the Internet with different means, and in order not to clog the 'Net, it is both prudent and considerate to use the plain text.

Closely related to this is to NEVER send attachments to an email list. That is an absolute No - no and you will get many angry reprimands, and may get deleted from the list, if you do. Attachments take up bandwidth, and for someone with a 33.6 modem (and there are many who use 14.4 still!) a 500k jpg of your pet dog, will take an awful long time to download. When I receive an ".exe" file which I immediately trash, I curse that person and will forever trash their stuff immediately upon receipt. Equally important are viruses, which are spread via attachments generally. Although we are Mac blessed and susceptible to very few viruses, realize that Windows people are unfortunate in this respect and are extremely vulnerable to this.

The virus hoaxes going round the 'Net are too many to count. To observe good Netiquette, don't post these, unless you have verified yourself that it is not a hoax but a genuine alert. In the same vein, do refrain from forwarding these interminable MLM schemes and chain letters, please. I really dislike getting these bogus requests about the Afghan women, or Microsoft is going to pay \$XX for each signature of this letter. That's where common sense comes in; if it sounds to absurd, it is absurd, and belongs in the trash!

We have all done it at some time or other—sent a private message to the wrong party! Of course an email list is not the place to send private messages to, but it is inevitable that it will happen to you. When it does, apologize briefly, and leave it at that. You may feel that you can never again show your signature on that list, but you would be surprised how little other people may really care about your very private thoughts or affairs. Just go on with life and your list and do your best not to do it again.

Try not to cross post to your email lists. By that I mean, post the same message to several lists, or take a message from one list and post it on another. Most of the time it is not appropriate, and members will end up with four or five, or whatever, of your messages. When you do post an item you did not author, do give credit to the source, author or origin of the material. The Internet has copyright laws, just like our "real" world, and copyright infringement is no different in cyberspace.

Advertising yourself on an email list is generally frowned upon, so do it sparingly. People who have signatures running more than a few lines, describing their every past, current and future business venture and hobby, may find themselves the butt of some scathing remarks. SHOUTING is always bad manners, in person or on an email list. Writing in CAPITALS is considered shouting and should never be done. Do learn a few of the emotions or to emote on lists.

:) is a smiley

(; is a sad face and those are probably the most widely used.

Below are some others, by no means all of them!

BO	Back Off
CBU	Carbon Based Unit (human)
CU	see you
CUL8R	see you later
DIIK	darnned if I know
FAQ	Frequently Asked Questions

FITB	Fill In The Blank
FOTFL	Falling On The Floor Laughing
FTBOMH	From The Bottom Of My Heart
FUBAR	Fouled Up Beyond All Recognition
FWIW	For What It's Worth
GA	Go Ahead (you turn, usually in a conference)
GIF	Graphics Interchange Format
GIGO	Garbage In, Garbage Out
GIWIST	Gee, I Wish That I had Said That
GMTA	Great Minds Think Alike
GUI	Graphical User Interface
HAND	Have A Nice Day
IC	I see
IMBO	In My Biased Opinion
IMHO	In My Humble Opinion
IMNSHO	In My Not So Humble Opinion
IMO	In My Opinion
KISS	Keep It Simple, Stupid
L8R	Later
LOL	Laughing out Loud
MYOB	Mind Your Own Business
O&O	Over & Out
OTOH	On The Other Hand
ROFL	Rolling On the Floor Laughing
ROTFL	Rolling On The Floor Laughing
RTM	Read The Manual
TBC	To Be Continued
TDMMDI	The Devil Made Me Do It
TIA	Thanks In Advance
WYSINOT	What You See Is NOT what you get

The best advice for using an email list is to think before posting. Once you click on SEND, there is no way to stop your Email from being distributed through the rest of the list and become accessible throughout cyberspace. It is not just the list which will access your reply but the rest of the world! Go to Yahoo for instance, and input your own name or email address. See what comes up—you will be surprised, I guarantee you.

Where do you find lists? Everywhere! No one knows how many email lists exist. One way to find one is to search in your favorite search engine for your topic of interest, and then follow a few of the links. Inevitably sooner or later you will find an address for subscribing to an email list. Most software and hardware companies maintain email lists for their products, and these are generally helpful until one becomes familiar with the item and its set-up. There are discussion lists for every topic under the sun, guaranteed, whether you want to learn to rebind incunabula, learn how to cultivate orchids or learn the haute dressage with your horse! If you want to practice your French or Swedish, subscribe to a list in that language, if you need a tutor in algebra, there is a list for you out there.





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## CHOOSING BLANK MEDIA FOR MUSIC CDs

By Rudy Trubitt

Burning audio CDs has never been easier. But listening to them on different disc players isn't always as simple: will they play, or won't they? Compatibility starts with choosing the right recordable disc...

On a recent stroll through a local mega-warehouse-store, I stumbled upon pallet-loads of blank CDs, stacked to the rafters-enough to convert my giant LP collection several times over. But so many types! Computer grade CD-Rs in 74 minute and 80 minute lengths, rewritable CD-RW discs, and what's this? CD-Rs "For Music!" They cost a bit more, but look: They're "for music!" If I were a true audiophile, I'd spend the extra buck for higher-fidelity sound, right? Wrong!

Let's get this straight: Don't buy "For Music" or "Music Only" blank media to use with Roxio software and your computer-based CD burner. These blank discs aren't specially-formulated for music, nor will they sound better than "data-grade" CD-Rs. But they cost more - up to twice as much per disc.

"For Music" blanks are just for use with standalone recorders that hook up to your stereo, and the extra cost is a royalty to songwriters for the privilege of copying their CDs. These recorders check the blank CD's "Disc Application Code." If the blank is marked with the "for music" Application Code, recording is allowed. If not, recording is disabled. Computer-based recorders don't care about the "for music" code, so these more expensive blanks are unnecessary. In fact, in some cases they won't work at all.

Having eliminated the "For Music" blanks from our consideration, what's the best bet for making audio CDs that will play everywhere? A good question, because clever readers like you know that sometimes a particular disc, burned on a particular recorder, won't play properly on a particular player.

These frustrating and seemingly random "incompatibilities" manifest in several ways: You may notice that it takes a long time to "find" the beginning of a song when skipping between tracks. Perhaps the beginning of a tune skips, or the song is joined "already in progress." Sometimes the disc won't even be recognized by the player.

To minimize these headaches, use computer/data grade write-once 74-minute blanks from a reputable manufacturer. Nearly all home, car stereo and portable CD players will play write-once CD-Rs, although you may occasionally find a disc brand and player that don't get along.

How about discs of other lengths? 60-minute blanks are as safe as 74's, although they are increasingly hard to find. Those long-playing 80-minute blanks are another story. The extra six minutes might come in handy when putting together the ultimate party mix for your high-school reunion, but be forewarned: 80-minute blanks are less compatible with older audio CD players.

In the summer of 2000, the standard for recordable CDs, known as the "Orange Book" was revised to include 80-minute blanks. Newer players will handle these discs without complaint, but older players might not be so tolerant. To be safe, stick with 74-minute blanks unless you really need those six extra minutes.

The color of the blank disc's dye layer (green vs. yellow) isn't an indicator of compatibility, nor is the difference between gold and silver reflectors significant. While silver discs are slightly more reflective than gold ones, the 2 percent improvement rarely makes a difference where compatibility with players is concerned. On the other hand, some claim that gold discs may have greater longevity, but if longevity is a big issue for you, look for special archival media brands, of which there are several. A couple years ago I would have urged you to find a brand that works for you and stick with it, but overall compatibility is pretty high these days, thanks to newer burners that optimize their writing to suit the characteristics of the inserted blank.

Next up: CD-RW. Unfortunately, CD-RW blank media is often incompatible with ordinary audio CD players. Only newer players, labeled as "CD-RW-compatible" or "Multi-Read" (see logo) will work with CD-RWs. I suppose I could get worked up over this, but given the low cost of write-once blanks, ditching the more-costly CD-RW media doesn't feel like much of a sacrifice.

Finally, what about listening to your audio CD-Rs in a DVD player? You'd think this would be a no-brainer, since DVD players support mass-produced audio CDs. However, a laser assembly tuned to read DVDs isn't

able to make out the marked dye layer sandwiched at the core of a CD-R. Unless your DVD player is labeled "dual-laser," chances are it won't play your write-once discs. Oddly, you might have a better chance with CD-RW media; the reflectivity character of these discs improves their performance with certain DVD players. If you're buying a DVD player, read the fine print. Most units currently on the market are compatible with CD-R and CD-RW, but sometimes the only way to be sure is to try it out.

So there you have it. Below is a handy chart with a summary of blank media types for use with computer-based burners and their compatibility with various players. But the short answer is, stick with 74-minute, computer-grade write-once CD-Rs, and most players will happily sing your tunes.

Rudy Trubitt is a writer, musician and music-lover from Oakland, California. Visit him on the Web at <http://www.trubitt.com>

This article was originally printed in Roxio's CD-R newsletters, delivered free to subscribers' emailboxes weekly. For more information and to subscribe, please see:

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## TAKING ON A LIFE OF THEIR OWN: SURVIVING CONFLICTS ONLINE

By Robert DeLaurentis

Every person who has spent enough time reading or posting messages on a public email list or forum has, from time to time, encountered a message that pushed the bounds of local acceptability. I have been a participant in online discussion groups since 1984. I have read hundreds of thousands of messages and I've written what seems like thousands more. In that time I have come across far too many messages that would have been better left unwritten. If its not an inappropriate remark, then maybe its something off-topic or a little too personal. That it happens occasionally is not surprising, given that we all see the world a little differently. What is surprising is that no matter how different the cause, the pattern that results repeats itself almost exactly the same way each time.

It starts with a spark, usually a borderline innocuous remark. A response ups the ante. Several rounds of escalation follow. Hurt feelings generally ensue. In an effort to restore order, the argument morphs from the original subject to procedures and policies. Just where do you draw the line? Unfortunately, the line between appropriate and potentially offensive can not etched in stone, surrounded by

flags and warning lights, and circled with the yellow "Do Not Cross" plastic tape that police use to decorate crime scenes. So what can be done?

A public forum works best, albeit not perfectly, if the users tend to be tolerant of those infrequent occasions when a boundary is skirted. Ignoring an isolated faux pas almost always results in it being forgotten almost immediately. That is often very hard to do, especially in the heat of the moment. Yet the alternatives gone unchecked usually result in a lot of charred egos and massive collateral damage as the disagreement spirals off in several directions.

If someone is so compelled to take issue with a particular message that ignoring it just isn't possible, writing the sender a personal email is the next best option. Talking directly might create a new understanding of the issues for both parties. And if several people wrote a private note saying essentially the same thing, one would hope that the original sender would rethink his or her original remarks in context of how other readers interpreted it.

One of the most effective techniques is to avoid conflicts in the first place. Here are a few guidelines to help steer list participants away from trouble.

1. Debates are disagreements about issues, conflicts are arguments about people's character. Debates are healthy. Conflicts are not.

2. Never, ever take issue with a person, only an idea. Suggesting to someone that he or she may be wrong is acceptable, suggesting that they are stupid is not.

3. Although it may seem you are talking to a screen, remember that those bits of text in a message window represent a real live human being with thoughts, feelings, and foibles.

4. Before clicking the send button, imagine reading your message aloud in a crowded room in front of people you care about.

5. A message that appears to demand an immediate and emotional retort never requires an immediate and emotional retort.

6. Messages on the screen lack the subtle cues essential to personal communication: tone of voice, eye contact, and body language. Therefore, messages can often appear much more strident than the sender intended, especially if the message is also short.

There is a clear difference between someone who has too much to drink at a party and makes a few ill-considered remarks, and someone who drinks too much then gets behind the wheel of a car. Society generally ignores the former and incarcerates the latter. Even when confronted with the online equivalent of a drunken driver, every effort should be made to keep the discussion focused on improving the general tone of future messages, not on assigning blame for past deeds. Getting the last word does not prove anything, except who spoke last.

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The *Mouse Times* Staff welcomes contributions of original Macintosh-related items from our membership. We reserve full editorial privileges.

To submit articles, please e-mail your text in MS Word or ASCII text formats. Graphics must be compatible with PageMaker, preferably in EPS format. Use standard fonts or include a font file with your submission.

Please contact the Editor for the Newsletter Deadline Schedule.

Send your articles to:

**SBMUG**  
**P.O. Box 60922**  
**Santa Barbara, CA 93160**  
or via e-mail to: <adonohoe@utech.net>

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## PERSONAL AD GUIDELINES

Do you have something personal in the Macintosh line you wish to buy, sell or trade? The deadline for ads is the first Thursday of the month. Short (35 words), noncommercial ads are free for SBMUG members only, and must be reconfirmed monthly!

## COMMERCIAL AD POLICY

Rates:	1 issue	2 issues
Full page	\$120	\$200
Half page	65	100
Quarter page	45	75
Business card	20	35

Payment is required in advance, with checks made payable to:

Santa Barbara Mac Users Group (SBMUG) and sent to the address above. Commercial ads should be submitted in EPS format on Zip disk or camera-ready format.

**NB: SBMUG makes no endorsements, either stated or implied, regarding any services or products advertised in this newsletter**

# MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION & RENEWAL FORM

Your due date is shown on the newsletter mailing label.

Application Type:     New     Lapsed     Change of info ONLY     Renewal

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- **Computer Level: Check the level you enjoy at meetings**  
 Beginners'     Intermediate     Advanced

### • Computer Interests

- |                                      |   |
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If applicable, please write the name of the SBMUG member who should receive credit for your new membership.

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# MONTHLY MEETINGS 3RD THURSDAYS

Santa Barbara County Education Office

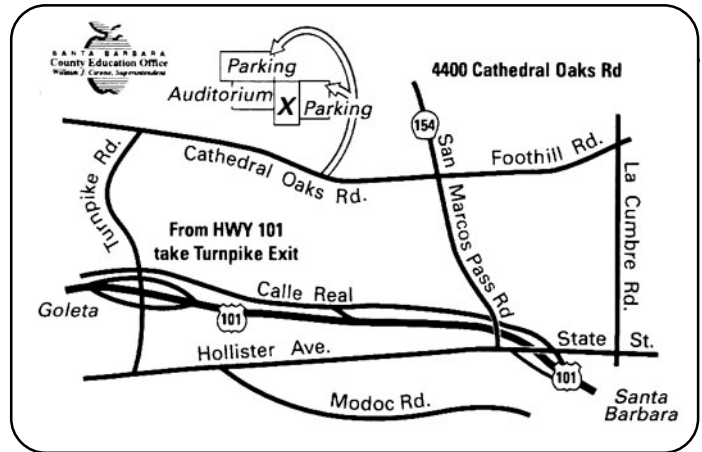
4400 Cathedral Oaks Road

Upcoming meetings: February 15 & March 15

6-7 pm Questions & Answers • 7-9 pm Presentations

Meetings are at the Santa Barbara County Education Office (SBCEO) auditorium, 4400 Cathedral Oaks Road (1 mile west of Hwy 154). Just inside the driveway entrance, turn right and follow the road up the hill to the end. Turn left into the parking lot — you'll find us in the auditorium.

Currently scheduled meeting dates through June 2000 are shown on page 3. Program information and meeting dates will also be listed on our Web site: <<http://www.sbmug.org>>.



**SANTA BARBARA MACINTOSH USERS GROUP**

**P. O. Box 60922**

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