

SANTA BARBARA MACINTOSH USERS GROUP

Mouse Times

News, Views & Reviews from the Macintosh Community

SBMUG Newsletter

March/April 2001

Santa Barbara, California

THE NEWS...

On March 15, Sebastian Frey of 4th Dimension Software gave us a demonstration of 4th Dimension's integrated database and server products. Sebastian has been developing applications with 4th Dimension since 1989 and has worked as a 4D consultant around the country and around the world. Sebastian is currently 4D's Web Development Tools Evangelist.

4th Dimension's debut product was the first relational database management system for the Mac. What began as a simple database, grew to a true client/server application in the early 1990's and went cross-platform to Windows in 1995. In 1996, 4D gained its own built-in web server and now "offers amazing flexibility, performance and value with more standard integrated web features."

With the purchase of StarNine Technologies and the WebSTAR Server Suite, 4D is now a leader in the Mac web development market offering users a more powerful integrated database solution. With its roots as a Macintosh product 4D is very committed to continuing its support of the Mac platform, and is committed to porting both 4D and WebSTAR to Mac OS X.

The April 17 presentation gave an in depth look at OSX.

IBM-Compatible vs. Macintosh; Apple's Viability

by Randy Singer

A person's choice of computer has taken on a significance with many people that in many ways is similar to one's choice of car. If you drive a Mercedes, a Lexus, a BMW, etc. many people feel that that says something about you. So it is with your choice of computer. In fact, much more so. It has even been said that one's choice of computer is like a religious choice. People are very committed to that choice. This Webmaster thinks that this is silly, but accepts that the situation exists. I believe that you really can't go far wrong with either choice, but that choosing to use a Macintosh over an IBM-compatible is akin to choosing an Acura over a Ford Taurus. Both are fine cars, the owners of both love them, but you rarely hear of an Acura owner switching to a Taurus, while you often hear of a Taurus owner switching over to an Acura. It is the same with a Macintosh. (The interesting point in this analogy is that Acura has less than 1% of their market, yet no one is afraid to purchase an Acura for fear that they will go out of business. Apple has over 10% of the personal computer market with the Macintosh, yet you often hear people say that they are afraid to purchase a Macintosh because they are afraid that Apple will go out of business. Strange.)

Let me point out that, no matter what Apple's earnings are, they have several Billion (yes, with a "B") dollars worth of gross sales each year. Companies with sales numbers in that range don't usually go out of business. At the very worst they get purchased by another company, who would probably endow them with better management. Fortunately, as of this writing, Apple's earnings are quite good and it looks like they will continue to be, thanks to an inspired new marketing strategy and a continuous stream of releases of new and compelling products.

One big problem for Macintosh-using attorneys is that most consultants are IBM-philes. (There are not many Macintosh consultants, mainly because setting up and configuring a Macintosh tends to be easy enough that a consultant is not usually necessary.) Getting accurate information out of them about the Macintosh, even if they say that they are knowledgeable about the Macintosh, is rare. Consultants tend to recommend hardware and software that they are familiar with, and will rationalize reasons for you not to go with equipment and software that they are not comfortable with. (I also want to note here that consultants are business people. They tend to recommend hardware, not that is the easiest to use, or which is the most dependable, but which they make the most money on. In the vast majority of cases that would be no-name IBM-clones. In study after study, the Macintosh has come up the winner in ease of use, reliability, economy of support and maintenance, and resale value.



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...

(IBM-Compatible vs. Macintosh continued from page 1)

Consultants generally have no concern for these things. In fact, the contrary would be to their advantage. The more problems that you have with your computer, the more money they make in consulting fees.) What can you do about this? Find out as much as you can about the Macintosh from this publication and the resources listed herein, from discussion forums on the Internet, and from Apple and their Web site. Talk to your local Macintosh retailer (such as CompUSA or ComputerWare) and see if they offer any installation and/or consulting services. Remember, even a child can install and set up a Mac. You can too.

What does the future hold for Apple? At this writing the iMac is in its third revision, and is still selling like mad. It is stylish, blazingly fast, inexpensive, requires next to no setup or maintenance, it is full-featured, and it includes both 10baseT Ethernet and the new faster 100baseT Ethernet. It includes a modem and getting on the Internet takes about 10 minutes from the time you remove the computer from the box. This computer is billed as a consumer market model, but it also embodies the best features of a network computer (dubbed "NC" by some - a basic inexpensive computer that exists mainly to interact with a server over a network or with the Internet.) Many law firms, especially those with oldtechnology computers in their firms, see the iMac as irresistible, especially when used in conjunction with OSX Server with its Net-Boot feature. (Net-Boot allows computers on a network to access applications on the server simultaneously and quickly, as if the applications were running locally.) I have been fielding a lot of inquiries as of late from firms interested in switching over their entire firms to a network of iMacs. Potentially a network of all-iMacs, (with the Macintosh's famous reliability and Apple's history of maintaining backward compatibility when introducing new system software), can last as long as the DOS machines that they will be replacing lasted.

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Randy B. Singer is a practicing civil litigator in Woodland, Calif. He is the head of the MacAttorney User Group, with close to 3,00 members http://www.macattorney.com, the co-author of The Macintosh Bible and author of the recently released ABA publication: The Macintosh Software Guide for the Law Office at:

http://www.abanet.org/lpm/catalog/511-0431.html

To subscribe to the MacAttorney User Group, send e-mail to <randy@mother.com> with the word "subscribe" in the Subject line of the message. You will automatically be made a member of MacAttorney. Membership is free, and members receive the MacAttorney Newsletter free via e-mail.

DISKGUARD (V1.8.6)

By Jim Tinsley

In the olden days, when computer use was pretty much restricted to large machines shared by a number of people, most operating systems required users to "log on" to the system and enter a password to verify his (or her) identity. Each user would have a set of rules regarding when he could use the computer, what (and how much) disk space he could use, and so on. For the most part, this paradigm was not carried over to the operating systems written for personal computers. This was partly be cause, being personal and all, they were not shared by many people, and partly because the necessary overhead was much more of a burden on a machine's resources in those early years.

Now that personal computers almost completely displaced the big monolithic machines in the workplace, and often serve an entire family at home, security and/or privacy needs often cannot adequately be met by simply locking the machine up in an office (especially if you only have a cubicle). DiskGuard (ASD Software, \$79) was written to address these issues.

DiskGuard is installed simply by running the installer-no muss, no fuss. A very simple, well organized control panel

(DiskGuard continued from page 2)

provides the user interface. It consists of a list of all volumes (physical disk drives, partitions, removable disks,etc.) and buttons for the various operations: setting or removing protection, changing parameters and log file access.

DiskGuard recognizes three classes of people: the Master, the User and the Unwashed Masses. There are no user/account names, just passwords. The Master, i.e. anyone who can give the master password, can do anything at anytime. Similarly, the User is anyone who knows the (single) user password. The User(s) can access any unprotected volume at anytime, and protected volumes at times set by the Master. These times are comprised of specific days of the week, in any combination, and a single set of contiguous hours on those days. The Unwashed Masses can access only unprotected volumes, but may do so at any time.

(It pays not to lose your master password. If you do so, for \$25 ASD Software will provide a code to get around it (to registered users only-send in your damn registration card!). It should also be noted that DiskGuard will not work on volumes on which you are using compression utilities or, reasonably enough, other protection utilities. You are warned to verify the integrity of a volume using Disk First Aid, Norton Utilities, etc., before "protecting" it. This is not only reasonable, but smart-errors in system files (catalog, map, etc.) are usually not noticeable until they accumulate.)

Interestingly, all parameters—including the Master password—are referenced to a given volume, which must be selected before any operation can be performed; there exists no global password for DiskGuard itself. On systems with multiple volumes, each volume can have different Master passwords and different User passwords, with different access limitations and so on. One or more volumes can be selected simultaneously for enabling protection, at which time a dialog box immediately appears requesting a Master password. Other than that, operations are done only on one volume at a time.

After protection has been set, DiskGuard will ask for a password for each protected volume on startup or reboot. If the operator offers an invalid password (for that day and time in the case of Users)—or clicks the Dismount Button—the corresponding volume is not mounted, and is therefore not accessible. If a User attempts to log on at a disallowed time, a message simply states that he is not allowed to use the volume in question at this time. When a User remains logged on as the end of his allowed time is near, he is warned (ten minutes before and one minute before the time limit) to save his work and shut the computer down. If he does not, the screen lockout activates and the master password must be used to regain access to the computer.

The Screen Lock feature can also be set to activate after a selectable amount of inactivity. When this happens, the

screen goes dark, except for a small icon that jumps randomly around the screen (thereby doubling as a minimalist screen saver). As with a screen saver, hitting a key or moving the mouse will "wake up" the machine, which then asks for a password for each protected volume, and any volume for which no valid password is given is dismounted. The screen lock can also be set by moving the cursor to a preset corner of the screen. This is a way of "logging out" without shutting down or rebooting the computer.

Trying to access an unavailable volume indirectly, via an alias for example, will trigger the password dialog. The DiskGuard application itself (as distinct from the control panel) is invisible, making it hard to delete for those not conversant with power-user software such as ResEdit. Should disks errors arise on a protected volume such that the protection can not be removed using the control panel, a separate Emergency Remove utility, included on the CD, will do the job. (Protection must be removed from a volume before it can be repaired.)

But wait! There's more! The Master can allow the User to change his password, require a minimum length, and limit the number of days that the User password is valid. With the latter option, the User is forced to change his password every so often if he has that privilege; otherwise, his access is simply terminated. The Master can also write protect the volume in question and prevent the User from inserting floppy disks (so that he can not copy files). For PowerBook users, you can specify that the computer be put to sleep in place of activating the screen lock so to conserve battery power.

Although DiskGuard is geared to disk-level protection (hence the name), specific folders inside a protected volume can be individually protected. This means that they are ALWAYS hidden from Users: during periods when a User is permitted to access a protected volume, these folders are made invisible. A special case of this is the system folder. A dedicated check box turns its protection on and off, and it is not made invisible, rather a message informs intruders that they do not have permission to access it.

As one would expect, DiskGuard maintains log files: one for each volume. A summary lists days the volume was accessed and the amounts of time that the Master and User were "logged on". Clicking the triangle next to a given day will expand the view to show every security "occurrence" that occurred that day: logins, logouts, failed attempts to access the volume, changes of password, and so on. The Master can create his own filters to show specific sets of events. However, there does not seem to be any way of printing the log. Nor can you delete it, or at least clear everything earlier than some given date, in order to keep the file from becoming excessively large. This leaves you the option of unprotecting the volume to enable you to delete the log, and immediately reprotecting it. There should be a better way.

(DiskGuard continued from page 3)

A significant lapse arises from the fact that EVERYONE (including the Unwashed Masses) has access to the DiskGuard control panel. A Master password is required to unprotect a volume or access the options menu, but both Masters AND Users can read the log file. I would have thought that this access would also be restricted to the Master. Even worse is the lack of global control noted earlier-the program does not take a password for a given volume until the user first sets protection on it. So, if there are any unprotected volumes on a machine, Anyone (washed or not) can select one and protect it with his own Master password. Thus a cleaver and malicious friend or employee could co-opt one of these volumes! Fortunately, this treachery can be dealt with using the Emergency Remove utility (kept hidden in a safe place!).

Clearly, the way to avoid this vulnerability is to protect all volumes on your computer. However, every time you start up your machine, or unlock the screen, you must enter the password for each protected volume separately-evenif they are all the same. If you have more than one or two volumes on your machine (my hard drive is partitioned into five), this could become tedious.

Another problem with having all program variables tied to specific volumes is that if someone is using the computer with a protected volume dismounted, the Master of that volume can not mount it nor change any of its options. If no protected volume is mounted that had enabled Screen Lock feature, THAT feature is disabled completely, and the computer must be restarted in order to access the volume. For example, I did not protect the startup volume (among others) on my home computer since it only contains applications, in addition to the System; I only protected the partition containing such things as my Quicken and MacInTax files. So if my daughter cranked up the machine to do schoolwork and that partition was left unmounted, the only way to mount it is to make her save everything and restart the machine.

In spite of the issues raised above, I quite like DiskGuard. Once you balanced out the level of protection you need, and the level of convenience you want, the program is quite easy to use. As long as the log file is not too large, it does not require much disk spaceabout 300 kb per protected volume. The various protection options allow quite a bit of flexibility. In a home setting, the parents could jointly be Masters and the kids Users. Or, each parent could have his and her own digital fiefdom for maximum privacy. They can let the kids have access to games or a web browser for a couple of hours every evening, and yet keep their little girl from getting into Quicken and checking her parents bank balance, or junior from reviewing dad's collection of erotic photography.

In Version 2, I would love to see a global (Uebermaster?) password to access the Control Panel, and global options for things like the Screen Lock feature. Then DiskGuard would be a way cool utility.

THE SBMUG-LIST:

BEHIND THE SCENES

By Paul Cronshaw

Many of you are subscribers to the SBMUG Discussion group. Undoubtedly, you have received the benefits of this list with the ability to communicate with other Mac enthusiasts and to tap into

the vast knowledge bank of the SBMUG membership for Mac related topics and help. But have you ever wondered what happens behind the scenes on this list? As the Administrator, I think it is time that I revealed what it takes to run the SBMUG-list.

A little background.

The SBMUG-list was born about 3 years ago. Having successfully run an Internet chiropractic discussion group (ChiroList), I approached Frank Dziuba at Silicon Beach Communications with the idea of setting up a mailing list for the Santa Barbara Mac Users Group. After a couple of email conversations the list was up and running. At first, we used the Majordomo software to enable members an easy subscription and unsubscription process. However, this software lacked features such as message archiving and digest format.

As Administrator of SBMUG-list, I was responsible for the management of this list to include help with the subscription/unsubscription process, bounced messages from inactive email addresses and other error messages send from the "maildeamon".

About a year ago, Frank notified me that he was upgrading the SBMUG's Majordomo software to a web-based list management program called GNU Mailman 1.1 mail list manager. (http://www.list.org/). In my opinion this upgrade has been very beneficial.

Using the Mailman1.1 protocol, I have the privileges and responsibility to manage this mailing list. For an idea of what this entails I refer you to this site for more information:

http://www.aurora.edu/~ckolar/mailman/m

SBMUG-List Administration

My Eudora 5.0 stats indicate I average approximately 100 messages per day. I receive many notifications in my email box of messages that are being held for administrative decisions.

To process these administrative requests, I log onto http://lists.netlojix.com/mailman/admin/sbmug-list>

I type in the password and open the area where the message(s) are being temporarily held.

Here is an example of an administrative request that ends up in my email box:

Delivered-To: paulc@silcom.com

Delivered-To: sbmug-list-admin@lists.netlojix.com

From: sbmug-list-admin@sbmug.org

Subject: 6 SBMUG-list admin request(s) waiting

To: sbmug-list-admin@sbmug.org

X-Mailman-Version: 1.1

List-Id: Santa Barbara Mac Users Mailing List

<sbmug-list.sbmug.org>

Date: Thu, 22 Feb 2001 17:00:02 -0800 (PST)

The SBMUG-list@sbmug.org mailing list has 6 request(s) waiting for your consideration at:

http://lists.netlojix.com/mailman/admindb/sbmug-list

Please attend to this at your earliest convenience. This notice of pending requests, if any, will be sent out daily.

Pending posts:

From: dankeny@newspress.com on Fri Feb 16 08:48:18 2001:

Cause: 'Postings from member addresses only.'

From: adonohoe@utech.net on Fri Feb 16 16:15:31 2001:

Cause: 'Message body too long (>40k)'

From: martina@aol.com on Wed Feb 21 23:14:26 2001:

Cause: 'possible administrivia to list'

Explanation of causes:

1. 'Postings from member addresses only.'

This cause is perhaps the most frequent reason for forwarding a message to my administrative address. Many subscribers have more than one email address at home and work. Since email can be forwarded from various sources, it creates a problem when replying with an email address that the Mailman program cannot recognize. My suggestion is to have one email address that is subscribed to the SBMUG-list

2. 'Message body too long (>40k)'

This cause is triggered when subscribers try to send large attachments or imbedded messages. Please remember to give a URL or send a message to the list requesting that subscribers contact you privately to receive an attachment. It also saves bandwidth and server space.

3. 'possible administrivia to list'

This deals with all the miscellaneous items that Mailman does not recognize.

4. 'Too many recipients.'

Mailman is selfish and prefers that "sbmug-list@sbmug.org" is the only address in the TO field.

5. 'Implicit destination'

This cause is generated if the sender puts "sbmug-list@sbmug.org" in the CC or BCC field

6. 'Suspicious header'

According to Frank Dziuba, this cause is most likely a header was included by the sender's mailer that made it seem forged. This can happen if they use a web-based mail program, since it will try to masquerade as them.

Tending to pending administrative requests.

Items that are being held for review will appear in my administrative email box. I have four actions available:

- Defer the posting, leaving it for a later time. Sometimes I am too busy to reply and will let the messages pile up. Just like paperwork stacking up on a desk! :)
 - Approve the posting and forward it to list members.
- Reject the posting: the original poster will be sent notification of the rejection along with the explanation that appears in the message box on this screen. I can customize the message as I see fit or leave it empty.
- Discard the message with no notification sent to the poster. This is particularly useful for spam.

Bounced Messages:

This is a Mailman mailing list bounce action notice:

List: SBMUG-list

Member: davedad@valueweb.net Action: Subscription not disabled. Reason: Excessive or fatal bounces.

BUT: User not found.

In this case, I have to manually unsubscribe this person from within Mailman's subscription list.

Notification of Subscription

This is a message that Mailman sends me when a new subscriber joins the list.

Delivered-To: paulc@silcom.com

From: mailman-owner@lists.netlojix.com To: sbmug-list-admin@lists.netlojix.com Subject: sbmug-list Subscribe Notification Date: Thu, 1 Mar 2001 16:00:00 -0800 (PST)

Sender: sbmug-list-admin@lists.netlojix.com

cbur@mosmanit.com.au has been successfully subscribed to SBMUG-list.

I also receive notification when a person unsubscribes. Since I am curious as to why they are unsubscribing, I have programmed Mailman to automatically send a survey to the person to find out reason(s) for their decision to drop off the list. Many times they will email me with the reason(s) why they are leaving SBMUG-list.

Angels in Cyberspace.

Sometimes a person sends a message to the list and it ends up back in their box with a message saying that it is waiting for a decision for posting by the administrator. Since the time it has been posted, the person may decide not to post this message to the list. They will quickly send me a private message asking me to be "an angel", delete the message and not let it go through. I am glad to accommodate this request.

Some helpful hints

To help continue to make SBMUG-list a positive experience for all its subscribers, I suggest the following:

- 1. Do not send attachments or files >40K to the list.
- 2. Send email with your subscribed email address only
- 3. Put "sbmug-list@sbmug.org" in the TO field only.

Above all please follow this list netiquette protocol that was posted to the list by members of the 2000-2001 SBMUG Board:

As hosts of this gathering, the SBMUG board holds certain expectations regarding the appropriate tone, style and content of our subscribers' posts. As a Macintosh User Group, we expect posts to this List to fall within the following three general categories:

- Help with specific problems using Macintosh computers.
- Questions and information on other Macintosh-related topics.
- Buying and selling Macintosh-related items.

Please note that although subscribers may offer specific equipment and services to the List, or share an exceptional bargain they have discovered, explicitly commercial postings are prohibited. For example, List members may mention the availability of commercial services or products on the List. Private individuals may offer personal equipment for sale. Of course, all correspondence regarding services or products should be conducted privately, not on the List. It should also be understood that SBMUG makes no claim regarding services or products offered by members of this List.

We expect discussions here to remain focused, but not so tightly that we can't all enjoy the occasional friendly digression. We are an informal community of people helping people, and while Macintosh-related topics are our primary common interest, we have no problem with a little peripheral chatter, as long as everyone stays friendly. However, we maintain that posting to this List is a privilege, not a right, and we reserve the right to exclude any subscribers whose contributions disrupt the harmony we strive to promote here.

For more detailed discussions on the points of Netiquette supported here, please refer to

the following:

- http://lowendmac.net/lists/netiquette.shtml
- http://lowendmac.net/lists/powerbooks.shtml
- http://www.tidbits.com/tb-issues/TidBITS-480.html#lnk2

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If applicable, please write the name of the SBMUG member who SBMUG member		your new mem	bership.

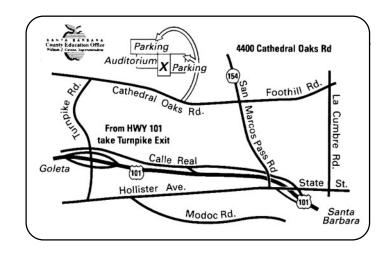
Annual membership dues are \$25. Make checks payable to SBMUG. Send completed form & check to:

Monthly Meetings 3rd Thursdays

Santa Barbara County Education Office 4400 Cathedral Oaks Road Upcoming meetings: May 17 & June 21 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 Santa Barbara, CA 93160



Check the mailing label above for your membership renewal date. Please help us by renewing your membership. We sincerely appreciate your support!