



SANTA BARBARA MACINTOSH USERS GROUP

Mouse Times

News, Views & Reviews from the Macintosh Community

SBMUG Newsletter

June-August 2002

Santa Barbara, California

Next SBMUG Meeting: Tuesday, June 11!

Due to circumstances beyond our control, the next general meeting of SBMUG has been rescheduled. Please mark your calendar and join us on *Tuesday*, June 11 at the usual location (see back page). Note the different day of the week. SBMUG will send a reminder e-mail about the meeting. There is good reason to attend this meeting...see below:

1,000 Songs in YOUR Pocket!



Don't miss the **Tuesday, June 11** meeting featuring a presentation of **iPod** and **iTunes**, presented by Program Chair **Morri Glaser**.

The iPod contains a tiny 5 gigabyte hard disk, that can hold up to 1,000 songs, or up to 5,000 MB of other files. Connect the iPod to your Mac's FireWire port and upload an entire music CD in ten seconds. Listen to music with the included headphones or connect your iPod to your car audio system with a cassette adapter.

SBMUG will also hold a drawing for a new iPod. Buy tickets for \$5 each. SBMUG must sell no less than 100 and no more than 150 tickets to give away the iPod. The ticket-holder must be present at the end of the meeting to win. Only SBMUG members may buy tickets, but you are welcome to join SBMUG and buy tickets at the same time. In the unlikely event that we don't sell enough tickets, hold onto yours and SBMUG will give away the iPod at the July meeting.

Want an iPod? Come to SBMUG's Tuesday, June 11th meeting and you just may take one home!

STANDING ROOM ONLY

The May meeting ran low on chairs as the audience crowded around to learn about **Adobe Photoshop Elements** from Tom Tuttle and Sandy Novak. Two SBMUG members won free copies of the program, everyone else took home a demo. Brian will bring more demo CDs to the June meeting (at the welcoming table) if you missed your copy.

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Read the *Mouse Times* online at:

[<http://www.sbmug.org/MouseTimes/mtindex.html>](http://www.sbmug.org/MouseTimes/mtindex.html)

If you prefer to read the *Mouse Times* online **only**, and not receive a paper copy in the U.S. mail, send an e-mail to the editor at [<brian@sbmug.org>](mailto:brian@sbmug.org)



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Special thanks to:

Tom Williams, Steve Hillery, & Santa Barbara County Education Office for sponsoring our monthly main meetings at the SBCEO auditorium; various **SBMUG Members** who volunteer for the refreshments table; **Guy DeMangeon** for donating fruit and vegetables from his business, **The Berry Man**; **Vicki Fletcher** for donating baked goods from her business, **The Good Earth Restaurant**; **Dan Logan & Santa Barbara News Press** for publicity; **Kinko's** for printing the *Mouse Times*; and many others...

THE SBMUG WEB SITE

Don't forget to stop by the SBMUG web site for regular updates on SBMUG activities. Our webmaster, Robert Winokur, does a good job of keeping the information up-to-date.

You can find basic information, such as the time, location, and topic of our next meeting. You can find the e-mail addresses of the board members. Issues of the *Mouse Times* are available as PDF files (launch the application Acrobat Reader, included with newer Macs, to view PDF documents).

The SBMUG web site is at
<<http://www.sbmug.org>>

THE SBMUG E-MAIL LIST

At the web site you will find a link to the e-mail list. If you subscribe you will receive e-mail messages from skilled Mac users, from Santa Barbara and beyond, helping list members with questions. It's OK to ask any Mac-related question, and the list members love to answer novice questions.

You don't need to be a member of SBMUG to subscribe to the list, and it's free.

THE BEGINNERS' SIG

The Beginners' Special Interest Group is headed by Dale Lowdermilk <dale93150@aol.com> and Harold Adams <harold@sb1ife.com>. They meet once a month, usually on the first Monday, from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. at the Goleta Public Library, 500 N. Faiview, Goleta.

Our thanks to the law firm of **Howell, Moore & Gough**, for allowing us to use their conference room for the monthly board meetings.

The Board meets normally on the Thursday, a week before the general meeting, at 6:30 pm in downtown Santa Barbara. The Board is made up of regular member volunteers who are simply taking their turn helping to manage the various activities of the group. They invite any member to attend the board meetings, whether to just listen in or to share ideas and participate in the discussions.

COMPUSA OFFERS MACINTOSH CLASSES

CompUSA will teach a class about **OS X** in July. If there is interest **CompUSA** will schedule classes for Photoshop 7.0, Dreamweaver, Flash 5.0, and Appleworks. This is their first attempt at Mac training and would appreciate your input.

Contact Eugene Smith at **CompUSA** at 805-571-4030.

LYNDA.COM DEBUTS PHOTOSHOP ELEMENTS TRAINING CD

"We are excited to announce the release of our new training CD-ROM *Learning Photoshop Elements*. It is our hope that you will help us spread the word about our latest lynda.com training product. We'd greatly appreciate it if you could pass this information on to those interested in learning this popular Adobe product using the high quality training that lynda.com is famous for providing."

<<http://lynda.com/>>

PERSONAL ADS:

APPLE LASERWRITER SELECT 360 with Farallon's iPrint Adapter---\$200.00 with less than 12,000 copies on it! Apple says they last for 300,000! 600 x 600 dpi, good ink cartridge, and so forth. Drop me a line if you're interested. <MickG@mac.com>

Upcoming SBMUG general meetings:
June 11 (Tuesday!), July 18, August 15,
September 19, October 17, November 21,
December 19.

APPLE'S iTOOLS; A GUIDED TOUR

Brian Carlin <brian@sbmug.org>

If you ever tried to share files with your friends on their Windows-Intel computers you probably copied them to a zip disk and carried it to their house. Or you probably tried to connect to their network and you had to install the DAVE software because they don't speak AppleTalk. You had to arrange a time and place to exchange files.

If you wanted to create a web site you probably spent a lot of money and time learning DreamWeaver and Flash animation, even though you just wanted one simple page.

With iTools, a free service from Apple, you can share any files with anyone, and build a fancy web site. You just need a Mac that runs OS 9 or newer.

iDisk: the core of Apple's iTools

Apple's iTools allows you to exchange files between your Macintosh, and any other Macintosh, Linux, or Windows computer. ITools includes the iDisk; 20 megabytes of file sharing storage on the Internet that you may use for file exchange, show your photos, or create web pages for anyone to view.

The computers can be anywhere in the world, and don't have to be online simultaneously.

Go to Apple's web site at <<http://www.apple.com>> and click on the iTools tab. When you sign up for your free iTools account you will need to download a special "plug-in" file to run iTools with your web browser. Run the installer program and you are ready to go.

Mounting your iDisk on the desktop:

Return to the Apple web site and log in to your iTools account. Click on the button that says, "Open your iDisk." When the progress bar (on your browser's status bar) is done, then your iDisk's icon will appear on the Finder's desktop. Make an alias of your iDisk (click on it and choose "make alias" from the file menu) so you don't have to browse to Apple's web site to open the iDisk again, just double-click on the alias next time.

You can also open your iDisk from Apple's Network Browser application. Click on the shortcuts button (leftmost button) and choose "connect to iDisk..." and an AppleShare dialog box

You can mount an iDisk using an AppleScript. You need the Standard Additions file in your Script Additions folder, but everyone probably has that since it's included with a System install. Here is a listing for the one-line script:

```
Mount volume "afp://username:password@idisk.mac.com/username/"
```

Replace "username" with your iTools account name and "password" with your iTools password. Save the AppleScript as a run-only application so nobody can read your source code for your password. Note that you won't be able to edit that application again so you may also want to save it as a compiled script if you don't want to lose the source code.

pops up for your account name and password. Did I mention you need the AppleShare extension to be enabled in order to use your iDisk? Howard Glenn couldn't see his iDisk on the desktop and we finally figured out his AppleShare extension was disabled.

OS X users can go to the Finder's go menu and choose "Open iDisk."

Saving a file to iDisk

You can just drag a file into one of the folders (Documents, Pictures, Movies, Music, Sites, Public) on your iDisk. The other folders do not allow you to drop files into them. You cannot drag and drop a file right on to the iDisk itself because you don't have the "write-access" privilege to the top level directory of the iDisk.

From many applications, you can choose "save as..." and choose the shortcuts icon in the upper right part of the dialog box, and choose "Connect to iDisk..." from the pull-down menu. If you use a dialup Internet connection, then launch your browser first to connect to the Internet.

Which Folder is for you?

Your iDisk Folders have unique functions, and the rest of your iTools features work with them. The iTools are set up to be simple for novice user and tools such as HomePage expect to find certain files in certain folders. It's easier to just follow the following guidelines.

Drop your GIFs, JPEGs, and other picture files in the folder called "Pictures." You can refer to these pictures when you build your home page, or send an iCard (e-mail postcard). You can create an instant photo album from your iTools account and include some or all of your pictures. Assemble a set of pictures into a folder and then drag the folder to the Pictures Folder, then you can select that set of pictures for a photo album.

Drag your HTML files (web pages), and other associated files to the folder called "Sites." Other people can view your web pages from any computer on the Internet. To access your web page in the Sites folder, point your browser to the URL <http://homepage.mac.com/username/web_page.html>

Change "username" to your iTools account name and change "web_page.html" to the file name of your web page. If you don't include a file name, the default web page will be displayed. You can also specify which web page will load by default (see "HomePage" below).

Drag your iMovies or QuickTime video to the folder called "Movies." Go to the Homepage web site and create a theme for your movie and click the

“publish” button and anyone can view your movie.

Drag mp3 or other audio files into the “Music” folder.

The “Documents” folder is for your eyes only. Save a file there and no one else on the web can access it. They need your iTools password to see files in that folder so it’s a fairly secure way to store files on the Internet.

Anyone can view your files in any of your iDisk folders (except the Documents folder) from the web, just point your browser to the following URLs:

<http://homepage.mac.com/YouriDiskName/.Pictures/filename>

<http://homepage.mac.com/YouriDiskName/.Movies/filename>

<http://homepage.mac.com/YouriDiskName/.Public/filename>

<http://homepage.mac.com/YouriDiskName/.Music/filename>

Note the period in front of the folder name, and if your file is in the “Sites” folder, you don’t need to add the folder name (it’s the default folder). Replace “YouriDiskName” with your iTools account name. Replace “filename” with the actual name and extension of your file and that file can be viewed on any browser.

You may purchase more storage for your iDisk, but it’s not cheap. Figure on a dollar per megabyte per year. So if you want a huge one-gigabyte iDisk, it’s going to cost you \$1,000 per year (1 GB = 1,024 MB). This may be an option for a small company that wants to distribute a large application.

You’ve got Webmail!

The newest significant feature for iTools is the enhanced e-mail interface. Webmail is so new that it’s still a beta version as of the time of this writing. You can check (and type in and send) your e-mail on the web, from any Internet terminal. You only need to remember how to navigate the browser to the Apple web site, and your password, so you have no excuse for not checking your e-mail when you’re at the Cayman Islands.

Your e-mail address is your iTools account name, followed by “@mac.com.”

You can automatically forward incoming mail to another e-mail address, and toggle that feature on or off any time. You can also set an automatic reply. If someone sends an e-mail to your mac.com address, the automatic reply feature sends a reply e-mail. Use this feature to set up an informational status message about your business any time someone sends an e-mail to you. This feature may also be toggled on or off.

You can create a GIF or JPEG image and include that picture in all of your outgoing e-mails. The picture should be 64 pixels by 64 pixels, and you can edit one or create one with GraphicConverter. Normally this picture would be a photo of yourself, but it’s up to your imagination. It’s important to note that the picture will only be seen by recipients using the OS X Mail application or iTools’ Webmail site, so its usefulness is limited.

There is a “bcc” feature (blind carbon copy) but it’s turned off by default. You must enable it on the preferences web page.

Unfortunately you cannot import addresses from other mail software.

You can organize your mail by creating new folders (choose “new folder” from the folder pop-up list), and you can click on the table headers to sort messages by different fields, such as date, subject, or sender.

You can import mail from another POP server by entering your account’s POP info on the preferences page.

You can access your webmail directly from any browser (even on a Windows PC) by typing in the URL:

`<http://webmail.mac.com/>`

iCards is another way to e-mail a greeting card to someone, but it is more clever. You may choose any image from your iDisk’s Pictures folder, for your iCard. Type in a greeting and send it, iCards has the simplest interface I’ve seen.

It’s Your HomePage

HomePage is a way for a novice user to create web pages easily. You can create web pages from your web browser, by logging into your iTools account (on the Apple web site) and click the HomePage button. When you edit the information in your home page and click the “publish” button, iTools will save the files to the Sites folder on your iDisk.

If you have more than one page, drag them on the list to order them. The topmost page is the one that will be viewed by default, if the user does not include a filename in the URL.

There are many templates available in iTools, for creating web pages. Some obvious choices are photo albums, resumes, announcements, invitations, etc. Less obvious templates would be fancy screen pages for your Quicktime movies (in the Movies folder), and the file-sharing template, making any file in a chosen folder available for downloading by a visitor to your site, on any computer.

When you create a photo album page, all of the photos in a folder (in the Pictures folder) are selected, and you may select a subset of photos to be included.

You may add a visitor counter to the bottom of your web pages to see how many people visited.

There is no advertising on the web pages, except a logo, “Made with Apple iTools” at the bottom of your page. Click the publish button to save your page so everyone on the web can see it.

More advanced users may create web pages of any design for their web site. Simply drag the files for your web pages to the Sites folder in your mounted iDisk, and the pages are immediately available to anyone on the web. Your pages may

include Javascript or any other advanced web page creation technique.

A Window(s) to your Mac

A Windows PC can mount your iDisk on its desktop if the operator knows your iTools account name and password. You can open your iDisk using Microsoft Windows XP, Windows 2000 or Windows 98. If you're using Windows XP, open My Computer, then choose Map Network Drive from the Tools menu. If you're using Windows 2000, open My Computer, choose Map Network Drive from the Tools menu, and click "Web folder or FTP site." If you're using Windows 98, open My Computer, double-click the Web Folders icon, and double-click Add Web Folder.

In each case above, enter the following URL as the location to add: <http://idisk.mac.com/username>

Replace "username" with your iTools account name. It's not quite as easy as using a Mac, but that's not surprising!

IMPORTANT: In addition to the standard iDisk folders, some versions of Windows reveal other files that are normally hidden on a Macintosh, with names that start with a period (.). Do not move, delete, rename, or otherwise tamper with these files. If you do, you might lose files on your iDisk.

Also be sure to check the "Software" folder on your iDisk for downloads of Apple software, music, and other extras. Just drag a file or folder to your hard disk to download.

THE "OTHER" iTOOLS...

Anita Holmgren reminds us there is a local Santa Barbara company with an iTools product.

<http://www.tenon.com/products/itools-osx>

For a small discussion about who was using the "iTools" name first, see:

<http://maccentral.macworld.com/news/0010/03.itools.shtml>

In a nutshell, Tenon's iTools is for sophisticated ISPs and web service providers to make setting up and maintaining a web server, dns server, ftp server, etc, very easy. With Tenon's iTools you can set up an Apache web server or a domain name server on Mac OS X, without ever touching a UNIX configuration file. It's all done thru a web browser interface from any machine or even via an Aqua GUI on a local or remote Mac OS X machine.

Apple's iTools, on the other hand, is for the Internet novice to make using the Internet easy. I've use Apple's iTools myself to make family photos available to distant relatives, and it's a breeze!

OS X NOTES FROM THE SBMUG LIST

Compiled from posts to the SBMUG e-mail List. Go to the SBMUG web site to sign up and receive e-mail from the SBMUG list.

<Moses Kravitz> I have wondered how everyone is doing with OS X? I still can't say I use it much. I kind of force myself to get familiar with it, but in reality I personally have not yet found a compelling reason to spend significant time there. It's cute the way plugging a digital camera in will pop up the "Preview" application.

What are you finding "so superior" about it?, in addition to PS7.

What great tales of enjoyment or productivity can anyone speak to in regard to X?

<David Heidelberger> Good question. Since at some point I will no doubt be forced to move to X, what can I expect will be its great benefit to me?

<Bob deLaurentis> Here are a few more off the cuff thoughts on OS X.

First, while there are always exceptions, Mac OS 9 development is dead, dead, dead. Nearly all the Mac developers are prepping OS X versions or have already released them. Many continue to support 9, and probably will for at least another couple of years, but I read VersionTracker in its entirety every day, and frankly there has been a quick slide off a cliff of

new OS 9 software in the last 3 months. There are maintenance updates, bug fixes and the like, but if you are the kind of computer user who is looking for new features in new and existing applications, stop looking in OS 9's toy box.

The action is in X.

I don't mean to suggest that all the OS 9 machines are suddenly obsolete — or worse yet — boring. They are the best personal computers ever invented, and they have many years of life left in them. I only suggest that eighteen to twenty-four months down the road (maybe a little less), OS 9 will be in same position 68K Macs were in a couple of years after the PowerPC was released. In other words, while I think OS X is in pretty good shape today, most of my comments are forward looking.

Eventually, Apple will drop OS 9 support in new hardware. Count on it. The day is coming, and based on Apple history it'll be sooner than some users are comfortable with. (Remember the hue and cry when the floppy was dropped without warning?)

OS X has one drawback for OS 9 users, and Cherie touched on it a few days ago: once you move from 9 to X, its like someone came in to your house last night and rearranged all the furniture. Its as if a good roommate has moved on and now there is a stranger standing in the kitchen munching cookies and leaving crumbs all over the floor. The good news is the initial shock wears off quickly. After a few days you stop bumping into furniture. After a couple weeks, it looks better now than where

it was. After a few months, there are no more crumbs pinching your bare feet.

OS X is not yet equal to OS 9. Some major software hasn't been ported yet, like Quark Xpress. Hardware device support is still spotty, and while X is better than 9 in many ways, its still a younger brother with some growing up to do. That said, I've used it full time for 6 months and could not be happier. I'm more productive, or more optimistic about the future of Macintosh personal computing.

<Moses> Bob- I especially, and I think we all welcome your comments on X.

Please do not let me put you on the defensive with this question, because I think so many of us grapple with this "migration" (oh no, shades of Cox). But- here goes- how much different are your comments on X now than they were 6 months ago? I know I have hardly moved at all in 6 months in regards to X. And so many people/clients I speak and work with have moved even less. And yet I am sure you are quite accurate in what you speak about what will happen in terms of applications, support. I still have this very secret suspicion that Apple is greatly 2nd guessing itself on this move. Am I very wrong?

<Bob> I don't believe that my opinion has changed at all in the last 6 months. There are more OS X apps now, which means more users have that option. I also believe that I've said in the past that for a very many users, the OS X applications are here now: Office, AppleWorks, Photoshop, GoLive, Illustrator, etc. That said, there are also quite a few holes that still need plugging.

I do not think Apple is second-guessing itself. I think from their perspective X is a resounding success, and its long-term success is almost assured. (Something that was not so certain a year ago.) Why is it certain now? Not because users are adopting it today, but because developers are making applications for it — applications that are selling very well.

I also think its normal that a great many (perhaps majority) of Mac OS 8 and 9 users have not moved up to X. Mac OS 9 is very good, stable, and works. It's reliable, familiar, and friendly if you know your way around. It also is zippier on most existing hardware than X. I don't think that this lack of adoption indicates imminent failure of the X strategy, I think its proof that users tend to stick with what they know, and change only when forced by circumstances.

Unlike updates from say OS 8 to 9, the 9 to X transition — despite Apple's public claims to the contrary — is a multi-year effort. The first year is behind us, and many of the early adopters have moved. The next 12 months will see a sharp increase in X adopters, followed by the third busy year of switchers. During the third year, the second version of many major X apps will be making their debut and many of the holdouts will begin to feel the weight of circumstances.

<George Tokarski> I'll throw in my two cents:

I moved to os 10 fairly early and have had few growing pains. After 10.1 my frustration with the speed disappeared. It was slower than 9 when moving windows around and opening programs but that has disappeared. It took a while to get used to and I found that everything was in a different place so I had to change how I worked. I used to have everything in the apple menu or in tabbed windows for easy access. When I first moved to 10 I thought, "well how am I going to do all that with no apple menu?" In 10 I now have all that in the dock. Different place but same function. Using the column view used to be my favorite but now I use the 3-pane view for fast browsing. Network copy speed and even duplication of files on my drives is A LOT faster than 9. I can leave apps running and not worry about them sucking memory or processor time (ms ie excluded). I have a TON of neat programs that are now indispensable: Fire.app (icq, aim, yahoo, msn messenger, irc in one), iGetter, iPhoto, Office X etc. I even found a neat program that displays my network speed in the dock, in real time.

As soon as I could I stopped using classic. I rarely boot it up anymore (cant remember the last time).

I still have a messy desktop but now use the Documents folder like I should. I keep ALL my documents in there and alias anything I use a lot to the desktop. Makes my backups a lot easier than before when I had to hunt for AppleWorks documents in the AppleWorks folder, quicken in the quicken folder etc etc. Support for long file names is great although a lot of the apps that have been ported don't support them very well. I also love the way I can print ANYTHING to pdf, very useful for saving web pages or strange documents.

Although I am not fortunate enough, the dual processor support is awesome, as is the ability to plug in certain printer and have them "just work." The same goes for some compact flash readers and other things.

The multi-user support is great, especially if you have kids. Makes it very easy to separate workspaces so each person can have a different dock, desktop, background pics, etc. Needless to say things can only improve, 10.2 should provide a nice speed boost and new features.

All in all, I moved to 10 without looking back and haven't regretted it.

<David> Robert, what you say has the ring of truth about it. If you are right, my intuitions about moving to X are probably correct. I started with the Mac in 1985 and always moved to the latest and greatest as upgrades were available. However by the time OS8 came around I had changed my tack to upgrading only when forced to by developments you describe. This tactic has been very fruitful for me in that there has been less productivity downtime for me.

Thanks for your insight.

<Moses> David- I think the point I would add is that, although it is hard to remember back to the early, mid 80's, every OS change from that time to the present has been gradual, with a

few tweaks here and there. X is, in my opinion, a radical departure, and why I think adoption has been rather slow. We need to be sold on it. Of course one way to do it is simply install it on all new machines, as Apple has done, and let new buyers learn to swim. It is the hardened users (like me) that I am concerned about.

That's why I started this thread.

<David> Moses, hardened user? I hadn't thought about it like that but I guess I'm one too. That's how I got X, bundled on a new G4 I bought recently. I tried X once shortly after I got it. It crashed when I opened PS6 so I haven't been there since. VERY discouraging. Stability? I didn't see any during my five minutes in OS X.

<Woody> Over and over again what I think has helped the most in my computer usage is to have multiple hard drives and/or partitions. And when new operating systems come out they are installed on another partition which allows me to continue to boot from the prior operating system. In all of the alpha, beta, and 10 release I have ran that on a separate partition then my stable OS (of the moment). I haven't missed a beat, I always have the option of going to something stable. The same thing was true in migrating from 7.5.5, 7.6, 8.5 to 8.6 to 9.

I have Photoshop 6 and have not had crashes while running under classic. On any of that stuff mileage varies at times. However the truer test is how do native written apps run with the system.

I think all of us running 10 look forward to the day that all apps are native and we do not need to rely on 9 any longer. As far as app availability Quark is one of the last major apps to transition.

This is not an experiment that will go nowhere. Those of us using Macs three years from now will be running the continuation of 10 with 9 as far in the relative past as system 7.5 (which you hear few people wax sentimental over).

One final thing that I have realized is that most likely I will use computers as long as we have infrastructure to power them, however I am not stuck on having any OS, version of, or software. It's all going to change...rapidly...and if you need the tool you might consider that as part of the given. I want to be proficient in computer usage. I want to know the fundamentals to word processing, etc...I would never want to be locked into ClarisWorks 3.0 forever (or the Mac OS as far as that goes). We are all clever and we can grow with the transitions of our hardware, operating system and software apps.

For the money-making machines I have figured how to make successful transitions...planning and redundancy makes a wonderful difference.

<Becky Davis> It's a bit odd to contribute to a conversation on a topic that you don't yet have direct personal experience with, but...

Please note the *Mouse Times* will take a vacation this summer. Article submissions for the next issue are due September 2, and members' personal ads are due September 5. Have a good summer.

While I haven't yet been able to do OS-X myself (don't own a Mac capable of it), I can speak to its strengths based on its Unix roots.

I've been doing computing for >20 years, and have been using Unix since the late 1970s. I ran an office full of 30-40 Macintosh desktops, with a Unix server from about 1989 through 1997. The Unix server provided file, print, backup, email, network, router, etc. services for all the Macs, both by virtue of Unix's inherent abilities, but also by running AppleTalk protocols, as well as being a router due to double Ethernet interfaces.

My dream during all of that time was to effectively merge the inherent stability, power and flexibility of Unix with the user-friendly interface of the Mac. I think that's what OS-X is finally doing.

Unix is a wonderful and amazing tool, which is why it became and remains so popular among computer professionals. (Linux is just a public domain version of Unix, for those who aren't familiar with different OSs.) During the almost 10 years that the above Unix server ran, it crashed on me 3 times. In other words, it is one of the most stable OSs ever invented when it is set up right. Since OS-X is maturing still, but is based on the BSD flavor of Unix (which is >20 years old), it has a great base on which to quickly mature and evolve.

The Unix OS is designed so that it continues to run, even if *a* service fails. (That's what "multi-threaded" does, and why you no longer have to manage memory per application; the OS manages the memory for each application for you.)

When a service fails — for ex., the email service — all the other services continue to run unaffected, as does the server itself. In other words, print, file, network, etc. continues uninterrupted even when print services are temporarily in need of attention. And fixing the broken service is often as simple as stopping and restarting that single process.

I was incredulous when I first encountered Windows-NT servers and found that when *a* service — for example, the email service — failed, those system administrators usually had to restart the whole server, not just fix the broken service. File, print, backup, network — everything was disrupted just because one specific service had failed. That's analogous to shutting off power, water, sewage and gas because your phone line went down, and you have to stop and restart everything to get your phone back up.

And that's a good opening to explaining the advantages of "multi-tasking". Those services all run *at the same time*, independent of each other. On previous versions of the Mac OS, the OS was doing really fast task switching (not multi-tasking) behind the scenes. (Think of the Wizard of Oz behind his curtain. One guy ran all the special effects himself by really focusing and being really quick, but if he stopped, so did everything.)

In addition to its stability, the suite of power tools that has been created for Unix over the years makes it a wonderful tool to use. Because it is a computer pro's tool created and enhanced by pros over the years, whenever someone created something cool to make their work easier, they usually shared it with others, and it became part of the suite of standard stuff that is "Unix." Brian shared his discovery of some of these tools (word count, redirect output, pipe output onto another process) in the April/May 2002 newsletter.

Unix's power, flexibility, and stability *when it is set up right* — along with its amazing suite of specialized tools — make it one of the nicest platforms to work with. If Apple (and the

companies that make applications for the Mac OS) can master OS-X's Unix roots, and continue to provide the famous user-friendly Mac interface, we have a winner with amazing growth potential.

[That's my \$0.02, based on no actual OS-X experience. Take it for what it's worth.]

<David> Becky, THANKS! That's the best run-down on Unix/X that I've come across. You have lessened my fear of migration when I finally have to face that issue.

BUT, one phrase you used raised the hair on my neck - "When it's set up right." I guess my great fear is that my OS X will be the one OS X that's NOT set up right.

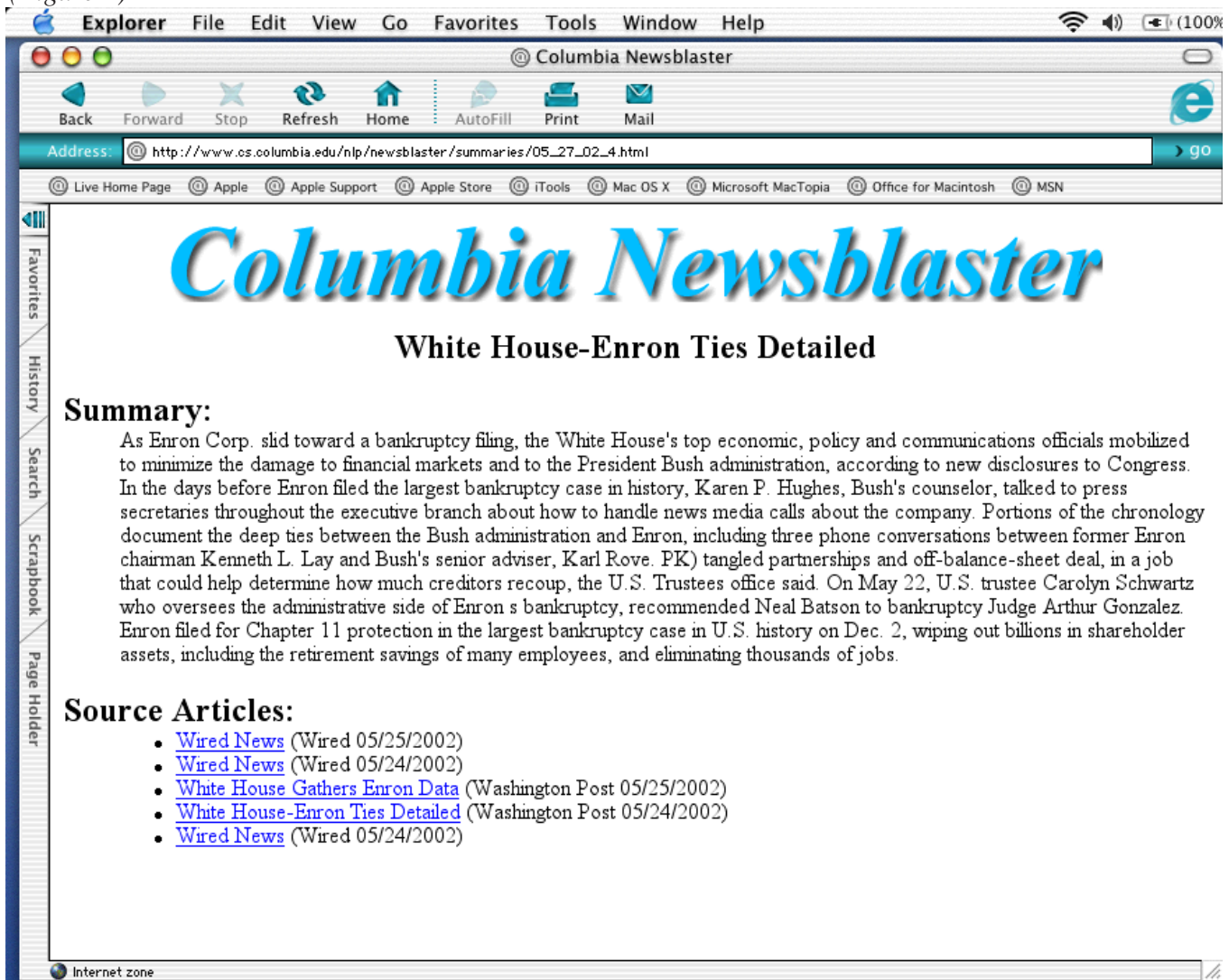
This Month's Featured Web Site:

THE COLUMBIA NEWSBLASTER

<http://www.cs.columbia.edu/nlp/newsblaster/>

Donald Burr <dburr@borg-cube.com>

(Figure 1)



One of the many benefits touted by Internet marketers is that the Internet will make it easier to keep track of the news that's happening around the globe. Unfortunately, it seems that the opposite is actually true. With so many different news websites out there, it is hard to find the stories that are of interest to you — “sorting the wheat from the chaff” so to speak.

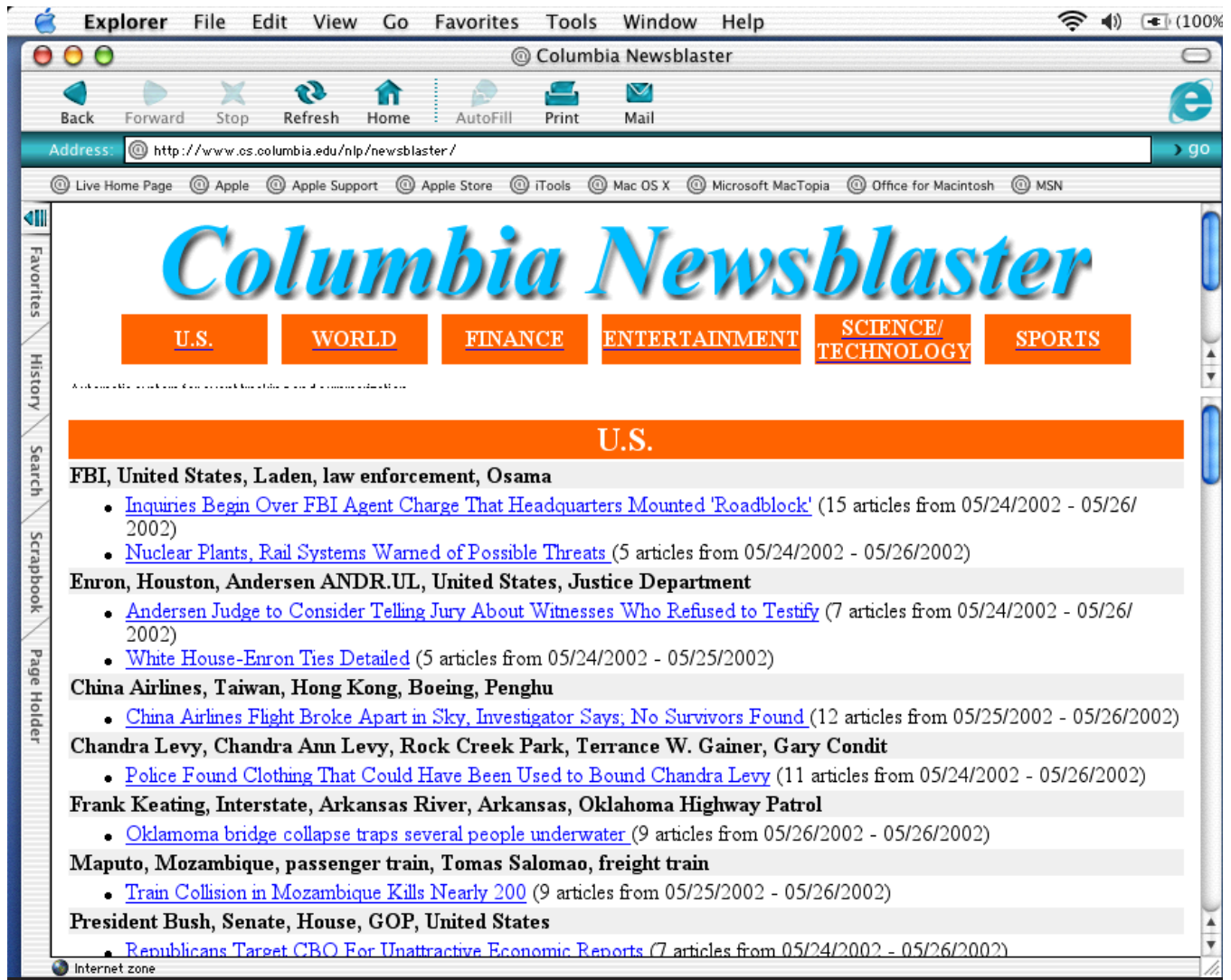
But fear not! There is one website that is trying to help you get what you need from Internet news sites. The Columbia NewsBlaster <<http://www.cs.columbia.edu/nlp/newsblaster/>> is a project being developed by the Natural Language Processing group at Columbia University, thanks to funding provided by the DARPA TIDES group (Translingual Information Detection, Extraction and Summarization).

It consists of an extremely powerful Artificial Intelligence (AI) program capable of reading and parsing natural language (i.e. news articles). It continuously scans the news websites provided by Yahoo, ABCNews, CNN, Reuters, LA Times, CBS News, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, Virtual New York, Washington Post, Wired, FOX News, NY Post, USA Today, Science Magazine, BBC News, Nature Magazine, MSNBC and Lycos, looking for topics of interest and similarities between articles. Then, from multiple sources, it writes a short summary of the particular news event. (See figure 1)

The summaries written by NewsBlaster are surprisingly good, if perhaps a little bland and generic; however, I find that they present most of the relevant facts pertaining to a certain event or news item. The original source material (the articles on the various web sites it indexed) are provided as clickable links, so you can read the original stories if you wish. News is presented in 6 broad top-level categories: U.S., World Finance, Entertainment, Science/Technology, and Sports. (See figure 2)

It may not replace your morning paper, but it will certainly help you get a feel for what's going on in the world, in a very short amount of time.

(Figure 2)



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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:

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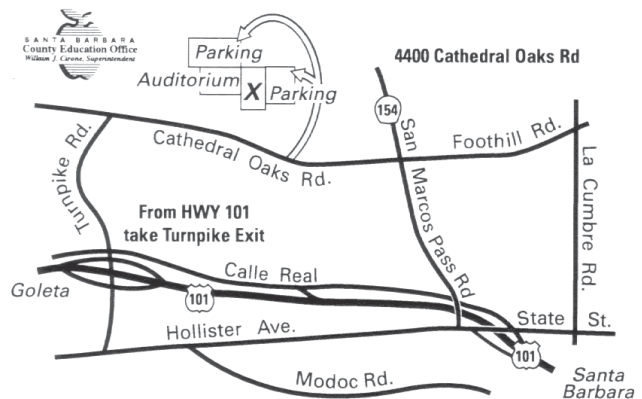
MONTHLY MEETINGS 3RD THURSDAYS

Santa Barbara County Education Office
4400 Cathedral Oaks Road

Upcoming meetings: June 11th (a Tuesday!) & July 18
6–7 pm Questions & Answers • 7–9 pm Presentations

Meetings are at the Santa Barbara County Education Office (SBCEO) auditorium, 4400 Cathedral Oaks Road (half-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 December 2002 are shown on page 2. Program information and meeting dates will also be listed on our Web site: <<http://www.sbmug.org>>



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