



Mouse Times

News, Views & Reviews from the Macintosh Community

SBMUG Newsletter

May–November 2001

Santa Barbara, California

THE NEWS...

Wildform, creators of Internet media software, today announced the release of Flix for Mac, the first Macintosh application that encodes video into Macromedia's Flash™ format.

In January, Wildform released Flix for PC, which quickly became a must-have program for Flash developers, web designers, and web video enthusiasts. Now Wildform has provided the same functionality for the Mac, a popular platform for media and graphics applications.

Flash, is an open standard used extensively on the Internet. Web users can view Flash content without a download. Flix-encoded video also streams to all platforms, all browsers and through firewalls, making for a truly hassle-free experience. Until now, Flash was primarily an animation tool, rarely utilized for video because it took hours or days to create even short clips. With Flix, video production time is slashed to minutes and users can easily insert links, create video banner ads and e-mails, and deploy customized media players.

Wildform, based in Venice, California. For more information about Flix or Wildform, go to:
www.wildform.com.

A LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Anita Donohoe <adonohoe@utech.net>

Let me begin by introducing Brian Carlin <kb6nvh@home.com> as the next editor of the Mouse Times. Brian has been an outstanding mentor with his support and his contributions to the Mouse Times during my year as editor. I have unreserved confidence in his ability to produce informative issues of the Mouse Times on a regular basis. Please help him succeed by contributing articles and content whether or not you are a member of the Santa Barbara Mac Users Group. If you have something to offer or come across an interesting item, let Brian know about it via email.

The year has been full. I have lost an aunt, a cousin and two friends who left me with rich memories to cherish and a good dose of inspiration. Daily responsibilities and obligations have kept me busy. The Mouse Times turned out a couple of issues, and I apologize for the long lapse between this issue and the last one. My travels took me to San Francisco, Atlanta, Hawaii and Ireland. During my visit to the Republic of Ireland, I experienced firsthand the empathy and condolences of the people and saw the global ripple effects of the September 11 terrorist attack on America. The Irish have lived with terrorism for centuries, and it has not broken their spirit, not even a tiny bit.

In the between times, I look at life through the macro lens, capture vivid sunsets. When the weather suits, I play the dulcimer on the back porch, sometimes in the company of the cats and Oneninetyfive, a cow who leaps over fences with abandon and visits on a regular basis. She is convinced the grass is greener within the borders of my failing barbed wire fence, and she knows my gate has crumbled and a section of fence right next to it is missing. She ambles in at her whim and has been a big help since the lawn mower quit in protest of the rugged terrain. She also helped herself to the pears and apples and is topping off by pruning the grape arbor. I'm in no hurry to fix the fence or the gate, but it would be nice to have one of the horses visit within the enclosure for a couple of days.

I'm learning how to write, cutting back on my responsibilities so I can concentrate on a book, and I'll be creating it on my Mac. It will be a compilation of photos, some historical, some of my creation, accompanied by narratives. The project is an autobiography of sorts, which means I'll have to publish it as fiction or art. I'm writing in MS Word 98 for the Mac, scanning prints and slides on a UMAX PowerLook III, using Netscape 4.72 with a rural analog modem for communications, PageMaker for layout, FileMaker to keep it all organized, DVD-ROM for backup and CD-R for permanent archives. The Mac is a G4 running OS9.0.4 with an Apple 21" monitor. It is a very comfortable setup, which makes productivity a pleasure. The bonus is the supportive environment of the Santa Barbara Mac Users Group.

(A Letter from the Editor continued from page 1)

The Santa Barbara Mac Users Group (sbmug) has provided me with valuable information on how to get the best out of my Mac, whether it is for personal or business performance. The programs and products presented at the meetings, the website and the listserv (both provided by Silicon Beach Communications <<http://www.silcom.com/>>) and hands-on workshops for dues-paying sbmug members have provided a valuable resource not only for me, but for the Mac community as a whole. Current information on classes, seminars, hardware, software, maintenance and troubleshooting is available to all at the monthly meetings, presentations, and through the listserv. Those who become members receive the newsletter and access to the workshops. The Santa Barbara Mac Users Group is an organization that exists because its members actively participate.

The annual election of the Executive Board is fast approaching, and there are several vacancies to fill. The Santa Barbara Mac Users Group needs a new President, Vice President and Program Chair. To continue to thrive, sbmug needs a fresh perspective and participation from the ranks of its membership who are willing to serve for a year on the Executive Board. No experience is necessary, just a little enthusiasm and the willingness to work with a team who volunteers a couple of hours a month for a very worthwhile endeavor. Those of who are resigning will help you succeed. If you are willing to consider filling a vacancy on the Board, please contact one of the nominating committee:

Howard Glenn <hbglen@home.com>

Ed Morin <edmorin@home.com>

The sbmug listserv is the best Mac resource in the county. If you haven't signed on yet, go to this link and follow the directions to subscribe:

<<http://lists.netlojix.com/mailman/listinfo/sbmug-list>>



Membership in sbmug is not required to participate on the listserv; subscription is open to all.

See you online,
Anita

THE "ASK FOR HELP" FORMAT:

a consultant's perspective excerpted from the sbmug listserv.
Becky Davis <becky.davis@silcom.com>

"... I think it is important that computer users have some concept of the time, patience, and complexity of ferreting through the trial & error process that computer repair technicians have to go through. They come to your home or business office and are expected to "fix it!" quickly. After all,

they cost upwards of \$50 per hour. It may turn out to be some seemingly simple glitch somewhere... like my needing a different PPD. But it can take a couple hours of sitting there, digging through things, to find that out. So yes... Do what you can to ferret the cause of your computer problem if you can. Then let the technician know exactly what you have done..." Julian

I'd like to add my \$0.02 to this discussion. Yes, PLEASE describe your problem and the attempted solutions in detail, and you are much more likely to get help.

Julian's description of his problem was the main reason I called him and told him what I'd try. He did such a good job of, (a) explaining the problem, (b) trying to fix it himself, and (c) explaining exactly what he did in trying to fix it. We've all been there with uncooperative computers and looming deadlines, and the Golden Rule applies.

As I read his polite (it makes a difference) request for assistance, I read about him trying many of the things I would have tried if I (or a client) were having the same problem. That made it easy to (a) relate, and (b) note the one or two things I would have done that he had not done. If I can offer a suggestion or two in 5-10 minutes for free that might solve someone's problem, I probably will. It's a normal professional courtesy to brainstorm with other consultants/computer professionals. If you either haven't done anything to solve it yourself (perhaps because you aren't able to), or you sound confused about just what is wrong, or you don't tell me details, I figure you need to hire a consultant to help you, not ask the list for free advice. To me (us?) that's a request for a fair amount of free consulting time, and I usually can't afford to give my time away.

(Julian's observation) is right on target. Sometimes the problem is trivial, but it takes hours (and occasionally months) to find the one nasty bug — and only after everything else is eliminated. Shelley was about to return a relatively new computer (which continually crashed) when she mentioned to Apple her UMax Astra scanner. That was the clue they needed to tell her about the software bug in its software that caused random crashes in all sorts of other software, whether she was using the scanner or not. Her sharing that also solved a problem a client of mine had been having for MONTHS, that I had spent countless free hours on, because we weren't making any headway. And that's the beauty of this list, of sharing, and of explaining the details.

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Setup • Networking • Repair

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ATM AND FONTS

Robert Winokur <robruadh@west.net>

I know this is an old thread, but I think a few words of clarification may be helpful concerning Adobe Type Manager (ATM) and fonts.

Briefly:

1. Unless you use PostScript fonts, you don't need ATM.
2. ATM doesn't "smooth" fonts like the "Smooth All Fonts" option in the Appearance control panel.
3. If you use Acrobat Reader, you need ATM. (Explanations follow.)

There are three kinds of font files in common use: TrueType, bitmapped, and PostScript.

All Macs and PCs come with TrueType fonts, which are the fonts nearly everyone uses every day. Like vector-based graphics, they are scalable to any size and any resolution, for display on the screen or for printing. TrueType support has been built into the Mac OS since System 7.0 and does not depend on ATM. (A TrueType extension for System 6 came with early StyleWriter printers.) TrueType font icons have three different-sized letter "A"s on them to indicate that they are scalable to various sizes.

In addition to TrueType, Macs commonly use bitmapped fonts, which are like pixel-based graphics. They have fixed sizes which appear in the font name (like "Courier 10"), and are normally used only for display on the screen, especially at small point sizes where their readability surpasses TrueType at the screen's low resolution. In the Macintosh world, they're often referred to as "screen fonts". Bitmapped fonts cannot be smoothed, so if you use the Appearance control panel's "font smoothing" ("anti-aliasing"), your Mac will use the TrueType fonts for display on your screen but not the bitmapped fonts. Bitmapped font icons have a single "A" on them to indicate a fixed size. TrueType and bitmapped fonts are usually found together in a Font Suitcase.

PostScript fonts work just like TrueType fonts, but are based on a different mathematical model. PostScript fonts also come with bitmapped screen fonts. OS 9 and earlier systems have no built-in support for PostScript, so without ATM your Mac has no way of using the PostScript fonts, though it can still use the corresponding bitmapped screen fonts. In that case, only the installed sizes will look good on the screen. In-between sizes will look very crude. ATM enables the Mac OS to display and print PostScript fonts at their best, at any size and resolution (just as the TrueType extension enabled System 6 to use TrueType fonts). PostScript fonts usually have a custom icon and are identified as "PostScript* font" in the Fonts folder's Kind column.

Although the jagged and crude appearance of PostScript fonts goes away when ATM is enabled, this is not the same as

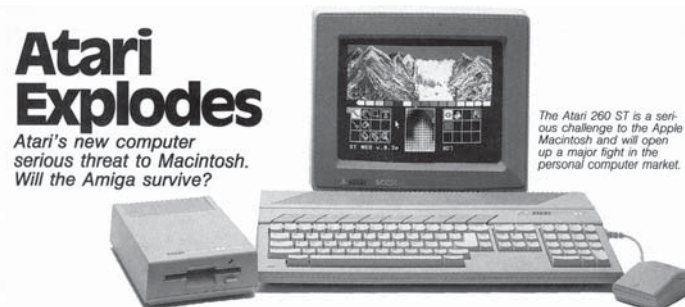
the Appearance control panel's font smoothing. When smoothing is enabled, gray pixels are added to disguise the jagged edges of individual pixels in the outlines of the letters. ATM simply allows the Mac to use the scalable PostScript fonts at the monitor's or printer's own resolution.

Acrobat Reader requires ATM, and its installer even adds a few special PostScript fonts to the Fonts folder. These are "multiple master" fonts, which enable Acrobat Reader to create a substitute font to approximate any font missing from a file. Acrobat Reader also has its own font smoothing method, which enables it to display very small characters with surprising accuracy.

Recent Macs come with ATM and Acrobat Reader installed, so it's a safe bet that your System installer disk has a compatible version of ATM on it

MAC NOSTALGIA

Submitted by Ralph Auf der Heide



MAKE YOUR OWN HELP

Brian Carlin <briancarlin@earthlink.net>

The day I brought home my new iMac I browsed through some of the Help pages in the Help Center, which is in the Help menu of the Finder. I found useful information about networking and some good drawings of the iMac hardware. Being naturally curious, I looked inside the System Folder and found a Help folder with a large maze of folders and files inside. I recognized some of the files were simply HTML files, which are the web pages you see with your web browser, and others were GIF files (pictures). Obviously the Help Viewer application was a simplified browser.

I do help a few friends with their Macintoshes and I wondered if there was a way for me to make my own customized help pages so my friends could remind themselves how to find files, or tell them what my fax number is. So I downloaded the Apple Help Reference (Apple Help SDK) which I found at:

<<http://developer.apple.com/sdk/>>

It installs a “book” in the Help Folder, so I could read it in the Help Viewer. A book is a folder full of HTML files, organized into “chapters” (more folders) and GIF files, including a Table of contents. Apple tells how to lay out a book and chapters and how to embed hundreds of “meta tags” in my HTML pages so the Sherlock search engine could find information for me. This seemed very complicated.

But there is a simpler way to view HTML pages on the Help Viewer. I could make one or two simple pages that cannot be searched with the text search tool, and are not listed in the Help table of contents. Losing the searching ability is not a terrible loss, and there are ways to get a reference to a custom help page into the table of contents in the Help Viewer.

You might want to do this because the Help Viewer loads HTML files from the hard disk drive instantly, even faster than your cable modem. You can create HTML pages that are customized for each Mac work station. Generic HTML files can always be uploaded to a web site so your less fortunate Windows friends can also read them, so help pages can be compatible with the Internet.

You don’t need to learn HTML to make basic HTML files. You can create them in DreamWeaver, Front Page, Microsoft Office, or from AppleWorks word processing documents. If you want to use the more advanced techniques from this article, you need to get your hands dirty and learn some HTML. There are many HTML primers and references available on the web. This article includes some of the syntax for special commands to use in your help pages.

The Apple Help Viewer displays all HTML 3.2 features except forms, plug-ins, and Java. So you cannot display an input form web page and ask the user to type in a question and submit it to the email program. But you can link a “mailto:” URL which opens an email document with an address in the “To:” field.

The Help Viewer pages can run AppleScripts, which is a powerful feature. Once you can run AppleScripts you control almost all other functions of your Macintosh from your help pages. AppleScripts can read and write text files, so they can alter HTML files any time, and reload the page in the Help Viewer. So the Help Viewer can be the user interface for a script. Applescript’s “say” command can be used to make your help page speak some text or calculated values to the user.

If you don’t want to make your own scripts, there are useful scripts already available inside the Help Folder. A smaller, simpler browser that can launch AppleScripts is a powerful tool, indeed. You make a link to an AppleScript with an anchor HTML tag like this:

```
<AHREF='help:runscript="Mac%20Help:shrd:OpnShrIck">
```

Note that all script path names are based at the Help folder

as the root directory. The help:runscript command has single quotes around it to distinguish it from the double-quotes around the file path name. The “%20” is an ASCII code for a space character (a hexadecimal number). If your file name (in the finder) contains a space, you need to encode it to the ASCII value. You can use ASCII codes for your file names, similar to URLs on the web.

Use the Apple Help Reference to learn what you can do, but be wary of some of the advice. For example, I was learning how to view a QuickTime movie on a Help page and I wasted two hours trying to follow Apple’s instructions. They didn’t say that I MUST supply the WIDTH and HEIGHT attributes to the <EMBED SRC> tag in order to run the movie, otherwise it won’t display. The Apple instructions specifically do not mention this.

I strongly recommend you download the AppleScript Guidebook, which includes a book about scripting the Help Viewer, even if you don’t want to write scripts. The Help Viewer chapter contains more useful AppleScripts that will help you with your help pages. The Guidebook also includes a sample help book that you can use as a template to create your own help books. The AppleScript Guidebook is available at:

```
<http://www.apple.com/applescript/help_mods.html>
```

To make a book, duplicate the sample book (that came with AppleScript Guidebook) in the Help Folder and give it a name. You’ll want to test your pages as you make them, so drag an alias of the Help Viewer application (found inside the Help Folder) into your folder. As you create your HTML files you can drag them to the Viewer alias to view them.

When the page is ready, you’ll want to change the creator type of the HTML file to make it a Help file. Search

```
<http://www.versiontracker.com>
```

for a freeware utility (such as FileTyper), use textchanger (part of BBEdit lite freeware download), or save this AppleScript as an Applet:

```
on open myWebPage
  tell application "Finder"
    set myWebPage to myWebPage as alias
    set the creator type of the file myWebPage to "hbwr"
  end tell
end open
```

Drag your HTML file onto this applet and it changes the creator of the text file to “hbwr” so it becomes a help viewer document.

You can make hyperlinks to other help pages, or to web pages on the internet, the same as other web pages. Edit your help HTML file with the tags:

```
<A HREF="page2.html"> Go to next page</A>
```

Opens another help page in the same folder.

```
<A HREF="http://www.yahoo.com"> Go to Yahoo</A>
```

Opens a web page with your default web browser application.

(Make Your Own Help continued from page 4)

You can display your JPEG photos or GIF images on your page. Use the tag:

```
<IMG SRC="myphoto.jpg" width="444" height="336">
```

Open your picture in an application such as GraphicConverter and get info to find the size of the picture (width and height) in pixels. I made a test page and displayed a 60 inch wide by 25 inch high GIF image just to make sure help viewer could display any size.

You can drag QuickTime movies, MP3 files, and your audio recordings (or their aliases) into your folder and use them in your help files. The recording will play automatically when the help page is loaded. You can display a QuickTime movie with the HTML tag:

```
<EMBED SRC="MYMOVIE.MOV" HEIGHT="256" WIDTH="320" LOOP="FALSE">
```

The image size of this particular QuickTime movie is 240 x 320, and I add 16 pixels to the height (256) in order to display the Quicktime player controls under the picture. You must specify the height and width parameters or your movie won't play. You can play the movie in the QuickTime player and click the info button to find the image size of the movie. Change the LOOP parameter to "TRUE" to make the movie run repeatedly. You can create QuickTime movies from applications such as iMovie, MovieWorks, or directly from a VCR or camcorder with a video capture device.

MP3 files play with the HTML tag:

```
<EMBED SRC="Red%20Rain.mp3" HEIGHT="16"WIDTH="500">
```

Set the height and width to "0" (zero) if you don't want to see the MP3 player controls on your page. The MP3 file stops playing when you switch to another application, so it's not a substitute for the iTunes application. Use a loop parameter, same as a Quicktime movie, to loop the audio. You can make an alias of your MP3 file and drag it to the book folder with the HTML file.

Record your own voice with SimpleSound, SimpleText, or a similar application and play it on your page with the HTML tag:

```
<EMBED SRC="my%20narration" HEIGHT="16" WIDTH="400">
```

You can also hide the controls or loop the sound. You could narrate your QuickTime movie, both the movie and the narration will begin simultaneously. If you loop a QuickTime movie and sound continuously, then you need to record a sound file as close to the same length of time as the movie as you can, to keep them synchronized for a few loops.

AppleScripts used by your help pages must reside inside the Help Folder in the System Folder. The Help viewer searches only inside the help folder for scripts. If your script file must be somewhere else, you can drag an alias of your Applescript into the Help folder, in the System Folder. Then

your help pages can launch scripts that reside elsewhere. You must refer to your AppleScripts with a file path name with the root at the Help Folder.

You may want to run an AppleScript regardless of which help page is on screen, or run an AppleScript to launch your help page(s). Download the freeware application "OSA menu," an AppleScript menu for the menu bar, at:

```
<http://www.lazerware.com>
```

Compiled AppleScripts can appear on the OSA menu for any application you have, or universal scripts are always available in all applications. You can open the script editor from the menu, or record a script. It's a very handy extra menu for the menu bar.

There are some very useful AppleScripts for any help page, especially when you're creating and debugging a help project. For example, you would want a script that reveals the current HTML file (on the finder desktop) currently displayed in the Help Viewer. Another would be to open the current HTML file in BBEdit or similar text editor to make changes. Another would be to reload the current page, perhaps after a script has modified the page contents. You will find these scripts in the AppleScript Guidebook ("Scripting the help viewer" chapter). Keep these scripts in the OSA menu for the Help Viewer folder and you can use them any time for debugging purposes.

There are more useful things to do with the AppleScript Guidebook. You can even embed AppleScripts, or any other useful data in the HTML comment tags in your help pages. Suppose you have an HTML comment tag that looks like this:

```
<!-- BEGIN SCRIPT 1000
tell application (path to frontmost application as text)
    display dialog "Hello!" buttons {"OK"} default button 1
end tell
END SCRIPT 1000 -->
```

It's actually an AppleScript and (if you installed AppleScript Guidebook) the help viewer can link to it with the HTML tag:

```
<AHREF='help:runscript="AppleScript%20Guidebook:scr:rdmscpt.scr"
string="1000">Say hello</A>
```

You might want to insert an AppleScript inside your HTML page if you want the script to only run with that page, and the script must be available whenever that page is displayed. It's also a way to hide a script from a casual user, and they think your help pages are "magic." Beware that property variables are reset to the initial value every time because the script is compiled every time it is run.

Once you have your pages and links set up the way you like, it's time to make the pages available to the user. There are many ways to make the page(s) available. Once you load the title page, you can get to any other help page you create with hyperlinks in your title page. It may be good enough to leave your main help page in the same folder as the documents you're providing help information for. Make an alias of your

main help page and drag it to the Apple Menu Items folder, or the favorites folder, or the Launcher window, or assign a function key to the title page with the keyboard control panel. You could make a script that opens your help page from the finder or other applications. But the way a user normally accesses help is to open the Help Center in the finder's help menu, so you will probably need to create a standard book that is recognized by the Help Center.

The problem is the Help Center document gets changed occasionally. It is changed when the Mac's operating system is upgraded, and sometimes it changes when a new application is installed (with its own help book). So the Mac needs to know about your help pages so they are included on the Help Viewer Table of Contents.

You need an HTML file of your table of contents in your project folder, and it needs header information that looks like this example from the sample book index page:

```
<HTML>
<HEAD>
<TITLESample Book</TITLE>
<METANAME="AppleTitle"CONTENT="SampleBook">
<META NAME="AppleIcon"
CONTENT="sample%20book/gfx/bookicon.gif">
<META NAME="ROBOTS" CONTENT="NOINDEX">
</HEAD>
```

Replace the "sample book" names with the name of your help project. Paint a 16 x 16 pixel color GIF file for the icon you want to display on the main Help Center page. You can create the 16 x 16 paint document with GraphicConverter and save as gif. Replace the CONTENT in the "AppleIcon" tag with the path to your book icon file. Don't forget, the "%20" is the ASCII code for a space character in your file name.

When your Help project is ready, drag your project folder (book) into the Help Folder. Trash the file "Help Center" that resides in the Help Folder. Next time you access the Finder's Help menu, the Help Viewer will re-create this file. The Help Viewer will look in your project folder and will find the META tags in your table-of-contents HTML file, which it will use to create a link to your help book in the help center main page. The title of your Help book and the icon you created will appear there.

Browse the current Help Center pages for ideas for your custom pages. They are just web pages, so you can view the source HTML code of other pages on the web for ideas as well. Allow the user to launch applications and control them from your help page. Your guidance and wisdom will be there to help the user even when you're away.



SPECIAL THANKS TO

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BURNING IN THE SUN:

CD RECORDING WITH YOUR LAPTOP

By Emile Menasche

It's summertime, and if you're like most of the wired set these days, you're taking your laptop on vacation. Two weeks without email?? Impossible.

The good news is that it doesn't need to be all about work. With Roxio's Toast 5 Titanium and a portable CD recorder, you can do things like burn CDs of your holiday pics, and give them to friends and relatives before you even leave the cabin. Or record some MP3s of Uncle Dave's classic jazz LP collection. Even transfer your family reunion videotape to VideoCD so the whole clan can enjoy it right away.

Of course, CD recording with a portable is not just for fun. Those of us with offices in our briefcases have burning desires, too - and not just for run-of-the-mill data backup. A well-equipped laptop can be a great audio/video tool: You can record and archive meetings, or create dynamic multimedia presentations.

What equipment do you need to burn on the go? More good news is that many recent laptops have CD recorders built-in, or as optional slide-in modules, so bulky add-ons are often unnecessary. Mac users have it especially easy, since all current iBooks and PowerBooks have internal CD-RW options, and the hard disks and processors have no problem keeping up with the demands of CD recording. If you have one of these babies, plus Toast, you can stop reading now. You're all set to go.

If you have an older portable, you can add on a CD-R or RW drive using one of several interfaces, but be sure your hard disk is big and fast enough to hold the data you want to burn, and that you have a reasonably speedy processor if you want to do things like encode MP3 or video files. CD-R

(Burning in the Sun continued from page 6)

drives are generally faster than CD-RW drives in a given price range, but can't handle CD-RW discs, which are useful if you do a lot of data backup, and want to rewrite the discs.

Here are tips for choosing a portable CD burner to use with your laptop:

Choosing an Interface

There are three basic interface options for adding an external drive to a portable: USB, SCSI, and FireWire. When choosing which interface to buy, also consider whether you want to use the drive with your desktop machine as well, and whether you want a model that comes with both PC and Mac support. Most drives will work on both platforms, but some manufacturers only explicitly support the PC.

* USB: USB ports are built into all new Mac laptops. They offer adequate throughput for basic chores, as long as you don't push your burner's write speed. 4X will be the fastest you can go with USB 1.0, and many systems can only achieve 2X. However, USB offers the widest selection of drives, and generally lowest prices.

* FireWire (aka IEEE 1394 or iLink): Standard on newer Mac laptops, FireWire is a great high-capacity media connection. SCSI and FireWire drives deliver much faster speeds than USB, but usually carry a price premium.

* SCSI: Once an Apple standard, SCSI can be added to newer Mac PowerBooks via PC Card interfaces such as the Adaptec SlimSCSI 1480:

[http://www.adaptec.com/worldwide/product/proddetail.html?prodkey=APA-](http://www.adaptec.com/worldwide/product/proddetail.html?prodkey=APA-1480B&cat=%2fTechnology%2fSCSI%2fSCSI+for+Laptops)

[1480B&cat=%2fTechnology%2fSCSI%2fSCSI+for+Laptops](http://www.adaptec.com/worldwide/product/proddetail.html?prodkey=APA-1480B&cat=%2fTechnology%2fSCSI%2fSCSI+for+Laptops)>

With a 32-bit CardBus SCSI card like the 1480, you should be able to burn CDs at your burner's maximum speed without a problem. Depending on how you configure your system, SCSI can be the fastest and most flexible way to go, but it is NOT plug-and-play like USB and FireWire. SCSI is also not an option for iBooks, which lack the necessary PC Card slot.

Note on USB-to-SCSI adapters: These can be useful for connecting a non-SCSI computer to an old SCSI device, but are not recommended if you are purchasing a new drive. They are too slow for reliable recording beyond 2X, negating the advantage of buying a SCSI drive in the first place.

Toast can recognize drives connected via USB, SCSI and FireWire, and will work with each in essentially the same fashion. If you use the "Check Speed" option before burning, the software will determine the most reliable speed for your configuration. You can check the Roxio Web site to see if your version of Toast supports a particular drive:

<http://www.roxio.com/en/jhtml/cdrdatabase/database.jhtml>>

Which is Best?

For occasional data backup and the creation of music CDs

from prerecorded material, a USB connection should be fine. It can handle burn speeds of up to 4X, which is adequate. However, some USB system/drive combinations have problems at 4X, and can only burn at 2X, which is too slow given the speeds reached by the latest generation of FireWire drives. Don't be misled by the claims of some USB drives to write at 16X, real-world performance won't match that, unless you get one of the very first USB 2.0 drives, and add a USB 2.0 adapter card to your Mac.

Overall, USB is easy to use - most devices can be "hot-swapped" (plugged in while the computer is on). Problems can arise, however, when several peripherals share a USB bus, so you may want to bypass your hub and plug the CD recorder directly into your laptop.

Most Mac users should go for a FireWire drive. FireWire delivers faster write speeds, and has the same advantage of hot-swappability. Many USB and FireWire devices also come in special compact versions that tote easily along with your laptop. SCSI drives are usually larger. Some "portable" recorders even draw their power from your laptop, but since this can be a big battery drain, we recommend getting a drive with its own power adapter unless you really need to burn in the field.

For optimal multimedia performance, SCSI and FireWire offer some additional perks. Multiple devices can share a single connection, which means you can add external SCSI or FireWire hard drives to your system and use them to store large audio, image, and video files without chewing up your laptop's internal disk.

Finally, if you expect to share the drive among multiple Macs and/or PCs, some with USB connections, and some with FireWire, consider a drive with dual USB/FireWire ports. These drives generally cost little more than their FireWire-only cousins, although there are fewer choices.

Other Considerations

Although many laptops offer speed on par with a moderately-equipped desktop, some components can impact disk-burning performance. Audio performance is determined by three main factors: processor speed (which can play a role but isn't always decisive); RAM (more is always better, we recommend 128MB or more); and hard disk speed (an issue with older drives). Disk fragmentation can really slow things down, so run a defragmentation utility regularly, or create a special partition for storing files that will be copied off to CD.

If you're powering your laptop with its battery, also make sure you have enough juice to get you through a recording session. If your system spins down, this can interrupt the burning process. While power-saving functions are disabled by burning software, they can't protect you when you run out of battery power.

The bottom line, however, is that almost any recent Mac

full page Kinko's ad goes here

(Burning in the Sun continued from page 7)

portable makes a great CD burning platform, and if you didn't get an internal recorder, adding a FireWire or USB drive is a simple task that will pay rich dividends.

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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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.

Nov 15, Dec 20, Jan 17, Feb 21, March 21, April 18, May 9 (2nd Thurs), June 20

STI: STRATEGIC TRASH INITIATIVE

HOW ORBITING GARBAGE CAN SAVE MANKIND

Dale Lowdermilk <Dale93150@aol.com>

In an effort to help lawmakers approach difficult problems from an imaginative "angle", the National Organization Taunting Safety And Fairness Everywhere (NOT-SAFE) would like to offer a proposal for an issues which touches the life of everyone on earthSNational Defense.

Instead of focusing mental and fiscal resources on research and development for exotic (non-testable) X-ray lasers, unreliable deployment systems and electronic gear that sometimes goes "blink-in-the-night" (offspring of that famous NORAD computer which is totally fail safS.fail sssafS safe), the Department of Defense should look for simple, less expensive solutions which are "litter-ally" in our own back yards. Yes, folks, America already possesses state-of-the-art, "off-the-shelf" (and out-of-the-box) technology to build today—not 10 years from now—a Strategic Trash Initiative (STI). By using obsolete ICBM's, Minuteman and self-destructing Atlas rockets to launch million of tons of junk, the United States could construct an impenetrable defensive barrier of garbage so effective that no incoming missile could pass through without becoming a disintegrated contribution

to the orbiting shield. If a 50-pound pelican can bring down a 500 mph B-1 Bomber in Colorado (9-28-87), imagine what would happen to a "Rogue Nation" or hostile (formerly Soviet) incoming rocket traveling at 17,000 mph when it collides with a genuine STI soup can, beer bottle or half-eaten chicken bone. Any military strategist knows the best defense is a good Offense, and even a non-military moron knows how "offensive" garbage can be, especially after being thawed and frozen every 90 minutes during it's orbital odyssey for 10 or 20 years.

Precisely launched litter, such as billions of bottle caps or smashed aluminum cans, could be positioned over the polar "caps" to help reflect deadly ultra-violet radiation that has begun leaking through our ozone-depleted atmosphere. As these items begin falling back to earth over a period of years, astronomers would be able to observe man-made Aurora Borealis with spectacular new hues and colors.

Trendy "Regional Refuse" themes could be adopted where trash surpluses existed. For example, empty suntan lotion bottles, discarded surfboards and black market computer chips would orbit over Southern California, while orange peels, pecan shells, "senior citizen voter droppings" (AKA CHAD) and confiscated drug paraphernalia would be positioned over Florida and the southeast portions of the U.S.A. The Midwest would utilize surplus rock-hard corn, wheat and abandoned oil drilling equipment, while the Northeast would be protected by a thick, rich layer of orbiting "stellar sludge" contributed by the human feces capital of the world, New York City.

For those who are vegetarian-optimists, we could launch tons of organically grown grains, oats, rice and acorns which, after we earthlings have figured out how to live with each other, could be retrieved after a hundred years or so and eatenSor maybe planted.

Even more important than the immediate "protection" offered by an STI Litter Shield, are its future applications for space anthropologists who will judge whether or not we did the right thing by "trashing" our national defense program. If it's worth doing right, it's worth OVER doing!

Dale Lowdermilk is the Founder of NOT-SAFE and can be contacted at POB 5743, Montecito, CA 93150 USA or via email at <editor@notsafe.org>

This article was first published in the Journal of Irreproducible Results (JIR-Box 236 Chicago Heights, IL 60611, Volume 34/ Number 2, Nov-Dec 1988, pp 18.) This more recently updated version can be found in the Montectio Journal, June 23-July 4, 2001, page 20, Jim Buckley Editor, POB 50015, Montecito, CA 93150 USA)

MAC OS X MUSINGS

Robert DeLaurentis <bob@robertdel Laurentis.com>

First off, note that what I'm writing is my personal opinion, nothing more, nothing less. Also note that this article is being written about a product that has not even been released yet, so most of my opinions are untested in the real world.

I'm also writing this now because when the software is released, I'm sure I won't have much time to participate on this list. In addition to troubleshooting the OS itself, I expect there will be a flood of software updates not longer after the OS is released.

Sometime this month, Apple is going to release Mac OS X 10.1. It is, simply stated, the first version of X that is appropriate for wide circle of users. When Apple released the public beta, the circle of users who should have been using it was limited to experimenters. It was not ready for full time or even part time use to get work done for the vast majority of users.

When Mac OS X 10.0 was released, the circle swelled outward to encompass users with fast machines, stuffed with RAM, who did not have a lot of legacy software or hardware peripherals that would be left behind, and folks who wanted to use it on at least a part-time basis.

When Mac OS X 10.1 is released sometime later this month, the circle is going to swell out by several orders of magnitude. It still won't be enough for everybody, but it will be very big nonetheless.

So, what does this mean. First, if you are the type of conservative user who keeps a full step behind the current OS, stop reading. But if you've been holding off installing Mac OS X until the dot 1 release, now is the time to start thinking about it seriously.

Here is what you should think about.

Do I have the hardware I need?

You must have at least a G3 (and while some CPU upgrade boards claim they will be able to or can support X, I don't have an opinion on that), and as much RAM as you can stuff into your Mac. 256 MB sticks are less than \$50, and as a result it makes a 512 MB Mac within easy reach. (If that sounds like too much, stop reading. RAM is just the first thing you'll need to buy. Vendors are in all but a few cases going to be charging a fee to update software to their Mac OS X compatible version.)

Okay, so you've got your hardware ready.

Next, think about partitioning your hard drive. There are advantages and disadvantages to multiple vs. single partitions, and I've used both for the last 6 months on different machines. Although your mileage may vary, I still think its probably better at this point to put Mac OS X and its own Mac OS 9.2.1 system folder on a separate partition. Keeping your present system will allow you to boot back into it for such things as using peripherals that don't have drivers yet. Note that if you have an older Mac, any partition with a system folder needs to be within the first 8 megs of disk space on the physical drive.

Next, make sure your backup sets are rock solid. That you have several copies, and that they are up to date.

Time to rearrange the software furniture. The Mac's present OS has very little structure, allowing the user to put just about any kind of file anywhere. And while Mac OS X is very tolerant, I'd recommend following its lead whenever possible. To that end, its

time to get all your documents gathered up into a single folder. The single folder can be divided up however you desire, but make sure that everything is in that one directory.

Back up again with your new, clean and organized multi-partition hard drive.

Now, as soon as the application software that is important to you becomes Carbonized, you'll be ready to install Mac OS X. Check out VersionTracker and see which of the apps you presently use have Carbonized versions. (Tip: Carbonized app means it runs in Mac OS X, as opposed to the Classic 9 layer inside X.) If you have not checked lately you'll probably be surprised to see that quite a few are already available.

During the next several months, I expect we'll see a small flood of updated applications, and the circle is going to get bigger every day. Its going to be a very exciting fall in the Macintosh Universe!

COMPUTERS FOR FAMILIES

Shelley Crawford <shelley@sbceo.org>

Here's a contact for Computer for Families.

John Padfield, 964-4711, ext. 5400

Please note that they are no longer taking anything lower than a Power macintosh. They are using these for internet access, so the computer MUST be able to connect via modem at a decent rate. Thanks again to all who have donated in the past.

DONATE YOUR OLD COMPUTERS

Becky Davis <becky.davis@silcom.com>

Santa Barbara Computers for Families has a website:

<<http://www.sbcff.org>>

Anyone who wishes to donate a working older computer (Mac or PC) can find out more there &/or fill out a form on that site and someone will contact them.

If your computer is really old and either not working or not likely to be useful to others, Marborg is actively working with a computer recycling company. (If the computer is new enough or works, they donate those computers to SBCFF.) If it is older, not fixable or worth fixing, etc., they send it to a company who disassembles it for parts and materials. It does not end up in the landfill. I talked to Derek Carlson at Marborg to confirm this.

You can drop off your older computers at the Marborg yard: 131 North Quarantina; M-F 7-5 or Sat 7-noon.

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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: <kb6nvh@home.com>

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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

<u>Rates.</u>	<u>1 issue</u>	<u>2 issues</u>
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

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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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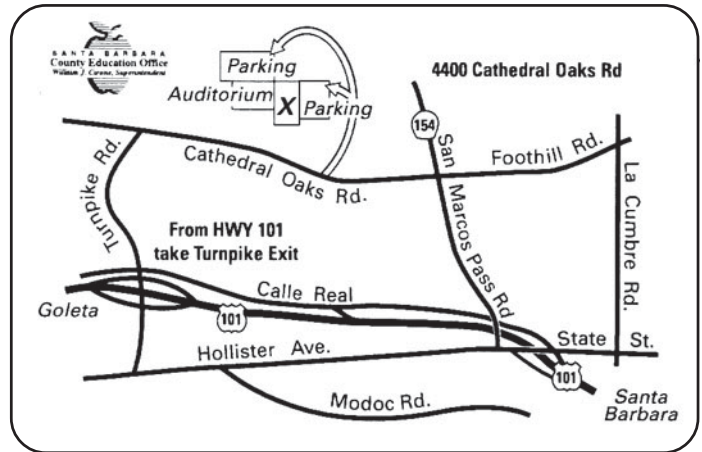
MONTHLY MEETINGS 3RD THURSDAYS

Santa Barbara County Education Office
4400 Cathedral Oaks Road

Upcoming meetings: October 25 & November 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 (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 June 2002 are shown on page 9. Program information and meeting dates will also be listed on our Web site: <<http://www.sbmug.org>>.



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