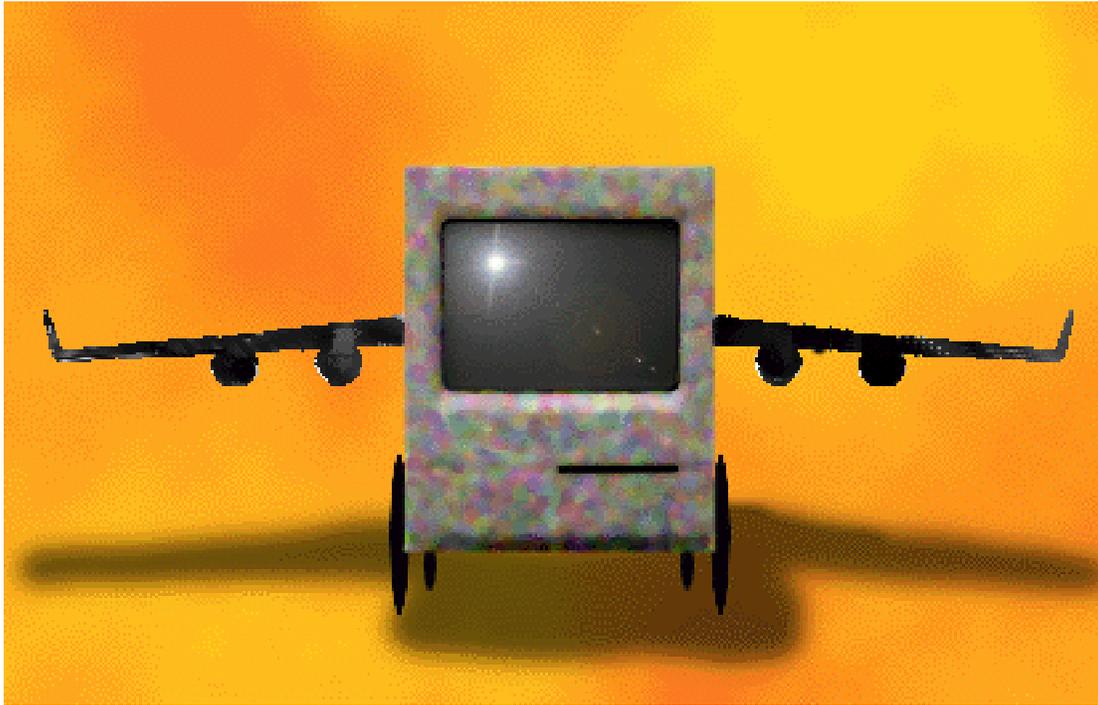


ATPM

- Better your Mac
- On the road w/dora
- Wishful Thinking



*About This Particular Macintosh™ 2.03: about the **personal** computing experience*

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rdnovo@aol.com

Cover Art

© 1996 Michael W. Sladek: mwsladek@aol.com

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<http://members.aol.com/mwsladek/MSD.html>

We need new cover art every month! Write to us!

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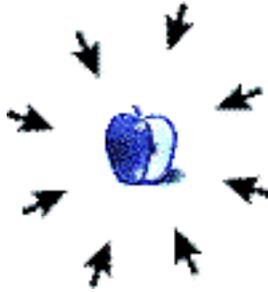
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belonged to Brian Koponen, who has chosen to receive nostalgic boy toys. The opinions expressed in *ATPM* are not necessarily those of this particular Macintosh. Publication, product and company names and logos may be registered trademarks of their respective companies.

About This Particular Macintosh is published with DOCMaker 4.6, and owes its existence to the program's author, Mark Wall. May his camels never have fleas. Thank you for reading this far, and we hope the rest of the magazine is more interesting than this. Thanks for reading

ATPM.





Welcome

Hi there. Welcome to the third issue of *ATPM* in 1996. The magazine has ballooned in size this month, due mostly to the addition of several graphical elements. That is, we added a lot of pictures. Mostly you'll find them in our new areas, like Mark Starlin's Keyword, a new continuing feature adapted from his shareware magazine, or in our magazine capper, Wishful Thinking, where we put all those ad campaigns we wish Apple had done. Don't miss out on this issue's installment, it's the very last chapter!

But the magazine might have also gotten bigger with the addition of Michael Sladek's cover art, a beautiful rendering of an older Mac poised for speed. He's referring to our feature this month, on making your Mac leap higher, go faster, and last longer. We warrant you'll learn something from at least one of the three articles we've brought you.

Or it could just be the collection of fine writing, humorous columns, and/or excellent reviews that we toss your way every month. We've got my regular column, Christoph Wiese's further travels with dora, his PowerBook Duo, and our usual help guys, Adam and Mike, answering your questions and making life with a Mac easier than it already is! These regular writers are the meat of *ATPM*.

Still, the heart and soul of *ATPM* is the stuff we get from regular folk like you. The letters, stories, pictures, anecdotes. Not many made it to our mailboxes this month, and we'd like to encourage you to write for *ATPM*. Check out "ATPM Wants You!" in this issue for how you can help.

Our Webmaster, Mike Shields, wants to butt in with a comment. "As you may know by now, there's this beast out there called the World Wide Web. *ATPM* has decided to jump on the bandwagon. Beginning with the next issue, *ATPM* will be available on the Web! I believe that the Web as a whole is greater than the sum of its parts, and is end-user driven. As such, I'm soliciting reader responses as to what YOU would like to see on our Web site, besides the usual great issues of *ATPM*. I've been given the pretentious title of Webmaster (mostly because I asked for it), so write to me with your suggestions at MShields@ccgate.hac.com. Thank you."

And finally, I'd like to welcome a new staff member, Michael J. Tsai, the new guy in charge of Reviews in *ATPM*. He comes to the magazine full of ideas, and we're sure you'll feel his presence before long.

Again, our apologies for such a large issue, but it's as small as it could be and still bring you what you expect from *ATPM*. Remember, you won't find a better expression of what it means to

own a Macintosh than you will find in *ATPM*, month after month.

Thanks for reading *ATPM*,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'RD Novo'.

RD Novo
Publisher Guy



Contents



eMail

Send your letters to rdnovo@aol.com All letters become the property of ATPM.

We Love you, Romeo

I have gotten an overwhelming response to the cover art I made for "About This Particular Mac" vol.2 no.2 Feb. 14, 1996. Because of that, I have created a Web Page to feature the art made for that cover. The final submitted cover art, the Smiley Heart Startup Screen, the Mac Colour Classic w/Startup Screen, and thumbnails of the previous two are available on the Page. Here is the URL:

<http://users.aol.com/quezon/ILoveYouMac/ILoveYouMac.html>

You can also FTP to the subdirectory:
[users.aol.com/quezon/ILoveYouMac/](ftp://users.aol.com/quezon/ILoveYouMac/)

In case you're wondering what Quezon refers to, he is a Philippines historical figure and the city I was born in on the island of Mindanao. Best regards, **Romeo**, *America Online*

Romeo, it was our distinct pleasure to showcase your art in our last issue. We look forward to having more of it in the future.

Hey, where's the eMail?

Hey you guys, what's up with this? Why aren't there any more letters on this page? At least you haven't resorted to making up letters, and pretending they come from real people. That would be low. **RealGuy**, *America Online*

*Yeah, that *would* be low. We'd never do that. No way.*



Mac & Talk

This is a forum for your opinions. Send your comments to rdnovo@aol.com. Be civil.

I've actually used View by Small Icons

Having grown up in a DOS environment, I've always sort of preferred the View By Names - especially when dealing with a folder with many files of the same type (let's face it, there's no way I'm going to go around changing icons for hundreds of files, just to differentiate between them.) *However* - there are also folders that it helps to View By Icon. Those folders that make it that much easier to find the particular file that I'm looking for; those folders that others have created for popular use. Which brings about View By Small Icons... I've actually used it here and there. I've found that it helps quite a bit when trying to understand things in the system folder. *Especially* in the Extensions folder. Haven't used Snap To Grid yet, though.

Blair Buscareno, *eWorld*

Mac & Talk will publish the opinions and responses you send us. While your letters become the property of *ATPM* (so that we can edit) we won't edit much more than punctuation, so be sure you mean what you say. Submission does not guarantee publication. And be courteous. We *will* edit **colorful** language. But most of all, sound off! This is your Mac we're talking about! Send your comments or replies to rdnovo@aol.com



About *This* Particular Macintosh



For Life

© 1996 by RD Novo: rdnovo@aol.com

I have an announcement to make. As of a couple of weeks ago, Bill Gates is no longer the richest man in the world. Warren Buffett, self-made investing gazillionaire, now holds that title. While Mr. Buffett lives most of his life in New York, he maintains a residence in his hometown of Omaha, Nebraska, important mostly because it's where I live, too. Omaha is also the home of America's largest independent jewelry store, Borsheim's, which is (imagine that) owned by Buffett. And Borsheim's is where Bill Gates bought his wife's engagement ring.

Two clues to Buffett's rise as the richest human? Live (for tax purposes, at least) in the Midwest, and sell expensive stuff to your competition.

But why do I tell you this? Well, Tiffany and I have gotten engaged, and in a twist of fate, we bought our rings at Borsheim's. Not because the Billster did, mind you. But that little coincidence did make me wonder if I'm not destined to write about this stuff.

The rings are very nice, thank you. The wedding won't happen for a long time, so don't expect engraved invitations soon. And I'll be sure to regale you with the horrors of planning the thing, so just sit tight.

Getting married (and you've got to say it, "Gettin' maaaaarried!") is a big step in anyone's life, but getting to the point where you *decide* to get married is even bigger. You're making choices that will affect everything you do from now on. This isn't about Froot Loops or Captain Crunch, decaffeinated or regular...

This is for life.

And so, too, this month, are a number of other choices I've made. This may seem a stretch to y'all, but bear with me...

Lots of minor decisions were made during February and March. I upgraded to Illustrator 6.0, just one of the reasons this issue is so dang large. I went a little "Strator happy," I call it. But Illustrator 6.0 is a huge improvement over version 5.5, I think, though it could use a few tweaks. Like I'd like to be able to paste a PICT into an Illustrator document without first having to save it as a separate file in Graphic Converter, open it with Illustrator, cut and paste it into

the document I'm working in, etc. I'm sure I can do this with 6.0, and some kind reader will tell me how. Thanks in advance.

I also decided not to subscribe to Prodigy, albeit the third largest online service in the nation. Not a hard choice, mind you, but I did get a free disk in the mail. And on the outside was "Amber," a very sexy, slinky, Rachel-haired, young, white woman in a tight lycra-look sweater, with a lock of hair almost in her mouth, and the words, "It all started when I typed hello" next to her. Tiffany said something like, "Nice picture," with a snort when I showed it to her.

"No, we don't use sex to lure teenagers online! Not us. It's those other guys." Are packages like this outlawed by the net censorship law?

Ahem. Excuse my vehemence.

I did decide, however, to get a second account on America Online. I've run out of screen names (yes, I use them all) and I need more. You'll start seeing them crop up in the magazine soon.

I also decided, and this wasn't very hard, that I hate Windows 95. At work, we've installed 95 on all the computers except one. I'm not sure why that one was left out, has something to do with a shell or something. Anyway, the machines it *is* on keep crashing. The bottom fell out of mine while I was playing Doom, and that got me all mad. I was doing really well. Another computer has decided to eat its own memory, slowly. At the beginning of the week it decided it couldn't print from Microsoft Access. On Wednesday it decided that two programs open at the same time were one too many, and on Friday it just said no. Another computer in the office decided that one brochure should take fifteen minutes to print, while everything else could print at the usual speed. And all the time they're asking me ('cause I radiate that "comfortable with computers" aura) if I know what's going on. And I think to myself, "You didn't get a Mac, that's what," and I say "No, sorry." Because it doesn't matter if someone out there knows what the problem is. It matters that these problems are happening at all. And this is the office that's planning to install a network soon. I've decided not to help with that.

Oh, and I decided to order the MacOS System 7.5 Update 2.0 by mail on CD-ROM instead of spending a hundred-and-five hours trying to find enough floppy disks, enough disk space, and/or enough download time to get it off the net. The aggravation is worth the \$14 for the disk. Besides, shouldn't we all support Apple?

But I also made three really big decisions this month. Really big.

The third biggest decision I made was to begin writing a regular column for MacSense. You know, that there big ol' electronic Mac magazine. They offered me a position, and I accepted, after much thinking and tribulation. What did I have to think about? Too much to write every month? Heck no, I actually **like** writing. (Go figure.) And I already write a regular update piece for Inside Mac Games, on top of this column for ATPM and a number of filler pieces, and the editing I do for AppleSauce. No, my quandary was whether writing for MacSense would affect the quality of my work elsewhere, especially in ATPM. After all, I held out so that I could write the way I wanted to write, and I already do that in ATPM. It would be unfair to both ATPM and MacSense to have the same column appear in both. (And I don't think they'd let me.) So I hemmed and I hawed and I jibbed a bit, and finally I decided that the opportunity was too great to pass up. It is going to be worth the extra work of producing another original piece every month to be able to write for MacSense.

This is one of those decisions that will affect me for my entire life, I hope. It's a step down a path I want to take.

The second biggest choice I made this month was to continue producing, and writing, and editing this magazine, About This Particular Macintosh. Though this was never really in doubt, I sat down one particularly stressful day (before I'd heard from MacSense), and I thought long and hard about the important things in my life. I have so much to do every day, this e-mail to answer, this thing to write, this meal to eat, x hours of sleep to catch up on, that I fear I do things without thinking about whether they're worth it. So I took the time to think about this magazine, about all the stuff I do with my time, and all the stuff I want to do with my time. I wanted to be sure that I was making an informed, intelligent choice, such that I could accept the consequences.

I am, I have been, and I will continue to do so. I'm in this business for the long haul. Another life choice, another decision to continue working within the Macintosh world, for myself, and for you. It seems that, destined or not, I will be writing about this stuff for a long time to come.

The biggest choice I made, well, you already know about that one. She and I are very happy. Thanks.



on the road
with
dora



For Better or Worse

Part two in a continuing series, © 1996 by Christoph Wiese, Krzysztof@eworld.com

(Last month: two friends from New Zealand have rescued me from gainful employment and the three of us embark on a summer road trip. Dora the Duo gets to tag along.)

“Experienced traveler” is a paradox — one travels in order to encounter new personalities, walk in unfamiliar surroundings, regain the feeling of being inexperienced, new to the world, to life. Yet to travel without any center of perspective or focus is no good; all those new things slide past like water, incomprehensible, forgotten. Our mode of travel this summer, the Planless Drift, can be particularly meaningless without themes to tie all the random little experiences together.

Music was one such theme: every place we stopped, we played in the streets. There is no better way to experience a culture in three hours than busking. People stop and listen to us, talk to us about themselves and their town, make us feel welcome with a smile or a dance or a few dollars. We thread all the towns together like beads in a row and compare them through the eyes of buskers... in Omaha other buskers stopped and danced, and waiters shared their tips... in Toronto we were illegal and had to straddle the line between two jurisdictions to avoid being fined... and so on.

With dora along, we had another theme: personal technology.

I don't think it started out being a theme for Tarek and Warwick — neither of them owned their own Macintosh, so they probably thought of dora as a useful part of our equipment, like the camp stove or the tent. My own history with dora was more profound, and it was harder for me to know whether or not she should come along, what role she would ultimately play in our travels.

Dora-the-five-pound-object is a complex and delicate machine. But dora-the-presence, dora-the-habit, dora-the-theme is much more. Since her arrival in my life, she has been my voice, my instrument, my window, my means of communicating with the world and with myself. She has generated and still contains every word I have written in the past four years. Sleepy words, angry words, ecstatic words. Love letters and song lyrics and my senior thesis. Short stories and bad poetry and works in progress. She is my handwriting and my style and the tone of my voice. So how could I move through the world without her?

And yet: how dare I bring her along? She could be lost or crushed or melted or stolen. I could regret the weight and space and care she requires. She could distract me from deeply experiencing the Planless Drift. Besides, this was no business trip, no first-class flights and five-star hotels. This was the open road: sweaty driving if Frieda the VW stayed healthy; hitchhiking if she didn't. Campfires and backpacks and aimlessness.

Dora (and this time I mean dora: the most perfect implementation of personal technology on the planet) must be able to keep up. If I have to send her home, if she breaks the first day, if her only use is to play games and hide in cyberspace, then the best of personal technology is still not ready for our lifestyle.

I want technology to be ready. I believe it is — in the form of the smallest Macintosh ever made. So we will live the ideal and see if it proves to be true. On the road with dora: for better or worse.

* * *

Dusty Gas Station, Route Something-or-Other, Middle-of-Nowhere, USA. Ninety degrees in the shade. Guy in Blue Overalls leans on his truck, waits for his tank to fill. The pump squeaks loudly every seventy-eight cents.

An old, sunbleached car chatters to a halt at the neighboring pump. One of those German hippie jobs from the sixties, with the rear wheels sticking out at funny angles. All four doors open, and three scruffy guys clamber out, with a stretch and a groan. Not from around here. Talking about Petrol. Funny haircuts.

Blue Overalls feels the pump shut off, replaces the handle, goes inside to pay his bill. When he comes out, two of the strangers are doing something weird to the pay phone; he stops see what they're up to. They've attached something to the handset with suction cups and velcro. Now they're plugging a cord from this thing into the back of a little computer. One messes with the keyboard while the other one puts coins in the phone and dials a number. They wait, one with his ear pressed to that handset mess. Obviously up to no good. Better talk to them.

"So, what're you boys doin' to that phone?"

"Shh," says the bald one.

"Fecksing," says the one with a pony tail.

Blue Overalls puts his hands on his hips. "What do you mean fecksing?"

The bald one has closed the computer and is unstrapping the handset. "Faxing, he means. They say it different where he comes from, is all. Seeya."

They climb into their heap (the rear wheels don't look right at all) and drive off into the dusty noon, leaving behind a nickel-sized oil slick on the blacktop.

* * *

Tarek is driving now, so he gets to pick the music. Cowboy Junkies. I'm riding shotgun; Warwick is doing his turn at purgatory in the back. It's better since we covered the seat with the blanket we got in Mexico — you don't stick to it the way you used to. He asks me what we got.

"It looks like we have places to stay in Ohio and in Toronto, and my grandparents sent the phone number of their friends in Illinois. Starting to look like we should head north. Tarek, you've got

stuff from your sister, your folks, and your girlfriend. Warwick, you've got about six different things. You can read first."

Tarek says, "Wait, have a quick look at the one from my sister. Anything about the baby?"

"Um, doesn't look like it. No, you're not an uncle yet." I hand dora into the back seat. Warwick clicks through his mail, leaning away once in a while to take bites of a drippy tomato. I open the AAA guide and read aloud the historical blurb for the little town we just passed through. Tarek can't find his sunglasses again, so I give him mine. Frieda purrs along the highway. The sky is huge and blue.

*Next month: friendly pig
farmers; zapping Frieda's
PRAM; and virtual uncle-hood.*



Higher, Faster, Further!

Welcome to our feature for this issue. So you want to better your Mac? You want it to leap higher buildings? You want it to go faster than the newest locomotives? You want it to last you further into the future? We've got three feature articles that'll give you some satisfaction. Select the article below, and the magic of DOCMaker will whisk you there. Enjoy! And let us know what you think, at rdnovo@aol.com.

●
**Treat your
Disk like Gold**
by Robert Paul Leitao

●
**RAM Doubler and
Speed Doubler**
by Adam Junkroski

●
**Faster,
Free, Now!**
by RD Novo

Treat your Disk like Gold

By Robert Paul Leitao, rodestar@aol.com

We've all been there. We unbox the latest computer offering from our friends in Cupertino. We're amazed at how much smoother, cooler and seemingly a zillion times faster our new computer works in contrast to whatever machine we were using before.

Then, within a few weeks or a couple of months, we begin to wonder what happened to our new computer's "lightning-speed" performance. Did we just get accustomed to our faster computer and raised our personal expectations accordingly, or are other factors at work?

The truth is a little bit of both.

Yes, we get accustomed to our new-found computing speed. But software developers, via updates and new versions, quickly begin to take advantage of increased capacity and faster processor speeds. And irregular data storage maintenance will gradually—and sometimes less than gradually—decrease our new computer's overall performance.

While there isn't much we can do about the ever-increasing sophistication of software, the good news is that we can do a lot—and relatively inexpensively—to help maintain efficient hard drive storage and data retrieval speeds.

For those with the gumption, I recommend reformatting your hard drives with FWB's Hard Disk Tool Kit. My experience is that after reformatting with FWB my drives run quicker, smoother and experience less problems. Especially when one encounters the rare but seemingly inevitable "hard crash" that wreaks havoc with the system's directory. My drives formatted with FWB's Hard Disk Tool Kit tend to experience less data corruption and are more easily repaired with good diagnostic software such as Norton Utilities than my drives formatted with other software.

I'm normally not a big fan of reformatting a hard drive and for most problems I consider doing so akin to undergoing general anesthesia to have a splinter removed. But, in this case, reformatting with FWB may be the best preemptive move one can make to avoid the need to reformat anytime in the near future.

Along with Disk Doctor, Norton Utilities (I'm using version 3.1, but version 3.2 is now commercially available) contains a wonderful little application called Speed Disk. Not only does Speed Disk defragment your files it will also "optimize" your drive. In layman-speak it essentially puts things back where they belong. Not only does your hard drive look prettier in the color image afterwards, but it will also increase data access efficiency and speed.

For anyone who is doing serious photo-manipulation or rendering with software such as Adobe Photoshop and yet does not have the benefit of an alternative "scratch disk," fragmentation and loss of disk access efficiency can be a big problem. Don't get me wrong. I love Adobe. Put an Adobe logo on a box and my mouth waters. Buying Adobe products is the closest thing to a knee-jerk response I've ever known. But because of the scratch space needed to manipulate images, disk fragmentation can occur. Speed Disk will effectively defragment your drive.

Lastly, let's remember to "rebuild the desktop" at least once a month. I recommend rebuilding the desktop every time you install or remove applications, system extensions or control panel devices. Simply hold down the option and command keys as you restart your Mac. This is the easiest and least obtrusive action one can take to help your system operate more efficiently. The only thing you lose are your comments in the info windows. Why? I don't know. Info windows are not the coolest places to store stuff, anyway. [The recently released System 7.5 Update 2.0, from Apple, keeps the comments when you rebuild the desktop. Ed.]

In closing, do not under any avoidable circumstances reformat or optimize your hard drive without proper backup. Ideally I would have on hand a second bootable drive to store your data and to use as a start-up disk for these operations. If you don't have an external hard drive or removable cartridge drive, try and borrow one from a friend. For those of you who are living in the Hollywood, CA area and are willing to write-down in 200 words or less how regularly reading ATPM is improving your computing life and bringing you to a new level of Macintosh enlightenment I may be persuaded to lend you one of mine. All kidding aside, ATPM has quickly become my favorite Macintosh magazine. And, if you do need help, regardless of location, please don't hesitate to e-mail me at the address below.

We've all made a big investment in arguably the best computer hardware and operating system available. A little bit of regular data storage maintenance will help you keep some of that "out-of-the-box performance" whether you have a new 9500 or my sentimental favorite, that "never-say-die" IICI. For questions or comments please feel free to e-mail me, Robert Paul Leitao (rodestar@aol.com).

RAM Doubler & Speed Doubler

By Adam Junkroski, rystan@aol.com

"What do you mean it doesn't actually double my RAM? It's called RAM Doubler, for crying out loud!!"

"Well, it's more of a sort of software trick. You still only have four megs."

It was immediately after hearing that comment from the folks at Connectix that I slammed down the phone, and proceeded to put fist-sized holes in the walls of my Gainesville, Florida apartment. It was 1993, or thereabouts, and I desperately needed the extra memory to get my old LC II up to speed to finish my struggling senior project at the University of Florida.

Back then, vast numbers of system conflicts, freezes, and less-than-stellar performance were the rule rather than the exception with the now famous, and almost omnipresent RAM Doubler by Connectix. But my, oh my, have they changed.

It seems like the idea, from the very beginning, was essentially a good one. The program, using

some nifty tricks with regards to fragmented memory, memory allocation itself, and hard drive space, would be capable of doubling the amount of RAM your computer thinks it has. The problem that cropped up almost immediately, however, was the way in which different programs use RAM. RAM Doubler was not originally written to tiptoe around memory hogs like Photoshop or PageMaker, and the result was an almost unavoidable crash every time you used these programs with RAM Doubler loaded. Hence situations like the one I had in college.

But Connectix stood by the fledgling product, and offered frequent upgrades, all available free to users of the purchased version. The most current version, 1.6.1, is almost entirely free of any bugs whatsoever, and an essential part of your computing experience.

RAM Doubler Pros

RAM Doubler does for your computer what you don't think is possible. It can make up to twice the amount of installed RAM available to your running applications. It does this using a series of highly technical tricks, all of which even I don't understand. But that's okay, because I do understand that it works. And when I say it works, you can trust me on that. Installed on Tiberius, my Mac, are 75% of the heavy-duty serious user programs, including PageMaker, Photoshop, Illustrator, Freehand, Director, and many others. I also have a slew of extensions that accompany things like scanner drivers, voice-recognition programs, video apparatus, and others. Not one conflict.

Have a game you can't play because you need six megs and only have five free? Get RAM Doubler. Need to scan some 1200 dpi 36-bit photos into Photoshop, but only have 12 megs free? You definitely need RAM Doubler (well, at 1200 dpi, even that might not help). This is the quick-fix answer for those of you with very little RAM, but big appetites for power. Even those of you with more RAM will find it useful. I have 32 megs installed on Tiberius, and I still use RAM Doubler religiously. I allocate close to 50 megs to Photoshop alone.

RAM Doubler Cons

While RAM Doubler in its current version is an excellent product, it can't bring you the moon and stars. As with any quick-fix, there are prices to pay. First will be speed.

RAM Doubler's dabbling (say that three times fast) under your Mac's hood means some extra things must happen when you perform actions on your computer. These extra calls to the system software can slow the computer down considerably, unless you have a PowerPC, which actually benefits in a number of ways from virtual memory. Though speed is a problem that Connectix has addressed in its newer versions, your 680X0 computer will still run slower with RAM Doubler than without.

The second price you'll pay will be with your memory needs themselves. RAM Doubler will never change the fact that newer versions of programs such as Photoshop and PageMaker require more and more RAM. In time, your needs will outgrow the amount of RAM even RAM Doubler can offer you. So when I say quick-fix, I mean it. Eventually, you will have to break down and buy more memory. But RAM Doubler will give you time to save up for it.

Speed Doubler

Recently, the folks at Connectix offered another little marvelous tidbit known as Speed Doubler. It is meant to speed up processing time for many tasks, on both 680x0 and PowerPC computers, though primarily on PowerPCs. Again, this involves lots of technical mumbo-jumbo that I

won't pretend to understand, but the idea is that it works, right?

Maybe.

Speed Doubler offers some improved finder functions, such as a "speed copy" and an improved trash can. This is presumably to accommodate the weirdness the program itself pulls, to avoid crashes that would likely occur with unimproved finder functions. But hey, they're nice to have, so who cares why?

Does it work? Well, yes and no. I notice several speed improvements with Speed Doubler. First, startup proceeds about twice as fast as usual. I didn't really notice this until I removed it, at which point I began turning on my computer and leaving to make a sandwich. After a few days, I reinstated it. I also noticed greatly improved file erasure speed. If you are deleting many items at once in the trash, expect it to go almost twice as fast as usual. Programs open and close with lightning quickness. But I still am not convinced that any program itself runs faster due to Speed Doubler. Photoshop in particular still takes five to ten seconds to process a 300 dpi 4x6 photo, even with Speed Doubler installed. On the other hand, changing the font for a fifty-page document (yes, I actually keep one of those on my hard drive, what a loser, right?) proceeded much more quickly.

I ran MacBench both with and without Speed Doubler loaded, and although the statistics noted that my processor was now twice as fast as before, the tests proceeded at exactly the same rate as without Speed Doubler. Curious, but in all fairness that might be due to the way MacBench tests the processor rather than a problem with Speed Doubler.

Overall, I would say that any bugs in this first version are somewhat minor. You can expect a must-have, solid product by the next version or two, one on an even par with RAM Doubler. Together, these two are soon sure to be essential partners for your beloved Mac. Look for RAM Doubler and Speed Doubler at your favorite retailer or in mail order for right around fifty bucks each. Some of the catalog dealers are offering special discounts if you purchase both at the same time, so look for the best price. You won't be sorry you did.

Faster, Free, Now!

By RD Novo, rdnovo@aol.com

There's lots of stuff you can **buy** to make your Mac faster, sleeker, trimmer. But what can you do now? Right now. Today. For no money? Well, you can take 90% of your extensions and you can toss them in the trash, then restart, then empty the trash. You could do it now. In fact, you should do it now. Now! Do it quickly! Before you lose your resolve! Quick, quick! Oh, oh, oh, oh!

Ohhhh. Too late.

Now you're no longer sure you want to throw away that really cool screen saver that you never really use. Or that program that keeps a record of every single keystroke you type, just in case your Mac crashes while you're editing the national budget. Or that nifty typewriter sound that "clacks" every time you "click."

You like that stuff, and really, how much can it slow down your system? I mean, they're just small things, right? Right.

Go online, and search for something called "Check Ticks." You could just search for "Ticks", I guess, and discard any manuals on dressing for picnics in New England. I found this wonderful utility on America Online, along with an explanatory document.

In essence, this is a program that sends a command to your computer called "GetNextEvent." Check Ticks sends 10,000 calls of this sort to your computer, and times how long it takes to send them. The result is expressed as "ticks." Like the ticks of a second hand, if you don't have one of those really cool digital watch things.

Essentially, this indicates how slow your computer is. For example, with all my extensions, fonts, and cdevs running, I get a result of 2416 ticks when I run Check Ticks. And believe you me, I can tell. I run the program and sit back, waiting. Then I begin examining my fingernails, and finally I go watch the paint peel on our ceiling. It's usually done by the time I get back.

Then I restart the computer with the Shift key held down to turn all my extensions off. I run Check Ticks, and sit ba... and it's done. Count them, 407 ticks. That's an eleven to one ratio. Without extensions running, my Mac is at least ten times faster than with.

Yowza.

Simply put, armed with Check Ticks you can determine what your screen saver does to your system's speed, and decide on those merits if it gets the trash, or if it gets kept. I, for one, have tossed Disklight, cool though it might be. Besides, I'm keeping Aaron, and you can just barely see Disklight with Aaron running. <grin>



Making the most of your Setup

© 1996 by Adam Junkroski, rystan@aol.com

One of the common laments of any computer user is that the market changes too fast to have a truly up-to-date system at any given time. Certainly, this is true in the Mac world, where a new product is introduced several times a year, each more enticing than the last. But that doesn't mean you have to be left out in the cold. Many of the first and second generation Macs are still puttering happily along out there, beefed up with accelerators, upgrade cards, external drives, and more. The trick is knowing when you can make modifications to your system, and when it's time to give up the ghost.

PowerPC

This is probably the subject of greatest concern to Mac users at the moment. Many of you own '040, '030, and even '020 machines, and are feeling threatened that soon you won't be able to run applications that are PowerPC native. While for the time, this concern is not founded, it might become so in the near future. For now, most applications (there are very few exceptions) are "fat" applications, and include code that works on any of the older (usually '040 or Quadra) Macs, as well as PowerPC computers in a native mode. However, within the next year or so, you can expect to start seeing many applications arriving that will not run on any unmodified '040 machines.

You can do something about this. Most, if not all, of the Quadra line are in some way upgradable to PowerPC. Even the Quadra 660AV, the 605, and the 610 accept logic board upgrades that effectively make them 6100s. In fact, practically the only models that are not currently upgradable to at least a 601 PPC processor are the Fat Mac and 128k Mac.

At printing time, upgrade cards were available for the following models:

Ilci, Ilsi, Ilvi, Ilvx, Performa 470, 600, 605, LC, LC 475, 570, 580, 605, 630, Quadra or Centris 610, 650, 700, 800, 900, 950, 660AV, and 840AV.

Not every one of the upgrades are simple plug-in cards. Some are full logic board upgrades, and as such will cost more. But upgrading to a 100MHz 601 processor can cost as little as \$899, depending on your machine. In many cases, this can be less than buying a new computer.

Compare prices first. Outdated 6100, 7100, and 8100 model prices are dropping almost weekly.

Storage Space

Our illustrious managing head editor, RD Novo, was thrilled to receive a Zip drive to test with Pokegenia. Why? Because we all love to have tons of storage space, and never seem to have enough. The thought of a removable system that offers virtually unlimited storage space is heavenly to the dedicated user. But there can be a price to pay.

Removable storage has always had one large drawback: speed. The Zip drives, SyQuest drives, Pinnacle drives, and others offer varying degrees of storage space on a single removable medium, but the transfer and seek times on them can be up to four or five times slower than a regular external drive. Some, such as the Iomega Jaz drive, offer transfer rates and seek times very close to, and in some cases exceeding that of external hard drives. However, you pay dearly for this advantage. The price for a Jaz drive is an average \$550, plus \$70-\$80 per 1GB cartridge. Now in time, this will pay for itself, but the idea is to make a go of your current setup with as few expensive modifications as possible.

The solution: Buy a compression utility such as Stuffit Deluxe (or the smaller, fewer-featured Stuffit SpaceSaver). The price averages about \$75, and can as much as double the space on your current drive, depending on how you use it. Paired with this, you can buy an Iomega Zip drive and 100 MB disk for \$200-\$220. Additional cartridges are between \$15 and \$21. Use the drive to backup files you don't open often, but need to have on hand. This will keep you from suffering during the slow seek and transfer times on a regular basis. Use Stuffit to compress the data on your ZIP disks, and you effectively have 200MB backup disks at your disposal. For about \$375 total, you can have the storage space of a \$425-\$650 1 gig drive, and add 200 MB at any time for less than \$20.

One quick caveat: Make sure you leave enough space available on your drive to unstuff files you'll need later. If you create mostly text files, you shouldn't need much...the average one megabyte text document will consist of about two-hundred pages with only half-inch margins, and most people won't have text files anywhere near that large. Photos, however, can take considerably more depending on resolution and bit depth. If you get too confused, simply leave as much space available as your largest file takes unstuffed. That way, you'll never be at a loss for space to unstuff into.

Dead Components

One of the worst things in the world is to have to replace a fried monitor or keyboard that can't be fixed for a reasonable price. Fortunately, there is the used solution.

Probably the largest dealer of used Mac components would be Shreve Systems of Shreveport, Louisiana. Another is Mac Sale, Int'l. These companies buy used Mac equipment, certify that it is in working order, and sell it at a sharp discount over new items. This can save you hundreds of dollars over new components, but you are taking on the possibility that you will encounter problems more rapidly than with a new component.

Usually, a used accessory dealer will even provide a brief warranty of the used product, making this option even more attractive than buying new when you're strapped for cash. Monitors, keyboards, logic boards, whole computers, scanners, hard drives, and other accessories and peripherals are all available. Many of these are still available new, making the used ones worth a look for the discount, especially if you know they can't have been used for long (check model

numbers to get an idea of how long the peripheral might have been used).

Family Matters

You might have occasion to adapt your Mac for use by your entire family, especially if you are recently married, or have children just entering school. This does not have to be the headache it might seem to be. We all know that children and spouses can go poking into files they don't belong in, potentially putting important data at risk.

The solution to this little problem is simply to get the data away from the offending users. Several programs like "Gibson's Utilities' Drop Blindfold" allow you to remove your files from desktop view entirely, making them impossible to access for anyone who doesn't open the Blindfold program first. This program is available on AOL and other online services, recommended shareware fee of only \$5-\$10. This is more than worth it to protect your marketing reports from junior. Simply copy Blindfold to a disk, and keep no copy of it on your hard drive (be sure to back it up!!!). This way, the floppy must be inserted to access hidden files. Chances are that your average user won't be able to figure this out, assuming they even know what files you've hidden in the first place.

Other programs offer password protection to your files, making it impossible to access them without an appropriate password. Such programs are always available online as shareware, with low fees. They are often as good as catalog-type items, and almost assuredly cost less. Some might even be free. It's worth it to protect your work.

One of our associate editors likes Folderbolt Pro. As a retail program, it costs a little more (about \$100), but offers higher-level user features including protection over a network. While this probably won't be necessary for the home user, it certainly never hurts if you link your home's Mac to work's with remote access of some sort.

Another concern of Family computer use is the internet and online service abuse. Teens and young adults (okay, and older adults too, but at least we can pay for it!!) can charge up huge amounts of money using internet access and online accounts, or access adults-only areas without your permission. This one takes a little vigilance to fix.

First, make sure you are the primary account holder for online services. This usually allows you to restrict access to certain areas for other users. Some services might offer time limits for secondary account users. If worse comes to worst, check your billing statements frequently (you can always review your time use online) to see how many hours have been used. It is a cruel thing to do, but if your children are not yet trustworthy, or have a history of abusing family resources, do NOT allow them to have a primary account on an online service.

As for internet security, purchase a copy of SurfWatch (\$49-\$52) for your computer. This will allow you to block access to sexually explicit materials. Password protection allows you to access these sites yourself, if you so desire, but will keep the kids out. Well worth the investment.

These are but a few of the perils of computing without much money today. I hope you find these suggestions save you some money, and enhance your enjoyment of your computer.

Win a Prize!

I am soliciting tips from our readers for the "All-Time Coolest Reader Tip" award. This will likely include a European Photo CD ROM, and a cheesy certificate that you can stick to the

'fridge. All entries must be submitted to: Rystan@aol.com by May 1, 1996, and must be accompanied by an online address where you can be reached. We are looking for unusual tips, so don't bother sending the "shift-command-3 takes a screen shot" tip, or submitting anything else that's been widely published. Be creative! Your tip can be for a specific program, the Mac OS itself, or even a game. I reserve the right to alter the prize offered for winning. I'm looking forward to your entries.

Next month, "Working For Tips" will explore some of the cool ways to beautify your Mac desktop without risking your system stability. See you then!



Did you
check the
Plug?



Two if by Mac

© 1996 by Mike Shields, mikeshields@eworld.com

“The 7200’s are coming! The 7200’s are coming!” went the cry across the Huge complex! Of late my day has been filled with endless reports of the Prank Virus making it to the Macintosh side. However, the highlight of these last few months has been getting Macintosh 7200/75’s up and running, to stem the tide of the CEO’s hopes to go single platform in 3 to 4 years. It’ll never happen, but in case you’re wondering, when I heard this, I feared for my job, however briefly.

For those of you that are just tuning in, last month I explained how I ended up at a company that some may refer to as, “Huge Aircrash!” doing of all things, Macintosh technical support.

Which brings me to the company’s current quandary, “What to do with the fourteen hundred 7200’s that don’t work?” Now I know what you’re saying out there in real-world-land. “I just bought a 7200/whatever, and it works great! Apple really knew what they were doing when they released them 2 months early in time for Christmas!” Now, I’m exaggerating here, but you get the idea. Around the middle of November, Huge was gearing up what it calls the CDE project, or Common Desktop Environment. This came about as a result of Apple and Compaq making the company an offer it couldn’t refuse. You think **YOU** have problems when **YOU** want to upgrade, multiply that times 6,000-plus users on a cross-platform LAN/WAN Network. Suffice it to say, it’s not enough to simply go to your local superstore.

The mechanics are simple. To wit: Hire 20 guys to go out to the 6,000-plus old machines; find out all the software that the customer has on his old machine, as well as the configuration, IP address, and monitor size; Ask the user what he wants to keep, put it in a “special folder” (that’s a directory for the few PC user/readers out there); bring the new machine; install it, get it up and running; and take the old machine away. Now, I know what you’re thinking, easy, right? Wrong! You’ve probably figured out by now, “1,400 machines, 6,000 users” therefore, Huge users, or Husers as we shall call them for the duration of my life in *ATPM*, how do they ALL get a new machine?

The answer is, flow down!!!

That’s right, you can get a used Mac or PC that’s new to **YOU!** For the purposes of this column, and the work I do, I won’t go into the headache that was created on the “other platform.” Are we all following this? This sets in place a chain of events. The new machine has to go in at the top of the line, before the people waiting for their ‘new’ Mac can get theirs.

And, the new machine o’ choice on the Mac side? The 7200!!! With a blazing speed of 75mhz or greater, 16 megs o’RAM, a 700 megabyte hard drive, and system 7.5.2, special for the PCI Macs, preinstalled!!! No ups! No extras!!! Am I sounding like a car salesman? Good!

Which indirectly leads me to you, as I was hired as a result of Huge implementing the CDE project. (that’s mid November for those that don’t know. I wrote about that last issue, which is downloadable from our Web Site... wait, we don’t have one yet, that’s next month, more on that later...)

Now let me digress for a second. Huge is in love with acronyms. I’m contracted to CSC, or the Computer Sciences Corporation, which in turn is contracted with Huge. Being in Desktop Support, puts me in the HSC, or Huge Support Center. I was originally assigned to the CDE, and others that came on at the same time as myself became SDC’s, or Service Delivery Co-ordinators.

Now, depending on where you got your New Mac from, would depend on who installed it for you. If you ordered from the catalog, you’d be paid a visit by an SDC, however, if you were part of the CDE, or refresh, you’d be paid a visit by someone assigned to the CDE, not to be confused with the CIA. All we need now is a visit from Col. Flagg, to make this complete.

The 7200's began to be installed company wide. Not only at ESN, (El Segundo North) but in Fullerton, as well as ESS or El Segundo South. I'm with ESN, my name's Shields. I carry a floppy.

In Desktop support, we started getting various calls to go out and fix the 7200 7.5.2 machines around the beginning of the year. And, though I didn't know it at the time, this would become an integral part of my day for weeks to come. It turns out that Huge, in their divine wisdom, didn't really test the machines with the 'core software' as thoroughly as they should have. A typical fix of a 7.5.2 machine would involve making sure the hard disk driver was updated properly, all the available patches and extensions were at their current versions, virtual memory was cranked up so Microsoft Office would run unfettered, and that certain control panels and extensions too numerous to mention were either turned off, or set properly if turned on. These problems became too numerous, and Huge stopped the installation of the 'defective' 7200's in the middle of February. However, not before over 800 were installed company-wide.

At the same time I was playing paramedic, the CDE division was busily trying to figure out the problem, and Apple was speeding up its release of 7.5.3, which they said would fix the problems that Huge was having. You see, as part of this month's conspiracy theory goes, bad mouth the platform you want to get rid of, and people will come a-flocking to the 'Wintel' side.

Huge, in its infinite wisdom, started a smear campaign. They sent company-wide eMail explaining the whole PowerMac fiasco, using the term 'defective Macs.' A statement they had to retract a week later, at (surprise!) Apple's request. They also gave the option to the affected departments and managers to get the equivalent Wintel machine, and said they could have that machine within a week. A meeting was held a couple of weeks ago to address all the problems. It came out at the meeting that Huge had not done proper testing, the 7200's are working virtually everywhere except Huge, (they didn't come out and say that, they simply said that every large company has it's own unique set of problems) that Bill Gates doesn't know how to write software (I'm paraphrasing), and that extensive testing on 7.5.3 has begun in earnest, a small town, just outside Los Angeles. Whereas you mere mortals are only now hearing about 7.5.3, we've had a site license for 3 months.

Which brings us to last week. 7.5.3 was released for the masses. Or so I thought. The server administrator put the 7.5.3 disk images on the public server, available for anyone and everyone willing to take the time and effort to install it. This was on a Wednesday. I receive a ticket to go to a user sight to install 7.5.3 on a Thursday, significant only because I was specifically asked for by name. So, I get there at the appointed time, only to find that where once there was a folder, there's now a simple text document explaining that CSC has decided not to make 7.5.3 available to anyone, as this is sending mixed messages to Huge that the PCI Macs work. I go back to base, scream a lot, and finally get the address and password of the private server the folder moved to. I was informed that it was ok to install on an individual basis. So, I go back, install 7.5.3, which to everyone's amazement, fixes the problem the Huser was having. In fact, at the same time, I was asked to install it on another machine while I was there, which I cheerfully did. I even got a free lunch outta the deal. So, about two hours later, I get back to base, and I'm informed that we **CANNOT** install 7.5.3. I tell the dispatcher, "Don't give me any tickets where the fix is to install 7.5.3, and I won't do it!" Easy, huh? This raises the question, "Oh, yeah?"

The next day, an alleged policy decision comes down, and Desktop Support is allowed to install 7.5.3 on an individual basis, to fix a specific problem with the machine. This lasts about 2 hours, enough time for me to put it on yet another PCI Mac, 'cause when I get back, I'm again informed that it is the official policy of CSC to NOT install 7.5.3 on any Huge machine!

<sigh>

You've got questions

I've got answers. Unfortunately, they may not be the ones you want to hear. It also occurs to me, in this interactive medium, that I can respond right away, and maybe publish a few here that might be of general interest.

Subj: Mac Problem
Date: Wed, Feb 14, 1996 5:35 PM PST
From: JimBarnes@aol.com
To: MikeShields@eworld.com

I read your offer of answering Mac questions in ATPM, and figured what do I have to lose. Here goes: Whenever a floppy disk is inserted in a mac at an elementary school I volunteer at, whether the disk is locked or unlocked, the Mac always sees it as being locked. I tried resetting the PRAM, rebuilding the desktop, and several different disks, in both locked and unlocked positions, but the Mac thinks they are all locked. I'm starting to think there may be a problem with the floppy drive. The floppy disks are recognized and can be read from, but nothing can be saved on them, and even a fresh floppy out of the box can't be initialized. Do you have any ideas?

Answer: This question is significant, in that it is the first one I received. Thank you, Jim. The quick answer is yes, this is a hardware problem. Specifically, have you tried rebuilding the desktop of the individual floppies? I bet you didn't know you could do that! When you insert the floppy disk in question, hold down the option and command keys, just as you would at startup, and you'll get the same question that you're used to. Go ahead and rebuild the desktop, on an average Mac this takes a minute or less for a floppy disk. You will probably have the same problem, and should get a replacement floppy drive.

Subj: well...
Date: Fri, Feb 16, 1996 12:29 PM PST
From: BBBIII@aol.com
To: MikeShields@eworld.com

You asked for it. You said send in questions so here it is. This is certainly not a plug problem. I have a new Performa 6115 (Newbie) and my mom's old Performa 550 (Magnifico). On her computer I downloaded Adobe Acrobat Reader and installed it. It works flawlessly. Then when I got my PowerPC I installed it and I get a "System Error" only option...restart. This is not good. I tried restarting with the extensions off. This didn't work because Adobe Type Manager was not installed. Then I went through my extensions and can't find the problem. I have the same extensions that are on my mom's and hers still works. What's up????

Answer: I don't know. Thanks for writing, Benny. Seriously, build a custom install set with your extension manager, that includes ATM. If it still doesn't work, I'd try upgrading my system software, the current version for mere mortals, is 7.5.1. If that doesn't work, I would try a clean reinstall of Adobe Acrobat reader. This would involve removing everything that was installed, including ATM. Now I don't know about you, but when I installed the reader, it overwrote ATM with ATM Lite, this could also be the cause of your problem, so when you reinstall the reader, do a custom install, and don't let it write over your full blown ATM. If that doesn't work, you probably do have an extension conflict, when you say you went through your extensions, I'm hoping this is what you meant. To resolve an extension conflict properly is both a time consuming and rewarding process. Now I know there is commercial software out there that shall remain nameless, however, it doesn't do anything more than you have to do manually, anyway. Simply start with an empty extension folder, and keep putting your various extensions in, until the problem crops up. When you find the extension that causes the problem, dump it. Continue this process until you have replaced all your existing extensions. If this still doesn't

work, do a clean reinstall of the system software. This involves removing the entire system folder, and reinstalling from floppies. Good Luck.

Send more!

That's it for this month, thanks for your questions. I'll try to answer them via eMail as well as here, from now on, this will ensure a timely response to your questions. Send your questions to mikeshields@eworld.com until it implodes, then to mshields@ccgate.hac.com

Next Month: The Hughes Wide Web? The advice provided in this column is the advice of a professional Mac Repair Guy, but you should always take precautions when fiddling with your system. If you want to pay a pro to do it, Mike charges \$30 an hour, for a minimum of two hours, and you have to get him to your computer. Mike would like to hear from people in Fiji or the Bahamas. The Editor.



About This Stuff

Where ATPM's readers and writers show us their stuff.



Legend of Kyrandia III, reviewed by David Lindsay. It's a game about a prankster with an evil side...



Big Secret 3.0, reviewed by P. Terence Cultra. This program hides files and folders by making them invisible.



Abstract Library 2.0, reviewed by P. Terence Cultra. Stores abstracts (and PICTS) from medical records for later retrieval.



Scrap It Pro, reviewed by P. Terence Cultra. Apple couldn't come up with a better scrapbook. (And they didn't!)



CD Menu 1.3.2, reviewed by P. Terence Cultra. If you listen to CDs on your Mac (and who doesn't) you need this.



Power Windows 1.0, reviewed by P. Terence Cultra. By the wunderkind who brought you Aaron, this is a simple gem.

Reviewer Profile: Who is this P. Terence Cultra guy, anyway? In his own words, he tells you!

Legend of Kyrandia III

Reviewed by David Lindsay, gamstr@interserve.com

Hello everyone. I regret that the game I had planned for this month's review, won't be reviewed. Quite frankly, I haven't finished it. The game is called: Legend of Kyrandia Book 3: Malcolm's Revenge. It is the latest in the Kyrandia series. It's not that I'm stuck in the game, I know what to do, I just can't do it. I have made every effort to finish the game. Used hint guides in magazines, looked on the Internet, posted multiple questions in the news groups, but don't want to put down the money to buy a real hint book. I believe they are a last resort, and am not willing to buy one.

I could try to review the game from where I am lost, but I don't think that would be fair to you

out there. The game could change radically (in a bad way), and that would change my opinion about the game.

Aside from that the game is on the verge of not being “worthy” for a page (or chapter) in *ATPM*. First, there is no way to shut off the menu bar in the game. It’s always up there, standing out in white. It’s really distracting. Second of all, the graphics are, how shall I say, DOS-like. They have not been enhanced for the Mac. Most of the characters are blocky. The only way to make it look good is to shrink the game window WAY down to a much smaller size. The game involves a ton of walking and going back and forth, which I get very frustrated about. At one point, Malcolm travels to a place called The Isle of the Cats. Malcolm had to hack and slash his way through the jungle to get to the different locations. I tried to make a map, but I got so confused, and gave up on the map. Trial and error is the best thing there.

On the plus side though, the soundtrack is excellent. You can’t put it in your audio CD player though. Most of the puzzles are challenging and fun, not to mention that there is more than one solution to a puzzle. A nice feature is the Jet Pop inventory—it lets you see more of the game screen instead of taking up space on your monitor. If you do decide to venture into the world of Kyrandia, the first book, *Fables and Friends*, introduces you to the land. In that book, I believe Malcolm is bad and you play Brandon (probably trying to save Kyrandia—again). The second book, *The Hand of Fate*, was not released for the Mac. I find that somewhat annoying that some publishers skip around like that. Now the third one, *Malcolm’s Revenge*, which I talked about here.

Malcolm’s Revenge requires: System 7 or above, 4 MEG of RAM, 256 colors, Sound Manager 3.0 or later 2X speed CD ROM or faster, a 68030 33MHz CPU or higher, and finally a hard disk with 12 MB available.

Please remember that this was not a review. Think of it as background on the game. Note that the box says the game can be played on an ‘030 CPU. I’m not sure if this is true. I was running the game on a PowerMac. The game’s installer checks video and CPU speed to install the right version (Let’s say you did have an 030. When it tests video and CPU you will probably get the smallest window possible. Don’t be surprised if that happens). At this time the game is not PowerMac native. I didn’t notice much of a speed decrease though.

Coming up next time:

hopefully *The Dig* (LucasArts) and a possible review of FWB CD-ROM Toolkit. Who knows, this double speed CD-ROM that I have might need a boost. Until then...

Big Secret 3.0

By John Montbriand
tinyjohn@sasknet.sk.ca
Shareware: \$25.00



Reviewed by P. Terence Cultra, cultran@shout.net

Other than my normal state of paranoia and propensity for secrecy, I don’t know why I can’t leave well enough alone and stay away from anything that has a password. Let’s face it, my telephone number is a challenge, and as to the birthday of my wife, forget it. But, as usual need or no need, when I saw *BigSecret 3.0* I had to check it out.

The primary purpose of BigSecret 3.0 is to hide files and folders by making them invisible. This it will do, but more on that later.

I'm a big believer in solid documentation when preparing to run programs such as this. After experiencing a few miscues with applications such as this you quickly learn you had better understand what it (supposedly) does (and doesn't do) before charging full steam ahead with the old "plug and play" philosophy we all hold so dear to our hearts. The author gets this right. Not only are the instructions clear and concise, the Version History adds additional insight into the application's workings.

When the program is opened one finds a very user-friendly interface which doesn't leave much room for confusion or mistakes. All right! Good documentation, user friendly, this program is already ahead of schedule! It looks like I've found an exception, I could have gotten through this one without reading the instructions. The speed is good and the graphics neat, Spot is one happy puppy.

I set up (previously) a dummy folder with a dummy file in it to run the test, placed it on the desktop and went to work. I would offer my first word of caution at this point. I'm not too sure this program likes to be run on items residing on the desktop. In the ten replications I ran I could not get BigSecret to hide the folder, and when tested on hiding the file by itself, sometimes it did and sometimes it did not. One of the times when it did not hide the file I drug it to the trash and the trash automatically emptied. Neat trick! I figured I'd better check things out so I searched for invisibles with Find File (command-option, then click and drag to invisible) and there it was. The empty trash was not quite empty. The good news is that after creating a new, empty file, placing it in the trash, then emptying it, the invisible file was trashed also. After this, my feeling is BigSecret should not be used on items on the desktop. Invisibles are tough enough to keep under control as it is.

Next, I placed the dummy folder and file inside the documents folder, ran ten repetitions on them—both together and separately—and everything worked wonderfully. The only conclusion I can draw is that BigSecret should be used on files and folders inside files and folders, not on the desktop.

The value of BigSecret as a method of hiding things has to be a personal decision. It all depends on what level of secrecy you're looking for. If your purpose in hiding something is so as to not tempt those with curious inclinations, then it will work. If there are semi-serious "snoopers" with access to your disk, then they can easily see what is being hidden by simply searching for invisibles with Find File, then going from there depending upon their level of intent and knowledge of the computer.

Personally, I'm passing on BigSecret for two reasons. First, I don't like glitches of any nature, regardless of why or who's fault. Regardless of what I say (or do) I'm a true believer in plug and play. Secondly, I don't have any big secrets, all of mine are super, super secrets.

Abstract Library 2.0



Reviewed by P. Terence Cultra, cultran@shout.net

As a general rule, it's hard to get too worked up or excited over program that does nothing more than store text information for reference purposes. However, Abstract Library 2.0 is a nifty little program that has some value and is interesting enough to warrant a brief discussion. Plus, you can't beat the deal, it's freeware.

Abstract Library 2.0 is designed to be a medical records text file storage system for storing abstracts. As it's designed for the 040 chip it runs best on a strong 040 machine with an extra 5 to 6 Megs of memory. I didn't like it on the PPC. It is cut and paste driven (you cannot import directly in to it) and allows one (PICT) picture of to be included with each text file. The PICT is stored separately (or behind) the document which is very nice. The excellent design of the interface makes data entry and retrieval a snap, but I didn't like the fact you can't roll up the window and the document size is fixed. This means that when you want to load a bunch of text files, unless you're working on a 15" screen or better you either have to work from the opening window or drag the abstract windows all around the screen. (O.K., so you can get around most of this with Control Strip from Apple but you shouldn't have to.) Once loaded however, all is well.

When the program is first opened there are four branches, "New", "Find", "Print" and "Quit". "New" provides all the necessary fields for effectively entering key information and the use of key words makes the future finding of articles a snap using the "Match Keyword" command in the "Find" window. Equally as nifty is the "Match Article" command.

Maybe I'm missing something but I think the "Print" branch is in the wrong window. When you hit the print button from the main window it takes you a window where you find the article you want to print with a "Match Abstract" command. First, unfortunately most of the time I don't know what I'm looking for, so the "Match Keyword" command would have been nice here. Also, I would have liked to be able to open the document from here to see if it was really what I was after, and if so then print it. Otherwise, what I'm saying is that I would have not put the "Print" button in the opening window, but would placed it in the next two windows the "Find Abstract" window takes you to. That way I could have found the document easier, reviewed it if necessary, and printed it. Well, as long as I'm thinking about it I guess I don't like the "Quit" button in the opening window either. If I open a program it is not for the purpose of quitting it, and if I'm elsewhere and finished, I'm certainly not going to click a "Done" button, then click the "Quit" button in the main window. I want to quit right where I am and if I can't I'm going to do a File/drag down/Quit. But then, maybe that's just me. I'm not a doctor.

The file output design is crisp, clean and well laid out. It makes for easy review and reading. I like the keywords listed at the end of the file. I would have preferred the abstract number to be at the end of the file rather than at the beginning as it doesn't make me any difference whether it is number 1 or number 5,000, and it clutters up an otherwise perfectly clean layout. Besides, I'm jealous as I don't really have abstracts, I'm much too common, having only documents, records, sheets, and so on.

All in all and overall Abstracts 2.0 has merit for those with need of a method to easily file, store, and maintain smaller sized articles of a similar nature. When viewed from the standpoint of what it was designed for I am of the opinion it is only a fair piece of work, but when viewed from the standpoint of being available for free its' limitations are certainly worth working around to those many individuals not having a high level need for a heavy duty text data storage and retrieval system.

Scrap It Pro

By John V. Holder
johnholder@aol.com
Shareware: \$20.00



Reviewed by P. Terence Cultra, cultran@shout.net

Yesterday I was reading an article on a commercial piece of software just released that will be a “be all and end all. “The clipboard/scrapbook that Macintosh missed”, or something like that. So you say.. I normally don’t take second looks at anything, however, after reading the article all I could think of was John Holder and ScrapIt Pro 4.2 (4.0.2 because the program is so good I’ve never bothered to download an upgrade. I believe there’s a 5.0.1 available online now.). This \$20.00 shareware program is one of the best deals going, period. Someone might open the door differently but they’re not going to do it any better than John has already done it.

To begin, it’s big, powerful, and doesn’t not require much memory. You can create as many separate scrapbooks as you choose to, depending upon your personal need, store notes, eMail, QuickTime movies, clip-art, sounds, etc. You can file by title, picture or type. You can drag, drop, cut, paste, use Speech Manager, print a list of what’s in the file.....on and on.

It’s Macintosh, it’s PPC or 040, and it’s simple. It’s so simple it’s one of the few programs I didn’t bother to even read the documentation (until after I’d found out how good it was and wanted to really know everything it did). You see, until I ran across this a year or so ago I had an extreme dislike for this type of program. I’d tried a lot and been disappointed by all of them, so when I first tried this I really expected to throw it out like the rest Wrong!!

However, to be fair I really should point out it’s downside also. That would be that 5.0.1 only handles searchable comments, supports QuickDraw 3D and ArchiCad, imports PICT, GIF, JPEG, EPSF, QuickDraw 3D, grabs multiple PICTs or sounds, and on an on..... You see, I wanted it to do my dishes after lunch. As I see it, that’s the only downside.

So, for someone to say they have a better way, I doubt it. I know that I’m secure enough with ScrapIt Pro that I wouldn’t even bother to try any other program of this nature. Plus, the “big bucks” this other company wanted is another story!! As I said I usually don’t go back and take a second look at anything, but after reading that article I felt the need to do so in this case.

Try it, you’ll love it! This is a “must have” in my book. Also, I must mention, if you do, love it and keep it, and do not pay your \$20.00, you should really feel bad. Such an act would constitute grand larceny, that’s how good it is.

CD Menu 1.3.2

By Henrik Eliasson
henrik@mailbox.macexchange.se
Shareware: \$10.00



Reviewed by P. Terence Cultra, cultran@shout.net

As a general rule I'm not much of a "tinkerer" when it comes to all the "cutesy" things you can do with the Mac. Not that there's anything wrong with that, 95% of Mac users do, for tinkering is what makes your Mac your Mac. I just happen into brute, raw computing power. When I run Cruncher and he moves those pixels around the screen, I want them to move so fast I can hear them move. That extends to the CD. As much as I love my music(albeit dated and the fact that the names of the groups of today my son (and business partner) tells me about sound more likethan anything else)) my CD remains the least used part of the computer. Too much work to go apple/drag/pop/click/click/click. By that time I'm too tired to listen to any music. (By the way, not to digress again, but what ever happened to groups, bands, and singers with common sense, reasonable names like Country Joe and the Fish, Led Zeppelin, Full Tilt Boogie Band, Jefferson Airplane, Dr. Hook, Twisted Sister, etc? Now those names were real, no publicity men behind them, they made sense!) Anyhow, back to business.

I was pleasantly surprised when I ran across CD Menu 1.3.2 the other day. It's a simple little control panel that sits cleanly in your menu bar. It's shareware and costs only 70 Swedish kronor (Now, everyone knows that's \$10.00 U.S!). It has hot keys which enable all the necessary functions such as play/pause, stop, eject, next track and previous track, as well as hot corners to activate the program. I like that fact that people such as myself (who do well to remember one key, much less have only a one in four chance of correctly remembering where I put it) can place a little icon in the chosen hot corner.

In truth, the only thing I use the menu bar control for is to turn up (or down) the volume when people are around. However, if you so choose you can fast forward/fastback, move to/back to the next song, and pause, resume or eject. Pretty nifty!

In the couple of days I've had it I've found I'm back to listening to music on a regular basis. It's easy now, no hassle. I don't know that I could call it a "must have", but I do know "Oh lord, won't you buy me a Mercedes Benz, my friends all drive Porches, I must make..." Enough said, I think it's worth a try.

Power Windows 1.0

By Gregory D. Landweber
greg@math.harvard.edu
Shareware: \$5.00



Reviewed by P. Terence Cultra, cultran@shout.net

For the person who's not into the "cutesy" things, here's another one.(Just because I don't use them doesn't mean I don't look at them!)

I can easily live without Aaron for a multitude of reasons, and Greg's Buttons is a push at best. However, I personally find Greg Landweber's latest introduction, Power Windows 1.0, is a fair piece of work. It's an extension which enables you to drag the actual window rather than an outline. I find its socially redeeming value to be that fanatical individuals such as myself who can't handle having their (multiple) desktop windows out of alignment by even one pixel can now keep them in alignment very easily. No more, no less.

Even though the documentation said that it could tend to be slow on a on a non-Power PC, I didn't find that to be so on Spot (638CD). Actually it was rather impressive. When running on the

higher level PPC machines I don't even notice it's there (other than while performing the purpose it's intended for). Also I didn't find the "white outs" (I'll leave it to you to read the documentation) to be an issue. However I only played with it for two days.

For the millions of Aaron and Greg's Buttons fans out there, you'll find this a nice piece of work. It's mainstream, no doubt about it. Most likely the only people who won't use it will be myself and the other 37 non-conformists out here in Cyberspace.

As always, if you use it, pay for it! When we have an individual contributing as much to the Mac community as Greg Landweber, we need to give him the incentive to keep on contributing.

Reviewer Profile: P. Terence Cultra

by P. Terence Cultra, cultran@shout.net

As this is my first writing for ATPM, I thought a good place to begin would be to share with you my reasons for volunteering to become a regular contributor of software reviews. First and foremost, I see this venture as being a small repayment to a few of the many individuals who have made, and continue to make, Macintosh computing such an enjoyable, warm, and personal experience. When an individual is willing to spend (hundreds) of hours developing a piece of software, offer it to others for them to try and use it at no cost, then base any (minimal) payment they will receive for the product on the honesty of the other person, he or she should be acknowledged and thanked. Freeware and shareware represent one of the finest hours for computing in general, and its continued existence will depend upon our collective honesty and support of the concept. Therefore, I feel that my sharing information and promoting software I have reviewed might contribute in some manner and help the individuals who took the time to develop it.

As a general rule I use 25-50 pieces of software a week because, as a businessman, it's where I find the "answers". Granted, I buy quite a bit of commercial software, but once I find an application that does the job at hand easily and acceptably, I tend to stick with it. There are only so many different tasks one does (i.e. word processing, accounting, etc.) and once these bases are covered by a solid application, the bells and whistles promoted in competing programs are seldom reason enough to change applications. However freeware and shareware is an entirely different arena. I find that if I let a week go by without spending five to ten hours scouring the Internet, AOL and Prodigy I have probably missed an opportunity to improve the ease with which I co-exist with Spot, Charger, and Cruncher. (*See below*) Probably more importantly, I might miss a fresh idea, a new cut on how to improve on an existing application, or I might simply not enjoy the pleasure of the world that is at my fingertips. I mean, come on, even if the item being reviewed turns out to be absolutely horrendous, I still got an hour or two of sheer pleasure in experiencing another person's hopes and dreams!!

Lastly, as a matter of process I first test everything on Spot (a Performa 638CD). This is for no other reason than that Spot is my favorite machine, the one I use on a daily basis. If the item I'm reviewing has no socially redeeming value other than being so much fun I can't see straight, then you'll find it on Spot. It wins, stays, and gets paid for. But as a general rule, it doesn't pass go and move on to Charger for testing (a Performa 6220CD) as it's not something we're going to use in the business. Yes, there's a lot of stuff on Spot, as I don't seem to be able to resist "Macplaying".

If it's audio, video, Internet or production oriented and good, then it moves on. If it's a good piece of work that I want to test for real muscle, I'll test it on Cruncher (the office's 7500). That's the routine. Oh, please note all opinions in this column are the opinions of Spot, Charger, and/or Cruncher. I'm just the person behind the keyboard urging them on.

To close this introduction, I'd be happy to share whatever additional limited knowledge I have on any of the software I review, or about the Macintosh in general. Just eMail me at cultran@shout.net. Please put the words "Refer ATPM" in the body of the letter. I should mention, like most Macintosh users I absolutely love the Macintosh, but in my particular case, even though I worked with the "other" systems for 20+ years in the corporate world, I refuse to discuss them. With the exception of eMail, how the Macintosh relates to them is moot, as in my world they do not exist anymore. (O.K., in reality I have to regularly address "them" and "their" issues, but that's work and this column is for pleasure.)

So, with all that behind us, I hope you find my reviews to be helpful in some manner. As previously stated this is my attempt to carry part of the load which we all must (should) carry to keep freeware and shareware alive, well, and kicking. Enjoy.



Keyword



Railroad

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Welcome to Keyword. Each month we will select a keyword and then go online to see what it uncovers. We won't be reviewing what we find. Instead we'll focus on showing you some of the treasures out there .

This issue's Keyword is: Railroad.

I don't know exactly why, but I have always found trains fascinating. Maybe it's the size and power of the locomotives, the sounds they make, or the way they travel snake-like down the tracks. As a child, I was always excited when our car got stopped by a train at a railroad crossing. Model railroad sets were a common sight at our house. In fact, I built several model railroad "layouts" over the years. I still enjoy trains.

Searching for railroad related stuff online turned up several expected things and a few surprises. One of the more pleasant surprises was a collection of very detailed railroad fonts by Benn Coifman. These "dingbat" fonts work very well as clip art when used in large sizes.

RAIL FREIGHT



RAILROAD HERALDS



WORK TRAIN



When I went to the World Wide Web and began to search the Internet, railroad related information was abundant. I found several home pages devoted to railroad topics. Robert Bowdidge's (bowdidge@cs.ucsd.edu) home page includes links to many subjects including:

- Mailing lists and newsgroups
- Railroad-related Bulletin Board Systems (BBSes) and ListServs
- Newsletters and other periodic postings
- Train Schedules and information on specific routes
- File servers and FTP sites: Places to find photos, sounds, and computer programs
- Model Railroad Information
- A Collection of Railroad Maps
- Washington D.C. railfanning courtesy of Charlie Wingate (was mangoe@cs.umd.edu)
- Los Angeles Railroads
- San Diego Railroads and Rail Transit
- San Francisco Bay Area Transit Information
- Reno, Nevada railfanning and history
- Colorado railfanning (Robert J. Niland's list of passenger railroads in Colorado)

In addition to these topics I found pages with links to games, clip art, photographs, sounds, railfans (a term used to describe people who enjoy watching trains), and travel information.

Following a link to railroad clip art produced several examples. Ken Houghton of Ken Houghton Rail Images posted numerous railroad logos in GIF format. These images are available for use free of charge. Ken simply asks that you give him credit for the artwork.





*Here is the logo for the Detroit
and Mackinac Railway Co.*

In addition to clip art, photographs were abundant. Several photographers have created pages containing examples of their work. Even the railroads themselves have created web pages.

One of the more interesting sites was the Union Pacific Museum. The Union Pacific Railroad has over 500,000 images in its archives. They have the largest known collection of A. J. Russell photographs, plus the collected work of Union Pacific company photographers. Some photographs date back to 1866. Not all of these photographs are strictly railroad related. Many record the development of the western United States including agriculture, industry, and National Parks. Several sample photos are posted on a regular basis, and if you see one that you really like, you can order it directly from the museum.

Railfans have it easy on the World Wide Web. Volumes of information are available for those planning trips that involve train watching. Fans of steam locomotives will want to check out Paul R. Tupaczewski's (paultup@interactive.net) article on the opening of Steamtown. Steamtown, one the world's premier steam locomotive museums, opened on July 1 in Scranton, Pennsylvania. Paul's article details the opening day ceremony and contains many thumbnail photographs.

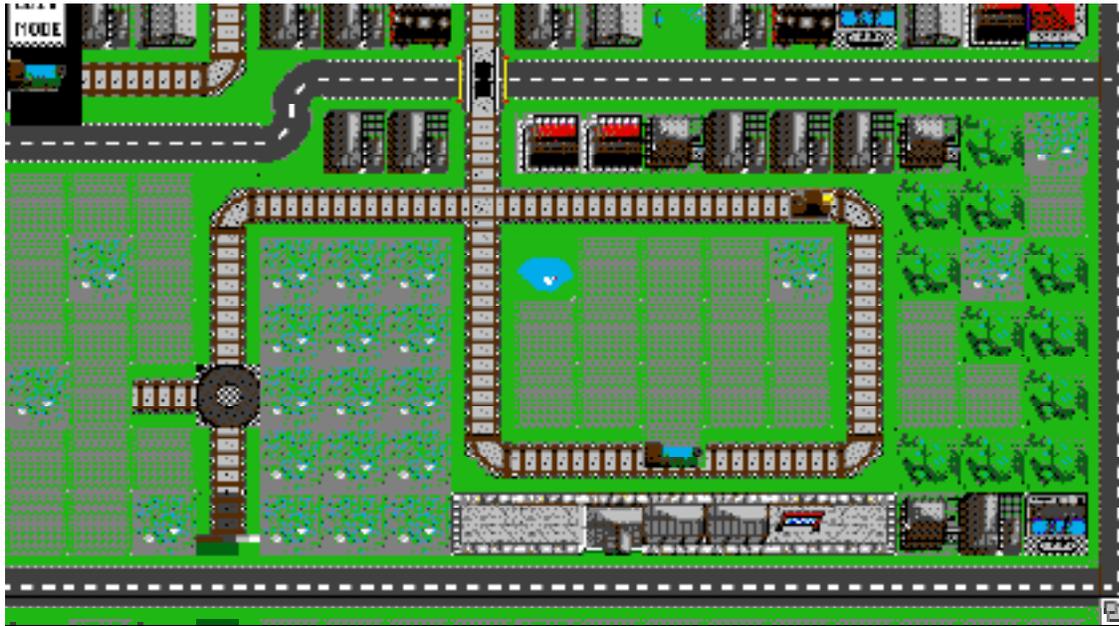


Opening day at Steamtown.

Of course, model railroads topics are well covered also. Model railroads come in many types and scales, and there are web pages devoted to each kind. While the majority of model railroaders have their own individual layouts in their homes or garages, there are also model railroad clubs whose members build their layouts as a collective effort. This usually allows them to create a large empire not possible when working alone. Another model railroading idea comes from the group N-Trak. N-Trak is a group of N scale model railroaders who build "modular" sections of a layout. These sections can then be linked together to create a very large layout. The group publishes a newsletter and sells "how-to" books on the subject. Sample track plans are also available.

I found several railroad sounds available in either “snd” or “AIFF” formats. How about a nice steam whistle as a system beep?

On the shareware front, I found Trainset Pro. A shareware program that lets you create a model train set on your computer, then watch the trains run.



A section of a train set created with Trainset Pro.

I've only scratched the tip of the iceberg here. Exploring cyberspace offers many treasures for those interested in railroads.

Keyword will be a regular feature in ATPM, returning every month with a new keyword, and new discoveries online. Keyword also appears in Mark's Mac Shareware Review (MSR) magazine. Search on AOL for "MacShareRv" Look for the fourth issue of MSR in April!



ATPM Wants You

We've said this before, but we'd like to say it again. ATPM is about your Macintosh, about our Macintoshes, and about the Macs of people who have never seen our magazine. We strive, every month, to give you a taste of what it's like to own a Mac. And for that, we need the stories, reviews, opinions, ideas, and anecdotes of Mac users just like you. We want you to write for ATPM. We'll take prose, poetry, pictures, questions, fanciful imaginings... pretty much anything you care to give. ATPM isn't much good without you, and even with a staff of editors and writers, we'll never represent the Mac user without your input. Please consider sending us your writing.

Send it to rdnovo@aol.com

In addition, ATPM is looking for specific skills in the following areas:

Artists

ATPM is looking to find an artist or three who'd be willing to produce regular pieces for the magazine. I'm thinking about a cover piece in each issue, probably related to the feature for that issue. Interior art is also wanted. This position may be paid (depends how much you want) and would be on a piece-by-piece basis, with rights to the interior art transferring to Only Boy Productions. Cover art pieces will remain the property of the artists. We can talk.
rdnovo@aol.com

Associate Editor

ATPM is looking to fill the following editorial position: features editor. At the moment this is an unpaid, difficult, time-consuming volunteer job. The Grand Plan dictates that it will remain this way for a little while. Each editor is in charge of one aspect of the magazine, but all of us will communicate, at least once a week, to discuss the direction, future features, changes in art, etc. for the magazine. I intend for all the editors to be involved in ATPM.

The Featured Associate Editor will be in charge of feature articles. You will (with us) determine what features are coming up, and will solicit writers to deliver articles for that feature. Look at this issue's feature section to get an idea of what I'm talking about. Two, three, or maybe four articles in a pinch. That's it. That's all you do. If need be, you must be prepared to beg me (or other friends) to write articles, or you must be willing to write them yourself.

Powerful incentive to farm it out.

Any takers? If you're interested, get in touch with me at rdnovo@aol.com



Next Time

Wow! Next issue marks the beginning of our second year of publication. A year ago, at the beginning of April, we published the very first issue of ATPM. Will we wax nostalgic next issue? Heck no! (Well, I might...) Next issue is about the World Wide Web, and that's what we'll write about. You can expect feature articles on web stuff, reviews, opinions, letters, more cool graphics... oh, and our URL. No, you can't visit us early. But you can comment on what you'd like to see. Check out the Welcome chapter. See you all next time, and remember to write in about your computer, because, after all, this magazine is about **your** particular Macintosh.



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This ad is a work of fiction by RD Novo. At one time, Apple was rumored to be in the hunt to buy Encyclopaedia Britannica. It was sold to someone else, but this ad imagines what might have been. Send your ideas for ad campaigns that should have been to rdnovo@aol.com