

MaUse

Macintosh Users East



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From the Editor

Firstly, I'd like to encourage MaUse members to sign on for another year and pay ~~their~~ their dues. For the first time in several years, Apple's future is looking brighter and ~~more~~ more secure, so a community of Mac users makes more sense every day. Those who need more info than I provide each month might consider a trip down to *Macworld* in July, ask Bruce for details, and don't forget the *New Media '98* show in May. Those who receive the printed *Double Click* may be wondering what happened to the delivery? Well, during the production of the April issue, I was also going through my last two weeks of my college career, so I was a little pressed for time - any graphics pros looking for bright young talent? I'm about to graduate.

Neil Carter

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Front Cover Missing



Club News

Windows on a Macintosh?

As Macintosh Users, we are often faced with the difficult task of moving files from the Windows environment to the MacOS, or vice versa. Fortunately, utilizing the control panel PC Exchange can take the pain out of moving Windows files onto the Mac - or can it? PC Exchange is a beautiful tool that we all take for granted, but it is extremely limited. Luckily, it allows a Mac User to insert a PC formatted disk into a Mac and have it pop up on the desktop. The disk then behaves as if it were Mac formatted and allows files to be used at will. I'll give you an example of when PC Exchange is really handy...suppose you're at a friend's house and you're surfing the Internet on his new Compaq Presario. You decide to save the text on one of the web sites you're currently viewing, to take home and later review on your Mac. After inserting the disk at home and having the disk icon mount properly on the desktop, you double click the file you saved at your friend's. After the hard drive chugs along for a minute, you're presented with a dialog box asking which application you'd like to view the file in. If you're like me, you'll probably pick Simpletext. Voila! There's the text from the website you viewed earlier, perfectly intact.

Now, what if the file that you saved on the PC was from Word Perfect 2.0? Chances are, when you loaded the file into Simpletext you'd get a series of dashes and boxes, followed by a few pages of line breaks with some snippets of the original document scattered between the

rubbish - you've now discovered the limitation of PC Exchange. To solve this dilemma, you need *MacLinkPlus*, a file conversion package that ships free with MacOS 8. This product offers the solution to the text artifacts that are present during *most* file transfers from PC applications. I've had great success with the product, but I must admit, I don't use it very often.

The third problem that faces Mac Users when dealing with PC file formats is a little more complicated. What do you do if you need to open a file from a PC application that has *no Mac equivalent*?

Well, you could try to re-save the file from the Windows application as a Mac friendly format, but what if you don't have access to a PC? Along comes Windows emulation!

A few years ago, Windows emulators began popping up on the Mac to help alleviate some of these issues, but it *wasn't* until recently that these *emulators* were really practical. So what exactly is an emulator, you might be asking? An emulator, in this case, is a piece of software that allows you to make your Mac think it's a PC - *well, sort of*. At this month's meeting, I am going to be doing a demonstration of one of the most popular Windows emulators on the market, *Virtual PC*. The product was first released by Connectix (makers of *Rain Dasher*) a year ago and is now up to version 2.0. The program lets you install any Operating System that will run on the Intel chipset, like: DOS, Windows 3.1,

Windows 95, Windows NT, OS/2, etc. For the demonstration, I'll be showing Windows 95. When you load Virtual PC you'd swear that you were actually using a PC. It doesn't provide a silly pretend Windows environment, it actually gives you Microsoft's Windows 95 on a Macintosh. The benefits are obvious right? Now you can load those silly files that have no Mac equivalent, but wait...doesn't that mean that you need the Windows version of the software to run in Virtual PC? Yes, and that's the beauty. This wonderful product lets the Mac User run Windows applications on a Mac. "Does that mean I can go to the store and buy that 3D Gardening CD-ROM that's only available for Windows?" - Yes! "Does it mean I can use Microsoft Access on my Mac?" - Yes! "Does that mean I can play Quake 2 now without waiting 6 months for the Mac version?" - sort of. Since I'm a little younger than the average MacUser member, I must comment on the issue of games. Personally, the only advantage I can see to running Windows versus using a Mac, is that there are a lot more games out for the PC. This is one of the big reasons why Windows emulators are even on the market. Look at any magazine review of Virtual PC and I guarantee they comment on how well it plays games. Well I'll be honest, it doesn't do it well, but if you need Windows for anything more than just games it's a great product. Now if all of this sounds too good to be true, it's because there are a few catches.

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Apple News



Newton's Death Should be a Lesson for Apple

By Andrew Gore

In the long history of Apple's blunders, the death of the Newton may qualify only as a footnote. But it's a footnote that speaks volumes about what is at the core of Apple's troubles. As a coauthor of Newton's Law, a guidebook to the first Newton, I was fortunate to be a firsthand witness to the Newton's life, even before the MessagePad was introduced to the world in August 1993. So it's with some perspective that I say the failure of the Newton can in no way be attributed to the acumen of the product's designers, who were one of the most creative teams of programmers and engineers I've ever known. No, the responsibility for the Newton's untimely demise must be laid at the feet of Apple executives, who simply didn't get it.

No one will ever forget what an absolute, bone-shattering disaster the launch of the original Newton was: the details of its poor handwriting recognition and other failings have been immortalized in popular culture. That first MessagePad was literally half-baked, a product that should have stayed in Apple's development oven for at least another six months. Many of the Newton engineers begged Apple not to release the product until it was ready, but Apple was terrified that some other PDA (personal digital assistant) would steal the Newton's thunder, and chose to release a product that wasn't finished. As it turned out, none of

those first-generation PDAs caught on and Apple easily could have waited another year to release the Newton. Apple let itself be motivated by fear, and fear is the worst emotion on which to base a decision. Although the first MessagePad was deeply flawed and completely overhyped, that didn't mean the Newton was dead in the water. After all, the first two versions of Windows were hardly barn burners, but Microsoft kept at it, chipping away at the product's flaws until customers finally started buying it. If Apple had followed a similar course, it would be the Newton's OS, not the PalmPilot's, giving Windows CE fits. Think about it: would any of us have guessed that U.S. Robotics would be the one company to design an OS that would kick Microsoft's butt in the marketplace?

Apple started on the right track. Rather than abandoning the Newton and starting over, it continued to make refinements. Most recently, the impressively powerful Newton OS 2.0 stood as a release whose technology still trumps anything that Microsoft or U.S. Robotics have to offer. But Apple never really recovered from that first failure. Long after users had forgiven the Newton's awkward birth, Apple managers obsessed about it. That's a shame, because despite the problems Apple's prelaunch hype created, all that excitement showed that peo-

ple did want a small, inexpensive device for tracking personal information. A lot of those people use PalmPilots now, but it didn't have to end up that way. Even today, the Newton's superior interface could grab a sizable portion of the PDA market, if only you could find a Newton that was the size of a PalmPilot. Here we run up against Apple again. The Newton engineers realized that they had to get small, and over the last couple of years, they did come up with designs for pocket-size, inexpensive Newtons. But Apple was gun-shy, afraid that it couldn't compete with U.S. Robotics' momentum. Instead of trying to fight it out, Apple turned its attention to vertical markets.

What ultimately killed the Newton was fear. Apple was afraid of taking a risk, even though risk was the only thing that could have saved the Newton. At Apple, it takes a hundred people to come up with a good idea but only one to kill it. Unless Apple can start encouraging intelligent risk taking, the company will be doomed to repeat the error it made with the Newton. I'll admit it: I'm in mourning. Not just for the Newton but for all the great ideas Apple has had that now may never see the light of day. I'm talking not just about ideas for the Newton - I'm talking also about brilliant ideas to improve and extend the Mac. I can only hope that Apple

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has finally learned that you can't succeed if you don't take chances. May the Newton be the last of Apple's good ideas to meet an untimely end simply because its creator had feet of clay.

web -

www.macworld.com

55 Million and Counting

CUPERTINO, California--April 15, 1998--Apple Computer, Inc. today announced profits of \$55 million and diluted earnings per share of \$0.38 for its second fiscal quarter ending March 27, 1998, up from a loss of \$708 million, or \$(5.54) per share, in the prior year quarter. The Company's net loss in the prior year quarter was \$178 million exclusive of non-recurring charges.

Revenues for the quarter were \$1.4 billion, down from \$1.6 billion in the prior year quarter. International sales accounted for 50 percent of total revenues. Unit shipments were 650,000, an 8 percent increase from the prior year quarter. Gross margins for the quarter were 25 percent, up from 19 percent in the prior year quarter.

"Apple had a great quarter, no question about it," said Steve Jobs, Apple's interim CEO. "We are very pleased with the strong demand for our Power Macintosh G3 computers, which accounted for 51 percent of all units sold."

"The G3s' higher margins coupled with disciplined expense controls have yielded continued positive cash flows and solid, high-quality earnings," added Apple CEO Fred Anderson.

web -

www.apple.com



McKenzie & Co., - a game for girls

Her Interactive, a division of American Laser Games based in Albuquerque NM, has produced a game designed specifically for girls 10 and up, a 5-CD-ROM adventure called McKenzie & Co. The Mac version of the game was said to be making waves in the software industry.

Gail Rubin, Public Relations Director for Her Interactive, addressed a special meeting for MaL&E on Thursday, June 13 1996 and left free demo disks plus a copy of the full game. I was given the full game to review in December of 1997.

First I want to say that my 10 year old granddaughter loved the demo and was begging me for the full version. This was the perfect opportunity to kid test it and see just how good it really was. The two of us sat down in eager anticipation to start our test and had problems right from the word go!

It would have been nice to have had a manual with detailed loading instructions, a trouble shooting area with solutions for problems, and a more detailed explanation of how the game works— even a technical support department would have been nice. Yes, friends they didn't even have a tech support department, just a number with a message saying it

did not exist. You're on your own! Because of that the following happened.

Christina, my granddaughter, wanted to start with Brandon. She said he looked to be the most interesting. The others did not appeal. But, after a couple of agonizing and frustrating hours we figured out on our own that Brandon was damaged and would not work, so we had to settle for someone else. The screen resolution was excellent on the games but bad on the video. I told her it would probably run better on her power Mac. The smart little girl then pointed out that the video ran fine on the demo, so why not on the full version? She had a point. Also, the viewing area sure was tiny, it would have been nice if the game filled the screen or at least a bigger area. She was then very quick to pick up that all the games were just versions of the same thing. It's like having fries with mushroom gravy, fries with chicken gravy, fries with salt and vinegar, fries with ketchup, fries with cheese topping...well, you get the picture. It gets boring pretty fast, even for a 10 year old.

Because the viewing area was so tiny we found it hard to see let alone select the items we needed to activate various activities. Christina wanted to try hair styles but gave up in disappointment because it was too hard to find the object needed to do this and too hard to get out if you selected the wrong one. She also discovered that you couldn't just go to wherever you wanted in the game— there was always a boring round about routine you had to go through. When she tired of the routine she quickly tired of the game. She said it would be lots of fun if it worked better.

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Windows emulation is slow. RAM hungry and a huge space hog. In order to have your Windows experience be as pleasant as possible (if that's even possible), you must be using the fastest Mac you can get a hold of—or perhaps I should say the fastest *PowerMac* you can get a hold of, because the program is for PowerMac only. You must also have as much RAM as you can afford to provide the emulator—after all, the amount of physical RAM that you have directly affects how much RAM Windows thinks it has. You must also have a lot of hard drive space. To simulate a C: Drive in Windows, Virtual PC creates a file that represents the PC hard drive. The file that it makes is as large as the amount of space it's emulating, so if you create a 500mb hard drive in Windows, you'll have a 500mb file sitting on your computer. Therefore, you need a lot of space on the fastest computer you can get in order to run Windows 95 comfortably. I use the product on my PowerCenter Pro (*Mac clone*) and I get quite good results. I normally allocate 80mb of RAM just for Virtual PC and it takes up around 350mb of hard drive space on my computer. I have tried running the program on my parent's PowerMac 7200 and it is painfully slow. Their computer uses a 75mhz 601 chip, while mine uses a 210mhz 604e chip. Connectix recommends at least a 603e running at 180mhz or a 604 running at 120mhz.

I have heard that on the new G3 Macs, the speed of Windows emulation is much better than it has been in the past. In fact, Apple claims that a G3 PowerBook can run Windows faster than the fastest PC laptop! (I don't know if I believe it though) One thing's for

sure though, products like Virtual PC make owning a Mac even more sensible. With this product, I have no reason to ever think of getting a machine that runs Windows 95, because I already can.

web:
www.connectix.com

Thoughts on Macs

In the last two issues of Double Click we have all been treated to an explanation of the joys of computing with a Mac, courtesy of my wife Donna. Well this month I felt it was my turn to set the record somewhat straighter and share some of the real advantages.

In Donna's listing of "things to do" I think she missed some very important tasks:

- Income tax preparation. Would you believe that my modest charge of \$5 per return (to defray some of the cost of the software) has been judged to be "too expensive!"?
- Budget preparation. Somehow my time spent in this activity was pronounced to be "non-value-added". It was felt that since we would be spending more money than we make, it was pointless making all those complicated spread sheets. Wouldn't I be better employed "consulting" and making huge amounts of money instead? I'm not really sure where I was to consult. Hopefully the consultants would treat me better than my tax customers.
- Plagiarizing "paper piecing patterns" in any size desired. Paper piecing is a peripheral to the "sewing activity" about which I will not comment, except to observe that it has nothing to do with making the new custom track suit I was promised last October.
- Making house plans to help decorate our new "cheaper house".

Possibly it is related to the lack of a budget, but we seem to have less money in our cheaper (newly decorated) house than we did before. Here the intent of the plan drawing was to organize things ahead of time, so that we would only purchase those items which we needed and could afford. This activity was found to get in the way of spontaneity and how could we spend a day without spontaneity? • Did Donna also point out that now she is receiving 50+ e-mails a day (about dead people in Missouri who have nothing to do with her or her relatives) - it takes her hours just to throw them away?

Well the bottom line of this whining is to explain that, whenever I wanted to use "Dad's Computer", either it was in use by my better half, or by the long-haired, loud-music-loving elder son who seems to find Dad's Mac - with CD! - so much better than his Mac; so Dad could never compute.

All is not lost however. Now that I have learned my lessons well, I have been spontaneous, thrown budgets to the wind and bought **MYSELF** a PowerBook from Jim Foster. So I am writing this at the kitchen table where I can be part of the family and take advantage of the few minutes before I go to bed. Oh did I mention how good Excel is for making honey-do lists (that I can sort by magic fields to make sure that I'm in charge....).

By John Oates

Coming Soon - by request

May 27: Microsoft demo of Office '98

June 24: Bernard Decker of Apple

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Being unable to get technical support, I called up the customer service department. They were totally unaware that they did not have a technical support department. On checking and finding out that I was right they did not know when they could get one, but said they'd notify me when they did. I pointed out that I had a defective disk and that their literature said it had to be replaced through the technical support department. They said not to worry, just give my name and address and a replacement would be on the way. Well, that was December 31st, 1997 and this is March 26th, 1998. Though, weeks later they did call and give me a technical support number, you don't get a live person. A call to technical support on March 12th to see when the replacement was coming, if ever, got me a recording that said to leave a message and they would get right back. Well, I don't know how many weeks right back means to them, but I am starting to believe there is no tech support; just a message system to which no living being ever responds. Will I ever get a replacement disk? Who knows, I doubt it!

By the way, there is a \$10 off coupon for two add-on CD's, but customer service says they don't have them for the Mac. That's not what the enclosed literature says, but hey, if they don't even know if they have a support department they are not likely to know if they have any Mac add-on disks, right?

On a scale of one to five I'd rate it a one because we like the demo. The following is a brief summary of what to expect if you buy the game:

- no manual
- inadequate loading instructions
- no trouble shooting section

- no technical support department
- boring, repetitive games
- small, poor quality viewing area
- no returned calls from tech support number
- poorly informed customer support
- no returns on defective disks
- no add-on disks for Macs
- difficult for either child or adult to figure out just how this game works and how to quickly get to where you want without going through the same boring routine over and over.

In a nutshell, that about covers it. These people really have to pull up their socks if they're going to impress me. Needless to say the kid test failed. Christina has given up waiting for Brandon, got frustrated with the game, and shelved it. She said James and Aaron looked interesting, but after being stood up by Brandon she was not surprised at finding the other two unavailable. When all is said and done we got stood up by McKenzie & Co. Good customer relations, technical support, and an well-written manual are an important part of the whole package. Without that, any software company is doomed for poor sales and a bad reputation.

If you are thinking of buying this product, I'd say wait. The concept is good but they have a long way to go. In view of what has happened to me, insist on getting in writing that the game must work properly, defective disks must be exchanged promptly, and you must be able to get technical support within one day of your call or you get a full refund on your purchase. And, as a final word of caution, be aware that they may not honour their guarantee. Just because someone says they will do something, even

put it in writing, does not necessarily mean they will do it.

By Gayle Sutherland

I'd like to personally thank Gayle for submitting not one, but two articles for the Double Click this month. As stated in last month's issue, she wins a prize for being the first member to submit an article for me.

The Source - Live

Remember when you joined MaUsE and one of the most attractive benefits was the BBS service? If you've forgotten, you're about to get a personal tour of The Source. At April's meeting, Jim Foster will be bringing along the actual server which houses The Source BBS. This will enable him to show the BBS working in its entirety without the need for a modem. From home, users need a modem to dial into The Source, but if you haven't got one and aren't convinced that you need one, another advantage to MaUsE membership is that we'll loan you one, free of charge.

BBS usage has been on a steady downfall for some strange reason as of late. Personally, I log on everyday and enjoy keeping in touch with other members between meetings. There's software to download, news, tech support, and even an online auction! Another plus is the addition of the Online Double Click, a full colour version of the publication you're reading right now.

Getting online with The Source is a snap for both Mac and Windows users. The club can provide all the software needed for just \$3. The BBS is just a direct call away and doesn't require any Internet service provider.

Reviews

by you —

3M Precise Mousing Surface by Gayle Sutherland

It was mentioned that mouse pads are to personal computers as cup-holders are to luxury automobiles ... you tend to take them for granted, you may not even use them, and you wouldn't think that they would deserve a lot of engineering/design resources. Well, in the graphic design field we use them constantly, we really notice them, and we don't take them for granted.

This new product really was different, just as the makers claimed, but the difference is not beneficial to the graphic designer. It is, in fact a very pricey hindrance.

Don't get caught up on the colour and texture thing. Texture is bad if you are a designer because it causes too much drag and who cares what colour it is (although I'd hate lime green) if it works well? Yes, it is very, very, thin and I like that and the unusual shape is aesthetically pleasing to the eye, but the shape creates a problem. Jim says it is sort of a curved fan shape somewhat reminds-

cent of the pattern made by a windshield wiper. As far as he can discern, the idea behind this shape is that your palm actually rests on your desk surface, not on the mousing surface itself, and as a result the design helps the surface resist the buildup of hand oils which are often the tell-tale sign of a very old mouse pad and which can eventually find their way into your mouse. Well, cleaning your mouse regularly helps get rid of any harmful debris. I have a 1982 vintage mouse that is still going strong! The shape of the pad however is probably purely decorative and drives you crazy if you are using a large monitor as any graphics professional does. You see, it's not the same shape as a monitor and if you use the whole screen, as I do, you are forever aware of the edges of your mouse tottering over the edge of your pad where the corners used to be.

The real secret of the 3M Precise Mousing Surface is, to quote from the packaging:

"Our patented microstructured surface—a network composed of peaks and valleys specifically designed to make your mouse move and perform better. This surface is specially engineered to provide the optimal coefficient of friction."

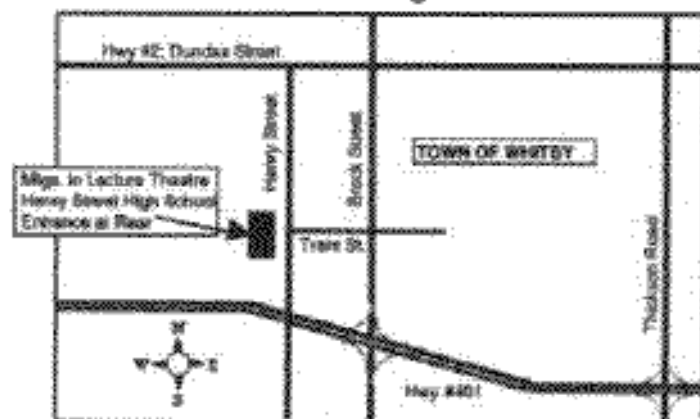
Friction is an understatement—DRAG would be a better word. You instantly miss being able to effortlessly glide across the surface of the beautiful Apple pad (that came with the computer). The Apple pad picks up most of the debris which is easy to clean off, this making mouse cleanings few and far between.

I do not recommend this product to the graphic designer. Not, unless you think tendonitis would be fun to have. The wrist gets cramped and strained very fast on the specially engineered surface of the 3-M mouse pad.

The old saying "if it ain't broke don't fix it" applies here. I have not found a better pad to date than the one that came with my computer, but if one comes along I'd be willing to try it.



MaUsE Meeting Location



About Double Click

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