

DOUBLE CLICK

A Monthly Publication of Macintosh Users East (MaUse)



April 1999

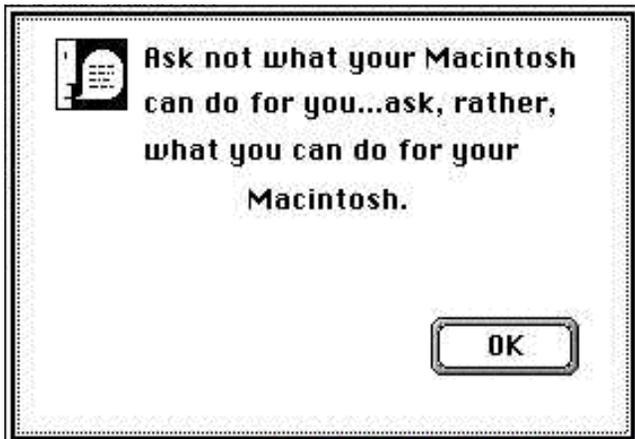
Next Meeting
April 28th

IN THIS ISSUE

PRINTING PREFS
& TUNING UP YOUR
TIRED OLD MAC

At This Month's Meeting...
Local Boys Make Good !!!

We will be enjoying the company of two very sharp, locally famous Macintosh troubleshooters, Jim Foster and Bruce Cameron, at our April Meeting. There are more details on the back page. To help ensure a good turnout the last page of this Issue is designed to be removed and put up by you as a Public Notice. Please feel free to take the back page of your copy to where you work or shop and display it for public perusal. If everybody in the Club does this we will have a lot of invitations in new places out there, somewhere. If any new faces show up at the April Meeting this will be considered a big success and repeated.



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MaUse
Macintosh Users East 

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From the Editor

‘Though April Showers
May come your way
They bring the flowers
That bloom in May.....

And so it goes.

Another Canadian Winter fades into another Canadian Spring, which means less snow shovelling and more mud And, of course, its that time again for the Mac Spring Cleaning.

In this issue we will look at some things that YOU can do to help your poor aged Mac pull up its socks and get into fighting trim for the Summer Computing ahead.

We will omit the more expensive solutions like accelerators and processor / logic board upgrades, (knowing full well how congenitally thrifty Mac users can be), and stick to the techniques that anybody can perform without special tools on their home Mac system.

If you feel the need to see something of your own in print submissions will be gladly accepted. Feel free to contact me either on the Source BBS or via email at mikeshaw@idirect.com if you have comments, requests or ideas to share.

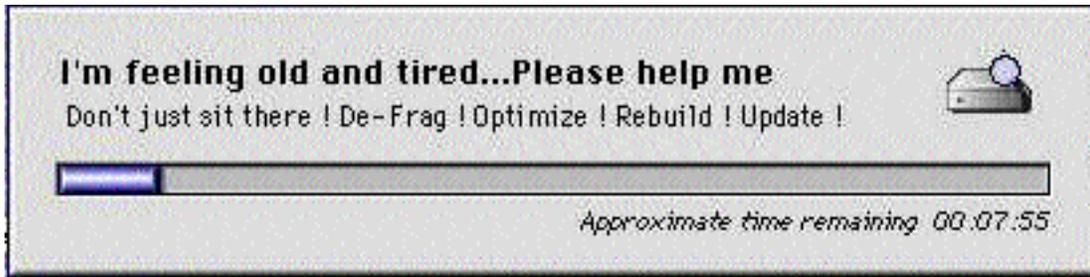
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Serious Tips for 680X0 Macs

Last month, if you read you Double Click, you learned something about the eBay Auctions...a great place to pick up, among other things, older Mac hardware at bargain-basement prices. With the older equipment especially it takes more than just lucky guesses to keep the personal Macintosh computer of your choice running at peak efficiency. This article will provide tips on keeping your old Mac quick. These tips are not geared for the owners of new G3 PowerMacs for whom speed is not a problem, but rather are presented for the rest of us who are still computing on the trailing edge.



Around our house we have the typical assortment of obsolete Mac hardware..... a 68030 Mac SE/30 (running Systems 7.1 and OS 7.5.5), a couple of modems, a wickedly fast 68030 IIfx or two, running OS 7.1 and 7.5.5, a 68040 Mac Quadra 950 (with System 7.1 and OS 8.1), and a PPC 603 Performa 6200CD, (a true Box of Delights), running OS 8.1, a few external Hard Drives, and a EZFlyer SyQuest drive. With as many Mac Systems as we have kicking about the place, (which is two systems less than I really want), it behoves me to know a little about what it takes to keep Macs running fast, true, and trouble-free under various Operating Systems.

Scott Barber, CEO of SERKER, Worldwide, Inc. has published some serious tips concerning caring for older Mac Systems on the QuadList, a ListServ for owners of 68040 Macintoshes, in response to questions about how the pros keep their Macs trouble-free. I have tried some of Scott's techniques on all of the Macs around the house at one time or another, to improve performance without resorting to expensive accelerators. They work.

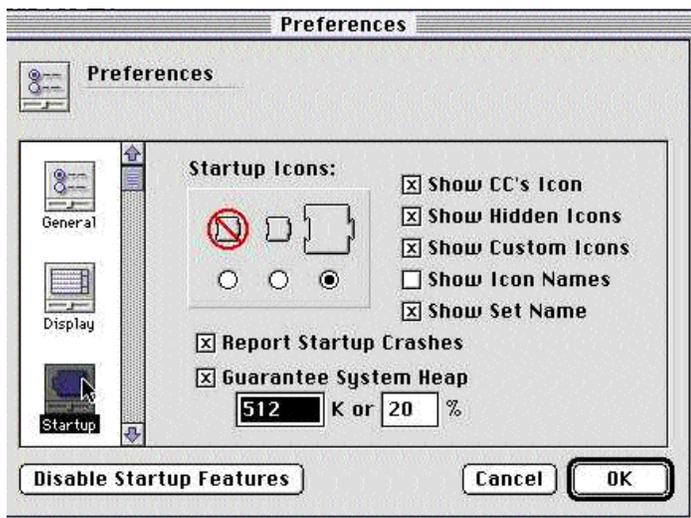
There are lots of other ways to speed up an older system, without resorting to hardware add-ons, but these are a really good place to start. These tips are succinct enough that I have quoted from them almost verbatim, with the kind permission of the author. Although Scott's focus is pre-press, these techniques work equally well with home office applications. The thing to remember here is that when your usually speedy Mac slows to a crawl there is usually a simple reason for the loss of performance and also, usually, a simple way to restore it

1 Set all machines to Maximum Disk Cache. Eliminate all un-needed Extensions and Control Panels. The larger the Disk Cache, the more of the System File is stored in memory, and the larger a section of a large application is also stored in memory. Elimination of unnecessary Extensions and Control Panels reduces the amount

of overhead and interrupts on the machine---usually toys and neat Desktop tricks can slow down a machine 5-10%. Especially important is the elimination of all unused Printer Drivers---the MacOS constantly scans for these extra printers, even when not selected. By reducing the search, and not loading those resources on bootup, you can increase performance visibly. (If you know you'll never need to drive a LaserWriter II NT, NTX, NTg or NTf, or some exotic printer you've never heard of, dump the Drivers. If you ever do get one of these printers, you can get the drivers then.). Preferences for programs you no longer have or use, and for demos, and for games you no longer play can take up valuable space on your Hard Drive and should be trashed, so check your Preferences Folder for orphaned documents that you no longer need.

2 Use FWB's CD-Rom Toolkit for machines with CDs. Apple's driver is crappy...bulky and slow, and constantly polling and taking up resources. CDT is written correctly. Preferences for speed or compatibility can be set for each CD you have with CD-ROM Toolkit.

3 Find, buy, steal, beg or borrow the latest version of Casady & Greene's Conflict Catcher---not only is it a good way to easily manage your Extensions and cdevs on the machine, but it also has the ability to add to the System Heap (guarantee system heap option). This is very important, because it's not addressed properly in any MacOS release for pre-press users---the System Heap should be set to 512k (ignore the percentage) in the CC Preferences. This increases system performance visibly. Using Conflict Catcher to create sets of Extensions and Control Panels tailored to your most-often used Applications can free up valuable memory.



4 Be vigilant in de-fragging and optimizing the hard drives---keep them clean, and running fast. 1% fragmentation of system files can lead to a 10% slow down in performance. Drives in a pre-press house should be optimized and checked every Friday before everyone goes home. The first two weeks will take a couple of hours on a really big Hard Drive---after this it will take 15 minutes. Make it the last thing done before anyone goes home for the weekend.

5 On 680X0 machines, reduce the number of menu patches, especially in PPC mode. If you look at the Conflict Catcher report, you'll be able to see how patches to the menubar end up slowing down PPC functions because they're PPC code patched over with 68k code. Even CC does this itself, so remove the menu pull down for CC, and try to make sure no one else is using menu patches like this. Using 7.6.1 or lower, Now Menus (part of Now

Utilities) is a good menu solution, while every other menu option I've found is a literal disaster. If you're using 8.1, then FinderPop is a better solution, using the Contextual Menu Manager (Pop up menu).

6 For 680X0 machines without the PPC Upgrade, remove all errant PPC code from the System File using a program called PowerPCCheck 3.2 from Hyperarchive. It will remove roughly 1.6 MB off the System File, making the system run 30% faster. (Of course, if this is a PPC upgraded Mac, you need that code in PPC mode). Try this on the System File, not the System Folder.

7 For all conventional '040 machines System 8.1 is a real boon. OS8.1, part of the NeXTStep project from NeXT, is closer to pure 68040 code, and routinely acts much faster than Systems 7.5.5 or 7.6.1. If possible, standardise on this version. If you have '030 machines, don't go beyond 7.5.5. ---7.6 and 7.6.1 are a disaster.

8 If you run Photoshop, you should create a 4MB RAM disk that is always active. Set the Primary Scratch disk to this 4MB RAM disk, and the Secondary to whatever hard drive you desire. The reason for this is simple. Photoshop has it's own virtual memory scheme, and even though you might have 80 or 90mb attributed to this application, it will always store it's toolboxes and filters in the scratch file, no matter what. The organisation of this file is unique---all the sort headers, plus the active tools, are always at the top of the file---about the first 2 to 3 MB. If the RAM disk is used as the first scratch disk, all of these tools are instantly available in memory, and you'll see the difference the first time you perform a filter such as a gaussian blur. If you've noticed, the OS isn't quick to respond and update when a filter in Photoshop is performed. When you set all of the settings in the filter, then hit "ok" to apply it, there is a five or ten second delay---usually accompanied by a white square where the box was, and you continue to wait for the "Performing Filter" window to pop up with the thermometer bar telling you just how much has been accomplished. With a 4 MB RAM disk, this is almost instantaneous, because the sort table, and the filter, are immediately available for use. You will notice that filter functions will also work 10-20% faster as well, as rebuilding the sort table during a filter function is not processor inten-

sive, but is instead SCSI intensive---processing on the filter must be stopped to rebuild this sort table every few moments---with the sort being instant now, the filter basically goes along unfettered. This is the most important tip I can give to Photoshop users.

9 If Virtual Memory is used by the MacOS for any reason, Virtual Memory should always set to a factor of 32. Hence a machine with 72MB of memory needs to have VM set to at least 96, or 128MB. This is because the MacOS prefers to make 4 MB block transfers, and the sort table inside VM is much easier to work with if it's a direct multiple, instead of having to figure out how to deal with an extra MB floating at the end of the file, or 3 MB outstanding. Real RAM is preferable to sham RAM, so avoid virtual RAM and RAM doubling utilities if possible and load up on RAM when you can get it cheaply.

10 Rebuild your Desktop File by restarting with the Option and Control buttons held down. Do it every two weeks. Avoid large numbers of custom icons. They look cute but they can really slow down the System.

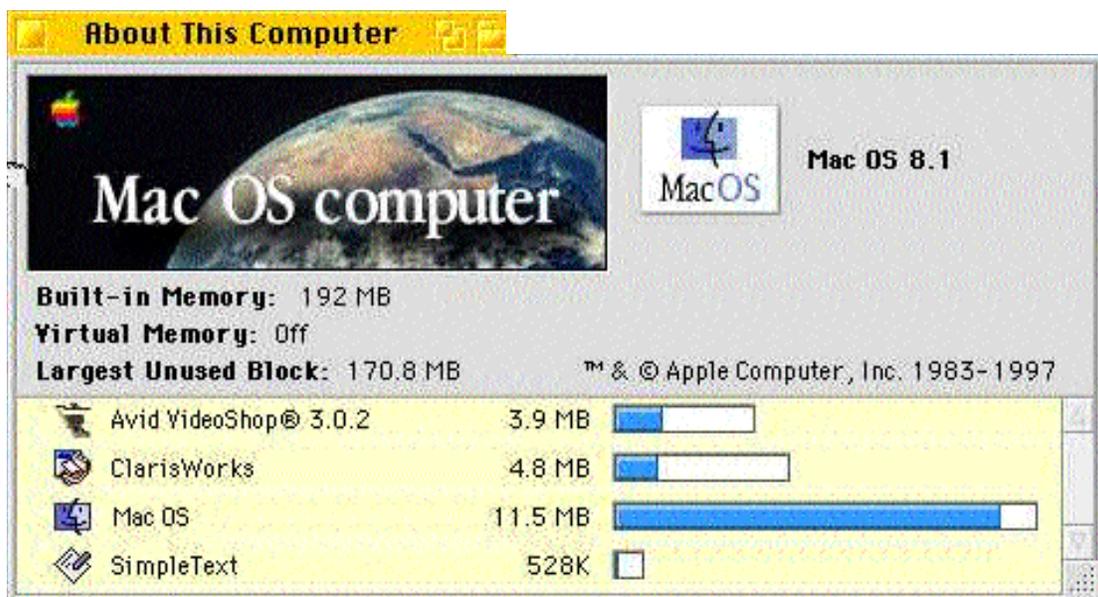
11 Buy a good disk repair program like La Cie's SilverLining or Norton Utilities for Macintosh, or TechTool Pro and use it regularly to repair damage and check for discrepancies. Buy a good anti-virus program and make sure that you use it to check floppies when you get them, as well as to check your drives periodically.

12 Get the latest version of the Operating System your hardware will support within the limits of your available installed RAM and Hard Drive. Experiment. If your Hard Drive is already partitioned try installing System 7.1 on one partition and OS8.1 on another. See the difference it makes on your favourite Applications.

13 Lastly, I realise that by creating a RAM disk and setting cache to 8MB I'm sacrificing 12MB of crucial pre-press memory. But I still stand by this in a pre-press house---if you're trying to pull those extra horse-power out of the machine, these are necessary steps. Since you're in a pre-press house anyway, getting a bit more money just to increase the memory on these machines shouldn't be that hard---for the performance it gives, the extra memory, allocated the way I've stated above, will increase compute performance by about 50%. If you want to run MacBench after these changes have been made, you'll see the difference...

More Help for Your Old Mac

In addition to these, other important tips for keeping your older Mac elegant and fast can be found at www.themacintoshguy.com. and at the Low End Mac site on the web.

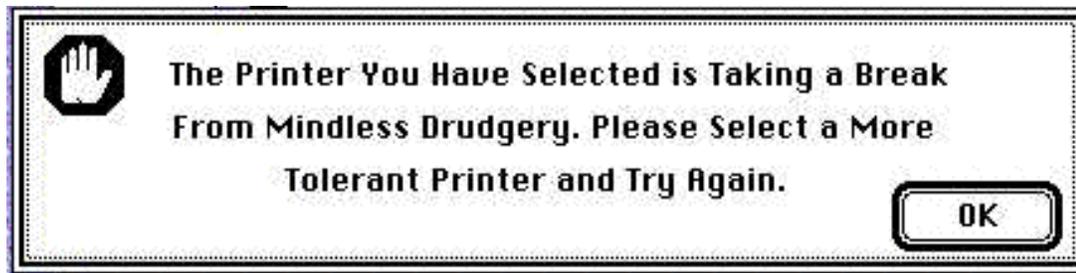


Printing Preferences

This Newsletter is coming to you hot off the Double-Click LaserWriter Pro 630.

Needless to say, it doesn't write at the speed of light but it is the printer of choice for this type of Desktop Publishing. Especially of my choice...it has a tiny Apple on the front of it.

The other printers in the house are a Hewlett-Packard Deskwriter 660C and an Epson StyleWriter 600. Both together they cost a fraction of the price of the LaserWriter when new and they both print at higher resolution and in zillions of colours. The Epson, for example, can be set to print at a resolution of 1440 dots per inch (dpi) for photo-quality printing.....which I have never done. It seems like a terrible waste of ink to me. Ink spots a fraction of a thousandth of an inch across are too tiny for me to see with the human eye, which is all that I am equipped with.



A little research on the topic of printing reveals why both types of printers are enjoying popularity and which type is best for you.

Inkjet printers are inexpensive but use liquid ink packaged in sufficiently small quantities that there have been many attempts over the years to market refill kits and lots of cheap replica ink reservoirs. For \$30 or \$40 plus the cost of paper you can print a few hundred sheets at highest quality, which is certainly enough for a few months of most family's normal use. And inkjet printers will print wonderful colours in higher resolutions. If you are on a tight budget and need these features, the inkjet printer is the way to go. The kids will love it and can jazz up their homework, greeting cards, letters to friends, artwork and posters with splashes of colour. These printers often come with free software packages like Printshop or Home Publisher to encourage lavish use of ink for home projects. If somebody is going to give

away a free printer with a new computer purchase, you can bet its an inkjet. printer.

Laser printers cost more initially, don't use inks and, unless they're REALLY expensive, can't produce colours. But, in a small business or home office the priority is high quality text documents produced quickly and cheaply, often in great quantity, which is exactly what laserwriters are designed to excel at. The laser printer prints by means of a toner and drum unit that electrically copies the toner to the paper and uses heat to fuse it there, like an iron-on transfer system. The toner cartridges are more expensive per unit than ink reservoirs, but will produce thousands of sheets instead of merely hundreds, and so are actually much cheaper. Compare \$120 every couple of years to \$30-\$40 every couple of months. The resolution for laser printers may be only 300 or 600 dpi, which sounds crude compared to the capability of a 1440 dpi inkjet printer, but in actual printing 300 dpi is a great resolution for text-only printing and cannot easily be distinguished from 600 dpi, which is what you

are looking at here. This Double-Click is produced on a Apple LaserWriter Pro at 600 dpi.

So which printer do you need ?

If you want or need to have colour and are on a tight budget, get an inkjet, especially if children will be using the printer but if you have the cash, need to print clear, crisp, permanent PostScript documents, in an office or home office environment, and can get along without colours, get a laser printer.

Buying Used

Everybody likes a bargain and with so many people upgrading their systems there is a lot of second-hand equipment for sale at great prices. Remember, though, that inkjet printer repairs can easily exceed the cost of a replacement printer in a few years if you don't have a Service Contract, so be careful when considering the purchase of used inkjet equipment. A used Laser printer, especially if well maintained or little-used, can give many years of high-quality performance before requiring servicing, and if it requires repairs will be more worth fixing.

MacAddict Network

Now that everybody and his hamster has Internet Access, I'd like to offer up one of my favourite Sites as a good place for any Macintosh user to visit for a quick connection to some of the most useful Mac sites on the Web. According to MacAddict Magazine these sites, selected on the highest editorial standards, make up the largest and most in-depth Macintosh site anywhere. MacAddict is a very cool Mac magazine.

www.macaddictnetwork.com will take you to the MacAddict magazine homepage where you can pick up links and be connected to the following interconnected sites:

EveryMac.com for Macintosh & Mac-compatible specs

[MacFixit](#) for all the latest trouble shooting info for Mac systems

[The MacGamer's Ledge](#) for downloads, demos, games, and reviews

[deal.mac](#) for all the most up-to-date Mac products at the best prices

[EvangeList](#) for Guy Kawasaki's Mac home page

[VersionTracker](#) for a list of and links to all the recent released updates.

[NoBeige.com](#) for the latest iMac news and developments

[MacResourcePage](#) for the MRP RAMWatch price guide and news, reviews & bug reports.

[O'Grady's Power Page](#) for PowerBook users

[Apple Jedi](#) for the e-zine for Mac developers

[As the Apple Turns](#) for a look at the Apple Computer story as a soap opera

[Iconfactory](#) for freeware icon sets to pretty-up your Mac Desktop

[MacCentral](#) for Software Updates, editorials & information

[MacSurfer's Headline News](#) for ALL the latest breaking Macintosh news

[Inside Mac Games](#) for a monthly CD-ROM magazine devoted to gaming on the Mac



And...Since you are all already on the Internet...

The MaUsE Club executive wants your email address to make it possible in the future to send out special announcements and emergency notices to all club members using Galleon Software's email merge program, Emerge, as demonstrated at last month's Mac Users' Meeting. Compliance is voluntary.

Please send your email address to Jim Foster at: jfoster435@home.com.



About Double Click

Double Click is produced on an antique Macintosh Quadra 950, monthly, where possible, by and for members of Macintosh Users East (MaUsE), an Apple Macintosh Computer Users' Group Serving the Durham Region & environs, for the purposes stated in its constitution. There is no charge for this publication. Articles published in Double Click may be reproduced for non-commercial purposes by other Macintosh User Groups or interested parties without prior permission. Any other reproduction of any part of this newsletter requires the written permission of the authors(s).

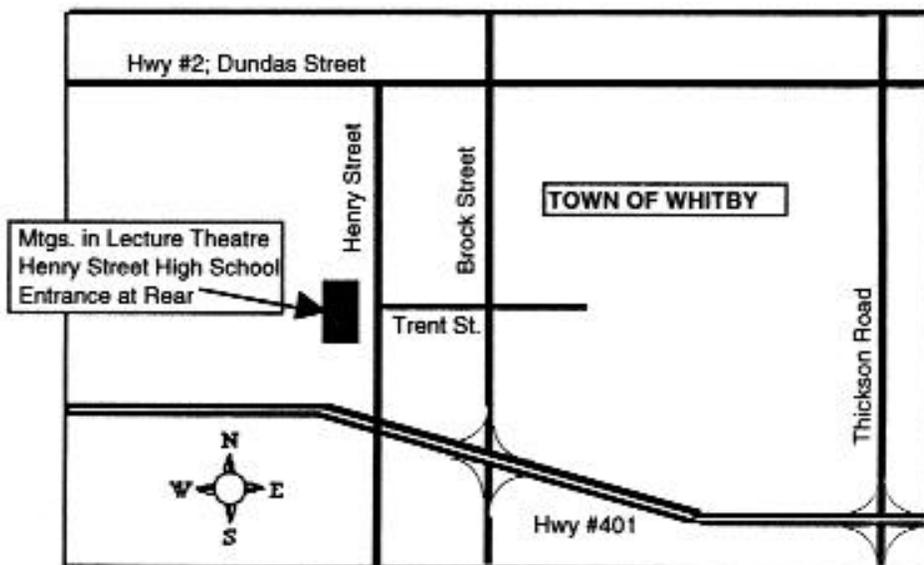
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Macintosh Users' Group

Public Meeting Announcement

The Macintosh Users East group is pleased to announce that we will be having Jim Foster and Bruce Cameron as the guest speakers at our Macintosh Users' April meeting at Henry Street High School in Whitby. All local Macintosh users and anyone else interested in the future of personal computing are welcome to attend. The topic for this month's meeting will be, "Routine Macintosh Care and Maintenance," and will entail on-site demonstrations of some of the Diagnostic Utilities and Repair Programs that all Mac owners can use to improve the performance and protect the integrity of their Macintosh Computers. With the demonstrations there will be opportunities for questions and explanations of all procedures. This Meeting is open to the public in a casual lecture theatre setting and will be of immense benefit to anyone who has or will ever have a Macintosh Computer.

Meeting Location



Next Meeting
April 28th, 7:30 P.M.
Henry Street High School
Whitby, Ontario
Use Rear Entrance &
Follow the Signs

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