MacBits

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What's Happening In MacMad

Jim Staal, President

Did you like the NanoBits format? This is the postcard-sized newsletter that we sent out last month. We really did not start out to reduce the newsletter to this size. It happened that several Board members had family emergencies or similar circumstances, so no one could produce even the one page version. Cammie and Spence came up with this format and rescued the publication totally missing the month.

We are now back to the usual routine of alternating full MacBits and one-sheet version. I would like to know your opinion of the postcard size. If enough members are willing to read MacBits online, and the others only want a reminder of the meetings, we could use the NanoBit format.

The newsletter is our major routine expense. Every issue mailed costs first class postage, plus printing. On the other hand, it produces out advertising revenue, about our only income other than dues. We have not yet polled advertisers to see if they would stay with us if the issues are just online.

Costs and budget are an issue as we try to move forward as a Macintosh Users Group. We are presently in the process of acquiring a new MUG computer. The old iMac was sold awhile ago, since it was just too big to store and transport. Our new computer will be an iBook. Apple's timing of the latest upgrades was great. They bumped the iBooks to G4 just as we were about to make the purchase, so we will have a G4 Mac and a good bit more left in the budget than if we had purchased a PowerBook.

The next item that we need is our own projector. Connecting Point has been very generous in lending theirs, and the Melbourne Library does have an older one. However, having our own MUG projector gives us better availability for use in Special Interest Group (SIG) meetings, training and alternate locations.

As I mentioned before, our main sources of revenue are dues and advertising. We previously made some income from swap meets when members donated items or shared sales with the group. Swap meets have gotten very little interest lately, so this source has dried up. We need another method of gaining revenue from the items that people are willing to donate. I still receive offers from members and others, but we currently have no way to act on these.

One possibility is using e-Bay to sell these items. If any of our members are e-Bay sellers or know of someone who is we would like to discuss this possibility. It could range from simply putting a few donated items up for sale to helping members sell their own items, hopefully with a portion being donated to MacMad.

We can also increase our revenue by selling more ads. This is a good time to talk to any businesses that you know or happen to be in and see if they would be interested. If they are, give one of the Board members a quick call or e-mail and we will follow

Inside This Issue

up.
Our list of upcoming programs is looking great, and we continue to add members. Thanks to all of you for getting the word out and for making MacMad better and better. In the coming months we will be looking at the developments in the operating system, celebrating the Holidays, using AppleWorks and other common programs, using digital cameras and iPhoto, WiFi, how various businesses and institutions use the Mac, and other topics that you suggest. Watch for a really interesting program on how Florida Tech is using the Mac to develop educational presentations. This is an outgrowth of the work that has been done over the years in the Marine Biology area.

I'm looking forward to seeing you at the meetings. Bring a carload of Mac friends.

Learning More About Your Mac

by Jim Staal

Many resources are available for learning about the Mac. Whether you want to learn about your operating system or your applications, on-line and CD courses are available.

If you are using a dial-up connection, downloading the learning files take longer. Most providers break their courses into small segments so that the download is not too long. When you want to view all of the segments of a long course, the CD option may be the best.

Several companies provide online training. Many of these offer some of the titles for free. These are usually about the basics of the operating systems, or one of the applications such as AppleWorks. Other titles range in price from a few dollars to around $100 apiece. Some also offer a yearly or monthly membership that give you the right to download as many titles as you wish during the period. Almost all of the companies offer at least a preview of the titles.

Many of the training providers offer nice discounts to members of a Macintosh Users Group (MUG). If the site does not list a MUG price, check with one of your MUG officers. **Dot-Mac** subscribers have access to free courses about using Apple-provided software such as iPhoto.

The normal training method is a QuickTime movie. This will usually be a demonstration of the techniques with narration. Segments range from two to five minutes to allow you to digest the content. Entire courses take several hours.

Virtual Training Company offers a monthly membership at $25, or $20 for MUG members.

The first thirty or so segments, usually covering introduction and basics, can be downloaded for free. *(http://www.vtc.com/usa.php)*

Total Training's product are all on CD, but can be less expensive. Their OS X course is $49. Some courses are as low as $10. Most of their content covers the Adobe products, and a bundle on Adobe Web Design products costs $999. *(http://www.totaltraining.com/home.html)*

MacAcademy offers CD only. Their operating system titles are broken into four CDs per operating system subject and each of the four CDs cost $39. Some older titles are discounted for clearance. *(http://www.macacademy.com/indexmac.html)*

MediaSchool is a subscription service costing from $14.95 for one month to $89 per year. For a limited time the first 30 days are free. Their courses are more Mac-oriented than some, and appear to be a bit more academic. Their site discusses the option of obtaining certifications by taking their programs. *(http://www.mediaschool.com/)*

A new source of information comes from on-line Mac newsletter publisher **TidBITS** Electronic Publishing. They are now offering a series of very reasonably priced e-books under the Take Control title. The first two of these are priced at $5, and cover Panther installation and customizing.

Titles coming in the near future include Mail, Dot-Mac, and more on Panther. *(http://www.tidbits.com/takecontrol/default.html)*

Of course, our friends at **O'Reilly** offer a comprehensive line of books e-books on nearly all Mac and other computer topics. They give a 20$ MUG discount. *(http://mac.oreilly.com/)*

Other training and book resources are available, including some published by the software vendors themselves. This list is intended to give you a place to start. **Happy learning!**

About Last Meeting
by Mark Fosgate
May 20, 2003

Jim Staal opened the meeting at about 7:05 p.m. with about 20 people in attendance.

Jim had the guests attending introduce themselves and discussed some new **WiFi** (wireless via airport or 802.11b/g standards for wireless capable computers and other devices) hotspots in the area and possibly being able to use one of the facilities in the future to do a wireless presentation. Jim turned the meeting over to Jamie Cox that had a presentation on using Palm desktop 4.0 to handle your calendaring and contact info needs without the necessity of having a Palm enabled device.

Jamie also touched on using the built in tools that Apple provides like iCal and Address Book to do the same things that the Palm software can do as well as providing data to the Mail application for entering email addresses, and in addition, the iSync software that works with many Palm enabled devices and Bluetooth devices to synchronize data between your computer and the aforementioned devices and .Mac accounts.

Jim Staal talked a little about the Now Up to Date program and how it compares to other PIMs (Personal Information Managers). Jim had planned on talking about another program called Organizer but due to technical difficulties could not.

Several small discussions were held on the strengths of Microsoft Entourage as a single combined application that does calendaring, email, to-do's, and events.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m. with the dinner crowd going to Bennigan's.

Review of MAC OS X 2nd Edition
The Missing Manual

Reveiwed by W. J. Moroney

Since I was comfortable with OS 9, I hesitated switching to OS X. Instead I put up with the frequent crashes and freezes in OS 9. When I did take the plunge; I had to keep returning to OS 9 because I could not find the programs and applications that I was accustomed to. The biggest drawback with OS X there is no manual supplied with the software. The purpose of this book, "OS X The Missing Manual" is to serve as the manual that should have been provided.

This manual describes what OS X 10.2 gives you and what it takes away (plus tips and work around tricks). This book is a must for getting help with OS X. It has been designed to accommodate readers of all skill levels (beginners thru advanced users). It describes things to learn and unlearn. The book is ideal for computer sharing, family members, or workers that share the same MAC.

This manual also provides work arounds for printing a window or file list and suggests Shareware to print without a work around. It is not necessary to read this book from cover to cover. It does suggest you use the table of contents and/or Index to locate the item, menu, or procedure you need help with.

Appendix "B" contains trouble shooting information such as; Problems that are not Problems.

Appendix "C" and "D" feature the "Where did it Go" as in OS 9 vs OS X "C" for MAC version and "D" for Windows version.

All in all this book "MAC OS X The missing Manual" provides much more information about OS X than any Manual would, if provided along with the OS X software.

I would recommend everyone using MAC OS X (whether beginner or long time Mac user) to have a copy of this book in his or her library.
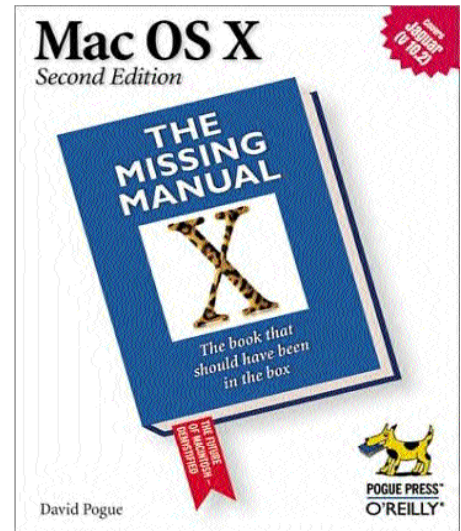
P.S. If other "Missing Manuals" are as well written and detailed as OS X, I would suggest they be considered to be included in your reference library.

W. J. Moroney

Hackers, viruses, the Mac, and OS X

Editors Note:
Thanks to Bill Moroney for his contribution to MacBits! We encourage all our members to do the same thing. Bill, we applaud you!

Available at Amazon.com
Barnes & Nobel
Or for a discount thru O'Reilly
books www.oreilly.com

Hackers, viruses, the Mac, and OS X

By Dennis Sellers
August 06, 2001

Written for Mac World Magazine publised with permission. www.macworld.com

Hackers and viruses pose more of a threat than ever for the Mac platform due to the Unix underpinnings of Mac OS X, according to Robert Franklin, Symantec's senior product specialist. Symantec is the company behind such products as Norton Anti-Virus and Norton Utilities.

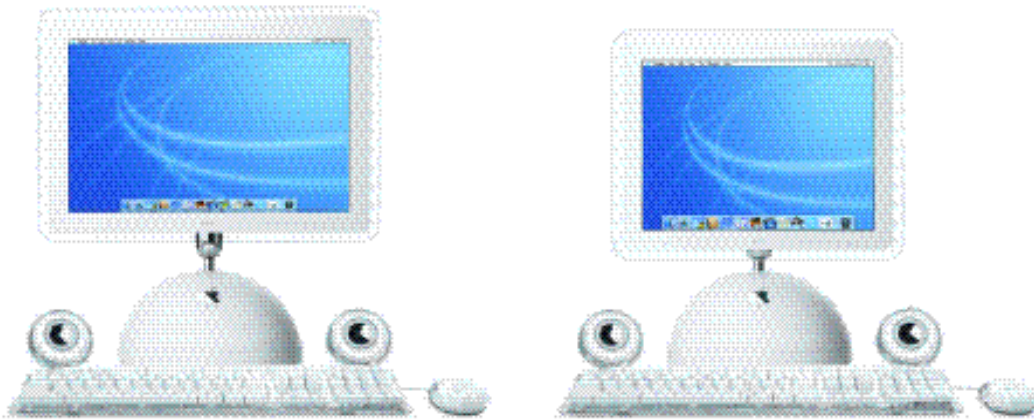Hackers are computer users who try to gain unauthorized access to other computers on the Internet. They pose threats with their abilities to view, copy or destroy personal files; view and copy information like names, addresses, important numbers and financial information; and plant computer viruses and/or Trojan Horse viruses.

"Hackers are challenged by the prospect of a new operating system, and Mac OS X is more vulnerable to attacks because of Unix," Franklin said. "Unix is more susceptible because it's a networking operating system. Also, UNIX has been around for a long time, longer than Windows, so people are very familiar with it."

Computer viruses are, of course, a common security threat that affects both Mac and Windows users -- though the majority of viruses attack Wintel systems. Viruses are programs that are designed to spread themselves. They're usually passed along through file sharing and e-mail file attachments and have the potential to wreak lots of havoc by destroying files, disrupting hardware functions, re-formatting hard drives, and implementing mass e-mail action to all address book entries.

"Mac users have, to some extent, been lulled into thinking they don't need to be pro-

tected," Franklin said. "It's not really a case of one operating system being more susceptible than another by the very nature of the OS. Rather, it's the fact that there have been, by volume, more viruses written to affect Windows machines than Macs."

The motivation here is that virus writers want their viruses to spread to as many users as possible. Since the Windows platform has the greatest worldwide reach, for both home and office computer users, more viruses are written for that platform, Franklin explained.

"This doesn't mean that Macs are free from virus concerns, or if a Mac gets a virus that the payload will be less significant," he explained. "There are a number of Mac specific viruses out there, and they can cause varying degrees of problems for Mac users."

The top four Macintosh specific viruses are:

* **Mac.Simpsons@mm:** an AppleScript worm that targets the Macintosh platform. It may open Microsoft Outlook Express or Entourage, and send a copy of itself with the original message to everyone in your address book. The name of the script is "Simpsons Episodes."

* **SevenDust:** There are six variants of this virus, including four polymorphic, encrypted ones. What they have in common is that they all infect applications by modifying MDEF and MENU resources, and they can create a System Extension (with an invisible character at the beginning of the name so it loads early) or add an INIT resource to the System file.

* **CODE 9811:** This virus spreads from application to application. When an infected application is launched, it searches for another application to infect and copies itself into that application. The contents of the original file are copied to an invisible file in the same folder whose name is composed of arbitrary upper case letters. The infected application also attempts to delete anti-virus software it finds in the default volume's root folder, or in the System, Control Panels or Extensions folders.

* **MBDF:** a virus that first appeared in 1992. The MBDF A strain originated from a Trojan Horse virus named Tetracycle. Additionally, MBDF A was found to be distributed in versions of Obnoxious Tetris and Ten Tile Puzzle.

The Simpsons virus can affect Mac OS X -- so can SevenDust, CODE 0911 and MBDF, but only in the Classic environment.

Then there are macro viruses. A macro virus is a macro (list of instructions) that masquerades as legitimate document. When a document infected with a Macro virus is launched, the virus contained in the file is released

"Most macro viruses aren't dangerous to Macs, but some are," Franklin said. "And even with the ones that aren't, Mac users can pass these onto PC users via e-mail attachments."

People often don't know that they are even spreading a virus, he added. Most are spread through e-mail attachments, and often come in the form of a picture, or animation or the file name is something inviting like "Check this out."

While all of us want faster Internet connections, Franklin said that high-speed connections (such as DSL and cable) actually increase the danger of getting a virus or getting hacked, especially with the combination of high speed and "on-all-the-time" connections. When connections are on all the time, hackers have a great opportunity to locate users online and cause harm.

Some Cable and DSL connections use a "Static IP Address" which means that hackers know where to return to access the same system, Franklin said. Even if Mac users have a Cable of DSL connection using a "Dynamic IP Address", where users are assigned new IP addresses every time a machine is restarted, users are still open to random hacking attacks, simply by virtue of being online at all.

Classified Ads Are FREE to MacMAD Members!

There are two ways to protect your Mac from hackers and viruses: personal firewall software and anti-virus software. The cable modem industry recommends personal firewall software as it offers more steps you can take to protect your computer and privacy while on the Internet.

"The easiest is installing personal firewall software ... a firewall is like a security system that detects and prevents intruders from entering your property," according to Cablemodem.net, a Web site devoted to the latest info about high-speed Internet access. "Personal firewall software monitors your computer for suspicious activity while you're online. Inbound intruders are stopped before they can get into your computer, and a record of the repelled attacker, including his IP address, is stored ... Personal firewall software is inexpensive ... and easy to install ... we think it's an ideal investment if you have a cable modem or DSL connection, or if you're a heavy dial-up modem user."

Of course, the best and easiest way to keep a Mac virus free is to use anti-virus software -- which lets you scan and repair infected files -- and keep it up-to-date. Most anti-virus software is updateable via the Internet, so virus definitions are always current.
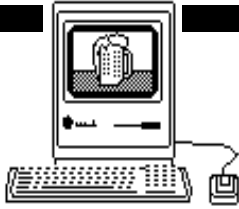
With Mac OS X gaining in popularity, viruses and hackers pose threats to the new operating system. Both are threats in different ways, Franklin said.

"Virus threats can come in bunches and are often unexpected," he explained. "Hackers are more of a constant threat that are always out there."

Mac users should continue to use both anti-virus and personal firewall products under Mac OS X in order to assure maximum protection for their systems. Also, they should make sure that the products they're using are Mac OS X compatible.

You can learn more about viruses at the *Symantec Anti-Virus Research Center.* Simply do a search for all viruses related to Macs by typing "Macintosh" into the search field in the *Virus Encyclopedia.*

About MACMAD

MacMAD is a user group devoted to helping each other explore the possibilities opened by the Apple Macintosh. We publish this newsletter, operate a web site (www.mac-mad.org), and hold meetings on the first Wednesday and third Tuesday of each month. **Our TeleFinder BBS is now available at bbs.macmad.org.**

After each meeting all are welcome at a local restaurant where we indulge in a festive open discussion over pitchers of cokes, beers, and food stuffs galore. Here the true spirit of the world of Mac is exposed, many acquaintances are made and expertise shared openly. Thus our name, MacMAD, which stands for "Macintosh Meeting And Drinking Society."

Meetings

All Meetings are from 7pm - 8:30 pm

Tuesday, November 18th
We are planning on a presentation on Panther, OS 10.3, plus AppleWorks hints for the Holidays.
7:00 to 8:30 at the Melbourne Library, Fee Ave. in downtown Melbourne.
Check our bbs for info!

Wednesday, December 3 rd
We are planning a Holiday Party at House of Joe, with WiFi connections available (check your e-mail for further details)
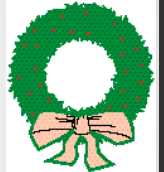
Tuesday, December 16th
No program is set for December, and given that it is the 16th we may want to cancel. Any comments from you Boarders or mem bers out there?

if We have a meeting - 7:00 to 8:30 at the Melbourne Library, Fee Ave. in downtown Melbourne.
Check our bbs for info!

Stay posted to MacMAD web page for updates and news on meetings! www.macmad.org

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