



# MAC FACTS

from

## Mac Help Desk

SUPPORT, SALES, TRAINING & SERVICE

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### *A Message from Dru*

Sunday May30<sup>th</sup> is Mac Mania Night on Cyberline! You may have heard I'm doing a radio show on WBAP, 820 on your AM dial. The last Sunday of every month is Mac Mania night. Only Mac stuff allowed. In May we'll have Bob LeVitas, best selling Mac author (and all around nice guy) some folks from Apple Corporate HQ in Cupertino and the folks from Sonnet Tech, makers of great accelerators for just about every Mac on the market. So listen and call in from 7 pm - 9 pm.



These folks joined the Mac Help Desk 'family' in March: Lena Griffin, Chris Bohnfolk, Natalie Ornish, Martco, Joe & Susan Grigsby, Donna Irby, Jeffrey Zeffran, Jeff Van Sicklen, James Bullington, Mirian Lohr, E.C. Petree, Kim Evans, MediaLinks, Shelly & Co., Robert Samuelson, Ray Fisher, Outdoor Systems, and Southwest Anesthesiology. Glad y'all are here.



Got a friend who'd like to receive MacFacts? Have them call, e-mail, or fax us with their contact number and we'll get them on the list. Got an idea for a story or want a article about a specific topic?..Let me know and I'll see what I can do to make it happen.



## A Mac Y2K Primer For The Novice

by Nancy Gravley

*"We may not have got everything right, but at least we knew the century was going to end."*

This quote from Douglas Adams, author of *The Hitchhiker's Guide To The Universe*, designer of *Starship Titanic*, and a *Mac Master*, made me laugh out loud. He is referring to the "Y2K problem".

If you are like me you have been inundated with information about the Y2K Problem. In Austin, Texas where I live we have had newspaper articles about survivalist who think the entire world is going to shut down and airplanes are going to drop from the sky who are stocking their shelves and buying guns and making preparation to protect their families. We also get lots of policy statements from government agencies to reassure us that "everything is under control." Congress is monitoring federal agencies for compliance and most state legislatures are doing the same thing. Here in Texas an enormous amount of money has been set aside to make sure all state agencies and programs continue to operate. Most agencies have hired staff just to deal with the problem. Because I work in a human services field where many recipients of services are dependent on computer driven supports, we have already sent out numerous notices to consumers and providers to warn them about what and how they need to check systems to prevent disruptions. All state agencies have assured the legislative watchdogs that the situation is well under control. So what is the truth and why does it matter? Here is my simple English explanation.

In the early days of computer development data space was a big concern. People in the field took pride in saving increments of space where ever possible. In the DOS environment part of that saving was to eliminate the 19 from the year as related to the computer's recognition of dates. The inability of the computer system to read it's system clock accurately can cause all mission-critical applications and backups to fail. Now we are told by "experts" that when the year changes from 1999 to 2000 the computers will read the new year as 1900. This could result in a telephone call that started just before midnight on December 31st of 1999 and ended after midnight on January 1st to be billed as a call that lasted -99 years rather than a few minutes. Problems can be related to hardware as in the system clock circuit, the operating system which may not recognize or process dates, and software applications and utilities which may have limited date-processing capabilities. For whatever reason, the Apple design is different enough that that leaving out the 19 wasn't necessary (thus the quote from Mr. Adams). Truth be told, I don't know if it was blind luck or brilliant planning on the part of the Apple creators. All Macintosh computers created since their introduction in 1984 have the ability to make the transition to the year 2000 according to information from Apple. We don't have to worry until the year 29,940. The ability of Apple II computers to handle dates after the year 2000 vary by model and if you need to check on your machine you can link to [www.apple.com/about/year2000](http://www.apple.com/about/year2000). Also, several sites that I checked suggest that you can test your own system by resetting your computers clock to just prior to midnight 12/31/99, turning off the computer and waiting 10 or 15 minutes and turning it back on to see if everything works. According to Information Week (quoted at the Apple website) the cost for fixing the Y2K problem for software alone will run around 600 billion dollars in U.S. dollars. For \$600 billion you could buy an iMac for every man, woman and child in the US, Australia, Belgium, Cambodia, Ecuador, Ethiopia, France, Greece and Guatemala with another 3,000,000 or so left over. Another source, [www.y2ktoday](http://www.y2ktoday), estimates the final cost will be over \$1 trillion in U.S. dollars. A big part of this issue is spin control. Companies and government agencies have realized the panic and bad publicity (not to mention law suits) that can result from inaccurate fixes.

Just in case all of this isn't enough, the year 2000 is a leap year. Apple assures us that "a Year 2000 Compliant product from Apple will recognize the Year 2000 as a leap year." A Year 2000 Compliant product from Apple refers to all Apple-brand hardware and software products as originally delivered by Apple. This does not include all Mac 3rd party products, some of which (QuickBooks Pro from Intuit among the most prominent) are not Y2K compliant. If you have a question about a particular Mac product, check the manufacturer's web site or contact them directly.



**Virtual PC 2.1.3 Features Floppy Fix** -- Connectix has released a small update to Virtual PC that corrects a problem where PowerBook G3 users running version 2.1.2 were unable to access the floppy drive from the left expansion bay. If you haven't updated the program since version 2.0, be sure to go through the additional steps listed in the Read Me file or on Connectix's Web page before applying the 2.1.3 patch. The updater is a free 1.5 MB download.