



MAC FACTS

from

Mac Help Desk

SUPPORT, SALES, TRAINING & SERVICE

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🍏 Apple Solution Experts 🍏

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A Message from Dru

If you want me today, you'll have to call me yesterday! I've had a number of you call me at the office during the day and leave messages. Thank you. But the fact of the matter is, if you want to contact me *during the day* (to reschedule an appointment, an emergency, a tough question, etc) by all means leave me a message (via phone, fax, or e-mail) and I'll answer it *on the next business day*. If you want me *today*, page me at 214-249-9543. When it beeps, enter your area code + phone number and I'll call you back ASAP. If it's an emergency add '*911' after your phone number. I'll call you back immediately. [Just remember about the boy who cried 'Wolf!']



We march ahead with these new client/friends from last month - Howard Charles, Lockwood Furniture, Typeworld, Ginger Martin, Josh McDowell Ministry, Judith Slagle, Anne Rohr, Mike Farrell, Linda Houghton, and Jennifer Quinlan,



Apple Corps of Dallas - "We've Moved!". Usually this Mac User Group (of which yours truly is the Prez) meets on the 3rd Saturday each month. This month is very special. First off, we have a new meeting space - Richardson Civic Center. If you've never been, it's gorgeous. It's located on the SW corner of Arapaho and Central Expressway (Hwy 75). You gotta see it for yourself. Secondly - We're meeting this Saturday, June 23rd. Yes, I know it's the 4th Saturday, but it's only for this month. Next month we're back on schedule on the 3rd Saturday. Thirdly, our presenter for this month is Apple! Come hear about all the new stuff. Hear about what's going on with MacWorld. Maybe even learn about a rumor or two about the (dare I say it) new iMacs?!? MacBeginners starts at 9 am. Main Meeting is at 10 am. MacHelp starts at 12 noon. FREE (and suitable for kids) but we do encourage membership. [the best \$30/yr you'll ever spend.] See you there!



Calling all writers. Got an article stashed somewhere? Wanna give some 1st hand advise or an 'in-your-face review? Send it over here to Mac help Desk. We're game. Get it to us by the 10th of the month and we'll do our best to get it in our next edition. We accept pictures, too!





iBook or TiBook?

by Mike Whybark

What would you do if you could exchange some work for either a shiny new PowerBook G4 Titanium or Apple's latest portable wonder, the iBook (Dual USB)? It's not an easy question, since both Macs induce excessive levels of drool, but it's one I'm going to try to answer in this article. Obviously, my situation is unique: a freelance job for a multimedia software company requires a Macintosh laptop computer, and another client would be happy to pay me for an assignment with the very laptop I need for the first gig. If you're trying to decide between these two machines, please follow along, and I hope my train of thought will help lead you to a decision as well.

The machine I imagined for myself was a current, speedy Mac OS portable, both tough and lightweight. I knew it needed to be fairly high-powered, since I was hoping for a three-year life cycle. Since I work on projects that require a great deal of image editing and compositing as well as audio, I knew I'd want a CD-R drive and a large internal hard disk, a complement of fast ports, lots of RAM, and a large, bright, high-resolution display. Additionally, I needed an AirPort card so I could work on my home AirPort network. At first blush, a PowerBook G4 Titanium, with its modern PowerPC G4 processor, high-end specs, and huge LCD display sounded like it might fit the bill well.

Titanium Problems -- I began my research at the Apple Web site. I was surprised to learn that the PowerBook G4 Titanium is available in only three varieties, two 400 MHz models distinguished by differing hard disk sizes, 20 GB and 30 GB, and a 500 MHz model with a 30 GB hard disk.

Somewhat disappointing was the single optical drive choice: a DVD-ROM drive, with no alternatives available for the Titanium's thin form factor. I've had a DVD-ROM drive in an older machine for years, but have never used it to read a DVD-ROM. Since I often need to burn data to a CD, the lack of ready access to a CD-R drive can seriously impede my work. I already own an external FireWire CD-R, so a built-in CD-R in the portable wasn't an absolute requirement - although a FireWire port would then be necessary. The Titanium supports FireWire, but my initial disappointment about the lack of a CD-R option led me to consider other possibilities. One option immediately presented itself.

Checking Out the iBook -- On 01-May-01, Apple announced the new iBook (Dual USB). It is so different from the old candy-colored iBook in appearance and features that it was almost instantly nicknamed the "iceBook" for its gleaming white plastic body. Substantially smaller and lighter than the old curvy iBook, the new iBook actually beats the svelte Titanium in the miniaturization department. It's neither as broad nor as deep as the Titanium, at 4.9 pounds weighs 0.4 pounds less, and it's a mere 0.35 inches thicker when closed.

The similarity of size and weight caught my eye - I hadn't considered the old iBook as an option due to its 6.6 pound weight and expansive dimensions. Looking more closely, I was pleased to note that the iBook also sports a FireWire port. Of course, it's AirPort-ready, but more interesting, it has four available optical drives - CD-ROM, CD-RW, DVD-ROM, and a CD-RW/DVD-ROM combination (you choose one when purchasing; unlike the PowerBook G3 series, the drive isn't in a

swappable bay). And despite these features, its price starts at well over a thousand dollars less than the Titanium.

Some more legwork on the iBook revealed its three main restrictions when compared to the Titanium: the choice of processor, the system bus speed, and the video and display systems. In each case, as one might expect, the Titanium is more powerful.

The most notable limitation, of course, is the iBook's use of the PowerPC G3 processor instead of the faster PowerPC G4, which also includes the Velocity Engine processing unit for dramatic speed increases in certain types of applications that have been explicitly compiled to support it. Mac OS X itself takes advantage of the Velocity Engine, and going forward, it's clear that the iBook will feel slower than the PowerBook G4 Titanium as both machines age. This means that the iBook may not meet my three-year life cycle requirement.

Secondly, the iBook uses a 66 MHz system bus as compared to the Titanium's 100 MHz system bus, which can impact the overall performance of the machine in situations where a lot of data needs to be moved across the system bus. However, the iBook's 256K L2 cache is on the PowerPC G3 chip itself, providing a 500 MHz data path, whereas the Titanium's 1 MB of L2 cache is on the processor module and runs at half the speed of the CPU (either 200 or 250 MHz).

Finally, and most glaringly (pun intended), the issue of video and displays comes into consideration. The iBook's built-in display system is a 12-inch diagonal XVGA TFT active matrix LCD, running at a maximum resolution of 1,024 by 768 pixels. That's not shabby by any means, though it can't compare with the Titanium's 15.2-inch wide-screen LCD running at 1,152 by 768 pixels.

The iBook also features nearly the same video subsystem as the older PowerBook G3 (FireWire), the ATI RAGE Mobility 128M with AGP 2x. However, the iBook's standard VGA-out port is limited to providing video-mirroring of the built-in display. That's fine for projection or use of a single large monitor at the iBook's highest resolution, but in contrast, the PowerBook G4 Titanium supports monitor spanning, so, when available, that giant expanse of screen can be complemented by another.

Finally, the iBook lacks a PC Card slot found in the Titanium, but given the functionality and ports built into the iBook, I can't see any particular need for PC Card expansion.

Outside Opinions -- Having realized that the iBook was a viable option for my needs if I adjusted certain expectations, I now faced the task of separating my needs from my desires, and for that, I've long had good luck seeking the advice of others.

I began with my wife. She listened to me lay the issues out, but in the end for her it was a clear-cut decision based on price; she thought that the significantly cheaper iBook was the preferred option. An enquiry to a list of computer professionals, most of whom are not Mac people, yielded the same choice but with a new perspective. The discussion there determined, based upon my use patterns and peripherals, that the machine under consideration was unlikely to be a replacement for my existing Power Mac G4 desktop system, and thus it would be more sensible to obtain a smaller, lighter, and cheaper "orbital" system.

A query to other savvy Mac users turned up somewhat different opinions that favored the Titanium over the iBook, citing display and screen size most frequently, followed by longevity, speed, and processor concerns. Folks also zeroed in on my desire for a CD-R in the portable as dispensable.

Some suggested a PowerBook G3 (FireWire) because of its robust suite of professional features and lowering price in the face of the new portables. Observations are cogent, but since size and

weight predominated in my mind as the narrowing factors, I didn't look closely at that machine as an option. However, its dual-battery capacity and resale pricing (I saw one on eBay with Final Cut Pro for about \$1,800) make it an attractive cost/value comparison to the iBook for the professional user.

The final sources of information I pursued with regard to the iBook were Macintosh price-and-bundle tracking sites, plus discussion groups and bulletin boards. I learned some interesting things from these forums, most notably that a number of people were considering stepping down from the Titanium to the new iBook, and that despite its space age construction, the Titanium's thin but large form factor contributed to it feeling fragile. Other negatives that cropped up around the Titanium related to problems with the DVD-ROM drives, slight keyboard impressions on the screen when closed (caused by dirt and skin oils deposited on the keyboard), and poor AirPort range due to the antenna placement and titanium shielding. Although Apple will hopefully work out these design kinks, it won't happen in time for this purchase. On the timing issue, although Apple has had trouble shipping machines in quantity when promised, the new iBooks (and particularly the CD-ROM model) do seem to be shipping steadily and for some online orders, before promised.

I also read of some problems that new iBook owners were experiencing. The first problem that surfaced involved difficulties with the audio output of the iBooks, solvable only with a restart; Apple responded immediately with a software update that Apple recommends all iBook owners download and install. The second problem involved varying problems with the trackpad, such as wandering or jumping cursors. The trackpad problem reports are still coming in and no resolution or clear indication of the scope of the problem is currently available.

Reading that brick-and-mortar merchants frequently had the iBook in stock inspired me to pay a visit to my local Computer Store in Seattle. I expected I would be more impressed by the form factor and screen size of the Titanium. However, once I was able to use both machines side-by-side, I found that the keyboard, trackpad, and button layout on the iBook was noticeably more comfortable. In particular, the Titanium has an extra half-inch or so of lip between the front edge of the machine and the trackpad button; every time I went to hit the button with my thumb, I smacked this lip instead. On the iBook, although the trackpad and button are the same size and shape as on the Titanium, I didn't have the problem with the lip. By itself, this isn't a huge issue - I'm sure I'd get used to avoiding the Titanium's lip right away. But overall, I just found the iBook more comfortable.

The iBook display was extremely crisp and bright. Even at the highest resolution of 1,024 by 768, I had no difficulty looking at it or hitting even small controls. The Titanium's larger display was just fine, but for some reason, I saw the iBook's display more clearly. Finally, the Titanium's slot-loading DVD-ROM ejects to the front of the machine, which would be a minor hassle when I use the machine in bed. The side-mounted, tray-loading configuration of the iBook wouldn't suffer this problem. Another bonus on the iBook side for lap use is my initial impression that it runs cooler than the Titanium. A lap warmer can be nice in the cold, rainy months, but I don't need to bake my thighs otherwise.

Finally, I was impressed at how small the iBook looks, while the Titanium's width gives the impression of size. The difference between them is only 2.2 inches, measured edge-to-edge the long way, but in packages this small, a few inches matters a lot.

Choosing a Book -- To sum up, I found the pricing of the iBook far more attractive than the Titanium's pricing. The low price also helped me soften my desire for a three-year life cycle. The main technical differences, such as CPU speed, display size, and monitor spanning capabilities turned out not to be crucial because I'm planning to use the portable in conjunction with my primary desktop Mac. Finally, the opportunity to handle the two machines side-by-side enabled me to determine that for whatever intangible reason, I preferred the feel of the iBook.

In the end, the iBook most closely suits my needs. Its up-to-date ports provide access to my supporting cast of peripherals here at home, so much so that I decided to get the least expensive CD-ROM model (though with more RAM and an extra battery). The iBook's Lilliputian stature means I can travel with it easily, and the price difference between it and the Titanium allows me to save some of the money I earned recently for the proverbial rainy day (which may come in the form of my late-summer electric bill here on the power-challenged West Coast). I'm looking forward to opening the box on my new iBook.



NEWSLINE

Apple First to Offer All LCD Flat Panel Display Lineup Unveils New 17-inch Model to Complete Display Family

Apple® today announced that it will become the first in the industry to move to an all LCD flat panel display pro lineup. At the center of the new display line, Apple unveiled the new 17-inch Apple Studio Display™, a digital LCD display featuring 1280 by 1024 resolution at an aggressive price of \$999 (US). The company also announced that it has lowered prices for the other two digital LCD displays in its line, with the award-winning 22-inch Apple Cinema Display now available for \$2,499 (US) and the 15-inch Apple Studio Display now available for just \$599 (US).

“Apple is the first company to move to an all LCD flat panel display lineup—the all-digital desktop has finally arrived,” said Steve Jobs, Apple’s CEO. “Apple’s complete line of affordable digital LCD displays are far brighter and sharper than the CRTs of old.”

Apple’s line of flat panel displays are digitally-driven from the computer to provide crisper images than prior-generation analog-driven flat panel displays. An all-digital interface produces sharp, flicker-free images that never need to be adjusted by user controls such as CRTs require. The displays’ active matrix technology provides extraordinary brightness and contrast with no image degradation.

Ideal for creative professionals looking for a superior-quality, space-saving alternative to a traditional CRT monitor, the new 17-inch Studio Display flat panel offers an incredible screen resolution of 1280 by 1024 pixels and a full 16.7 million colors. Its incredibly wide viewing angle of up to 160 degrees maintains color fidelity even when viewing off axis.

The 17-inch Studio Display continues the award-winning industrial design of its 15- and 22-inch siblings that is both beautiful and functional. In addition to its slim desktop footprint and low power consumption, the 17-inch Studio Display also features the Apple Display Connector, an innovative single-connection quick-latch mechanism that combines USB, power and video in one cable, for easy hookup and reduced desktop clutter. For easy plug-and-play connections to peripherals, the 17-inch flat panel also offers a 2-port powered USB hub.

Apple’s complete line of flat panel displays provide the perfect companion to Apple’s latest desktop computers. The award-winning Power Mac™ G4 professional desktop offers either 733 MHz, 533 MHz and 466 MHz single-processor configurations, or dual processor 533 MHz PowerPC G4 processors with Velocity Engine™. The Power Mac G4 comes with a choice of optical drives and easy-to-use applications for creating music CDs, interactive DVD videos and desktop movies.

Pricing & Availability

The 17-inch (diagonal) Apple Studio Display flat panel is expected to be available in early June from Mac Help Desk, the online Apple Store®(www.apple.com), at Apple's retail stores and through Apple Authorized Resellers for a suggested retail price of \$999 (US); the 15-inch (diagonal) Apple Studio Display flat panel for a suggested retail price of \$599 (US), and the 22-inch (diagonal) Apple Cinema Display for a suggested retail price of \$2,499 (US).

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In case you haven't heard, Apple is now in the retail business. Apple has committed \$50 million to opening 25 Apple Retail Stores this year. You can see what they look like by going to Apple's web site or you can wait until August 3rd and see one for yourself when Apple opens it's 'Dallas' store at the new Willow Bend Mall in Plano. Should be very interesting!

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Thanks for taking the time to read the 134th edition of our newsletter. Feel free to 'pass it along'. Any comments would be greatly appreciated