



MAC FACTS

from

Mac Help Desk

SUPPORT, SALES, TRAINING & SERVICE

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a Macintosh Solutions Provider company

Volume 13, Number 6

June 2003

A Message from Dru

Anyone who tells you that “Macs are just for ‘creative types’”, needs to take a gander at this little news blurb – <http://www.army.mil/> (the U.S. Army’s main web site) has recently moved to MacOS X in the aftermath of a successful attack on its then Microsoft based web site. So, it seems, the System of choice for all those ‘creative types’ at the U.S. Army is MacOS X!. Whatdoyaknow!

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Anyone need/want a Grand Piano? Have I got a deal for you...

	<p>The Yamaha CP70B Electric Grand Piano - The CP70B is called an electric grand piano, even though it has hammers and strings, because it has a sophisticated piezo type pick-up system that translates the vibrating strings into an audio signal (Much like an electric guitar). For more info on the CP 70B, go here – http://www.machelpdesk.com/cp70.pdf</p> <p style="text-align: center;">+</p> <p>Anvil Road Cases - The first Anvil cases were designed for traveling musicians who, in the mid 1950's, turned to electric instruments and sound systems, which were far more prone to damage in transit than their acoustic predecessors. Anvil quickly became, and still is today, the number one name in protection for musicians on the go.</p>
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The piano is in great condition (considering that I used it on the road for 5 years!) and includes everything to make it work (except an amplifier) but includes the Anvil cases. Yours for only \$995 OBO. WOW!

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For all you newbies or you folks that just want to know more about your Macs (or meet other Mac enthusiasts), the **Apple Corps of Dallas** is for you. This 25 year old Mac User Group (the oldest in the country), meets either the 2nd or 3rd Saturday every month. The next meeting is June 21st. Russ Coffman will be our presenter. He is one of the founders of the Dallas Motion Graphics. Dallas Motion Graphics is an association for all who create, use, or enjoy computer-generated imagery for video, film, and interactive media. The meetings start at 9 am at the Richardson Civic Center. Go to <http://www.acd.org> for more information



Some Fast Advice for Selecting and Using Ink Jet Printers

Printing is such a basic function of the Mac OS, I often wonder why so many people have problems selecting and using printers. Of course, when you check the confusing and often overlapping product lines from the manufacturers, it's easy to become totally bent out of shape over what to buy.

Like PC box makers, these companies are heavily competitive and want to cover all the bases. But it just makes it all the more difficult to choose the right model. Fortunately, with prices getting lower and lower, and quality moving in the other direction, it's really hard to find a truly bad product.

But there are potential landmines, which is why I've assembled a few suggestions and comments on buying and using your next printer

Why so cheap? How can you possibly get a good printer for \$50 or \$100? Printer makers follow the so-called "Gillette Razor" philosophy. Sell them cheap, and make big profits on the consumables. I mean, are those tiny ink jet cartridges really worth \$35 a pop? However, the efficiency with which a printer uses ink can really affect the cost of maintaining these devices, and it can soon exceed the original cost of the printer itself. Some of the larger computer magazines and review sites will measure the cost per page. While it can vary from model to model, Canon tends to be cheaper, Lexmark tends to be higher, and the rest fill out the great divide between these two extremes. If a printer uses separate cartridges for each color, that's even better, because you won't have to replace three colors because magenta is spent.

Mac compatible? Usually, but not always. Check the specifications. Sometimes you have to go to the company's Web site to get the drivers you need. In any case, don't install the drivers until you determine whether Mac OS X recognizes it out of the box. If it does, you'll see it listed in the Print dialog box (you don't even have to call up Print Center). Now try the various features, and if everything works all right, you don't have to worry about installing any extra software. You may find, however, that some features, such as borderless printing on Epson printers, requires newer drivers. And remember that if you use the printer in the Classic environment, you will also have to install the Mac OS 9 drivers and select the device in the Chooser.

Take speed claims with a grain of salt! Twenty pages a minute? Give me a break! Manufacturers measure print speeds from the time the page drops into the paper path, using the lowest resolution or draft mode setting. You trade off fast speeds for lower quality. But it can also take a few seconds for the job to spool to the print queue before the paper begins to move. On some printers, there will be a short interval for the print heads to clean themselves, which can add to printing time. At least HP is honest about this, and sometimes mentions print speeds at both the lower and highest quality settings, so you know what to expect.

Where's the cable? You just spent anywhere upwards of \$100 for a high quality printer, and there isn't any. Why? Most printers have both USB and Parallel ports (for PC boxes), and the printer manufacturers have decided not to supply both cables, or choose which one you're likely to need. So always include a cable in your purchase, unless you already have one for the older printer you are setting out to pasture.

Align the print heads first. More and more printers automatically print a test page after going through a print head alignment cycle. But for many, you still have to fire up a utility application to make sure things are set up just right. Where is it? If you install new drivers for a printer, you might find it in the Applications folder. Otherwise, launch Print Center, select the name of the printer (on some models you may have to Add it first) and click the Configure button. If you're using an older Mac OS, see if a special folder for the printer's utilities was created after installing the drivers. The Page Setup box for an Epson printer will often have a button to access the setup application.

Gaps in printed output? Maybe the printer was sitting around awhile before you brought it to your home or office. Use the printer utility software to clean the heads. There is usually a "deep cleaning" option to deliver a more intense result. Remember that each clean cycle uses some ink, so run them judiciously. If repeated clean cycles don't clear up the problem on a new printer, take it back to the dealer and insist on a fresh unit, or replacement consumables. It's also a good idea to print a page or two each week to keep the ink from drying up, and don't stock up too far in advance, unless you output lots of copies. Ink can also dry out in the wrapper after six months or a year.

What about your old printer? You migrate to Mac OS X, and are disappointed to find that your workhorse ink jet is not compatible and the manufacturer isn't planning on delivering the software you need. Time to send it to the rest home? Not necessarily. *Gimp-Print* (<http://gimp-print.sourceforge.net/MacOSX.php3>), a set of free drivers, supports over 500 printers from the major manufacturers. You are likely to find an older model among them, such as the Epson Stylus Color 1520, which is still a staple among graphic designers. Sometimes you'll even discover that Gimp-Print has better support of special features than the manufacturer. It costs you nothing to give it a try.

Test different papers. One brand of ink jet or multipurpose paper will give you smudgy output, and another will deliver text that is almost as good as a laser printer. I have had great results from Georgia-Pacific Multi-Purpose, which usually costs less than \$4.00 a package at Wal-Mart. It may not be the best paper in the world, but it works for me.

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NEWSLINE

QuarkXPress 6 for Mac OS X shipping next week

At a briefing on the Apple campus, Quark announced that QuarkXPress 6 for Mac OS X, the latest upgrade to the company's popular design and layout software, will ship next week. QuarkXPress 6 brings a host of new features and enhancements, all of which we have detailed in previous reports. "QuarkXPress 6 for Mac OS X is the most anticipated application of the year for our professional customers," said Steve Jobs, Apple's CEO. "Quark has done a great job bringing QuarkXPress 6 to Mac OS X and has removed the last barrier for creative professionals to move to Mac OS X." QuarkXPress 6 requires Mac OS X 10.2 or later, and carries a list price of US\$1,045. It can be purchased from the online Apple Store, Quark's Web site or by calling Quark at 1-800-676-4575. Users of QuarkXPress 5 can upgrade for \$199. The upgrade price for users of version 4 is \$299, while QuarkXPress 3 users can upgrade for \$499.

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Apple to hosts indie music party

Apple Computer threw a party for 150 independent record label executives on June 5th in its Cupertino, Calif., headquarters. The Mac maker hopes the party will result in licensing deals to expand the library of songs for sale at its iTunes digital music store.

Since its launch in April, the iTunes Music Store has sold 3 million songs, according to Apple. The company has licensing agreements with the top five record labels -Warner Music Group, Universal Music Group, BMG Entertainment, EMI Recorded Music and Sony Music -that enable it to offer a library of more than 200,000 songs (*“New Music Tuesday” adds between 2,500 – 4,500 songs each week – Ed*). Individual songs cost 99 cents to download (and most albums cost \$9.99) and may be transferred to an iPod, or up to three Macintosh computers, or burned onto an unlimited number of CDs. Unlike other legal music download services, Apple does not charge a monthly subscription fee.

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Foster High considers turning down free Macs

by Nora Doyle

TUKWILA, WA - Some Foster High School teachers are balking at the idea that the school board could refuse to let them accept \$43,000 worth of new computers the school was recently awarded through a grant program.

Earlier this year, teacher Jeff Heiman applied for a grant from a nonprofit organization offering 30 new Macintosh computers and six laser printers to a school in an economically challenged community. The Tukwila School District, with a high number of students who qualify for free and reduced lunch, fits the bill.

Heiman thought he had found an answer. When he found out in May that Foster won the grant, the math teacher was elated. The extra computers would give the students he'll teach next year daily access to a computer, which they need, he said.

But according to the school technology plan created in 2000, Tukwila schools will move toward using only personal computers (PCs), not the Macintosh, for financial reasons, Superintendent Michael Silver said.

The district has a six-person technology department staffed with people expert in PCs, Silver added. Having only PCs allows the district to better maintain, repair and replace computers in a cost-effective way, he said.

But even without the 30 new Macintosh computers, Foster will have a stash of Macs around the school. A caveat of the technology plan allows teachers to keep their Macs at their desks instead of getting a PC if they wish. In addition, the library and a graphics classroom can keep their Macs.

It's silly to turn down the offer of free Macs when the school district has to provide technical support for the Macs already at the high school, said Heiman, who said he didn't know about the Mac rule in the technology plan when he applied for the grant.

“My job as a teacher is to do everything I can to improve the education of kids. In my professional judgment, we need these computers,” he said.

The superintendent said the district should stick to its plan.

“At this point ... going with one platform for a small school district seems most prudent,” Silver said.

The matter will be discussed at the next school board meeting, when Heiman said he and other teachers will ask the board for a one-time exception to the technology-plan rule prohibiting new Macs.

Heiman said without new computers, the students he will teach next year will have little chance at using a computer as often as they need to because of the school's impending reorganization. About two years ago, the school was the winner of a \$427,000 Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation grant that calls for breaking students into smaller groups to maximize the time they spend with teachers. Foster's 700 students will belong to one of three "academies" that suits their interests. (The Gates grant does not restrict what kind of computers a school may use.)

Heiman will teach math and Spanish to about 140 students in the Experience Academy, which will try to better prepare students for the life they will encounter after high school.

The problem is that scheduling and other technicalities will not permit students in Heiman's group to have daily access to the school's computer labs, the teacher said. While his students often work effectively in groups at the seven computers he has in his own classroom, that's not enough computers for the days when each student needs one. The 30 computers provided by the grant will make a big dent in the problem, he said.

Nelson Humiston, parent of two children who will enroll in the Experience Academy next year, said he hopes the school board will allow Foster to accept the computers.

"In a time of serious budget crunches in the schools, for them to turn down a gift of \$43,000 just seems asinine ... Policy is a nice idea, but reality is that they're going to have Macs and they might as well take the free ones when they can get them," he said.

Heiman said he applied for another computer grant, but has not yet been notified of the results.

A school board decision on the new computers is not expected until the next meeting

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Thanks for taking the time to read this month's newsletter. Hope you enjoyed it. If you have any comments or suggestions for stories (or would even like to write a story - hint, hint, hint), please send them to me at machelpdesk@attbi.com. Feel free to share this newsletter with a friend. The newsletter archives are located at <http://www.machelpdesk.com/page6a.html>. Y'all come back now, y'hear!