



MAC FACTS

from

Mac Help Desk

SUPPORT, SALES, TRAINING & SERVICE

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A Message from Dru

I formally kicked off Mac Help Desk's *iPod Music Loading Service* on June 1st. As some of you are aware, I was associated with another service from August 2004. Unfortunately, the terms of the other company became increasingly unreasonable, so I resigned. Which is good news for y'all because with the CD jukebox I told you about last month, I can now offer you lower prices to load your iPod full of music. See <http://www.machelpdesk.com/imls.pdf> for more info. Ask for our Sizzlin' Summer iMLS Rates. Effective June 13th through July 30th.



Tiger, Tiger burning bright...By now you've probably all heard about Apple's newest Operating System – Mac OS X 10.4 – otherwise known as Tiger. If you haven't already upgraded to Tiger and are still considering migrating, here's a fantastic Tiger Migration manual. It's a large download (about 2MB) so be prepared. Go to <http://www.machelpdesk.com/tiger.pdf>. It's well worth the time.



Apple Corps of Dallas (ACD) hosts it's monthly meeting at the Richardson Civic Center on June 11th. The Main Meeting begins at 9 am and will about Apple's .Mac (that's dot Mac) service. Lee and Darrin from the Willow Bend Apple Store will be the presenters. The Main Meeting is FREE and open to the public. The Special Interest Groups (SIGs) begin a 8am and 10:30 am and are open to members only. For more info go to <http://www.acd.org>.



It's Official – Apple is moving to Intel Chips. See Newsline for more info! Wowsers!



The office will be closed June 24th –26th. I'll be attending a wedding in Iowa. The office will also be closed July 1st –4th for the Fourth of July Holiday. I'll be in Boston on the Esplanade watching the Pops play the 1812 Overture and listening to the cannons of the 1st Marine Division roar and watching some of the best fireworks in the country.



It's summer. They kids are home from school. Everyone want to use the computer. What better time to get that box of electronic miracles, tuned up and ready to take the heat...and the kids. Call

us to schedule an appointment. Ask for our Sizzlin' Summer Support Rates. Effective June 13th through July 30th.



Music-Player Tunes: Should You Own or Rent?

By Julio Ojeda-Zapata

Is a to go music-rental service really worth it? You have to consider you'd be paying fees for month after month and year after year without ever owning a thing. You'd become a slave to one such service or another, in a sense, because canceling it would also kill all the music you've painstakingly accumulated.

If you're finally getting into digital tunes with a portable player and songs downloaded from an online music store, your path seems clear, right? You'll go buy one of Apple's popular iPods and then hit its market-leading iTunes Music Store - correct?

Think again. At least, several pretenders to Apple's digital-music throne want you to reconsider.

And, the newest versions of the Napster, Rhapsody and Yahoo Music services make your decision a bit less obvious, especially if you aren't choosy about which player you'll tuck in a pocket or purse.

Sampling and Dabbling

Here's the Apple approach to online music: You download tunes at about buck a pop and essentially own them. You can then move them to an iPod - no other player need apply - or record them to blank CDs.

Napster, Rhapsody and Yahoo add something new to the mix. In addition to a-la-carte downloads, you can put rented music on a range of portable devices - not including the iPod - for a modest monthly fee. This means you can fill your player with thousands of tunes without having to buy every one, which few of us can afford.

Sounds appealing, doesn't it? It's a good way to sample new tracks from your favorite artists and to dabble in new genres without taking a huge financial hit.

Now, such an arrangement has its problems, which I'll cover below. But I'm betting Apple is looking hard at the subscription approach to portable music as it is increasingly challenged from all directions.

RealNetwork's Rhapsody, available as a computer-only music-rental service for a while, just relaunched with a \$15-a-month Rhapsody to Go option. The portable-music service competes with Napster to Go, available in test form since late last year and formally unveiled at US\$15 a month last February.

The latest entrant, Yahoo Music, has debuted a Music Unlimited service with portable-music features essentially identical to those from Rhapsody and Napster - but at only \$7 a month, or \$5 a month if paid in a one-year lump sum.

Paying the Piper

All three portable-music services depend on a Microsoft technology dubbed Janus, which allows "tethered" song transfers from Windows PCs to music players. That means you can take your music on the road, provided you keep paying that monthly subscription fee. If you stop, the songs don't work anymore - either on your player or your PC. *[Does it strike anyone else as ironic that Janus is the guardian gates (or maybe Gates). He is usually represented with two faces. -Ed]*

To get Janus-ized, you have to buy a compatible player. Some such devices work with Janus out of the box, while others may need a "firmware" upgrade consisting of software you download off an Internet site and install on the player.

I generally had decent luck using the Napster and Rhapsody services with one Janus-compatible portable player, Creative Lab's tiny Zen Micro, even though the maker offers its firmware upgrade only in test form for the moment.

Once I had downloaded each service's jukebox software, I was able to find music I liked in its online catalog and transfer it to the player with a drag-and-drop motion. When played on the device, songs sounded indistinguishable from purchased tracks. I could even mingle songs downloaded from the Napster site with those from Rhapsody, even though Napster assured me this was definitely not recommended nor, in fact, technologically feasible (yeah, right).

But I couldn't get Rhapsody to Go to work on one of two Windows PCs - though, in fairness, I was experiencing a number of other odd malfunctions on that computer. I haven't been the only one to run into Rhapsody problems.

Yahoo Problems

The Yahoo service also proved problematic. Its Music Engine jukebox software wouldn't read the contents of my player as readily as the Napster and Rhapsody programs, and synchronizing the device's contents with rented music on the hard drive took forever. This is all forgivable, however, since the just-debuted service is in "beta" (as in still-in-testing) form and technically not ready for prime time.

Those wanting to use iPods with rented music via their Windows machines are out of luck because Janus doesn't work with the Apple players.

So iPod users must buy and download songs, either via Apple's iTunes Music Store or through the Rhapsody store courtesy of a Real "Harmony" technology that provides iPod compatibility. (Apple doesn't sanction the latter and, in fact, incapacitated a previous version of Harmony. It will surely attempt to do so again, so you probably shouldn't count on using your iPod with Rhapsody in perpetuity.)

Napster, Rhapsody and Yahoo offer other ways to enjoy digital music. One is "streaming," which involves playing music radio-style over a broadband connection without downloading it. Napster and Rhapsody also offer "tethered downloads" consisting of unlimited music transfers to the hard drive - but not a portable player - for a smaller fee. Yahoo makes no such distinction, rolling computer and player rentals into a single monthly fee.

Extra Goodies

The three services are loaded with additional goodies in attempts to one-up the dominant iTunes.

Music Unlimited lets subscribers use their Yahoo Messenger software to sift through and listen to

friends' music collections and playlists. They also get purchased-track downloads at 79 cents each, compared with 99 cents for other Music Engine users.

Real lets users stream songs in the Rhapsody library as often as 25 times at no cost. This freebie is intended to entice them into sampling for-pay features, such as personalized playlists and "radio stations" attuned to their long-term listening patterns.

Napster is particularly feature-laden, offering such amenities as music-star blogs and exclusive tracks recorded in the service's studios, along with PlayLists to Go featuring prepackaged song selections in various categories for a Janus-ready device.

So is a To Go music-rental service really worth it? You have to consider you'd be paying fees for month after month and year after year without ever owning a thing. You'd become a slave to one such service or another, in a sense, because canceling it would also kill all the music you've painstakingly accumulated.

A la carte downloads are more satisfying in this regard. And if you intend to own music, Apple's iPod and iTunes are the way to go. The iPod, while lacking some features found in competing players, is the easiest and most elegant to use. The iTunes Music Store is no slouch in the features department, and it boasts the user-friendliest front end.

And we're betting Apple will roll out some kind of subscription service eventually for those intrigued by the music-rental option. It's only a matter of time.



NEWSLINE

Apple to Use Intel Microprocessors Beginning in 2006

At its Worldwide Developer Conference, Apple announced plans to deliver models of its Macintosh® computers using Intel® microprocessors by this time next year, and to transition all of its Macs to using Intel microprocessors by the end of 2007. Apple previewed a version of its critically acclaimed operating system, Mac OS X Tiger, running on an Intel-based Mac to the over 3,800 developers attending CEO Steve Jobs' keynote address. Apple also announced the availability of a Developer Transition Kit, consisting of an Intel-based Mac development system along with preview versions of Apple's software, which will allow developers to prepare versions of their applications which will run on both PowerPC and Intel-based Macs.

"Our goal is to provide our customers with the best personal computers in the world, and looking ahead Intel has the strongest processor roadmap by far," said Steve Jobs, Apple's CEO. "It's been ten years since our transition to the PowerPC, and we think Intel's technology will help us create the best personal computers for the next ten years."

"We are thrilled to have the world's most innovative personal computer company as a customer," said Paul Otellini, president and CEO of Intel. "Apple helped found the PC industry and throughout the years has been known for fresh ideas and new approaches. We look forward to providing advanced chip technologies, and to collaborating on new initiatives, to help Apple continue to deliver innovative products for years to come."

"We plan to create future versions of Microsoft Office for the Mac that support both PowerPC and Intel processors," said Roz Ho, general manager of Microsoft's Macintosh Business Unit. "We have a strong relationship with Apple and will work closely with them to continue our long tradition of making great applications for a great platform."

“We think this is a really smart move on Apple’s part and plan to create future versions of our Creative Suite for Macintosh that support both PowerPC and Intel processors,” said Bruce Chizen, CEO of Adobe.

The Developer Transition Kit is available starting today for \$999 to all Apple Developer Connection Select and Premier members. Further information for Apple Developer Connection members is available at developer.apple.com. Intel plans to provide industry leading development tools support for Apple later this year, including the Intel C/C++ Compiler for Apple, Intel Fortran Compiler for Apple, Intel Math Kernel Libraries for Apple and Intel Integrated Performance Primitives for Apple.



Apple to Supply iBooks for Cobb County One-to-One Computer Learning Initiative

Apple announced that the Cobb County School District (*which includes Atlanta, Ga - Ed*) has selected Apple as its supplier in the largest ever one-to-one computer learning initiative. The district's program, named “Power To Learn,” plans for Apple to provide iBook G4s to every student and teacher in the district, starting with deployment this fall of more than 17,000 iBooks for teachers district-wide and students at four high schools designated as demonstration sites. Pending school board approval, the second and third phases of the program will equip all Cobb County high school and middle school students with iBooks beginning in 2006, resulting in a total deployment of 63,000 iBooks.

“We're thrilled to work with Cobb County public schools on this landmark one-to-one initiative,” said Timothy D. Cook, Apple's executive vice president of Worldwide Sales and Operations. “School districts across the country have improved student achievement with the help of Apple's one-to-one solutions, and this ambitious project will give Cobb County students a tremendous academic advantage.”

“The Power to Learn program represents a giant step forward for education in Cobb County,” said Joseph Redden, superintendent of the Cobb County School District. “Apple's combination of innovative technology, world-class technical support and unparalleled experience in the education market make it an ideal partner.”

Designed with education in mind, the iBook G4 is encased in a sleek, durable polycarbonate plastic enclosure and offers superb performance with either a 1.2 GHz or 1.33 GHz PowerPC G4 processor. Providing up to six hours of battery life for all-day use in the classroom, the iBook offers AirPort Extreme 54 Mbps 802.11g wireless networking. Every iBook also comes preloaded with Mac OS® X and iLife® '05, allowing students and teachers to make the most of digital movies, photos and music in school projects and presentations. The lightweight iBook fits easily in a backpack and its slot-load optical drive has no protruding trays or doors that can break.



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@comcast.net. 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.