



MAC FACTS

from

Mac Help Desk

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A Message from Dru

Hope you had a **Happy St. Paddy's Day**. May the road you travel have only small hills. May the sun kiss your cheeks and the wind be pleasantly at your back. And may you be in heaven an hour before the Devil knows you're dead. Amen.

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You might wonder why I'm always pushing the Apple Corps of Dallas (ACD) and other Mac User Groups (MUGs). Because, if you've done any business with a retailer lately, you might have noticed what crummy customer service and support they give. That's because IT'S NOT THEIR JOB. They're job is to part you from your money and then kick your butt out the door hoping never to see you again until you want to spend more money. ACD, on the other hand, exists solely to help Mac users. The next monthly meeting is in April. The main meeting starts at 9 am and the SIGs (Special Interest Groups) start at 11 am. This all happens at the Richardson Civic Center (Central Expressway & Arapaho – SW corner) and, best of all, it's FREE! For more info go to – <http://www.acd.org>.

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Got Nigerians? Don't know about y'all, but I've been getting a flood, lately, of Nigerian con letters. You know the ones – some desolate Nigerian who's late husband stole a large amount of money from some company and now they need your help to get the money out of Nigeria and they're willing to give you a commission. WRONG! Not only is it spam, it's also a con. And unfortunately thousands of people fall for this con every year. But, once you know what to look for, you can spam the spammers. Go here - <http://www.flooble.com/fun/reply.php> and give the Nigerians a taste of their own medicine.

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FREE Hands-Free Massage anyone? I'll be at the upcoming Dallas Auto Show (3/26-30), as an exhibitor, in booth 45. Feel free to stop by and get a Free Hands-Free massage. The Show will take place at the Dallas Convention Center...And if big shows and/or downtown Dallas aren't your cup of tea, on April 5-6, I'll be at the Bob Duncan Community Center in Arlington, TX exhibiting at the Healing Arts Expo. Free massages and well-being for everyone! Did I mention the Free prizes?



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By: **David K. Every**

In the PC world, I hear all the time about "**Backwards**" compatibility. That to me is like saying "I wish I had to wash my clothes by pounding them with rocks like my great-great-grandmother".

What **Backwards** compatibility is, is when you create a new function or feature for your computer, it must also have a mode that works just like it did in the past. So if you come out some great new Video standard, with higher resolution than ever, then you will still emulate the older (crappier) mode - so that all old programs and Hardware will continue to work.

When you double the speed of something, or improve something else, computers (PC's especially) are almost always "backwards" compatible. So this means that the "new" thing, can behave backwards, and run as poorly (or slowly) as the "old" thing. Bleck! If I wanted it to behave as poorly as the old thing, then I would have kept the old thing to begin with.

DOS users are quite proud of their Backwards compatibility. They brag that they can still run DOS programs on WinNT. Or that their video card can still run like an old text-based computer of 2 or 3 decades ago. For some reason, to me, that is not something to be proud of. I bought that new thing so it would be better - not the same. I want to plug in new stuff and have it work better!

There has got to be a better way, and there is. Sometimes, but not always, my Mac is **forward compatible**. What this means is that when something is designed, it is designed with the future in mind (looking forward).

When Apple created the first Mac, they created it with 128k of RAM and a very small black and white screen. But Apple also designed it with the future in mind. They put values in Memory and told programmer to "ask" how large the display was, and what its resolution was. Apple also put in a location so programmers could ask if the computer could support color, and programmers could even set colors (even though the screen was only black and white). Three years later, Apple introduced color Macs with larger screens (and more resolution). Like magic, those that had obeyed the rules automatically took advantage of color and higher resolution. They were "forward" compatible. (Except Microsoft Apps, which all broke because they never follow the rules. Why should they when they can charge you for upgrades to fix their problems?).

It was neat taking old programs and run them on a NEW machine, and have them take advantage of new features. Some programs used color (what had only shown up on a color printer started looking the same on screen), much more memory, larger displays and so on. On PC's when I put in a new video card and ran a program, it had to run in the old video mode, couldn't use more colors than it was designed with, and other less-than-impressive stuff.

The Mac was the first computer to be "forward" compatible on a semi-regular basis, and the more I work with Windows and PC's, the more I question whether Apple is still the only computer to do this at all. We need to push the industry to do this more. We start by being aware of the issue, then by pointing it out. Eventually companies like M\$ will catch on, and hardware companies, and more than just Apple. We will end up with more companies engineering, and thinking towards the future

- instead of designing new things with one foot in the past (and backwards engineering).

Computers do it with memory and hard drive space (to a point), and can usually take advantage of faster processors automatically (unless they're something like MMX). But I want to see more of it - like I want to see people be able to add a second monitor and have that work automatically (well that works on a Mac). I'd like to be able to double or quadruple my Sound quality and have the OS and Sound programs automatically work at higher quality (well that worked on the Mac). I'd like to be able to take my computers memory beyond limits (like 640K) without having to rewrite all my programs (my Mac did that too). I want to be able to plug in CD-ROM's and have them work, even though a "CD-ROM" hadn't even been thought up when the SCSI was created (like my Mac again). I want my system to take advantage of a second processor, or 3D acceleration, or video acceleration - and have my older Apps work and take advantage of those functions (like Apple is doing with the Mac). Hmm... I'm noticing a trend to my thinking. I like it when Apple adds a features or function to my machine, and many old Apps work just fine and use the new functionality. I do not like the PC and that most of the times things have to be rewritten to work, or have to use old modes.

So every time I hear a PC person talking about "backwards compatibility", I just chuckle and think how "backwards" that is. I want more forward compatibility like my Mac gives me, and less backwards compatibility like I always get with my PC. I guess for the next decade or two I'll have to stick with my Mac!

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NEWSLINE

Apple stops selling the CRT iMac

CNET reports that Apple's decision to pull the last remaining CRT iMac model from its online store signals an end to the system's public availability. "Introduced in a shade known as Bondi Blue, the iMac spent its childhood in candy colors like grape and lime and its early adulthood in wild hues like Blue Dalmatian and Flower Power before spending its later years in subtle shades like graphite and snow. Within hours after its disappearance from the Apple Store, the iMac was being eulogized by the Mac faithful."

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Apple Releases Mac OS X 10.2.4 Update

Apple Computer has released Mac OS X 10.2.4, which includes networking enhancements for SMB and AFP file services and improves support for audio applications under Classic and for FireWire audio devices under Mac OS X. The update also rolls in several bug fixes for the Finder, the Classic environment, printing, and the Address Book, and includes security updates to some of the Unix utilities underpinning Mac OS X. The update is available via the Software Update pane in Mac OS X's System Preferences, as a stand-alone 40.1 MB updater for Mac OS X 10.2.3, and as a stand-alone 76 MB combined updater for any version of Mac OS X 10.2. [GD]

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Safari Public Beta (v60) Released

Although we usually don't report beta software updates, Mac OS X users seem to have embraced Apple's Safari Web browser in a big way, with more than 1.5 million copies downloaded, according to Apple. The latest update, Safari v60, reportedly performs 30 percent faster, improves the playback of Flash content, adds support for XML, and enhances support for CSS1. The update is available through Software Update or as a separate 2.9 MB download.

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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), please send them to me at <mailto: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!