



MAC FACTS

from

Mac Help Desk

SUPPORT, SALES, TRAINING & SERVICE

(972) 783-9787 • (214) 249-9543 - *Pager*

e-mail address - machelpdesk@comcast.net

Web site - <http://www.machelpdesk.com>

a Macintosh Solutions Provider company

Volume 15, Number 9

September 2005

A Message from Dru

Thanks to all of you who sent their condolences regarding my Dad's sudden death on August 12th. If you want to see what he looked like, read his bio, and see the obit from the Philadelphia Inquirer. Look here <http://www.machelpdesk.com/dad.html>



Hurricane Relief: Make a commitment to send something to those that lost everything - American Red Cross telephone donation hotline: 1-800-435-7669.

American Red Cross web site LINK: <http://www.redcross.org>

Episcopal Relief, LINK: <http://www.er-d.org/>

Salvation Army, LINK: <http://www.salvationarmyusa.org/>

Catholic Charities, LINK: <http://www.catholiccharitiesusa.org/>

B'nai B'rith Disaster Relief, LINK: <http://www.bnaibrith.org/>

Baton Rouge Area Foundation, LINK: <http://www.braf.org/>



Not that we need it, but...For those of you who don't read e-mails - Mac Help Desk, Inc. has as of August 8, 2005 retained the services of Fidelity Credit Management to provide collection of past due accounts and other monies owed to Mac Help Desk, Inc. [In other words, 'the Bank of Richman' is hereby closed.]

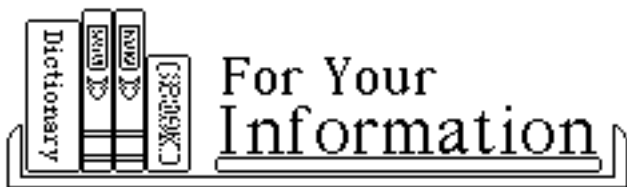
Invoices that are past due by more than 45 days will be automatically forwarded to Fidelity for collection..



Wonder what '.Mac' is? Come find out for yourself at the Apple Corps of Dallas' monthly meeting on Saturday September 10th at the Richardson Convention Center, Arapaho & Central. Meetings start at 9 am. It's kid-safe and FREE!



The office will be closed on September 17th - 19th. I'll be in Boston attending the naming ceremony of my nephew. I *am* his godfather, after all. Oh and don't forget to take our survey. Just go to <http://www.machelpdesk.com> and scroll down a bit. Thanks!



Jury Duty Scam Leads to Identity Theft

Here's a new twist scammers are using to commit identity theft: the jury duty scam. Here's how it works:

The scammer calls claiming to work for the local court and claims you've failed to report for jury duty. He tells you that a warrant has been issued for your arrest.

The victim will often rightly claim they never received the jury duty notification. The scammer then asks the victim for confidential information for "verification" purposes.

Specifically, the scammer asks for the victim's Social Security number, birth date, and sometimes even for credit card numbers and other private information - exactly what the scammer needs to commit identity theft.

So far, this jury duty scam has been reported in Michigan, Ohio, **Texas**, Arizona, Illinois, Pennsylvania, Minnesota, Oregon and Washington state.

It's easy to see why this works. The victim is clearly caught off guard, and is understandably upset at the prospect of a warrant being issued for his or her arrest. So, the victim is much less likely to be vigilant about protecting their confidential information.

In reality, court workers will never call you to ask for social security numbers and other private information. In fact, most courts follow up via snail mail and rarely, if ever, call prospective jurors.

Action: Never give out your Social Security number, credit card numbers or other personal confidential information when you receive a telephone call.

This jury duty scam is the latest in a series of identity theft scams where scammers use the phone to try to get people to reveal their Social Security number, credit card numbers or other personal confidential information.

It doesn't matter *why* they are calling - all the reasons are just different variants of the same scam.

Protecting yourself is simple: Never give this info out when you receive a phone call.

Please let your friends and family know about this jury duty scam - it's important.



NEWSLINE

The iPod's Competition: The Shakeout Begins

Every so often, you read a story from someone who should know better claiming that the iPod is

past its peak and that sales will soon begin to tumble. There's no way that Apple can continue to dominate the digital music player market for so long. After all, nothing is forever, and this is Apple Computer. Of course, nobody is predicting the imminent end of Microsoft's dominance of the PC market, because that's Microsoft. There's supposed to dominate. It's their destiny. Apple is destined to fail, and if these misguided folks continue to say that often enough, maybe it'll come true.

Well, in the case of music players, there are failures, but not from Apple. The latest casualty is D&M Holdings, Inc. of Japan. You may not have heard of the company, but you've surely heard of its brand names, which include Denon, Marantz, McIntosh Laboratory (which preceded the Apple Macintosh), ReplayTV and, of course, Rio. In case you don't recall, Rio actually built the first portable MP3 player to get to market, long before Apple jumped into the game with the iPod.

But being first doesn't guarantee success, if you can't stay ahead of the competition. D&M's excuse was that "the company's decision to shut down the Rio business followed a determination that the mass-market portable digital audio player market was not a strong enough strategic fit with the company's core and profitable premium consumer electronics brands to warrant additional investment in the category."

Shorn of the corporate-speak, it simply means that Apple, which maintains a formidable 70 percent marketshare, beat them to a pulp.

A few weeks back, Creative Labs, which makes Zen MP3 players, announced it was hemorrhaging red ink as it struggled to build market share. Will Creative hang in there? I don't pretend to predict corporate strategy, nor am I about to suggest that the problems with the Zen will impact the future of the company's other brands, which include Soundblaster sound cards and Cambridge SoundWorks loudspeakers. In fact, Creative's executives blame the loss on "price competition" and promise to regain profitability by year's end. I suppose we'll just have to wait and see what happens.

This doesn't, of course, mean that the iPod is immune. Other competitors, such as Samsung, have deep pockets and perhaps the wherewithal to weather years of heated competition to gain a significant foothold of the market. Apple can't rest on its laurels just because the Rio is on the way out, and Creative Labs has seen some financial reverses. Even cultural icons are eventually supplanted by other cultural icons, and Apple has no exclusive on brilliant design.

Other companies out there are bound to some day find a mix of low pricing and reasonably user friendly design that may truly give the iPod a run for its money. If anything, the pressure is higher for Apple to continue to innovate with its MP3 player line. It may not happen this year, or even the next, but eventually digital music players will become commodity products, just as handheld radios and CD players are now. In that environment, the iPod may still be a significant presence, but not nearly as much as it is now.

In fact, I very much believe that Apple may have to begin to reconsider its music strategy as the competition becomes more fierce. Take subscription music services. Today, they don't count for much compared to the iTunes Music Store. In addition, ongoing negotiations over royalties for music delivered on a subscription basis have hit a snag, which may, in the short term, imperil such iTunes rivals as Napster, Real and Yahoo! The music companies still have to be dragged kicking and screaming into the 21st century, and things may get nasty before the issue is resolved.

But there are benefits to the subscription model. It may not be the best route for the long-term, because your music library only exists as long as you pay the monthly fee. But it allows you to legally sample an entire song before you buy a copy, not rely on just a 30-second sound bite to make a determination. That might just give the fledgling artist a better chance to deliver hit product which is, as you might expect, what the business is all about.

Assuming current negotiations over royalties succeed, should Apple consider this route? Perhaps not while it's sitting pretty far ahead of the competition. Surely Mac users must also feel somewhat alienated because those subscription services, which use Microsoft's digital rights management scheme, do not support Macs, and the iPod, except for Real's hack, is not a player either, if you'll forgive the pun.

You can bet, though, that Apple has a "Plan B" and no doubt a "Plan C" if the market for iPods and music sales begins to sour. Profit margins on iPods are sufficient to allow for price cuts, and adding an iTunes music subscription service with a unique Apple slant may indeed be part of the picture.

But if more and more music player brands bite the dust in the months to come, don't expect to see any big changes from Apple in the foreseeable future.

○❁❁❁❁▼▲❁❁❁❁●

Sign of the Times ~



○❁❁❁❁▼▲❁❁❁❁●

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.