



BRMUG

Baton Rouge Macintosh User Group

News and Views

June 2003

BRMUG Information

Member Meetings

Regular meetings are held the third Thursday evening of each month at BlueBonnet Library at 6:30 P.M.

Planning Meetings

The Thursday after the regular member meeting the planning meeting is held at 6:15 at Calendars on Perkins near Essen.

About BRMUG

For more information call the User Group President, Isaac Traxler, 225-926-1552 or send e-mail to info@brmug.org or check our web page at <http://www.brmug.org/>

BRMUG Volunteers

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 Richard Johnson m1@brmug.org
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 Contact anyone above if you have suggestions for BRMUG.

After the Meeting

Join us at Brewbachers on Bluebonnet after the BRMUG meeting: fun, food, open format. Get to know each other.

Newsletter Articles

Please submit newsletter articles to newsletter@brmug.org. Articles are printed on a space available basis. Submissions are welcome!

The June meeting will be held at the **Bluebonnet Library** on **June 19th**, the 3rd Thursday of the month, at 6:30 P.M. This month's presentation will be on **Keynote and PowerPoint** by Don Ballard. As many of you know, Don has been using PowerPoint for a number of years and has become quite proficient. This month he will show us Keynote (Apple's new presentation software) and show us how it stacks up to PowerPoint. Members and guests are welcome. After the meeting, we will have our normal Social Hour at Brewbachers. If you need help getting there, check our web site for a map (<http://www.brmug.org/about-brmug.html>).

Meeting is at the Bluebonnet Library!
 Visit <http://www.brmug.org/next-meeting.html> for more information.

May Meeting Review

Last month Glenn Matherne demonstrated iPhoto and quenched our thirst for pictures from his honeymoon. Thanks Glenn! I know I learned a few things I did not know.

AAPL

This has not been a bad month. Apple stock has hovered in the \$17 to \$18 range. It has held most of its value since the iTunes Music Store opened. This surprised a lot of people. Of course, numerous announcements about future competing services have been made. Apple held a meeting with about 150 independent music publishers and offered them pretty much the same deal the big 5 are getting. It will be interesting to see how many small labels sign with Apple. Of course the real waiting game is iTunes for Windows. When it comes out, how Windows users like it, and how it and the store stack up against the rest of the market will determine the success or failure of the iTunes Music Store long term. Maybe that editorial was right. Maybe Apple really did re-invent the music industry. Maybe they were the only ones who could save the industry. But will they profit from it long term?

QuarkXpress 6

QuarkXpress 6 has finally been announced. This is the version that runs on Mac OS X. The shipping date seems to be in dispute. Regardless, it should be only a matter of weeks before people can

start trying out QuarkXpress 6. I wonder how compatible with the previous release it will be? I wonder how stable it will be? If it turns out to be a winner, there goes the last major barrier to Mac OS X adoption.

WWDC

Now that Apple has bowed out of MacWorld, they have to use other avenues for announcements. It appears that this year's Worldwide Developers Conference on June 23-27 in San Francisco is going to get a lot of them. Expect to see pre-release version of Panther-- the next upgrade for Mac OS X. Also expect to see some Macintosh model running the new Power PC 970 processor from IBM. Shipping is not expected to start immediately, but it does appear that Apple may ship 970-based systems before Panther ships. Maybe in the next month or two. Jaguar will not show the true performance potential of the 970. Panther will be much more capable of exploiting the 970s power. I can hardly wait.

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O'Reilly

O'Reilly has long been in the technical book publishing business. In recent years they have taken an interest in the Macintosh world. Their first big success was the *Missing Manual* series that is edited by David Pogue. In fact, the series has been so successful that it has been expanded with volumes for the Windows world.

O'Reilly publishes a large number of Macintosh-oriented books. If you are not familiar with their books, please visit them at <http://mac.oreilly.com>. Many of the books have sample chapters online so that you can "try before you buy". I have found almost every book they publish to be very good (and amongst the best available on the subject anywhere). The *iMovie Missing Manual* was worth its weight in gold when I was preparing for my iMovie demo last year.

They have recently published *Mac OS X Hints*. This book was written by Rob Griffiths. If you think the title sounds familiar, you are right. Ron runs a web site called Mac OS X Hints (<http://www.macoshints.com/> - covered in a newsletter article not long after this site first came online). The book is a collection of hints originally published on the web site. The hints were all re-written and tested for Jaguar (over 550 hints). Many screenshots added. David Pogue even polished the book. While I have not seen this book yet, I bet it is a winner. If you want to know how to tweak Mac OS X, this is a great place to start. *Chapter 3: The Dock* is featured online at O'Reilly's web site.



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Mac OS X Hacks is another O'Reilly book. It was written by Rael Dornfest and Kevin Hemenway. This book is a long list of tweaks and changes you can make to Mac OS X. As the hacks are presented, various parts of Mac OS X are explained. The hacks go from how to use various features of Mac OS X through building on the Unix basis that Mac OS X is built from. O'Reilly's site lists the 100 hacks in the book with a short description of each. Several of these actually have links to the full text.

by Isaac Traxler

Mac OS X Software

Mac OS X is a great operating system. It comes packed with a lot of software. A lot of commercial software is available. But how do you keep it up to date? Where do you go looking for software?

Keeping Mac OS X current is not too difficult. In the *System Preferences Panel* is a program called *Software Update*. You can run this when connected to the Internet and you Macintosh will connect to Apple and see if any updates for the operating system are available. You can then decide to wait, to mark the updates Inactive, or download and install the updates. This is a great tool and resolves a lot of issues from the past. If your Macintosh stays connected to the Internet, you can have *Software Update* check each day and see if any new updates exist.

Unfortunately, *Software Update* does not take care of everything. You still have to check Apple's web site for updates to *Safari*, *iMovie*, and others. And you have to check the vendors sites for any other software you have installed.

For a long time, Macintosh users have counted on Version Tracker (<http://www.versiontracker.com/>). For years this has been the main site I have visited to find new software or to check for updates to software I already have. In the last year or so, the site has changed some. You now get to go through at least one extra web page to download updates. Each page has ads. The pages are complicated and slow to load and render. In spite of all of this, it is still an excellent resource and a site worth going to.

I have shifted to macupdate (<http://macupdate.com>) as my primary software site. I look for new software as well as updates here. While it looks different than Version Tracker, it reminds me of the old Version tracker site. It has less clutter. It loads faster. It does not have

extraneous page loads between you and your updates. I highly encourage you to browse this site.

by Isaac Traxler

Safari

I have been using Safari as my primary browser for a while now (shortly after tabs were added). So I guess it is time to discuss Safari. Especially since Microsoft announced that they would not make another major release of Internet Explorer. So Safari is the future.

Safari has improved a lot since its initial release. Apple has tried to make very few obvious changes. They have concentrated on behind the scenes improvements. I think this is great. Get Safari working before you invest a lot of efforts doing things that have not been done.

So what has Apple done? A lot more configuration options exist now -- although I still cannot set animated gifs to play just once. Apple is close to reaching the minimum needed configurability to satisfy most users. Safari is about the same speed as Mozilla from my perspective. Some pages are faster in Safari, some faster in Mozilla. This is saying a lot.

I have very little trouble with pages not rendering in Safari. I found one the other day that consistently crashed Safari. I sent it off to Apple via the Bug report button. I think **EVERY** software product should have this feature. What better way to improve your product than to have the users directly report bugs while they are experiencing them. Safari still does not play Settlers worth a darn (<http://settlers.cs.nwu.edu>).

I like the minimalist attitude of Safari. As little space as possible is wasted, leaving as much as possible for displaying web pages. I do miss the line at the bottom of Mozilla that reports the destination link of a page when you hover the mouse over a link. I really wish Apple would find a way to add this feature to Safari. I like being able to see where I am going before I click.

I find the bookmark system confusing and clumsy. Why can't you drag drop while managing bookmarks? Why can you only open multiple pages in tabs at the parent folder level? Hasn't Apple heard of nested folders? As a matter of fact, I believe the entire bookmark system needs an overhaul in Safari. I don't get excited about any of them, but Safari's is the worst I have seen.

Printing is another issue. I love the way most pages look when display in Safari. I hate the way I need a microscope to read pages printed from Safari. I am not sure where the problem is. I have had problems printing in almost every browser I have ever used. This is one place where Mozilla still outperforms everybody else. Hey Apple, this one needs a lot of help. Not all of the rest of us are under 21 with better than perfect vision.

Many of the keyboard/mouse shortcuts are great in Safari. But why do I **HAVE** to go to the Reload button to reload a page? I realize this is the normal way. But why can't the mouse let me? It already allows to View Source and Save a Page As... Is it asking to much to have a few more options there? Like forward, backward, reload? Other browsers can do it. Mozilla does it. You borrowed the Tab mouse menu from Mozilla -- borrow the page body mouse menu from Mozilla. I think I lose more time moving back up to the reload/back buttons than I do anywhere else.

Safari is a frustrating product to use. It has so much right. It feels good. It is fast. It is clean. It does not seem to leak memory or abuse cpu. It rarely crashes. 90% of it is very ergonomically designed. Please Apple, get around to the next 5-8%. I might not care that other browsers exist.

by Isaac Traxler

Toast

Mac OS X provides the ability to burn CDs and DVDs. Sort of. It works with Apple CD-R, CD-RW, and DVD-R drives. It works with some third-party devices. It does not work with some others. It can burn some kinds of CDs: Music, MP3 data, and for other Macintoshes. Limited video DVDs can be created.

What if you need to exchange files with the Windows or Unix world? What about a CD that they all can read? What about a hybrid CD where the Macintosh sees one thing and the Windows world sees another?

If your needs go beyond the basic, then the built-in features of Mac OS X will probably not be enough for you. But there is an answer. Roxio (<http://www.roxio.com>) produces Toast Titanium which is the latest version of the venerable Adaptec Toast software.

Toast Titanium adds a lot of functionality to Mac OS X. It also can interfere with the built-in burning software (although

the latest version is not supposed to). Toast is also a great solution for burning DVDs. It works with SuperDrives and with third-party DVD-Rs. It also allows you to save data onto a DVD.

Toast Titanium and Mac OS X really do work together. When Toast is burning a CD, it periodically updates the Dock icon so that you can see how far along you are. It takes advantage of the bouncing icon to let you know that the burn is complete. These features are great -- no interrupting what you are doing to check on progress, just glance at the icon. A really nice feature that a number of programs could learn from.

Toast works by creating a buffer that you drag stuff to. It constantly updates the size so that you can decide when to stop. When you start the burn, Toast dumps from this buffer to the CD.

Toast provides a lot of control over the burning process. You can configure almost everything -- perfect for those of us who like to burn at slower speeds. Toast can read and burn just about every format out there. It is perfectly happy working from its buffer or starting with a downloaded ISO image. It will even create ISO images. In fact, the list of features and supported formats is longer than the available space here. You can check out their web site for a summary of features and supported formats (http://www.roxio.com/en/products/toast/product_comparison.jhtml).

The idea behind Toast is great. Take something the Macintosh does and extend it. Because Toast works at such a low level, it has to get updated practically every time Apple changes something. It actually replaces some of the Mac OS X code. This tight integration can obviously lead to issues. Toast and Mac OS have had them many times. Regardless, Toast is the class of the field. If you need to do things beyond Apple's basic features, Toast is for you. Good luck!

by Isaac Traxler

Future Meeting Calendar

June 19, 2003	.....Keynote	.....Don Ballard	.....Library
July 17, 2003	.....X Windows	.....Isaac Traxler	.....Library
August 21, 2003	.....iCal/iSync	.....Isaac Traxler	.....Library
TBA	.....BRMUG Picnic	.....Everyone	.....LSU
September 18, 2003	.....iMovie	.....TBA	.....Library
October 16, 2003	.....Mac OS X Utilities	.....Isaac Traxler	.....TBA
November 20, 2003	.....Annual Game Meeting	.....John Quebedeaux	.....Library
December 18, 2003	.....Christmas Party	.....Everyone	.....Library

Business Card Composer

Have you ever tried to make a business card? Using Photoshop is very tedious. In fact, none of the common page layout or graphics tools lend themselves to business cards. This is a real shame considering how good inkjet printers have become and how reasonable business card blanks are.

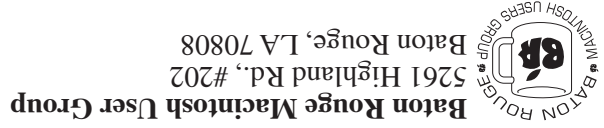
BeLight (<http://www.belightsoft.com/composer/>) saw the same thing I did. They set out to make a program that would make it easy to produce quality business cards with a minimum of fuss. They even provide lots of samples to help get you started. The result is Business Card Composer (shareware: \$39.95).

Business Card Composer meets many of its goals. It is very easy to use. It is native for Mac OS X. Producing good looking cards is rather simple. I tested the software by trying to reproduce the existing BRMUG business card in it. A couple of tries and I had our logo inserted and sized appropriately. Placing text in the correct position was not hard at all. In fact everything the program could do was easy and fast. In less than an hour I was very close to our current card.

The problem was the things it could not do. It did not know about Small Caps (when the lowercase letters are actually printed in smaller uppercase letters). You cannot control vertical spacing with a paragraph. Basic type features are present -- but nothing fancy. This is a shame. Business cards often take advantage of the fancier features of fonts and type.

This was a real shame. Everything they did was great. Unfortunately they stopped before producing the product most people want. If you need something like this, go ahead and try Business Card Composer. They have a free version that the only limit is the watermark it prints on the cards.

by Isaac Traxler



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Baton Rouge Macintosh User Group

This Month:
Keynote and PowerPoint
by Don Ballard

Hiroshima 45
Chernobyl 86
Windows 95

**THIS NEWSLETTER IS RECEIVED BY ALL
BRMUG MEMBERS, CONTRIBUTORS, AND
REPRESENTATIVES.**

The Baton Rouge Macintosh Users Group is a non-profit organization dedicated to Macintosh Users. Our mission is to help bring these users together in order to keep them informed of Apple Computer, Inc.'s trends, visions, and educate them on how to best use this most cost effective, easiest and friendliest of all platforms: **The Macintosh.**

If you are in the position of selling, supporting, or using the Apple Macintosh computer or any of Apple's products, we would like your participation and support for the benefit of our membership and your customer base.

Everyone is invited to attend the meetings. For a complimentary newsletter, or flyers to give out to others, or any information about the group contact the following BRMUG Ambassador: Isaac Traxler, President, (504) 926-1552, e-mail: president@brmug.org. We'll be most happy to talk to you about the Macintosh!

Send this form with \$15 (\$10 with copy of current school id for students) check payable to BRMUG to: BRMUG Treasurer, 5261 Highland Road, Suite 202, Baton Rouge,

BRMUG Membership Form 6/2003

Name: _____

Address: Street, City, State, ZipCode

Home Phone: _____

Office Phone: _____

Things the club should do: _____

My interest areas: _____

