



BRMUG

Baton Rouge Macintosh User Group

News and Views

July 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

Isaac Traxler president@brmug.org
 Glenn Matherne vp@brmug.org
 Don Ballard treasurer@brmug.org
 Don Ballard sec@brmug.org
 Richard Johnson m1@brmug.org
 Jeff Sheldon m2@brmug.org
 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 July meeting will be held at the **Bluebonnet Library** on **July 17th**, the 3rd Thursday of the month, at 6:30 P.M. This month's presentation will be on **X-Windows and Fink** by Isaac Traxler. Apple now offers an X-Windows beta that can be downloaded and installed. Combined with the Developers kit and Fink, the Macintosh becomes a very significant member of the Unix-like family. Members and guests are welcome. After the meeting, we will have our normal Social Hour at Brewbachers. If you need help getting there (<http://www.brmug.org/about-brmug.html>).

Meeting is at the Bluebonnet Library!

Visit <http://www.brmug.org/next-meeting.html> for more information.

June Meeting Review

Thanks Don! I think you did a great job showing how easy Keynote is to use and pointing out that it does require a little more hardware than PowerPoint. You almost got me excited enough to play with Keynote.

AAPL

This has been another good month for Apple. The stock price has hovered around \$20 (much of the time over \$20). The official announcement of G5 based systems (IBM's Power 4 desktop chip) helped some (even though they are not yet shipping). In site of this announcement, I think the rise to \$20 and the steady hold was more Wall Street believing that things are about to be even better for Apple (over the next 2-3 months). And now we wait for what next month brings.

Mac OS X Security Updates

Apple has released two security updates for Mac OS X in the last month along with a few other software updates. With Panther being delayed, Jaguar needs some more help to keep going.

iChat AV and iSight

Rather than announcing a new product, Apple has built a lot of new features into iChat. First off, iChat will hopefully soon gain an entire new universe of people to message with. AOL is currently working to integrate ICQ into AIM. Since iChat

is AIM compatible, it should gain ICQ access in the future. AOL has promised to integrate with out instant messaging environments in the future (which should help bring them to iChat.

Apple also released a "web cam" -- a camera that connects to your Macintosh via FireWire. iSight is a 640x480, 30 fps, 24 bit camera and a microphone. All data rom the camera and power for the camera flows over the FireWire cable. It weighs less than 2.5 ounces.

iChat AV with an iSight camera becomes a teleconferencing system. With adequate bandwidth, both video and audio can be transmitted to another iChat AV user. The potential to bring low-cost family chats together is phenomenal. Imagine using your Internet connection to video-phone speak and see family on the other side of the country. Apple has brought their unique simple hardware design together with an easy to use software package to finally make video conferencing easy. Maybe you will be able to show someone the next time you need help.

JULY Contents

June Meeting Review.....	•1
AAPL.....	•1
Mac OS X Security Updates.....	•1
iChat AV and iSight.....	•1
The New G5 Macintosh	•2
X-Windows and Fink	•2
Future Meeting Calendar	•3

The New G5 Macintosh

Apple announced a new Power Macintosh line at WWDC. Simultaneously, the old line was no longer available for purchase (even though much of the new line will not ship before August). You can still buy a G4-based Power Macintosh in the old plastic cover case. Although your only choice is one or two 1.25 GHz cpus. A single 1.25 GHz system with 256 MB RAM, 80 GB hard drive, Combo Drive and ATI Radeon 9000 is \$1300. A decked out dual system with SuperDrive and 2 GB of memory is \$3,300. Not really bad prices (especially at the bottom). But still not pocket change. Especially for a system that will be viewed as obsolete as soon as the new G5 systems start shipping.

So, what about the new G5 system? Apple is calling it a G5. It has the IBM Power 4 desktop chip in it. This should not be confused with the next generation processor that Motorola has been developing (at a rate that was unacceptably slow for Apple and Macintosh users). The G5 is a 64-bit processor. This does not mean that it is automagically twice as fast. It does mean that the cpu can handle data 4 bits at a time instead of 32 bits at a time when it needs to. It also provides for more real and virtual memory (Apple is initially promising support for 8 GB of RAM). Independent of the word size, the G5 is just faster. At the same clock speed it can execute instructions in less time. Even more important, it is much better at stacking up instructions and executing multiple instructions in a lot less time than the G4

would have. And the icing on the cake is that its clock speed is much better than the G4 (1.6, 1.8 and 2.0 GHz initially). So at the same speed, the processor get more done and it is available at almost twice the speed of the G4. Seems like a no brainer doesn't it.

By the way, the new G5 comes in a new snazzy, Aluminum case like the PowerBook. So the professional line matches once again. The new G5 case is about the same width, a little taller, and weighs less than the previous G4 case. It has been divided into regions. The entire bottom zone of the case is the power supply. Above that is an isolated section with the processor(s) and memory. This area is separated from the rest of the system and has its own fans for cooling. Above this is the PCI/AGP expansion area (of course it has its own fan). And on top is the storage area for hard drives and optical drive (with its on fan). This new design will make it much easier to keep temperatures at acceptable levels throughout the entire system.

So what is the catch? There are several actually. Some people are unsure about the look of the new aluminum case with the grilled front. The new systems have only one optical drive slot (we just got the dual-bay G4). The price is a little steep. The 1.6 GHz entry level model starts at \$2000 (\$1800 with CD-RW/DVD-ROM instead of SuperDrive). The 1.8 GHz starts at \$2400 (\$2200 with CD-RW/DVD-ROM instead of SuperDrive). The dual 2 GHz system is \$3000 with SuperDrive.

But before you run out and order one, take a closer look. Not all systems are created equal. In fact, Apple has two very different systems that you can get. The 1.6 GHz system uses PC2700 memory instead of the faster PC3200 memory use by its bigger brothers (possibly a noticeable performance difference) and it maxes out at 4 GB (4 slots) instead of 8 GB (8 slots) of RAM. The 1.6 GHz system comes with an 80 GB instead of 160 GB serial ATA drive. The 1.6 GHz model has 3 33 MHz, 64 bit PCI slots. Its bigger brothers have 1 133 MHz, 64-bit PCI-X slot and 2 100 MHz, 64-bit PCI-X slots. PCI-X slots are the next generation of PCI. They are backward compatible but when used with new PCI-X cards, can provide dramatically improved performance.

So before you buy, be aware of the differences in the models. This is not to

say the 1.6 GHz model is a bad system -- in fact it is substantially better than any G4 system available. But for a modest amount extra, you can jump up another level (\$200-\$400 -- 10-20% of base cost).

What a history: PPC 601, 603/604, 603e, 604e, G3, G4 and now the G5. A remarkable hardware progression. The G5 brings a lot of new hope. IBM is shipping 1.6, 1.8 and 2 GHz chips ahead of schedule. Motorola rarely met schedule. Most Motorola chips did not have much growth (improvement from initial speed to final speed) -- with the exception of the 603/603e family. IBM is known to expect more growth from their chip families. Rumor has it that 3 GHz chips may be available by year's end. Also, IBM has set early 2005 as the release date for the next generation desktop processor (G6?). Less than 2 years a way.

We may finally need sunglasses here.

by Isaac Traxler

X-Windows and Fink

So you have explored the boundaries of Mac OS X and you want more? Guess what? There is a lot more! Get ready to enter the Unix zone. Mac OS X is capable of being a full featured command line and graphical member of the Unix community (whatever that is). So how do you get there?

The command line side of Mac OS X is already there. Open the *Terminal* application (*Applications --> Utilities*). Here is that elusive command line you never had. Kind of funny actually. The DOS command line is becoming less significant as Windows becomes a more true graphical environment. Mac OS X finally brings a command line to the Macintosh world and it brings a very powerful at that.

So you are tired of the command line already? No worries. Apple has embraced the graphical side of Unix also. Start out by downloading X-11 from Apple (<http://www.apple.com/macos/x11/download/>). Apple requires your name and e-mail address to download. Next you download the current Developers' Toolkit (a link to it is in the bottom right of the X-11 download page). Install them both. wasn't that fun?

So far you have not really done much. X-11 is the software that graphical applications in the Unix world use to display.



BRMUG Mailing Address

5261 Highland Road #202
Baton Rouge, LA 70808

For more information call the User Group
President, Isaac Traxler: (225) 926-1552
e-mail: info@brmug.org
web: <http://www.brmug.org/>

Mac OS X uses Aqua to display graphics (everything on a Mac) for you to see. Apple's X-11 software converts Unix X-Window graphic commands into Mac OS X Aqua calls making it possible for graphical Unix programs to display on Mac OS X.

So how do you get graphical Unix programs? The easiest answer I know is with Fink and Fink Commander. Go to the Fink download page (<http://fink.sourceforge.net/download/index.php>). Follow the Quick Start instructions for a new user. The 'sudo dselect' command will provide a menu that you can use to update, install, and remove packages. This is a nice simple way for new people to use Fink. Instead you can use 'fink selfupdate' to learn about new packages, 'fink update-all' to update/upgrade installed packages, and 'fink install <package name>' to install new packages.

Right about now you are probably feeling a little overwhelmed. You probably want to know what Fink is and what is going on. The Unix family has a lot of variation. Most packages do not automatically work on all flavors of Unix. It takes a lot of work to write one so that it works on many flavors. Fink is an Open Source project that was started with the goal of providing the Mac OS X community access to as much of the Unix software library as possible. This was no simple task. While Mac OS X is based on FreeBSD, Apple changed a lot. In particular they changed a lot of the libraries (including leaving X-11 out initially). The Fink project tries to take existing Unix source code packages and provide a list of patches that must be applied to make them work with Mac OS X. If you use Fink to do source builds (as I do), when Fink installs a package, it downloads the real package from wherever it is (Fink keeps a database of packages and where to get them), applies a patch file to the distribution software so that it will work on Mac OS X and then it compiles the source code. Yes. It actually downloads all the source code and compiles it on you Macintosh. This can take a while. A long time if you choose a big package like GIMP.

Fink also keeps track of pre-requisites. In the Unix community, many programs are written so that they use code from other packages. This results in one package needing several (or many) other packages installed before it can be installed. Fink figures this out and presents you with

Future Meeting Calendar

July 17, 2003X Windows.....Isaac TraxlerLibrary
 August 21, 2003iCal/iSyncIsaac TraxlerLibrary
 TBABRMUG Picnic.....EveryoneLSU
 September 18, 2003iMovie.....TBALibrary
 October 16, 2003.....Mac OS X UtilitiesIsaac TraxlerTBA
 November 20, 2003.....Annual Game Meeting.....John Quebedeaux.Library
 December 18, 2003Christmas PartyEveryoneLibrary

Ideas for future meetings are welcome and desired!

a list of pre-requisites and asks if it is okay to go ahead and install them. If you say yes, Fink first installs them and then follows up with installing the actual package you requested. This may take hours, sometimes days. The good news is that after you have certain base packages, many other packages have few or no other pre-requisites. By the way, Fink has over 2700 packages currently.

Compiling these programs takes time. And when updates come out, you get recompile them. In exchange, you get programs that are pretty much optimized for your computer. Maybe you would prefer an easier path? The Fink world has done two things to make life easier: Fink Commander and binary distributions. Fink Commander is an entirely separate open source project (<http://finkcommander.sourceforge.net/>) with the goal of producing a GUI front-end for Fink. It is worth checking out if you are not familiar with using the command line.

Fink Commander used with the binary distribution can take you a long way into the Unix world without very much exposure to the command line. Many of the packages are available in binary (pre-compiled). The biggest difference (other than saving all of that time compiling) is that the binary distribution is usually a little bit older. Only well-tested applications are made available via the binary method. Because I work in the Linux world daily, I am used to newer versions of software. I did give the binary method a try for a while, but return to compiling my own to have the newer versions of certain programs.

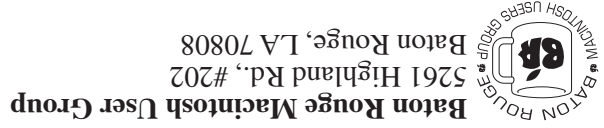
At this point, you might want to know if it is really worth all this. In general the Mac World does not have to pay the price for quality software. That is not true in the Unix world. Apple is well aware of this and has intentionally kept the average user isolated from the ugly Unix world.

But what does Fink buy you? Here are a few of the things I use from the Fink world: bluefish, dia, ethereal, gimp, nmap, screen, silc, vim, wget, X-Chat, xmms, and xgalaga.

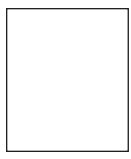
Bluefish is an open source html editor. A pretty good one. Every once in a while I try a HTML editor instead of using vi. dia is an open source implementation of Visio (a program for drawing flow charts, networks, etc. dia is pretty good. Ethereal is a network sniffer. I use to capture the actual ethernet packets coming to and from my machine so that I can debug things. Gimp is a graphics program that can perform many of the same functions that Photoshop does. nmap is used to discover what protocols a computer talks (a security scanner). Screen allows me to connect to multiple other sessions and move the connections around so that I can access them from any computer (makes running the AIX systems much easier). Silc is a client to an IRC like world that is totally encrypted. Vim is a Very Improved version of vi. Wget is a great tool for downloading files in a batch. X-Chat was a biggie for me. I periodically need to talk on IRC. I could find no good freeware IRC client for Mac OS X (X-Chat Aqua was recently released -- a version of X-Chat that runs under Mac OS without needing X-Windows). Xmms plays music. In particular, it can play Ogg Vorbis format that iTunes currently cannot. Xgalaga is a remake of the old Galaga arcade game.

I just listed a dozen of the over 200 packages I have installed. This list gives a good indication of the power and variety of software available from the Unix world. Fink opens this door. True, you have to go through and do some work yourself, but Fink has done the really hard part. For free. I love the open source world. Give it a try! The only thing it costs is time.

by Isaac Traxler



Baton Rouge Macintosh User Group
 5261 Highland Rd., #202
 Baton Rouge, LA 70808



This Month:
 X-Windows and Fink
 by Isaac Traxler

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 7/2003

Name: _____

Address: Street, City, State, ZipCode

Home Phone: _____

Office Phone: _____

Things the club should do: _____

My interest areas:
