



BRMUG

Baton Rouge Macintosh User Group

News and Views

April 2004

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
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 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 April meeting will be held at the **Bluebonnet Library** on **April 15th**, the 3rd Thursday of the month, at 6:30 P.M. This month's presentation will be an **Places You Should Know About** by Don Ballard and Isaac Traxler. The Internet has millions of web sites. Some of them can be very helpful for Macintosh users. Don and I will show you a number of them. 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 Agenda	
6:30 PM	Welcome, Apple News
6:45 PM	Feature Presentation
7:45 PM	Questions and Answers
8:30 PM	Meeting ends

Meeting is at Bluebonnet Library!

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

March Meeting

The March Meeting was an Overview of Adobe Illustrator. I tried to demonstrate the flavor of vector drawing programs, and in particular Illustrator. I hope you learned a some things and enjoyed the meeting!

AAPL

Apple stock has essentially maintained its value over the last month in spite of no major announcements. In fact, this has been a very quiet month for Apple. In opposition to this, Apple stock hit a several year high of \$28.35 and closed the week over \$27.50. Strong iPod Mini sales were about the only news from Apple this month other than the ongoing legal battle with Apple Records of Britain. April could be a great month for Apple stock prices.

iChat Update

Apple released iChat AV 2.1. This version enhances iChat AV so that it can video conference with Windows XP users of AOL's video conference users. This is the next step in universal video conferencing between Windows users

and Macintosh users.

In most recent efforts to advance the state of the art, Apple has confirmed to industry standards (even more so than most other vendors). iChat AV is a departure from this trend. With iChat, and with iChat AV, Apple ignored official standards and choose to partner with AOL and use their proprietary defacto standards. Time will tell if Apple has made the right choice.

Security Update

On April 5th, Apple released a Mac OS X security update for 10.2.8 and 10.3.3.

APRIL Contents

March Meeting	•1
AAPL	•1
iChat Update	•1
Security Update	•1
Hypercard Over.....	•2
PlayFair Arrived and Gone	•2
Apple Developers Changing.....	•2
Fink 0.7.0	•2
Mac OS X Trojan Horse?	•2
Google Mail.....	•2
Where to Look.....	•3

This update includes fixes for CUPS Printing, libxml2, Mail and openSSL.

Hypercard Over

Bill Atkinson's Hypercard changed the world by providing a programming environment that almost anybody could use. For years, Hypercard was an environment that brought custom database application programming into the grasp of a lot of people. In spite of its success, Hypercard use has declined significantly over the last several years. Apple has finally officially discontinued Hypercard. In many ways, this announcement was not a big deal. Hypercard has not had a new release in years and was never turned into a Mac OS X application.

PlayFair Arrived and Gone

Apple has tried to walk the middle ground between the music industry and the consumer with their FairPlay DRM software. This software works in combination with the encrypted AAC files to limit the number of computers that can concurrently play music. PlayFair is/was a program that could remove all of the FairPlay DRM from a downloaded AAC file. Some saw the release of this application as a great thing. Others feared it might fatally hurt Apple in their relationship with music publishers. PlayFair is now history. Apple's lawyers have descended on the PlayFair developers with DMCA violation threats. For now, PlayFair is not currently available.

Apple Developers Changing

Apple has noticed something. While looking at the list of registered developers, Apple noticed that a lot of new developers from the Unix world have joined the Apple fold. Apple has been aggressively recruiting for new developers (particularly from the Unix developer ranks). Apparently Apple has succeeded. In response to this, Apple is adding more sessions at the next WWDC that are aimed at Open Source and traditional Unix developers. The times are changing.

Fink 0.7.0

The Fink project has a new release (*fink.sf.net*). Fink is an Open Source project to make as much of the Unix/Linux Open Source software available to the Mac OS X world as possible. Past history has shown that the Fink project is high quality and the current release

is no different. Even with Fink, you are still need a good bit of knowledge to take significant advantage of the ports.

Mac OS X Trojan Horse?

For a little while it looked like the honeymoon was over for Mac OS X. A trojan horse exploit for Mac OS X had been reported. It turns out that this is not exactly the case. In late March, a programmer posted an example of a way to possibly attack a Mac OS X system. The idea was to include an executable code segment inside an MP3 file. Normally the code would be irrelevant. But if the MP3 is double clicked, the code would then run. This code could be anything (including instructions to erase your hard drive). In fact, this possibility has been around since OS 9 and the current possible hole has its roots in OS 9. So far, no actual exploits exist.

If and when an exploit is created, it will still need a way to be transmitted that will be effective. Symantec acknowledged the existence of the posting and stated that they will be watching closely for any manifestations. So, for now, we are still safe and do not need to worry excessively.

Google Mail

Google seems like an unlikely success story. The dot-com era is over. Gone are almost all of the something for nothing companies. Yahoo is one of the few survivors. Out of the embers rose Google. Their search engine is undoubtedly the primary search tool used by geeks. It is possibly the top search engine for everyone. It claims to index more pages than anyone. And all this when the dot-com bust is in full swing.

In fact, Google is much more. They now have the remains of the usenet archives. *news.google.com* is beyond a doubt the beginning of a new way of discovering timely information on the web. The list of unlikely achievements is very long. So what do you do for an encore? You pick something that everybody knows is a lost cause with no way to provide the service for free and then you do it. Google is planning to offer free e-mail.

What is Google going to do for e-mail that will make it special? To start with, what about a one gigabyte mail quota? Unbelievable! Their plan is to change the way you do e-mail. They want you to quit spending time filing and categorizing e-mail. In fact, they want you to

quit deleting e-mail. Google hopes to use their searching and categorizing knowledge to prevent you from having to organize your mail.

This may be a revolutionary way to think of mail. Obviously grouping mail by thread (like in usenet posting) is a logical idea. Fast, powerful searching is a welcome idea. In spite of years of practice, I have yet to devise a foolproof organizational scheme for e-mail. Part of the problem stems from the fact that most organization systems are hierarchical and many e-mails need to live at the edge of multiple paths. A message might be from Don, concerning BRMUG about an upcoming meeting and the Mail application. Where do you store this? Do you make duplicates and put it in each category? Regardless of what you do, it is very possible that it will not be in the first three places you go to look for it at a future date. Google hopes to solve this via the searching skills of Gmail.

What is the down side? Google is doing this as a research project at this point. For the research to work, they need access to the data (your e-mail messages, your queries, and how and when you access the messages). Makes sense. Right? Privacy groups are worried. Google is retaining the privilege of keeping copies of your mail (even deleted messages). Privacy groups are concerned about the impact of this. Certainly it could be an issue if a law enforcement agency provided Google with a search warrant for data that you had requested deleted.

Before you get to excited, remember that this is a free service that you voluntarily participate in. You are under no obliga-



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2004 Meeting Calendar			
January 15	Annual Game Review	John Quebedeaux	Bluebonnet Library
February 19	iTunes, iTunes, and Music	Isaac Traxler	Bluebonnet Library
March 18	Adobe Illustrator	Isaac Traxler	Bluebonnet Library
April 15	Places You Should Know About	Don Ballard Isaac Traxler	Bluebonnet Library
May 20	To Be Announced	To Be Announced	Bluebonnet Library
<p>We need ideas for future meetings! Help us develop a plan to fill out 2004's schedule. Send ideas to <i>newsletter@brmug.org.</i></p>			

tion to use the service.

But... This service may fundamentally change the way people think about and organize e-mail in the future. Maybe even more than e-mail. Imagine a file system with this ability. Imagine if everything in your account on your Macintosh was organized this way. Imagine the power of Google built into Mac OS X for retrieving information. I know that I have spent hours looking for some file with a specific piece of information. The idea of being able to search all of my mail, or all of my machine, or all of my machines at one time and find all files that match a query is fascinating. Surely it is only a matter of time. Mac OS X can already do this in a limited manner. Imagine having Google's technology at your fingertips...

Now imagine this grand experiment going on and not being part of it. I am not sure right now, but I believe I am going to have to take part in the Google Mail experiment. Who cares if it survives, goes away, or becomes a commercial service. This may be a real chance to participate in the shaping of the future. And maybe it will be a flop.

Where to Look

It turns out that many useful places exist for a Macintosh user to go look. Obviously many of these are on the web, but quite a few are right here on your system.

Do you have any printers configured? Point your browser at <http://localhost:631>. This is the CUPS administration interface. CUPS is the print engine that Apple adopted with Mac OS X. From here you can do many of the things you always wished you could from the

Printer Setup Utility.

System Preferences is loaded with things you might overlook. Tired of Expose disrupting your display? Reset the keyboard keys to activate Expose. Miss the old KeyCaps? Go to International, select Input Menu; turn on Keyboard Viewer and check "Show input menu in menu bar". Now click on the US flag and choose Show Keyboard Viewer. Want your computer to lock (or not) when the screen saver kick in? Choose Security and check "Require password to wake". Does your Mac do what you want when you insert a CD/DVD? CDs & DVDs panel can fix it. Hard drive spinning down to soon? Take a look at Energy Saver. Can't remember a keyboard shortcut? Want to change them? Choose Keyboard & Mouse and select Keyboard Shortcuts. Have fun! Want to change the name of your computer? Choose Sharing and change the name. Want to turn on fast User Switching? Choose Accounts and select Login Options and then check Enable fast user switching. And don't forget Universal Access for a host of neat features.

Ever tried to customize Safari to be frustrated by the few choices in Preferences? Look under the View menu. You will find lots of neat stuff here. I turn almost everything here on. Want to know what Plug-ins you have? Choose Installed Plug-ins from the Help Menu. Really informative.

Don't like Finder's defaults?

Choose Preferences from Finder. Many options here (including the return of labels). Most people just do not think to look here. Ever try to find some special character and what font it lives in? Under Edit in Finder, choose Special Characters. Now choose Roman (for example) from the View list. Expand Font Variation and it will show you each font that has the chosen special character. Not quite as easy to sue as the old KeyCaps, but much more powerful. Under the Finder Go Menu is the Recent option which is a list of folders you have recently been in.

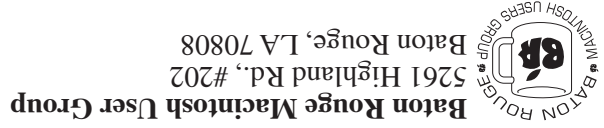
Have you ever looked at Mac Help? You know the Help available from Finder. The slow to open window that you accidentally invoke sometimes. Give it a read. You might be surprised. Not up to speed on all the new Panther features? Choose What's New in Panther? and browse. A great way to learn the new features. If you have never done it, choose Browse Mac OS Help. You can find some amazing stuff here. Maybe you have never been happy with the search feature. regardless, you will be amazed just how easy the Help information reads this way. Just wander around a read a while. Check out Automating tasks on your computer for an intro to Applescript.

Also look at the Library Menu of Help. In particular, look at the Developer Help Center. Loads of good stuff here (Richard -- enjoy yourself).

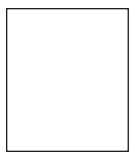
Have you looked at the Calculator application? Yeah, that yucky looking basic calculator. Take a look at all the neat stuff you can do with it if you hunt around a while. Show Paper Tape is a printable window of what a printing calculator would produce. Want more precision? Or less? View menu and precision. Display Format turns the calculator into a base conversion tool. And you can enter a number and see the Unicode character associated with it. Choosing Advanced turns this mild-mannered calculator into a scientific calculator. This calculator is also a full function conversion center -- including currency! You can even have it speak to you. The only things missing are programability and graphing. Really amazing power considering how innocuous it looks at first.

There you go. Just look around your Macintosh a little and all kinds of useful things can be found. Even without the Internet, Mac OS X is a powerful environment that is very configurable and full of helpful information. Next time you have some free time, take a look at some of these places. You will be pleasantly surprised how much you find. I never cease to be amazed at what I find (when I am not desperate). Have fun!

by Isaac Traxler



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This Month:
Places You Should Know About
by Isaac Traxler & 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, #202, Baton Rouge, LA 70808.

BRMUG Membership Form 4/2004

Name: _____

Address: Street, City, State, ZipCode

Home Phone: _____

Office Phone: _____

Things the club should do:

My interest areas:
