



BRMUG

Baton Rouge Macintosh User Group

News and Views

February 2005

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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 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 February meeting will be held at the **Bluebonnet Library** on **February 17th**, the 3rd Thursday of the month, at 6:30 P.M. The meeting will be 6:30 PM at the Bluebonnet Library. The topic this month will be *An Introduction to Keynote 2* by Don Ballard. The presentation will cover the basics of Keynote as well as point out some of the new features in Keynote 2. 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>).

Here is the meeting schedule:

6:30 PM	Welcome and recent news
6:50 PM	Don's Distraction
7:00 PM	Keynote 2 Presentation
8:00 PM	Questions and answers
8:30 PM	Adjourn to Brewbachers

Meeting is at Bluebonnet Library!

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

January Meeting

In January I did an introduction to iPhoto. This turned out to be quite interesting for me. My laptop had iPhoto 2 on it until a few days before the meeting. I owned iPhoto 4, but had not gotten around to updating. I was surprised how much faster it was. iPhoto 4 did not seem very different at first glance. As I used it, I discovered a number of new features. So, if you have neglected to upgrade, you need to do so. I suspect you will be as surprised as I was. Hope you enjoyed the meeting.

PowerBooks Updated

While the PowerBook still does not have a G5, it has gotten a lot better. They are now available in 1.5 and 1.67 GHz and come with 512 MB of memory. All models include 802.11g, Bluetooth 2.0, faster graphics and faster hard drives. SuperDrives are now 8X. The video card on the 17" will now power the 30" display!

The PowerBooks also include the new Scrolling Trackpad and the Sudden Motion Sensor. The new Trackpad supports scrolling like scroll wheel mice. The Sudden Motion Sensor technology is used to protect the hard drive if the PowerBook is dropped.

12" models now start at \$1499, 15" models start at \$1699 and 17" models start at \$2699. Typical Apple -- better machines for less money.

AAPL

A famous curse is: May your times be interesting. Following Apple's stock price has been very interesting for a lot of months. This month it almost hit \$82 (\$81.99). The current price is just about unbelievable. It is certainly high compared to the yearly sales. Based on the current price, Apple has announced a stock split. This will be the third stock split in Apple's history. And all of this without a G5 for the PowerBook!

Local Bargains

CompUsa has a Sony 50 pack of CD-Rs for \$7.99 and a 50 pack of DVD-R for \$19.99. They also have a Belkin 500 VA UPS for \$9.99 after \$65 mail-in rebate.

FEBRUARY Contents

January Meeting.....	•1
PowerBooks Updated.....	•1
AAPL.....	•1
Local Bargains.....	•1
Mac Mini.....	•2
Longhand.....	•2
Cocoa Services.....	•2
New Trackpads.....	•3

This is an amazing price. UPSes are good things to have. If you can handle waiting on the rebate, this is an excellent bargain.

Circuit City has a 25 pack of TDK DVD-R for \$7.95 and a 50 pack of CD-Rs for the same price.

Office Depot has a 50 pack of CD-Rs for \$9.99. They also have a 25 pack of CD-RWs or a 25 pack of DVD-Rs for \$9.99. CD-RWs are not on sale that much any more.

Mac Mini

The Mac Mini just won't leave the headlines. Apple dropped the prices of several of the options for the Mac Mini making it even more affordable. The world appears to be pretty pre-occupied with the Mac Mini.

The Mac Mini as a media center has drawn a lot of interest. Myth TV announced support for Mac OS X (Myth TV is a popular software media solution in the Linux world. A project has also been formed to develop media solutions for the Mac Mini.

Instructions on over-clocking have already been posted.

The PC world has also been intrigued. One gentleman managed to fit a slower PC processor inside the Mac Mini case (although he did not have room for the optical drive). Another vendor sells a PC about 4 inches longer than the Mac Mini that is faster but costs about twice as much.

Both Debian and Gentoo have been working aggressively to get their versions of Linux working on the Mac Mini.

Google gets over six million hits when you search for Mac Mini. The Mac Mini has created a similar stir to the original iMac.

Longhand

Remember the Graphing Calculator? Remember how neat it was? And then along came the powerful but traditional calculator that Mac OS X includes. It really is a very good calculator with a lot of features. Its biggest flaw is that it follows the calculator theme completely.

Want to do things that are not exactly designed for data entry on a numeric keypad? Longhand may be your answer. Visit <http://longhand.pansophists.net/> and download Longhand. Let me warn you in advance -- it is not striking like the old Graphing Calculator. In fact, it looks a little to unassuming. When you open Longhand, you are presented with a window split near the bottom and

nothing else. If you click in the top, you can type. Enter an expression (like 2*3). Boom, the answer appears in the bottom window.

This may not seem like a big deal to you. Most of the time it may not be. Both Longhand and the built-in calculator will allow you to enter a formula and get an answer. Longhand shows you the history in the bottom window (you can copy from here and paste into the top window). This makes the bottom sort of like a long scrolling memory. You can just keep changing the expression in the top window. Each time you do the result changes. Fix mistakes on the fly! Longhand is more like a cell out of a spreadsheet than anything else.

So far, Longhand is nothing more than a calculator without a keypad. But then you start looking around. The Help includes a Manual and a Reference Guide. The Reference Guide lists a lot of functions (most of the things you would expect in a spreadsheet).

This is a useful little application that is fun to just sit and play with. And it is free. So enjoy.

by Isaac Traxler

Cocoa Services

Cocoa Services are a feature of Mac OS X that is very rarely talked about. In the early days of Mac OS X when many of the applications we used were Carbon based, Services were irrelevant.

Maybe I should back up a bit. When Apple started showing off Mac OS X, the environment for programmers was called Cocoa. It was very different from the way previous Mac OS releases did things. Many developers were reluctant to commit to Cocoa. Others did not have the time or resources to devote to a complete rewrite.

Along came Carbon. Carbon was a bridge between the old and the new for programmers. Instead of rewriting 90% of your code to make it work with Cocoa, you could rewrite 10% to get it to work with Carbon. In the beginning, this is how most programs for Mac OS X were first made.

As time has passed and Mac OS X has become dominant and Mac OS 9 has become forgotten, developers have moved to Cocoa (mostly). When most development was in Carbon, the benefits of Cocoa applications were not very obvious. Now that we see so many Cocoa applications, we can begin to appreciate some of the advantages of Cocoa.

The Services Menu item in the menu list below the name of the application is an important feature that Cocoa applications include (Richard has been trying to get us excited about this for years). Apple provides a number of built-in services that are accessible to all Cocoa applications (like the spell checker).

Services was an important idea from Apple that has not quite taken off like they had hoped (it seems anyway). Apple has believed for a long time that the right way to do software development is to create a lot of little pieces and then glue different combinations together to create new applications (anybody remember OpenDoc?).

The Services Menu item is a universal connector for plug-ins. Yes, Cocoa has a system-wide standard for implementing plug-ins (via these services).

And now they are starting to take off. Devon Technologies is a perfect example (<http://www.devon-technologies.com/>). They have 3 commercial products: DevonThink, DevonAgent, and DevonNote. DevonThink is a system for creating and organizing information (notepad, outliner, scrapbook manager, information manager, freeform database, archive, bookmark manager and image database - all in one integrated application). DevonAgent integrates with DevonThink to ease finding things outside of the Devon documents (Internet, ...). DevonNote is the notepad feature of DevonThink.

So what does this have to do with Services. Devon knew they needed a number of utilities to implement their product suite. Some of these they have been made available as free Cocoa Services:



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AntiWordService, BlueService, CalcService, HotService, and WordService.

AntiWordService imports Word formatted documents into any Cocoa applications (if it knows what to do with it). A really simple little plugin that makes it possible to open any Word document right from TextEdit (or any other Cocoa editor). No, it does not export.

BlueSeervice allows you to send selected text to a BlueTooth device.

CalcService evaluates the highlighted text and attempts to calculate the answer. Great for little expressions in the middle of a document.

HotService makes the keyboard shortcuts that invoke these services immediately available after opening a Cocoa application (you do not have to select them once first).

WordService provides 34 functions to convert, format or speak the currently selected text, to insert data or to show statistics of the selection within all Cocoa applications.

As you read about the Devon commercial applications, you see how these pieces are integrated into them. The neat thing is that Devon made the tools available to all Cocoa applications for free.

One potential drawback to Services is that after you install a bunch of them, you wind up with a huge menu list. You need a simple way to enable and disable Services. Blacktree.com provides Service Manager (<http://blacktree.com/apps/servicemanager/index.html>) for free. Service Manager is a control panel that allows you to step through the various available Services and enable or disable them. It reminds me a little of the old Extension Manager. This simple, free tool makes managing Services easy.

Hope this quick insight into Services helped. May the future bring many more services.

by Isaac Traxler

New Trackpads

The new PowerBooks come with new trackpads that support several new features. You can scroll vertically by moving two fingers vertically on the trackpad. Horizontal also works. This is like adding dual scroll wheels to the mouse (but I still want my three buttons!).

Apple accomplished this magic in the PowerBooks by using new trackpads (different from the old ones) and with new drivers.

When the announcement of the scrolling feature first came out, a lot of people accused Apple of stealing the code from existing freeware and shareware authors. It turns out that Apple's features only work on the new trackpads.

But the good news is that solutions exist for people with older PowerBooks. Raging Menace (<http://www.ragingmenace.com/>)

2005 Meeting Calendar			
January 20	iPhoto Introduction	Isaac Traxler	Bluebonnet Library
February 17	Keynote 2	Don Ballard	Bluebonnet Library
March 17	Pages	Isaac Traxler	Bluebonnet Library
April 21	Available	TBA	Bluebonnet Library
May 19	Available	TBA	Bluebonnet Library
June 16	Tiger	Isaac Traxler	Bluebonnet Library
July 21	Garage Band	TBA	Bluebonnet Library
August 18	iChat	TBA	Bluebonnet Library
September 15	iMovie	TBA	Bluebonnet Library
October 20	CompUSA Visit	Mike Luchsinger	CompUSA
November 17	Available	TBA	Bluebonnet Library
December 15	Holiday Gathering	N/A	Brewbachers
BRMUG's Meetings at a Glance Send ideas to newsletter@brmug.org .			

makes a \$15 Shareware program called Side Track that provides the same functionality for older PowerBooks and more. It also supports tapping. Of course, if you want the scrolling functionality for free, I have the answer. iScroll2 works on many models of PowerBooks (<http://www-users.kawo2.rwth-aachen.de/~razzfazz/>). It is not as simple as Side-Track, you have to type some things to install it properly but it worked great on my PowerBook (even after upgrading to 10.3.8).

by Isaac Traxler

uControl

Since I am talking about PowerBooks, here is another problem and solution. The Caps Lock key on the PowerBook is in the way. Many people (not just me) hit it constantly when trying to reach shift. Ideally, it could be just treated as a shift key. Unfortunately, that is not possible.

uControl from Shane Celis is a collection of hacks to improve various quirks of PowerBooks (and iBooks).

The Edit Keys pane allows you to re-map Caps Lock, Command, Control, Enter and Option keys. This is not a full function key remapping -- it only does the keys listed above and only remaps to these same places or nowhere. Regardless, it allows me to disable the Caps Lock key (saving a little sanity).

It also remaps the Function Keys so they act as Function Keys normally and that you press the FN Key when you want the PowerBook specific functions.

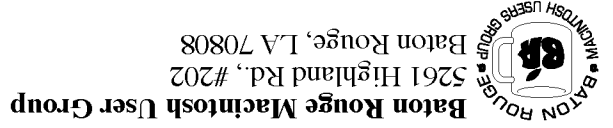
The PowerBook does not have a Forward Delete Key. uControl allows you to set Shift Delete as a Forward Delete.

It also can enable scrolling on the trackpad if you hold a key down while scrolling (such as FN, Control, Command or Option).

It can also swap left and right mouse buttons (for left-handed people).

uControl is a product that fills a very small niche, but it is practically a necessity.

by Isaac Traxler



This Month:
Introduction to Keynote 2
 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, #202, Baton Rouge, LA 70808.

BRMUG Membership Form 2/2005

Name: _____

Address: Street, City, State, ZipCode

Home Phone: _____

Office Phone: _____

Things the club should do: _____

My interest areas: _____

