



# BRMUG

Baton Rouge Macintosh User Group

News and Views

June 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](mailto:info@brmug.org) or check our web page at <http://www.brmug.org/>

### BRMUG Volunteers

Isaac Traxler [president@brmug.org](mailto:president@brmug.org)  
 Glenn Matherne [vp@brmug.org](mailto:vp@brmug.org)  
 Don Ballard [treasurer@brmug.org](mailto:treasurer@brmug.org)  
 Don Ballard [sec@brmug.org](mailto:sec@brmug.org)  
 Richard Johnson [m1@brmug.org](mailto:m1@brmug.org)  
 Jeff Sheldon [m2@brmug.org](mailto: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](mailto: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 16<sup>th</sup>, the 3rd Thursday of the month, at 6:30 P.M. The meeting will be 6:30 PM at the Bluebonnet Library. This month, Isaac Traxler, Don Ballard and Glenn Matherne plan to show off some *Software Gems*. Over the years we have discovered various software programs that we love. This month we will demonstrate some of these gems for you. 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	Software Gems
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.

### May Meeting Review

We planned to do something a little different in May. We were going to do 2 shorter presentations instead of one. Of course the obvious occurred -- we did not get to the second part. So we moved the *Software Gems* to this month. There seemed to be a lot of interest in the demo of the Epson CX6400 printer. Quick summary: good quality prints, fast in draft mode, inexpensive ink, barely adequate scanner, can be used as a low-volume copier and includes memory card reader. I am still very happy with the printer (especially for the discounted price). Several people questioned the ink price: Normal "sale" prices at [inkdaddy.com](http://inkdaddy.com) show a 12 pack for \$46 (less than \$4 each). Periodically, better prices are available. For more pricing information on ink cartridges -- I highly recommend <http://dealink.com>.

When we planned the printer demo for the meeting, we were not sure how it would go over. Based on feedback during and after the meeting, it looks like it was a success.

As always, I hope you enjoyed the meeting and hope to see you this month.

### AAPL

Just as things looked like they were on the way up, the world turned upside down. Apple had climbed back up to over \$40 a share. And then the bombshell at the World Wide Developers Conference. Apple stock is just below \$36 right now. Wall Street, for once, is in line with everyone else -- nobody is sure what is going on and what the ramifications of the news will be. We really do need to sit back and wait a while to see what happens.

### Tiger Update Released

Tiger still calls itself 10.4.1, but another update was posted in the last week. This one, like the first Tiger update fixes some security issues, tweaks Dashboard and includes a number of other small fixes.

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I have installed it on both my laptop and desktop Macintoshes without obvious problem. This one appears to be a slam dunk -- so go ahead and install it if you have not already. It has not been long enough to know if it has helped my Safari issues.

### **DashBoard Widgets**

A lot of people wondered about Apple's new Dashboard and its widgets. It looked interesting but there were not very many widgets available. The Apple Widget page (<http://www.apple.com/downloads/dashboard/>) currently has more than 500 widgets listed. Growth has certainly been phenomenal. I played with them a little at first but have now reduced myself to just a couple to try and conserve memory. Each Dashboard Widget is a mini-version of Safari. It does not take long to add up. It sure looks like people really like it though. Maybe when I have some free time, I can take another look at Dashboard.

### **Tiger Shipments hit 2 million**

Apple has shipped 2 million copies of Tiger since its late April release. In less than 2 months Apple has shipped 2 million copies of Mac OS X. That fact alone should have propelled the stock price through the ceiling. Shipping includes, retail sales, education sales, copies with new computers and automatic upgrades. Still amazing.

### **Apple Marketshare**

An article claiming Apple may have a 16% install base (<http://macdailynews.com/index.php/weblog/comments/5933/>) re-ignited the OS wars again. Most studies put the Macintosh at 3% to 5% marketshare. Last quarter Apple sales were right at 1 million Macintoshes -- implying around 4 million a year. Which implies 80 to 100 million PCs a year sold. Installed base refers to how many are still in use. Lots of evidence exists to presume that Macintoshes are used longer before being

retired. What if 5% marketshare was correct and installed base was really 10%? All things considered, the used lifetime of a Macintosh could be twice that of the average PC. Remember, the PC market share includes all of those low priced systems that tend to fail a lot sooner or need to be replaced a lot sooner because they are under powered.

I think it is very feasible that the 10% number could be close. I am sure if people believed that number, the software developers would change their opinion about supporting the Macintosh. A lot of software is not aimed at the business world -- where the PC tends to have the largest ratio. What if 10 to 20% of the home PCs were Macintoshes? Suddenly, a large potential market exists. Especially when you consider the fact that Macintosh users tend to pirate software less than others.

These may not be unrealistic numbers. They are unknown numbers though. And without easy evidence to the contrary, the world seems quite happy to go by monthly sales figures and continue to list the Macintosh user base at 3 to 5%.

Maybe increased marketshare is not the proper fight -- maybe accurate determination of installed base should be the real battle.

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### **Apple and Intel**

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I was in Poughkeepsie New York at an IBM facility on Monday -- you know the day Steve Jobs said it. When I got on the plane with my PowerBook, I expected it would be perfectly acceptable to have my IBM-powered laptop in the halls of IBM. By the time I got there, the word was out. Apple had dumped the Power PC and IBM for the x86 and Intel.

Everybody just shook their heads. The IBM folks new that IBM had lost an opportunity. Just a few miles up the road from Poughkeepsie is Fishkill -- IBM fab plant where they make cpu chips (I am sure glad I was not going there).

So why did Steve Jobs say the unthinkable? There is no question that Jobs is embarrassed by not having shipped the promised 3 GHz PowerMac (the promised 1 year is almost 2 now). I am sure this embarrassment fits in the big picture somewhere. IBM simply has not been able to increase the chip speeds and improve the chip yields like they needed. And that does not even get into the need for low power chips for laptops.

Making chips for business and con-

sumer computers is an interesting business. IBM is used to the minicomputer/mainframe world where a processor at a specific speed will be sold from 6 to 18 months normally. In the PC business, 3 to 6 months is a long time. One of the problems IBM did not anticipate was the need for constant speed improvements. You are probably wondering what this means for Sony and Microsoft? The game console market is a lot like the minicomputer/mainframe market. The PS/2 and X-Box have both been around several years. And the new ones are not significantly faster than the old ones. The new ones are smaller and less expensive to build. With a multi-year period to refine a product, you can dramatically reduce its cost to produce. I think IBM and the game console industry may get along fine.

Apple was the wrong size. Apple needed the wrong number of chips. They needed to many to be ignored but not enough of any particular chip at a particular speed were made to really pay off the cost of designing and ramping up production. Pretty much, every time IBM starting to get better yield, it was time to move to another generation.

And then figure in the cost of producing a duplicate family of chips almost as fast but that use a lot less power (for laptops). If Apple sold 10 times as many machines, then it would have been worth it to IBM to keep doing the R&D for the short production runs (making 10 times as many chips means a lot more potential for profit).

You might be wondering why nobody saw this before the deal was done. They



**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](mailto:info@brmug.org)  
web: <http://www.brmug.org/>

### **Other Macintosh User Groups**

#### **SMUG**

Shreveport Macintosh User Group  
<http://mac.meetup.com/146/>

#### **NOMUG**

New Orleans Macintosh User Group  
<http://www.nomug.org/>

did. We all did. Everybody hoped that sales would increase fast enough to justify the expense IBM was making to develop the chips. IBM hoped to be able to shorten their design/production times. Sales did not increase because the chips were not there. When IBM started making the chips, the yields were okay. As the speed bumps occurred, the yields did not go up (yield is the percentage of usable chips from a production run). Typically, IBM makes very good progress on improving yield. The shorter lifetime of the product wreaked havoc on the normal production cycle.

At this point you might be wondering how things would have been different if Apple needed 3 to 5 times as many chips. At those quantities, IBM could have justified building new chip production facilities and revamping existing ones more frequently. Each time a facility is created or reworked, the yield percentage tends to go up (after things get going). So if Apple had needed more chips right off the bat, IBM could have invested in the production facilities to make them with the knowledge that it would pay off. With the increased number of chips, the R&D costs are spread over more chips -- reducing cost per chip.

Apple and IBM knew this before they entered into the partnership. They both decided to take the gamble. Apple had to do something. Years of poor yield percentages and slow development by Motorola had Apple lagging behind. Apple believed they could sell a lot more computers if they had the parts to make them.

IBM saw the Apple deal as a wonderful opportunity. IBM believes the PowerPC is technically superior to the x86. IBM believed that the PPC could dominate the desktop PC world. With the extra income from Apple, IBM hoped to accelerate PPC development and take the desktop away from Intel. It was a calculated risk. It could have succeeded.

IBM ran into yield problems a little sooner than they had hoped. The Power 4 architecture (G5 to us) was a huge improvement over the G3/G4 world. In making these gains, IBM was unable to do their normal task of reducing power consumption. At first this was not a huge problem. Because the G3/G4 used so little power, the new G5 (Power 4) merely compared to Intel and AMD offerings (instead of producing substantially less heat). In the end, this made a lot of difference. Part of IBM's development staff worked on reducing power consumption of the G5 (with very little success).

Most of IBM's research effort was on the Power 5 and Power 6 (Power 5 is the basis of the current IBM minicomputer product line). If the roadmap had remained intact, we would be seeing Power 5 Macintoshes about now. Between the delays fighting power consump-

2005 Meeting Calendar			
January 20	iPhoto Introduction	Isaac Traxler	Bluebonnet Library
February 17	Keynote 2	Don Ballard	Bluebonnet Library
March 17	Tiger Preview	Isaac Traxler	Bluebonnet Library
April 21	Pages	Isaac Traxler	Bluebonnet Library
May 19	Epson CX6400	Isaac Traxler	Bluebonnet Library
June 16	Software Gems	Isaac, Don & Glenn	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 <a href="mailto:newsletter@brmug.org">newsletter@brmug.org</a> .			

tion on the G5, the tremendous heat produced by the Power 5, and the need for a laptop solution IBM and Apple were faced with a choice: either part company or make a large investment hoping to resolve the roadblocks.

Steve Jobs (presumably) decided that Mac OS X and the Macintosh are not merely a processor -- but an idea. He decided that it was more likely that this idea can continue (and prosper) by changing to Intel than by gambling on IBM.

No question -- the PPC is a better architecture right now. No question that IBM could not afford to make the monetary investment needed that would allow the desktop PPC market to possibly reach critical mass. To their credit, IBM is salvaging a lot of the effort and research with the cell processor and the gaming console market. It is not the dream they had -- merely the necessary step to stay in business.

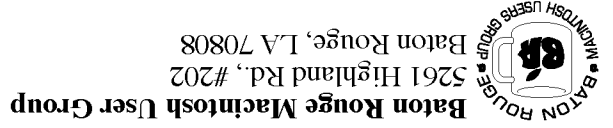
And so Apple sets out to accomplish the impossible: transition from one family of processors to an entirely

different one for the second time. The only other vendor to ever do it was DEC (and they are gone now). Apple did it when we went from the 68000 family to the PPC family. These chips were as different as the PPC and the x86 are today. NeXt also did it -- sort of.

Apple does have an advantage this time. They have the experience from the previous transition. They have a customer base who believes it can be done. Mac OS X already runs on x86. Since the beginning of Mac OS X development, Apple has been careful to make sure the core OS was processor agnostic. While this still leaves a lot to do, the first 70% of the transition is already done. The next 20% will come quickly.

The last 10% will tell the story. If Apple makes it to 98-99% within 18 months, then life is great. Otherwise, Apple may join NeXt and DEC. And Steve Jobs will look pretty dumb. Yet another gamble. Of course, striving for excellence is always a gamble.

by Isaac Traxler



This Month:  
**Software Gems**  
 by Isaac, Don, and Glenn

*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](mailto: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 6/2005**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: Street, City, State, ZipCode

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Office Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Things the club should do: \_\_\_\_\_

My interest areas: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
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