



BRMUG

Baton Rouge Macintosh User Group

News and Views

October 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 October meeting will be held at the **Bluebonnet Library** on **October 20th**, the 3rd Thursday of the month, at 6:30 P.M. The meeting will be 6:30 PM at the Bluebonnet Library. This month, Don Ballard and Isaac Traxler will provide a look at *Alternatives to High Cost Software*. We all know that Microsoft Office is available for the Macintosh. We also know that the price is considerable. Don and I will look at some other alternatives. 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	Alternatives to High Cost Software
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.

September Meeting Review

With Katrina just behind us, we set out to have a normal meeting. As it turns out, Katrina was not really behind us. As we tried to get started, the topic kept coming back to Katrina.

We had a very good meeting. A lot was said that needed to be said and many of us felt a little better.

But we never really got around to the intended topic of the month. So, after careful consideration, we will try it again this month. We hope to actually discuss various free and low cost software solutions for Mac OS X.

Thanks to all who were at the meeting last month. I hope the derailing of the intended program was not a problem for you. Our goal is help Macintosh users. Last month, we discovered that sometimes, the best way to help is to tackle the problem at hand --regardless of the connection (or lack there of) to Mac OS X or a Macintosh. Thanks again.

BRMUG Picnic

The annual BRMUG Picnic is over. It was September 17th. For a while, it looked like the weather might change our plans. We also wondered about having a picnic

in the aftermath of Katrina. But we did it anyway.

And I believe, a good time was had by all! I know I had a good time. We got to see the normal regular folks. We also had some folks from the past show up along with a few new folks. And Don brought some relatives that were displaced by Katrina.

The food was wonderful (as always). Thanks to John Quebedeaux for cooking (and thanks to Jeff also). We had BBQ chicken, hot dogs, potato salad, baked beans, watermelon... More than enough food and plenty of variety. Thanks to all who brought food.

And we had volleyball. Last year, volleyball was derailed because of my freshly broken leg. Rumor had it that we might be getting a little to old for such an athletic adventure. In fact, it tool a

OCTOBER Contents

September Meeting Review	•1
BRMUG Picnic	•1
AAPL	•2
iMac Mini Upgrades - Sort of.....	•2
Video iPod.....	•2
Front Row	•3
The iMac	•3

little effort to get the usual suspects to take the court.

But we did. And in the time honored tradition, Don took the opposite side of the net from me. But this year was different. It just so happened that Don's family that came with him happened to include a couple of young energetic folks who were positive that history would not repeat itself this year.

Don's team started out strong. We had a little trouble until we formalized that a server touching the tree that overhung the court did not count and had to be re-served. And Don's side won the first match.

We changed sides and tried again. And now the score was even at 1 and 1. Someone suggested leaving it a tie. We just couldn't do that. It's not natural.

So we swapped sides for the third and final match, the tie-breaker. The result was definitely not a forgone conclusion. In fact, the battle was intense.

We were playing to 15 points, and requiring the winner to win by 2 points minimum. The game went on longer than this description. We actually tied at 15. Both sides had multiple chances at game point. It was almost like no one wanted it to end. For sure, no one wanted to be the loser.

And then it was over. And history repeated itself again. And the closest battle ever was over. Congratulations to Don and his team. You fought hard and almost won. The competition was almost as good as the food!

I can't wait until next year!

AAPL

This column is getting difficult to write. It seems like anything I can think of to say is merely a repeat of a past column. So here goes.

We had a mixture of good news and bad news. Apple set another all-time high for stock price (\$55.35). Apple's net worth increased again -- now at \$44.8 billion.

And for more highs, Apple announced record earnings that are hard to fathom. Apple received 40% of its income from the music business (the rest from the Macintosh). Quarterly revenue was \$3.68 billion (\$2.35 billion same quarter last year) with a net profit of \$430 million (up from \$106 million last year).

Apple shipped 1,236,000 Macintoshes this quarter and 6,451,000 iPods (growth of 48 percent and 220 percent over same quarter last year).

So one would see this and think that all of the news was wonderful. The day after Apple announced its earnings, Wall Street analysts reacted the way they used to. Apple stock plummeted to below \$50. The following days were better with Apple returning to within a \$1 of their high.

Mac Mini Upgrades - Sort of

Apple found an interesting way to announce upgrades to the Mac Mini line -- by not telling anyone. Purchasers of new Mac Minis may find what they expect or they may find a faster cpu and a faster DVD drive. Apple is in the process of changing the cpu speed of the Mini from 1.25/1.42 GHz to 1.33/1.5 GHz. Video cards are doubling from 32 MB to 64 MB of RAM. SuperDrives are now at 8x and BlueTooth has been updated.

While these are modest gains, one has to wonder why Apple has not bothered to announce the changes. Instead the changes are being done without changing package labeling or part number.

In the past, when Apple did a feature bump like this, you saw supplies dwindle of the old model and then someone would report seeing a new model number. This left Apple needing to discount the remaining older models to sell them. The Mini does not have a lot of profit in it (compared to other products). By not announcing a change, Apple was able to clear out almost all of the previous model inventory before anyone noticed. Customers got exactly what they ordered, except for the folks who got even more than they expected. The best guess right now is Apple did not announce the changes to prevent lowering prices on the previous configuration Minis in the pipeline.

Video iPod

Apple faked everybody out. The rumor mill was solid that the new Video iPod was going to be announced. And then folks started reporting that the rumors were wrong and we would see other announcements, but not a Video iPod.

And then Apple announced the Video iPod -- sort of. The full-size iPod line as we knew is now gone. It has been replaced with a slightly sleeker version with better battery life. The new models are 30 GB (\$299) and 60 GB (\$399). Basically the prices are the same except the 20 GB model grew up to 30 GB. This widens the gap from the Nano (at 2 and 4 GB). Apple believes that Nano

sales are strong enough, that moving the entry level Video iPod to 30 GB will not impact Nano sales.

But other things have changed. The U2 edition seems to have been discontinued. But the new Video iPods are available in white and black.

The screen is a little different. The previous models had a 2 inch color screen with 220x176 resolution. The new models have a 2.5 inch color screen that is 320x240. This new screen is much better, but drains the battery a little quicker.

To accomplish this larger screen, the clickwheel got a little smaller. Video plays back at 30 frames per second (and is said to look real good on the tiny screen).

Just as with photos, the new iPod can display its movies on a TV. As with the Nano, the new model does not support FireWire for iTunes synchronization (although indications are that the iPod still will function as a FireWire drive).

So with all this said, what about video content. Apple has a lot of music videos available for \$1.99. But more importantly, it has episodes of a couple of TV series available. The current ones are not important. What is important is that Apple side-stepped the entire movie industry and partnered with Disney (my how things get weird) to make certain Disney owned TV shows available (I wonder if the Disney/Pixar war happened with this in mind...). Apple is currently having trouble with the music industry about the \$0.99 price. Rather than fight directly with movie industry at this time, Apple changed the name of the game.

The Video iPod does not have as large



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a screen as the PSP (Play Station Portable). It also does not have the battery life. It also avoids some of the headaches that the PSP has faced: signing companies for movies distribution, prices of movies,...

The Video iPod is being aimed at TV shows and music videos (shorter than movies). This allows the shorter battery life to be a minimal issue. Since movies are not yet available on the iPod, Apple does not have to deal with the complaints about limited availability that Sony has dealt with. And consumers are not faced with the question of buying a movie for the DVD player and for the iPod.

Maybe Apple pulled a really smart one here. Most of the world is down on the Video iPod because of the small screen, the limited battery life, the lack of movies, ... By not stepping into the movie market right off the bat, Apple can mostly ignore these complaints. Customers are just getting more features for the same price. I bet when Apple figures out a distribution system for movies (including price and multiple studios), a new Video iPod comes out that is much more practical for viewing full-length movies in standard or HD.

So the iPod continues to evolve. Each new model gains features and capabilities without pushing the cost up. The iPod started out expensive but has grown into a complete product line with a wide price range, various features and lots of choices.

Front Row

People have been trying to help the Macintosh achieve the dream of being an entertainment hub with varying degrees of success. Many have been disgruntled that Apple had not responded to the Microsoft Windows Media Center. We all know the Macintosh should be better at home theatre, but Microsoft was definitely first.

Apple appears to have started to take notice. Front Row is not going to send Windows Media Center packing the way Final Cut Pro did Adobe Premier. In fact, it is very different.

Instead of generating a customized version of Mac OS X for home theatre, Apple created a piece of software glue to integrate several existing applications. Front Row provides a simple interface to access audio (iTunes), pictures (iPhoto), movies (iDVD) and videos (?). And added a remote control so that you can lay on the bed and do these things without touching a keyboard.

Front Row is a good start (I expect it to be part of iLife in the future). It is lacking though. Apple has totally ignored the idea of broadcast/cable TV. Apple does not have a hardware solution for getting broadcast/cable TV into the Macintosh. They do not have a software solution for watching, or recording TV. With

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	Glenn Matherne	Bluebonnet Library
August 18	iChat A/V	Don & Isaac	Bluebonnet Library
September 15	Katrina & Apple	All	Bluebonnet Library
October 20	Alternatives to High Cost Software	Don & Isaac	Bluebonnet Library
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 .			

the addition of these 2 things, the Macintosh can truly become the ultimate media center (and kill TiVo).

So instead, we have Front Page. It is a nice front-end for the existing software modules and does add remote control. Of course, we want and expect more from Apple.

The iMac

The iMac got a new lease on life. The iMac is still available in 17 inch and 20 inch models but now runs at 1.9 GHz and 2.1 GHz. Hard drive options include 160 GB, 250 GB and 500 GB serial ATA at 7200 RPM. Memory now includes 512 MB on the motherboard and a slot that supports 512 MB, 1GB and 2 GB DIMMs (for up to 2 GB of memory).

The mighty mouse is now standard on the iMac. The optional internal modem is gone. You can now choose to get an external USB modem for \$49 (this simplifies production and inventory immensely).

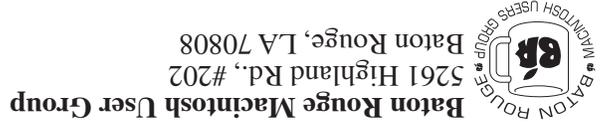
The iMac went on a diet, the new case is about 1/2 inch thinner than it

used to be. The network connection is 10/100/1000. AirPort Extreme (54 Mbs) is standard on all models along with Bluetooth 2.0 +EDR. The video card is now a ATI Radeon X600 XL with 128 MB DDR memory. Both models come standard with a 8x SuperDrive.

Oh yeah, the iSight is now built in. That is right! Apple has turned the iMac into a video conferencing system.

The back of the display no longer has the industry standard LCD mounting bracket (not exactly sure why). Other than this, the new iMac is a nice evolutionary step from the previous model. Prices for the 17 inch start at \$1299 and the 20 inch starts at \$1699.

These prices are excellent for all you are getting. The iMac is a great value at this point in time. It does have the drawback of limiting you to one screen that cannot be moved to your next computer. If you are considering a Mini, you might want to look at the iMac again.



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Baton Rouge Macintosh User Group

This Month:
 Alternatives to High Cost Software
 by Don Ballard & 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, #202, Baton Rouge, LA 70808.

BRMUG Membership Form 10/2005

Name: _____

Address: Street, City, State, ZipCode

Home Phone: _____

Office Phone: _____

Things the club should do: _____

My interest areas:

