



BRMUG

Baton Rouge Macintosh User Group

News and Views

November 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 November meeting will be held at the **Bluebonnet Library** on **November 17th**, 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 will provide a look at *iTunes, iTunes Music Store and Podcasts*. iTunes has been around for a while. It has come a long way from its original starting spot as a MP3 player. Join us this month as we discuss iTunes and all of its many features. 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	iTunes, ITMS, Podcasts
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.

November Newsletter

Due to other obligations, this newsletter is being produced fashionably late. I will bring copies to the Meeting Thursday. I will not mail a copy of this newsletter out (because of the late production). All memberships will be extended one month.

October Meeting Review

We finally got it done. In September we had planned to look at software alternatives. For October, we refined the topic a little: Low cost or free software solutions. And we finally got through it.

We talked about Open Office (and even demonstrated it a little) as a free alternative to Microsoft Office. While a good product, it relies entirely on X-Windows. Because of the difficulty of making an X-Windows product that feels like a Mac application, this team is going to quit worrying about Mac OS X. The good news is that Neo Office is a free version of Open Office just for the Mac OS X. You should check it out.

We also mentioned AbiWord as a free word processing solution. AbiWord is an excellent product and well worth looking at. For a low cost, you should consider

Pages (bundled with Keynote for \$79) from Apple.

We were not able to list a stand alone spreadsheet solution during the meeting. Since then I have found a free product called BC Spreadsheet. It does not support tmuch in the way of interchange but is a simple spreadsheet.

The next major question was about databases for Mac OS X. I have not been able to find an Access like database for the Mac. In the meeting, I did mention MySQL during the meeting but was reluctant to recommend it for beginners. I have since taken some time to look at MySQL for Mac OS X (included with Mac OS X Server by the way). Complete MySQL is worth a download. It includes MySQL, an installer, a preference pane for controlling MySQL and the MySQL Manual (PDF). I was quite impressed

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with it. CoocoaMySQL and MySQL Query Browser are both GUI frontends to MySQL. They look and feel different but are both very viable ways to create and maintain MySQL databases (on your Mac or remotely on another computer). MySQL Backup provides a simple GUI interface to produce backups of your databases. I was quite impressed with how easy these tools make MySQL for a novice (or an experienced user). And they are all free.

As always, visit <http://versiontracker.com> or <http://macupdate.com> to download your favorite applications.

Hopefully this followup has helped tie up any loose ends from the last meeting. As always, thanks for coming.

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 (actually, this is how I started last month's AAPL column and darn if it is not totally appropriate this month).

The news was pretty good this month. Apple continued to set record highs, some more. About this time last month Apple had dipped to \$55 a share. They just topped \$65 a share. When is the last time you saw a stock rise almost 10% in a month? Three months back, AAPL was just barely above \$45 a share (over 45% growth in 3 months!). Six months ago, AAPL was a little above \$35. A year ago, it was around \$28 (over 100% growth in a year). Two years ago, it was below \$15. Apple is now worth over \$50 billion. What kind of fool did not buy Apple stock a couple years ago (other than me)? This has been a phenomenal run. One would assume that it will have to come to an end soon...

iTunes Music/Video Store

With the introduction of the iPod Video, Apple added video content to iTunes. Rather than jump into full-length videos, Apple stocked the store with music videos and select TV shows (\$1.99 each). Analysts were not sure about Apple's partial entry into the video market. Some saw it as Apple admitting that the iPod Video was not ready for prime time.

In 20 days, Apple sold over 1 million videos. Apparently Apple saw a different model than just pure movie sales. Amazing. I wonder what will happen when Apple does move into the movie business? Sure to be a blockbuster of a week!

Supercomputers

A while back Apple made a big splash with the Virginia Tech G5 cluster by making the top ten of the Top 500 supercomputers in the world. The Virginia Tech cluster has dropped to 20th now (much faster systems have been built). Another Mac cluster came in at 15th (pretty good right now). In total, Apple has 5 clusters in the Top 500 (3 in the top 100 and 2 in the top 20). These are very respectable numbers for a vendor that is not heavily courting the High Performance Computing market. IBM, SGI, HP and Dell have entire divisions dedicated to the High Performance Computing market.

Of local interest, LSU has a 32 node XServe cluster known as Nemeaux. Maya gets quite a workout on this cluster.

The New Quad G5

Apple announced a new PowerMac G5 last month. It comes with 2 dual-core processors -- effectively a 4 cpu Mac. Most of us just dreamed for a minute and kept on going. But you know, for \$3,300 this is a lot of machine.

It deserves more than a passing glance. At 2.5 GHz for each cpu (funny no one is saying terraHZ), this machine has an amazing amount of compute power. It uses PC2-4200 RAM (533 MHz) that can be either ECC or not and is available with up to 16 GB of memory (\$10,000 extra).

This is not the end of changes for this model. It now includes dual Gb ethernet. It includes 4 slots (of various degrees of performance). The available Nvidia Quadro FX 4500 video card comes with 512 MB of memory on it and is amazing.

Apple now offers 500 GB hard drives, meaning the system can have a full TB internally. This machine was built to image movies with Final Cut Pro. If you are into video, you do not need to wait for the Intel systems. This machine is loaded with performance (and a lot cheaper than many 4-way Intel/Athlon systems).

Dual Architecture Binaries

People have been getting excited about the new Java release from Apple. NOT because it brings us a new Java, but because the package includes all the code for PowerPC and for Intel. This package will work automagically on a current Macintosh or on an Intel-based system running Mac OS X.

This is really quite cool. It signals the beginning of Apple releasing dual architecture binaries (get ready for the flood of applications to remove X86 or PPC code from the dual architecture packages).

Apple is already starting the process of building and testing applications for both hardware platforms. It looks like they learned a lot from their previous migration (6x0XX to PPC). By the time Apple starts selling an Intel-based production system (development systems now available), Apple will be well on their way to having a completely dual architecture product line (that will be really cool!).

The Idea Apple Missed

I think Apple has missed a great idea. Many people want Apple to introduce more Macintoshes (especially something in between the Mac Mini and the Power Mac other than the iMac). Others want more choices in the iPod line (more PDA functions, input).

The reality is that these product lines are pretty good. And Apple has a number of excellent Displays. And the software line is approaching phenomenal. I don't forget the XServe and the XServe Raid. These products fill a void that Apple has had for a long time.

So what am I referring to? Personal storage, non-portable. Think about it. As your household extends beyond its first Macintosh, a new problem develops. Inevitably, the file you need is on the other Macintosh. So you wind up having to boot it up or leave it on all of the time. Neither of these are optimal ideas.



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So what other choices exist? From Apple, none. Most of us just deal with the hassle. Sometimes, we think to boot our laptop up in target mode and mount it on our desktop so we have access to both.

But what happens when you have a Mac, your spouse has one and the kids have a couple? You clearly need some place for the common music and pictures and documents to live.

Some of us take an older Macintosh, add some disk to it and use that as a home file server. While this works, it has drawbacks. Older Macintoshes tend to use a fair amount of electricity and take up a lot of room. And it is another machine to but OS upgrades for and to manage.

Others are turning to the Mac Mini. This is a very attractive option, but it has its problems also. You need to have a display and a keyboard/mouse for it. While the Mac Mini is not very expensive and does not take a lot of room up, these extras are large and can be pricey. And before long, you are adding another hard drive to the Mac Mini (80 GB does not go as far as it used to).

And what about printing? Without a dedicated machine to act as a print server, you wind up with another problem.

The non-Macintosh world has a good answer now. Products like the Buffalo Network Attached Storage. This device looks kind of like a small safe (neat idea). It can have up to 4 internal drives (usually 250 GB). This makes a nice round terabyte. It also has 4 USB ports so you can add more disks or printers. You plug it into your network. You use a web browser to configure it (format the disk, define the printer, ...). It produces Windows Shares that can be mounted by Windows, Linux and/or Macintoshes.

This is real cool. You can just buy this box, plug it into the wall and your home network, configure it and forget it. Every time you boot your machine, it automatically mounts the shares and life is wonderful. While this can be done on the Macintosh, a Windows Share is not the best file system for a Macintosh to use (nor the easiest).

The idea is real cool though. Of course, this is crazy. Who needs a terabyte at home? Who can afford a terabyte at home? Hmmm...

This device is currently available for under \$700. Yes, I double checked. The price is right. Suddenly the idea of a terabyte is not so absurd. And think, you can attach your low-cost laser printer and your fancy photo printer to it so that all of your machines have access to them. No more cables to move around or booting another machine to print from yours.

But who needs a terabyte? have you noticed how quickly the disk space disappears when

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	iTunes	Isaac Traxler	Bluebonnet Library
December 15	Holiday Gathering	N/A	Brewbachers
BRMUG's Meetings at a Glance Send ideas to newsletter@brmug.org .			

you store AAC encoded music?

Funny how big the picture collection got when you upgraded from the 1.3 megapixel camera to the new 5 megapixel camera with the 1 GB memory card.

And video clips do not take up hardly any disk space. Playing with iMovie HD is just a little thing.

And nobody downloads games and neat applications from the Internet (remember NeoOffice or AbiWord?).

Maybe a terabyte is not so much after all. I wonder when they will ship the Buffalo Network Storage device with 500 GB drives so that you can put 2 TBs in this nice little case (6.6 x 8.7 x 9.5 inches and 15.8 pounds)? They do have a 1.6 TB model using 400 GB drives -- so anytime now they should release that 2 TB model.

By the way, it supports several configurations. You can raid the drives so that no data is lost when one of them fails yielding 750 GB of storage. Or you mirror the drives yielding 500 GB of total storage.

It also integrates with Buffalo's HD Media Player for streaming video/audio.

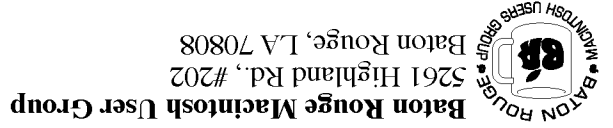
Just a small box that looks nice and is easy to configure and use. And it provides network printing for clients. For a nice touch, Buffalo designed it so that it understood UPSes. It can be configured to automatically shut down when a UPS notices loss of power. Add a wireless router and you have a complete home network infrastructure.

Doesn't this sound like something Apple would think of? It is simple, no bigger than necessary and packed with features. Okay, I will admit the price is a little cheaper than Apple would likely charge.

I even think the look is close to perfect. What better image for a place to store all of your music and images than a safe?

I am sure Apple has something neat up their sleeve. But I bet this product cleaned up a little would add another \$5 a share to their stock price.

by Isaac Traxler



This Month:
iTunes, iTunes, Podcasts
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, #202, Baton Rouge, LA 70808.

BRMUG Membership Form 11/2005

Name: _____

Address: Street, City, State, ZipCode

Home Phone: _____

Office Phone: _____

Things the club should do:

My interest areas:

