



BRMUG

Baton Rouge Macintosh User Group

March 2006

News and Views

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 March meeting will be held at the **Bluebonnet Library** on **March 16th**, the 3rd Thursday of the month, at 6:30 P.M. The meeting will be 6:30 PM at the Bluebonnet Library. This month, Arne Christiansen will present *Automator*. Apple calls Automator your personal automation robot. The GUI world of Mac OS has often lead to the need to do numerous repetitive tasks. Over time Apple has produced a number of solutions to try and ease the pain (Applescript is the longest lasting and most famous). Automator was designed to reduce the tedium of repetitive tasks. Unlike Applescript, Automator is not a scripting language, but instead it is a workflow automation solution. This month, Arne will provide us an overview of Automator and show us some of the actions he has created. I think this will be a great chance to learn to use your Macintosh more effeciently.

John Quebedeaux will be bringing his 17" iMac Duo so that we can all see Mac OS X running on Intel. I plan to cut the news section to a minimum so that John can share his view of the new Duo for a few minutes and still provide plenty of time for Arne to get us all excited about Automator -- so please join us. 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
6:45 PM	iMac Duo
7:10 PM	Automator
8:10 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.

February Meeting

In February, I presented an Overview of iPhoto 06. I hope I was able to help you understand a little more about iPhoto and the latest enhancements. If you want more about iPhoto and iLife, visit CompUSA 1:00 PM on March 11 or April 9. They will have a short presentation on iLife 06.

If you are interested in learning about more Apple sponsored events in the Baton Rouge area, visit <http://www.seminars.apple.com/> and select *Events by Location* and choose Baton Rouge. This a list of all Apple sponsored seminars in our area.

Thanks CompUSA for hosting these. Note that some events require pre-registration (indicated on site).

Apple High Performance Computing Seminar

On Tuesday, March 14, Apple will be sponsoring a seminar at LSU on High Performance Computing. If you are interested in this topic, visit the Apple seminar site referenced above to register and learn more about the event.

MARCH Contents

February Meeting.....	•1
Apple High Performance Computing Seminar	•1
AAPL	•2
Bum Wrap on Hype?	•2
Steve Jobs #140	•2
Intel Macintoshes	•2
Security Challenges.....	•3
iTMS Subscriptions	•3
Automator, iMac Duo	•3

AAPL

After three years of steady increase, Apple has just experienced a couple of months of decline in Stock Market value. Apple's stock price has dropped from a high of \$86.40 to a current price of \$63.19.

At first glance this might look kind of scary. One thing to take into account is how far and fast the price had jumped recently. In late October, Apple was just below \$50. In the three to four months following that low, Apple climbed to their all-time high of \$86.40. Since then, they have shed about two-thirds of the gain. This has also happened before in this three year skyrocket from \$6 to \$86.

And lots of factors contribute to this decline. Apple just had two record quarters. No expects that they can do it again. Apple is right in the middle of the transition to Intel-based Macintoshes. For the first time, we have been more than a year without the release of a major new version of Mac OS X (planned).

iPod sales are (yet again) expected to plummet because conventional wisdom is positive that Apple cannot maintain the huge market share they have possessed for years.

Steve Jobs just sold Pixar to Disney for stock and became the single largest Disney stock holder and gained a seat on the board of directors. Many financial analysts are concerned about the impact on Apple if Jobs gets heavily involved with his latest investment. Some are worried about some kind of Disney/Apple buyout/merger.

Other competitors are moving into the online music business. Amazon just announced a move into the online movie business that Apple seems destined to enter any day now.

So what conclusions can you draw? Wall Street is nervous about Apple's ability to grow and continue to make even more money (of course, this has been true for years and Apple is stronger than ever). Yes, the folks that bought at \$70 and \$80 have lost some money. I do not think that it is a permanent loss. I really believe the stock will still hit the target of over \$100.

And I think it will be in the next 6 months. Why? The Macintosh transition to Intel has gone much smoother than the 680XX to Power transition went. The killer desktops have not been revealed yet. The rest of the MacBook Pro line has yet to be released. The new iBook has

not shown up yet. I expect all of these by the end of summer.

But there is an even better reason to be optimistic. It has nothing to do with product lines or anything else concrete. We all know that Apple likes to surprise and likes to celebrate. Apple is approaching its 30th anniversary. I think Apple may just have a few surprises up their sleeve yet.

Bum Wrap on Hype?

The press has been raking Apple over the coals for over hyping their last announcement.

What did Apple do wrong? They held an invitation only event and said we have some surprises for you. The rumor world went into overtime and predicted an amazing array of things.

And what did Apple do? They released the new single and dual core Mac Mini. This is a major release people. The entire Switcher campaign rides on the back of this inexpensive wonder. Moving it to the Intel platform is a big deal. By the way, the Mac Mini got several improvements and wireless/Bluetooth became standard. And the price did not double. The Mac Mini is very close to that dream home media center that we all want.

And Apple pushed further into the iPod accessory market. Apple created a huge market place for iPod accessories when the iPod started shipping. Apple has been carefully trying to shift some of that money into their pockets. They have instituted a licensing program where iPod accessory makers pay Apple a license fee.

And now Apple is starting to release their own iPod accessories. Maybe the new speaker system and leather case or not earth shattering, but they are a huge deal. It marks the end of Apple not competing with the party accessory makers. What if this extends to other products? Apple will find itself an brand new lucrative cash cow.

So, maybe this announcement was not on a par with tearing down The Wall in Berlin (as someone claimed it should have been). Maybe Jobs intended to show something else and backed off at the last minute. Regardless, this was a big event in the history of Apple. They made the first major change to the new company savior (Mac Mini). They made their first real foray into the accessory market.

Maybe the press did not understand the significance of what they were seeing. Maybe the event was planned to have an

even bigger announcement. Maybe the press (and the rest of us) have become to accustomed to amazing introductions. Or maybe these announcements were much bigger than they looked.

Steve Jobs #140

In amongst the real important news, here is a little side note. In Forbes latest list of billionaires, Steve Jobs comes in at a mere 140th place. Visit <http://www.forbes.com/lists/2006/10/HEDB.html> for more details.

Intel Macintoshes

Many people have contributed to Apple's Apple is now shipping the iMac Duo, the MacBook Pro and the Mac Mini. Lots have been received by people already. Dissection pictures of all are online.

And that is the big news. People have them. No major issues have cropped up. Yes, each model has a few minor issues and complaints (just as every other computer Apple has ever shipped did). The big news is that there is no big news. No rampant software nightmares. No horrible performance issues. Nothing but comments like "I got mine and this is neat and I wish that..."

Most vendors would be having huge press releases lauding their amazing success (how many companies have ever successfully transitioned from one processor to another entirely incompatible processor and succeeded?). Apple is quietly marching forward.

I, for one, cannot wait to see the other new Intel Macintoshes that are coming. I believe Apple has already proved that the transition will not be a big deal.



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Security Challenges

Security has become a big topic in the Mac world. A few tricks have been discovered that are a pain (disguising file types and letting auto-execution cause an unexpected action to be taken). Apple will have to figure out a long term solution to avoiding this without destroying another major part of Mac OS X's ease of use.

A lot of fear spread that the Mac would suddenly be vulnerable because it was now Intel. This fear has largely disappeared.

And then came the "Security Challenge". A Mac Mini was set up with SSH and Web open. Two accounts were created. The account names and passwords were published. And the machine was cracked in about 30 minutes.

This created a lot of fear for a little while. First, would you really leave the keys to your car in the door (publish the username/password) and then point to the car and ask someone to steal it without fear of arrest? That is basically what this "test" did.

A more appropriate test was set up at the University of Wisconsin shortly after. A Mac Mini was set up on the Internet. SSH and Web were opened up and left in default configuration. Two accounts were created (but the info was not published).

The Mac Mini survived the test without a hitch. Unfortunately, the test was shortened when the university requested the machine be shut down after the campus network was overrun with traffic by people trying to kill the machine.

In spite of being hammered hard enough to disrupt the network of a major university, the Mac Mini did not crash, did not hang, continued to serve web pages and was not penetrated in the least.

For now, it appears that Mac OS X still has plenty of security left in it. Considering that nothing extra was done to secure the system, this was a pretty amazing feat.

iTMS Subscriptions

So far, the iTunes Music Store has been a purchase only store. This just started to change. iTMS now offers monthly subscriptions for select TV shows. Instead of paying \$1.99 per episode, you can pay \$9.99 to cover an entire month's worth of episodes (16) of two Comedy Central shows ("The Daily Show with Jon Stewart" and "The Colbert Report").

Some see this as the precursor to monthly, unlimited music downloads. To me, it looks like the album approach (songs are \$0.99 each or \$9.99 for the entire album). I am not saying that Apple will not go to a monthly rental program. I just do not think that this is the same thing at all.

2005/2006 Meeting Calendar

March 16	Automator	Arne Christiansen	Bluebonnet Library
February 16	iPhoto 06 Overview	Isaac Traxler	Bluebonnet Library
January 19	Buddy, where did you put they put that start button?	Don Ballard	Bluebonnet Library
December 15	Holiday Gathering	N/A	Brewbachers
November 17	iTunes, iTMS, Podcasts	Isaac Traxler	Bluebonnet Library
October 20	Alternatives to High Cost Software	Don & Isaac	Bluebonnet Library
September 15	Katrina & Apple	ALL	Bluebonnet Library
August 18	iChat A/V	Don & Isaac	Bluebonnet Library
July 21	Garage Band	Glenn Matherne	Bluebonnet Library
June 16	Software Gems	Isaac, Don & Glenn	Bluebonnet Library
May 19	Epson CX6400	Isaac Traxler	Bluebonnet Library
April 21	Pages	Isaac Traxler	Bluebonnet Library
BRMUG's Meetings at a Glance Send ideas to newsletter@brmug.org .			

Automator, iMac Duo

This month will be special. This BRMUG meeting will be the first attended by an Intel Macintosh. And we all get to take a look at it (Thanks John!).

Even better, we are being treated to a topic that has never been presented before at a BRMUG Meeting: Automator (Thanks Arne!).

Automator is an effort by Apple to produce a tool that you can use to reproduce mouse movements, actions and typing so that tedious and repetitive actions can be turned into an action (GUI version of a macro).

Automator is an amazing product. In you are not familiar with it, you probably should visit <http://www.apple.com/macosx/features/automator/> to get a good overview of Automator. Apple describes Automator as a method of automating a workflow process.

The fact that Apple realized that people perform patterns of operations (work flows) and thought to provide

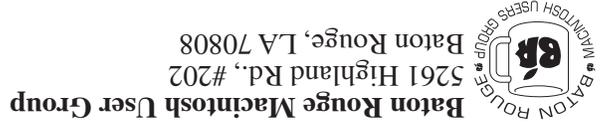
a tool for normal users to streamline tasks is really neat. Most workflow automation is only designed for some aspect of a large business.

Apple's Automator site is well worth a visit. Not only does it have a good description of Automator and demos, it has links to discussions and lots of pre-written actions that you can download. The download section is set up just like the Widget download area. You can find a lot of really neat stuff here -- things you do every day and always wanted to make easier.

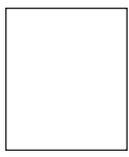
There are also a number of external web sites that are publishing actions (links to several of the more popular ones are right on Apple's Automator page). To find more, go to Google and search on: *mac os x automator action download*.

I want to thank Arne for volunteering to introduce all of us to this new feature of Mac OS X. Automator has the opportunity to change how you use your Macintosh (for the better).

by Isaac Traxler



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This Month:
Automator
 by Arne Christiansen

*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 3/2006

Name: _____

Address: Street, City, State, ZipCode

Home Phone: _____

Office Phone: _____

Things the club should do: _____

My interest areas: _____
