



BRMUG

Baton Rouge Macintosh User Group

May 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 CC's on Highland (either College or Bluebonnet).

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 May meeting will be held at the **Bluebonnet Library** on **May 18th**, the 3rd Thursday of the month, at 6:30 P.M. The meeting will be 6:30 PM at the Bluebonnet Library. This month, BRMUG will present *Accessorize Your Mac*.

Many accessories exist for computers today. Have you ever wondered which one work and which ones don't with your Macintosh? Have you wondered which should buy versus the ones to steer clear of? Here is a chance for BRMUG to help you out. Several of us plan to bring various accessories (peripherals and other things) so that you can have a look and ask questions. Please feel free to bring anything you wish to share with the group. And bring questions about things you are thinking about getting. You can spend a fortune adding things to a computer system, this meeting should help you get the most bang for your buck!

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	Accessorize Your Mac
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.

April Meeting

At the April meeting, Don lead us on a discussion of things you should do routinely to your Macintosh to keep functioning properly. A lot of good discussion occurred and I think everyone present learned a few things. Thanks Don!

John Quebedeaux brought an Intel Mac Mini, a Apple display, and his father's MacBook Pro (that had Boot-Camp installed). It is really cool to be able to see these various Macintoshes and peripherals close up. Thanks a bunch John!

AAPL

Wall Street continues to baffle me. Apple had a very good quarter. It was better than the same quarter last year. It was not down nearly as much as many thought after Apple's strong holiday quarter.

And Apple Computer won the lawsuit that AppleCorp (the remnant of the

Beatles record label) had filed. The judge even said Apple Corp has to pay Apple Computer's legal fees. This should have been a very positive influence.

The new Apple TV commercials are actually promoting the Macintosh over the PC. A common Wall Street complaint is that Apple is not aggressive enough in their marketing.

SONY caved in. The new SONY media players support AAC (Apple's music encoding protocol). SONY has held out for a long time. Their adoption of AAC signals very solidly that Apple controls the digital music world.

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iTMS just added selected shows from the Fox Network including 24. This means that Fox, ABC, NBC and CBS all sell some shows via iTMS (Sopranos and HBO are about all that is left). Maybe the only thing missing here is the new, larger screen iPod (the true Video iPod). Based on how large a percentage of the music industry is on board, the fact that all the major networks are on board, I do not see Apple being able to be denied when they do choose to move into the movie business.

So much has gone right in the last month. What has the stock price done? AAPL is down about \$0.60 since this time last month. I suppose Apple was expected to move mountains or something. In fairness, the entire Stock Market looks a little rough over the last month and Apple is pretty much flat. So things are not bad -- I was just hoping for more.

We do live in interesting times.

BRMUG ListServ Available

Periodically, I get asked if BRMUG has a mailing list/listserv. I have resisted the idea in the past. I receive far more mail a day than I can deal with. Many important messages get far less attention than they deserve. I have been reluctant to add more e-mail to the overflowing stack that now exists.

I am also concerned about other people. An active mailing list could discourage people.

But time has passed. Most of us have developed techniques for dealing with massive volumes of e-mail.

And needs have changed. We need a simple electronic way to get the word out about upcoming meetings. We need a way for members to ask questions of each other. We need a way for club business and planning to be managed and recorded.

So we now have two mailing lists. To start with we have *brmug-l* and *brmug-planning*. *brmug-l* is meant to be a general purpose list that anyone can join and then post questions to or answer questions. The list is not for business purposes, but feel free to post requests for help (for pay or not). I will also send out a notice the week before and two days before the meeting. I will also send a message out when the newsletter is available online. If this list gets to active, I will create a separate *brmug-announce* list just for meeting announcements and important news.

brmug-planning is for the officers to

communicate about club business and for club members to send ideas to. This list will have announcements of planning meetings and anything else that seems related to running the club.

Any member is welcome to join either list. You can also remove yourself at any time. You can choose to receive each message individually or to receive daily collections. An automated archive exists of all posted messages.

To subscribe to the lists, please visit <http://isaac.lsu.edu/mailman/listinfo> and click on the list you would like to join. I will make every effort to prevent the lists from becoming spam distribution points (only members can post).

I believe that this is a good first step in merging BRMUG in to the e-mail world. Maybe it should have been done sooner, but it is here now. So, please sign up and let's see if we can utilize this new fangled technology.

MacBook Pro 17 Released

Apple announced the 17" MacBook Pro at the end of April. This system answered several questions (or at least stirred the pot). It is almost identical in look to the original 17" PowerBook. Like the PowerBook, the MacBook Pro 17 offers a slightly faster CPU and better video card than the 15" model.

But then the fun starts. Maybe it is because Apple had more time to design it. Maybe it is because they had more room inside. Regardless of the reasons, the 17" has a number of new features.

FireWire 800 is back. Was Apple really going to give up and then brought it back after lots of complaints? Did they run out of time on the 15"? Did they have insufficient room in the 15"? Who knows. Regardless, it is back.

The 17" also supports a 8x DualLayer DVD drive that many have been wanting.

The best feature to me is the return of the 17" display. I am dreaming...

Audio Recording Equipment for Mac

Here are some suggestions categorized by cost. [Editor's note: This original article included numerous excellent images that somehow wound up on the cutting room floor.]

Lower Budget: The Shure SM58 is a low cost professional recording microphone. Usually these are priced under \$100. Medium/high quality for a reasonable price.

The Behringer Eurorack-UB802 is a

low cost audio mixer for under \$55. It is used to get audio from various sources into your Mac, mixing multiple audio sources into one that is fed into your computer. With some Macs you can record directly into the Audio input. These devices are compatible with Apple Garageband and Audacity (freeware).

If you require an analog audio interface, you will need a Griffin iMic (\$45). This will allow computers with NO analog audio interface to get sound from a mixer or microphone. If you use a G4 iBook these are necessary.

Medium/Higher Budget: The AKG Perception 200 is a professional condenser microphone (\$150). It is used for high quality vocal recording in a studio or small room. These have much higher quality than cardioid microphones, usually coming with shock mounts to reduce noise from vibration.

For much more recording flexibility, you may want to look for an external Firewire audio interface, like the Presonus Inspire (\$199-\$250). These devices allow for multiple inputs into your Mac, using the Firewire interface to capture audio. Most of these devices come with a software-based mixer.

You can control your audio input devices right from your Mac. Most commonly, audio software like Apple Garageband or CUBASE-LE can greatly enhance your recording quality and flexibility. Many Firewire interfaces are also BUS powered, meaning that there is no need to bring along a large, cumbersome AC brick. This is great for portable recording.

by William Sellers



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Accessorize Your Mac

For a preview of this month's meeting, I thought I would talk a little bit about the various accessories I have (or wish I had).

For me, the displays are the most important add-on. My desktop system has a pair of 20" IBM LCDs and an early Apple 15" Studio Display. I use the 15" to keep a system monitoring web page and my iChat Buddy list. It is purely a status place that does not get obscured by other things.

In my work I use the terminal for command line access to the machines that I manage a lot. I also use the web a lot. Pretty much the monitor directly in front of me has terminal (and the dock on the far left). The monitor to my right a little has Safari open with multiple windows and lots of tabs. Any other application is just lost in amongst these. Multiple monitors is by far one of the biggest items in improving productivity for me.

Keyboards are a big deal for many people. Choices go from simple USB keyboards to mini-wireless to monstrosities with dozens of extra keys. Because my Macs have always included one, I have always started with Apple's keyboard. The design seems to be very good for me and I have seen little reason to replace it. I can see the advantage of a bluetooth keyboard for meetings and for sitting on a couch while working on a large screen. My desk stays so littered with cables that a wireless keyboard would be a disadvantage (the two USB ports on the keyboard are used a lot).

Mice. A lot more choices than keyboards. Back in the PC PS/2 days I bought a Kensington optical scroll mouse (USB with a PS/2 adapter). When my USB-based G4 arrived, I moved that mouse to my Mac. I have used that same mouse until a few months ago (it was getting pretty ratty looking on top). Because of the clutter on desk, I found the cord was constantly causing problems (getting caught...). A while back, an optical, 4 button, scroll wheel, RF optical mouse was on sale at Geeks.com (for \$7 or \$8). I bought it. It took me a few minutes to figure out about the reset switch on the bottom. Since then it has just worked. No new drivers. Nothing. Have not got around to figuring out how to use the 4th button yet. Being wireless, it goes to sleep after a while of inactivity (which shortens as the batteries wear down). This is the only real problem I have had. Whether you go USB, USB RF wireless, or bluetooth make sure you get optical, scroll mouse. Mac OS X uses the right click a lot. Most applications automagically support scrolling via the scroll wheel. A true must have.

Ever wanted a bar code reader? I use the USB version of the CueCat (can be bought for \$10-20 on eBay). It is not bad for the price.

Speakers are great with iTunes. I have a pair

2006/2005 Meeting Calendar			
May 18	Accessorize Your Mac	Team	Bluebonnet Library
April 20	Mac OS X Maintenance	Don Ballard	Bluebonnet Library
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
BRMUG's Meetings at a Glance Send ideas to newsletter@brmug.org .			

of Labtec LCS-1070. These are amplified speakers that are just big enough to not sound tinny. You can spend as much as you would like here.

Printers and scanners are important items. For space reasons I have shifted to all-in-one printer/scanner/copy machine/media card reader. On the color inkjet side, I have been very pleased with Epson. They almost always have low-cost models that do a good job printing. Their best feature is that low-cost third-party ink cartridges work with them (typically \$3-6 a cartridge). I have a Brother all-in-one laser printer that has not been used enough to determine longevity and durability. I paid about \$100 for it and toner cartridges are about \$30 each (still on original). Once again, price of refills was determining factor.

Media card readers are a big item for me. I have cameras that use Secure Digital/Multi Media, SmartMedia and Compact Flash. I have tried several solutions here and pretty much they all work. Size, price and matching your

type of media are important here. Having a read-anything is a plus when friends bring their various cameras. I really like the PCMCIA adapters for use with laptops.

USB keys/thumbdrives are the big rage. I have had several. The first lesson I learned is that anything over 128 MB just about always fails to work unless plugged directly into computer or a powered hub. After trying a number of them, I have given up. The size is exploding on them and the prices are in constant flux. My current solution is a small SD/MM reader (\$8) and a 512 SD card (\$18). When 512 MB gets unacceptably small, I will just get a larger SD card.

On the topic of USB hubs, get two and make sure at least one is powered. Most keyboards and such are USB 1. Most drives are USB 2. If both are connected to the same USB hub, everything slows down to USB 1 speeds. So hook slow things to one hub and drives to the powered hub.

by Isaac Traxler

