



BRMUG

Baton Rouge Macintosh User Group

News and Views

February 2007

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 February meeting will be held at the **Bluebonnet Library** on **February 15th**, 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 present *Inkscape -- an Open Source Vector Graphics Package*. This meeting will demonstrate the use of Inkscape and provide some fundamental vector graphic ideas. This will be more of a return to our tutorial type meetings. This meeting should have some useful information while presenting a no cost vector graphics drawign solution. I hfound it very useful for drawing network overview diagrams. 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	Inkscape -- an Open Source Vector Graphics Package
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.

January Meeting

The January Meeting was taken over by the iPhone and the Apple TV. These are clearly huge announcements by Apple. In fact the iPhone is following typical Apple success story plot. Initially the rumors came along and we got all excited. After a while, we all began to believe Apple has missed the window and that all they could do is produce a minor refinement of existing phones. And then the debut knocked our socks off. It was amazing, radical, different and interesting.

The world reacted in the normal ways (remember the first announcement of the iMac and the iPod). Some declared it the solution to all known problems. Others pointed out small issues. Others declared it the biggest mistake Apple ever made. Many complained of the price. And then a flurry of lawsuits showed up

And these have already been followed up by the iPhone killers (why does an overpriced, flawed, useless device need a killer?).

And the Apple TV was formally announced. It is designed to be the iPod of personal home multimedia. It will pair

with a computer/iTunes combo just like an iPod does. It acts as a cache of content (just like an iPod holds a subset of your music/video content).

The Apple TV's strength seems to be that it interacts with HD TVs easily. Apple is apparently betting that people are frustrated enough with getting content to their HD TV that a \$299 device that simplifies it is worth it (pre-orders for the Apple TV are flooding the Apple Store so they might be right).

Thanks to all who attended last month and participated in the discussions of where Apple is going. While we still do not know, we know more about the iPhone and we are starting to see a

FEBRUARY Contents

January Meeting.....	•1
Steve Jobs - Stock	•2
Steve Jobs - DRM.....	•2
AAPL	•2
Nano/Shuffle Goes Color	•2
Movies at iTunes Store	•2
Apple Name Resolved?	•2
Inkscape and Vector Graphics	•2
AirPort Extreme.....	•2
Inkscape & Vector Graphics	•2-3

glimpse into their home media plans.

Steve Jobs - Stock

Steve Jobs and Apple are still being investigated for predating stock. Many companies have utilized the process of giving stock to executives at a declared value from a date not the same that it was issued over the years.

This practice is being reviewed (apparently folks have figured out how to abuse it). Now Jobs is being looked at in connection with Pixar.

The results could turn out that Jobs is just an executive signing orders composed by the legal/financial staffs without understanding or he may be guilty of trying to produce the maximum economic benefit under the grey area in the law. Certainly what was done appears to be inline with many other companies practices (this does not make it right, just points out that most did not see an issue with it).

The question now is what actions the legal system may take and if it will impact Job's ability/desire to remain in charge.

Steve Jobs - DRM

Steve Jobs did an interview where he claimed that he/Apple would love to remove DRM from iTunes, but cannot do so until the recording industry agrees.

Some say this is FUD. Clearly Apple would benefit from not having to constantly test and update its DRM code (reducing development costs). Apple might lose revenue if piracy increased.

Apple is often pointed at as the new king of DRM because of iTunes and the iTunes Store. I have often believed this position was unfair. From the beginning Apple has allowed purchased music to be exported from iTunes and then re-imported without DRM restrictions. They have made it less than trivial, but very possible. Clearly, motivated thieves are at most required to go through some motions.

This stance is one of the more open/laid back stances on DRM in the industry (I have often wondered how Apple keeps convincing the recording industry that Apple's DRM is sufficient).

Jobs recent declaration of the desire to be DRM free does raise some questions. Why does iTunes not support the download of DRM free purchases at this time? Surely, some artist or studio would take advantage of this feature given an opportunity. Since Jobs just made his

comments, I suspect somebody will step forward and ask if the iTunes Store will distribute their work DRM free. It will be interesting to see what happens.

AAPL

A month means a lot. A month ago AAPL hit its 52 week high of \$97.80 (and record high of all time). Now they are at about \$85 a share and have Market Cap of \$73 billion. Microsoft is still worth about 4 times Apple. Intel is about 1.7 times Apple. Wal-Mart is less than 3 times the value of Apple.

The iPhone drove prices up last month in conjunction with MacWorld. Now we wait the 5 more months until the iPhone ships. Clearly an obvious cause for a decline. The stock back-dating item continues to draw attention. Apple's success brings with it a multitude of law suits from other companies. All of these together provide an opportunity for Apple to sink a little.

There is good news on the horizon. Barring major nightmares (like Jobs leaving, ...), Apple should rise again. It is almost time (if not overdue) for numerous products in the Apple product line to get at least feature bumps if not serious upgrades. Rumors also indicate multiple brand new products from Apple to be announced in the next several months. Leopard looks like it maybe on sale in late March, which looks like it will bring with it new versions of iWork and iLife. This should also help raise the stock value.

Nano/Shuffle Goes Color

Without fanfare Apple added pink, blue, orange and green to the silver Shuffle but kept the price at \$79. The 2 GB iPod Nano is available in silver. The 4 GB Nano is available in silver, green, blue, pink and red. The 8 GB Nano is available in black and red.

Movies at iTunes Store

iTunes Store adds Lionsgate Movies. This adds another 150 movies to the inventory including "Terminator 2" and "Dirty Dancing."

Apple Name Resolved?

Apple Inc. and the Beatles Apple Corp. have signed a new agreement (the last one was in 1991). This agreement should resolve the use of the name Apple and the logos allowing Apple Inc. to no longer get sued in Britain over its name. Many are speculating that this agreement will

lead to the Beatles catalog being available at the iTunes Store (if/when this happens expect to see Apple's stock price jump a few dollars).

AirPort Extreme

Apple has made a number of changes to the AirPort Extreme. It is still a great wireless base station that now supports 802.11n (which Apple claims to be up to 5 times faster than 802.11g). The AirPort Extreme now includes a USB port that can be used to share a USB drive or printer (a hub can be used so that both are shared or multiple of each). This looks to be the beginning of a home hub to me. Just need a built in web server so that you can get to your files when not at home.

Inkscape and Vector Graphics

As most of you know, I have repeatedly professed my lack of graphic creativity repeatedly. This does not mean that I lack the ability to recognize its need. Nor does it mean that I cannot appreciate some levels of beauty and simplicity.

And now for a step back to the past. I remember sitting at an early Macintosh Plus and using MacWrite, MacDraw and MacPaint. It was obvious that MacPaint was very different and did not work like Mac OS, MacWrite and MacDraw. While the idea of MacPaint was neat, I found it very difficult to produce images in it that look good on screen and when printed. But MacWrite and MacDraw items scaled (mostly) without any issue. That was when I chose to concentrate



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my feeble efforts on MacDraw instead of MacPaint.

As time progressed, MacDraw was updated for a while and then I moved on to other drawing programs (never really finding one I likes as much as MacDraw). The rest of the world moved down the paint process and wound up at things like Photoshop.

Some might ask what the difference is. Paint programs work with a series of pixels (dots that can be clear or any other color) -- very much like your computer display. With Paint programs you can produce very precise exact images with tremendous control over color and detail. Unfortunately, as you scale these pixel based drawings they lose detail when reduced and look blocky when enlarged.

Draw programs are known as vector graphics programs. Each item they display is an object with a set of rules on how to draw it. For instance, a triangle in a vector program can be scaled (larger or smaller) without any loss or gain of detail because it gets redrawn completely at whatever scale.

I find vector graphics more appealing because I do not have to worry about the size of what I am drawing. I can just start drawing. If I run out of room, I just shrink everything and have more room. If I finish and there is white space left over, I can simply expand the drawing.

For example, I needed to produce a drawing of the network architecture of a cluster I administer for HPC @ LSU. The initial drawing for a slide in Keynote. I also wanted to be able to make it into a full page PDF so that people could print it out and see it better. I also wanted to produce a graphic for a web site. I did not want to redraw it 3 times.

My solution was to use a program called Inkscape -- a free, Open Source program that does vector graphics based on SVG (Scalable Vector Graphics). SVG is an open standard based on XML that describes how to draw images (in the same way Postscript or TrueType describe how to draw characters).

The drawback of drawing programs is that they tend to be slow redrawing complex images (it takes a lot of cpu to redraw and scale the images). Complex images are often very large also compared to Paint programs that produce static size documents for a give size/resolution.

Inkscape is available for Linux, Windows and Mac OS X. On the Mac it runs under X11. This produces some issues for Mac users. Menus are X11 -- not Mac style. Key strokes are control instead of command (Apple key). The copy/paste buffer Inkscape uses does not interact with the Mac buffers. Printing is non-trivial (done via LPR).

2006/7 Meeting Calendar			
February 15	Inkscape and Vector Graphics	Isaac Traxler	Bluebonnet Library
January 18	MacWorld Recap	Don Ballard	Bluebonnet Library
December 21	Holiday Gathering	N/A	Brewbachers
November 16	Mac Extras & Gadgets you want!	Everyone	Bluebonnet Library
October 19	iTunes And iTS	William Sellers	Bluebonnet Library
September 21	Software Choices	William Sellers & Isaac Traxler	Bluebonnet Library
August 17	Podcasting 101	William Sellers	Bluebonnet Library
July 20	GarageBand	Glenn Matherne	Bluebonnet Library
June 15	Backup Up Your Mac	Richard Johnson	Bluebonnet Library
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
BRMUG's Meetings at a Glance Send ideas to newsletter@brmug.org .			

At this point, you might ask how I could recommend a program with these issues? I will admit that some of these are almost show stoppers.

I periodically use X11 applications, so I am somewhat familiar with the window/menu differences along with the keystroke differences. Unlike Gimp, I found Inkscape enjoyable enough to use that I did find myself forgetting that I was not in a Mac program.

Printing might be an issue. For me it was not. I was merely producing an image to put in other documents. Inkscape fully supports numerous save formats and exports. Saving as a PDF produces easy to print documents. This also solved getting the result to Keynote. I opened the saved PDF and selected the part of the drawing I wanted (Acrobat copied it) and then I pasted it into Keynote where I could scale it without loss of detail.

Getting stuff in was more problematic. Inkscape does a good job of importing SVG documents and

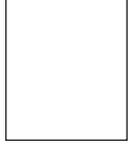
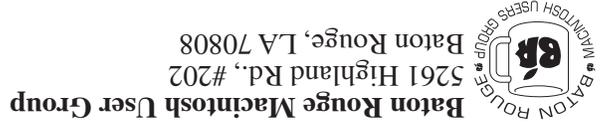
some others. For a starting point, I visited <http://www.openclipart.org>. They have thousands of free pieces of SVG clip art. From here I found basic building blocks that could be converted into nodes and switches.

Like many programs, Inkscape provides palettes of tools. The basic tools are select object, edit path, zoom, rectangle, circle, polygon, spiral, freehand draw, bezier curve draw, calligraphy, text, connectors, gradient, and eye dropper. This gives you a vague idea of the basic toolsets.

Normal operation is to draw a figure (say a square). Color and fill it. Then maybe draw a circle and do the same. You can now click on the corners to resize. These 2 items are objects. They can be selected simultaneously and then aligned (centered). You can then group them so that they become a single object. This is the basic idea of creating building blocks.

I guess the rest will have to wait until the meeting. See you there.

by Isaac Traxler



This Month:
 Inkscape -- an Open Source Vector Graphics Package
 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 2/2007

Name: _____

Address: Street, City, State, ZipCode

Home Phone: _____

Office Phone: _____

Things the club should do: _____

My interest areas: _____
