



Rmug News

May 2005

This Month

RMUG Meeting, Saturday morning
May 14, 2005 9-11:30 AM

All Mac users, new & old are invited to attend the next RMUG general meeting at:

Yaks Koffee Shop
3274 Bechelli Lane
Redding, CA

Coffee and donuts will be available during our "Get Acquainted" time, 9am to 10am. There are classes for "Beginners" and "Intermediate" from 9:15 to 10:00 am.

Topics this month will include an iPhoto demonstration as well as Photoshop Elements emphasizing layers. Related personal creativity projects and issues as well as the usual Q&A.

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President's Letter

Due to extenuating circumstances there is no presidents letter this month. An interesting digital camera discussion by David Pogue will be substituted.

Editor

Defending Big Megapixels

In my review of 8-megapixel digital cameras a couple of weeks ago, I made fun of megapixel mania. Companies hawk megapixel ratings as though they're a measure of photo quality, which they're not. And lots of consumers are falling for it. The drawback, I noted, is that more megapixels means that you have to buy a bigger memory card to hold them. And you have to do a lot more waiting: waiting between shots, waiting for the photos to get transferred to your computer, and waiting to open and edit them. For most people, I wrote, a four- or five-megapixel camera (capable of great big 11 x 19 inkjet prints) is more than plenty.

A dissenting view came by e-mail from an old friend, Harris Fogel. He's an associate professor of photography in Philadelphia:

"My advice to students is opposite of yours when it comes time to decide on resolution. I have always advised them to use the highest quality setting they can manage, and to buy big memory cards.

"Why? Because that family snapshot might just be the last time you see your grandmother, or the last time the entire family is together. And to shoot that moment at low resolution dooms that image to 5 x 7 or 8 x 10, with little opportunity to improve upon that.

"In digital audio, all those folks who recorded with first-generation digital audio decks now cringe at the sound quality. [These days], it's pretty much the standard to record at higher resolution and downsample to lower res when needed. But you still have a higher quality file to refer to when the time comes to remaster.

"Having spent my life working with images, many of them archival and historically important, I thank the gods for the incredible resolution of the wet plate process, for the use of large format film, and the care given to properly process film and prints. On the other side, there is simply nothing you can do to improve upon a low-res image, captured with a lossy format like JPEG.

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RMUG Information

Why RMUG? The Redding Macintosh Users' Group was formed to help members and new users obtain maximum enjoyment and performance from their computers. This is accomplished through group activities and our direct affiliation with Apple™.

Resources: RMUG resources include monthly mailings from Apple™ and numerous outside vendors. We have a library of public domain programs, games and shareware software. We have videos and other computer-related guidebooks and information.

Meetings: RMUG meetings are held on the second Saturday of each month from 9:00 to 11:30 am – contact any club officer for meeting location. The meetings give members and visitors an opportunity to share information, opinions, personal experiences and techniques regarding Macintosh computer systems—hardware & software.

Membership Information: We invite you, as a guest, to attend our next monthly meeting. If you decide to join RMUG, your membership fee includes your whole family. We need your help as much as you need ours! Please participate!

Welcome To Our Meetings: Call the President, Marcus Harner at 245-0895 or contact other RMUG officers for help. Go to <http://rmug.org/membership.html> for numbers.

Membership Dues: \$24 / year. Includes newsletters, access to shareware, monthly workshops, troubleshooting help. Payment of dues can be made at the monthly meetings or send them to: *Charlotte Ruskowitz, 6538 Mossom Ln., Anderson CA 96007* . Please make check payable to: Redding Macintosh Users' Group.

SECRETARY'S NOTES:

MINUTES – RMUG MEETING, APRIL 9, 2005

Directories: Michael Peters said Directories are one of the biggest problems in the UNIX environment. In response to a member's disappearing files, first he repaired permissions (see March newsletter for steps). Then he ran Disk Warrior to correct directory problems. The files were found.

Repair permissions weekly and before running updates. Repair disk (Disk Warrior, Cocktail, etc.) every three months. You need to be running at least OS X.3 to use Disk Warrior. Ken will check with Alsoft to ask about a group discount on Disk Warrior.

Keep your computer fast. Load your hard drive only 20% full. Never load it more than 80% full. Suggest leaving only your applications on the main drive, and putting all your documents and working files on an external drive.

Printers: Michael Peters demonstrated the Epson Stylus Photo R300 printer that uses six ink cartridges. This printer includes a special tray that lets you print customized text, graphics, and photos directly on ink-jet printable CDs or DVDs. Michael uses Roxio Toast 6 and Discus 3.07 to obtain great CD or DVD covers as well. You can also print photos directly from digital cameras and automatically copy photos to your computer by inserting the camera's memory card in the printer's memory card slot.

Ron Brink showed two printers and other numerous items.

Picture Mate is a small, all-in-one, easy to use printer for making 4" x 6" prints. It will also print a preview sheet. You must use their paper and ink, 100 sheets of paper/\$30. I believe this is an Epson printer. Approximately \$200.

The Epson Stylus Photo R800 printer uses eight ink cartridges. It will print borderless 8" x 10" prints. It sprays each print with a clear coat for greater longevity. It also includes a special

tray for printing customized text, graphics, and photos directly on ink-jet printable CDs or DVDs. It will also print photos directly from digital cameras and automatically copy photos to your computer by inserting the camera's memory card in the printer's memory card slot.

Ron also showed Pixel Smart which allows you to make posters from regular prints; Noise Ninja to take noise out of pictures; an Archival Storage Box for discs; a new stackable Belkin USB Hub with 2 vertical and 3 horizontal plugs; Renaissance Wax, a cleaner and preservative for old pictures; and a Big Book with acid free inserts for preserving newspaper pages and other large items.

Michael Sauer added his support to Ron's testimonial regarding the Epson Stylus Photo R800 printer and, I believe, to all the high end Epson Stylus Photo printers. He showed us a 16" x 20" Sepia Chrome print on plastic that had a commercial lab make for him for \$75. Then he showed us the same subject, same size print he had printed on an Epson Stylus Pro 4000 printer on Epson Luster Paper for \$3.65. He preferred the colors in the print he had made on the Epson printer to the colors in the print he had purchased from a lab. He suggested we not buy Epson Photo Paper at Costco because that paper appears to have a greenish cast. He suggested we use Epson professional papers obtained from quality supply houses. He prefers Epson acid-free Matte paper for longer life prints.

Our next meeting on May 14th will be held at YAKS Koffee Shop, 3274 Bechelli Lane. The program will be iPhoto.05 and the Layers tool in Photoshop Elements 2 (other Photoshop tools as time allows).

Jacquie Martin, Secretary

Old Dogs New Tricks:

YOUR FIRST COMPUTER.

I need to illustrate Remember your first car? Excitement, fascination, experimenting, telling your friends what it would do. It could go faster than you needed to go, and take you where you wanted to go.

There is a similarity in computers. For your first computer, you really don't need the latest whiz bang the advertising says you must have.

Even older computers have a speed you cannot keep up with. In writing letters, most people must stop and think how to express themselves. The computer is waiting for you. Looking up addresses, choosing a border for a birthday card, deciding on which font, selecting friends for the party, remembering how to spell you friend's last name, and on and on. The computer is waiting for you.

Spending money on the fastest computer only makes sense if you have specialized in a certain field. Graphic artist need speed. An architect drawing an office building may need speed. A commercial print shop may need speed. You probably don't.

If your grandchild is updating his computer, take his/her old one. Or buy the \$50 one at the yard sale. Like your first car, you will be amazed at what it can do. It will go faster than you need to go, and it will amaze you with how much information it can store.

Get a computer! Write your life story. Print the Church School lessons. Tell what life was like 60 years ago. Write headquarters for your organization.

Make a friend over seas. Write your favorite recipe. Explain how to make the things your dad used to make. Write to the newsletter. Remember when us old folks die we take all of our stories with us unless we write them down. And remember to have fun with your first computer.

By Allen Hall

Desktop Security:

Apple Mythology and Desktop Security

Two weeks ago theregister.co.uk summarized an analysis (done by Quocirca) of reader response to questions on Linux desktop migration.

To no one's surprise, the study found that business people cite the opportunity to sidestep the insecurity of the Microsoft (Nasdaq: MSFT - news) PC, not cost savings, as the primary reason for considering desktop Linux. Most respondents agreed, furthermore, that the high cost of matching Windows applications, particularly Microsoft Office and custom applications, is the greatest barrier to change.

What's most interesting about this is what it reveals about the respondents: specifically that they're so focused on fighting Microsoft's alligators that they don't see the hardware side of their security problems and are blind to the BSD-based Mac OS X option for running Microsoft Office without Microsoft Windows.

Software and Hardware Vulnerabilities

At present, attacks on Microsoft's Windows products are generally drawn from a different population of possible attacks than those on Unix variants such as BSD, Linux and Solaris. From a practical perspective, the key difference is that attacks on Wintel tend to have two parts: A software vulnerability is exploited to give a remote attacker access to the x86 hardware and that access is then used to gain control of the machine.

In contrast, attacks on Unix generally require some form of initial legal access to the machine and focus on finding software ways to upgrade priveleges illegally...

The vulnerability exists in Microsoft's code, but the exploit depends on the rigid stack-order execution and limited page protection inherent in the x86 architecture. If Windows ran on Risc, that vulnerability would still exist, but it would be a non-issue because the exploit opportunity would be more theoretical than practical.

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DESKTOP SECURITY CONTINUED:

Linux and open-source applications are thought to have far fewer software vulnerabilities than Microsoft's products, but Linux on Intel is susceptible to the same kind of attacks as those now predominantly affecting Wintel users. For real long-term security improvements, therefore, the right answer is to look at Linux, or any other Unix, on non x86 hardware.

One such option is provided by Apple's BSD-based products on the PowerPC-derived G4 and G5 CPUs. Linus Torvalds, for example, apparently now runs Linux on a Mac G5 and there are several Linux distributions for this hardware -- all of which are immune to the typical x86-oriented exploit.

Power of Attraction

In addition, Apple's Mac OS X has several compelling attractions of its own. First, it's the most advanced and user-friendly graphical user environment in commercial use. It offers thousands of commercial applications, including Microsoft Office. And it runs nearly all open-source applications.

Also, Macs are less expensive. That's not what you see in the PC press, but it's reality. The explanation for that, besides dishonesty on the part of PC reviewers going as far back as 1984, is primarily that Apple's product cycles resemble those of other consumer electronics manufacturers, not those of the PC industry.

Thus, Apple's products have generally been considerably less expensive and faster than PCs at the beginning of the Apple product cycle, and comparably slower and more expensive than PCs at the end. That probably ended, however, in the late 1990s when the combination of decreasing hardware prices with increasing Microsoft licensing cost reduced the pricing advantage enjoyed by PCs introduced at the end of an Apple product cycle.

Notice that in assessing relative price and performance, both aging and software

confuse the issue. Macs run more functional software and have a much longer useful life. As a result, the Macs that PCusers see most often -- in schools or at grandma's house -- tend to be significantly older and slower than the PCs people compare them to because Wintel product churn means that a three-year-old PC is a museum piece, while a six-year-old iMac running OS 9 is likely still to be in use.

Apples to Apples?

It's possible, however, to take both aging and software out of the comparison by looking at situations in which both groups use the same software on the latest hardware they can afford. Check out supercomputer performance data, for example, where everybody runs the same applications under Unix, and you'll see that a dual G5 Xserve at 2.3 GHz makes about twice the cluster contribution offered by dual Xeons at 3.2 GHz.

Although Apple is expected to announce further speed bumps (and video upgrades to the 128-MB Radeon 9600) several weeks after you read this, prices are currently well below comparably configured Dell gear, but the difference is narrowing as PC manufacturers close out the 3.X-GHz era and pre-announce their second new generation since Apple's first G5 desktop was introduced in June of 2003.

For example, using pricing and configuration data from the Dell and Apple Web sites on April 10, 2005, Dell's 810 laptop is now about \$300 more than Apple's midrange; Dell's Optiplex GX280 is about \$77 more than Apple's midrange iMac (but the 670 Precision workstation remains more than \$1,200 more expensive than the dual-G5, 2-GB PowerMac; and Dell's 2850 dual Xeon server is about \$1,700 more than the midrange on Apple's dual G5, Xserve/RAID combination.

Faster and More Capable

Although the Apple products are generally a bit faster and more multimedia capable than their PC counterparts, the most important differences aren't in things like memory and processor speed, but in design, software and licensing.

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DESKTOP SECURITY CONTINUED:

The iMac is the first genuinely ultrathin desktop, the laptop a second-generation Titanium and the server combination highly optimized for rendering, multimedia and Web serving. All combine BSD Unix with the Mac OS X supershell, and not only do Apple's licensing policies on the server not restrict you to 25 clients, but the use of BSD Unix means that you don't have to buy separate machines for each major application or suite.

In other words, if security concerns are your most important driver for desktop change, and Microsoft Office compatibility is your most significant barrier, then switching to Macs actually offers you the best of all possible worlds. Microsoft Office on Unix/Risc with a better GUI, longer product life, some cash savings and a performance bonus thrown in.

By: Paul Murphy

Paul Murphy, a CIO Today columnist, wrote and published The Unix Guide to Defenestration. Murphy is a 20-year veteran of the I.T. consulting industry, specializing in Unix and Unix-related management issues. He maintains a discussion forum for his column on Winface.com.

Submitted by Donald Lapray
dyarpal@yahoo.com

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Michael 347-6599

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Michael 347-6599

Wanted. An older LASER printer - serial - that will work on my Power Macintosh 6500/250. OS 7.5.5. I had an Apple LaserWriter Select 300 that needs a scanner motor to repair which I haven't found. I'll be at the next RMUG meeting.

Dave Ashcraft 275-1617

Google Maps:

Well, it looks like the evil scientists at Google Labs have been busy over the past few months. Back in February, Google introduced "Google Maps" at <http://maps.google.com/> Type in what you're looking for--an address, a city, a point of interest, an airport code, etc--and Google will display a really high-quality map of that location. For example, if you search for SNA [the airport code for Orange County's John Wayne International Airport] Google shows you where I live. No, I don't actually live in an airport although at times it sure does feel like I do. I live directly north-northeast of the Duck Ponds. Now for the cool part. Once you've located John Wayne airport on your map, click on the map with your mouse, hold your mouse button, and drag your mouse up and to the right. That's right, folks: Google maps are draggable! Keep dragging up the California coastline and you'll end up in Los Angeles. Oh, and you can zoom in too. On the left side of the map, click on the plus or drag the slider up.

Wait. There's more. Do a search for "pizza Irvine." Not only will Google show you the location of most of the pizza joints in beautiful Irvine, California, if you click on any of the map's "push pins" or click on one of the pizza places' names on the right side of the screen, a shadowed balloon appears showing you the pizza place's name, phone number, address, website link, and even a link to get driving directions. And if you click on another company's name, the map will automatically scroll to that new company's location...

Oh, and Google Maps also does driving directions. Go to maps.google.com and above the search box click on the "Directions" link. Then, just key in your starting and ending addresses.

The New Stuff

Maps are cool, I guess--and I *REALLY* like the interactivity that Google has built into its map site--but have you ever wanted to see what your house or school or business looks like from space?

Well, just go to maps.google.com, search for a particular address, and then, in the upper right corner of the screen, click on the "Satellite" link... Yes, you heard right: **GOOGLE MAPS NOW SHOWS SATELLITE IMAGES!**

Oh, and all those search features we talked about before, work on the satellite maps as well. Do a search for "pizza Irvine" and you'll see what Irvine's pizza places look like from space. And if you click and drag your mouse, you can scroll around beautiful Orange County.

And it's not just Irvine that is viewable from space. In fact, all-around nice guy James Turnbull has spent the better part of a week finding cool stuff from space and posting it to his Google Sightseeing blog at:

<http://www.shreddies.org/gmaps/>

Make sure to browse through the archives. Turnbull has found a BUNCH of neat stuff hidden in Google's satellite images.

Now for the bad news:

Google Maps is still in beta, so expect some bugs from time to time. You can only use Google Maps to search for locations in the United States and Canada... There are some places in North America that aren't covered by Google's satellite images, especially if you zoom in all the way. A good example is the southern parts of Disney's Epcot Center in Orlando.



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GOOGLE MAPS CONTINUED:

The satellite images are “current” but not exactly up to date. For example, the satellite image of the closed Tustin Marine Corps Air Station [northeast of SNA] still shows base housing even though the houses were demolished last summer. [Oh, and those two really big buildings are blimp hangars which aren't going anywhere.] When you zoom all the way in on a map, especially a satellite map, the address balloons are sometimes about 25 feet [7.6 meters] off. For example, when I searched for my family's old house in Tulsa, Oklahoma, the balloon pointed to the house across the street. Still, for what you're paying for this service [NOTHING!], these "problems" are trivial. All in all, maps.google.com is one of the more exciting things to come along in a while.

Paraphrased from “Tourbus” and submitted by
Charlotte

DEFENDING BIG MAGAPIXALS:

"So I tell folks, buy a big card or two, especially now that a 1-gig card is 80 bucks, and shoot in TIFF or RAW [high-quality formats that take up a lot of memory]. For 95 percent of the images, it won't matter a bit. But for those once in a lifetime photos, it's well worth the investment. So, in my book, the 8 mp file is well worth the effort, and still isn't close to film's inherent quality or possibility for future use and exploration."

Hmm.

At just about the same time, Karl Petersen, who's a technical adviser for a book I'm writing about Apple's iMovie video-editing software, mentioned in passing that he's using iMovie's high-definition feature, even though he doesn't have an HDTV camcorder. He's using iMovie to create high-definition slide shows.

But how will he show them?

On a high-definition DVD player, he says, when high-definition DVD players (and recorders) become commonplace. Someday.

What do these two conversations have in common? In both these cases, these guys are advocating using resolution and quality settings that are obviously overkill or even impossible to view now — but that they might need in the future.

They got me thinking. Three years from now, an eight-megapixel camera may indeed seem laughable, just the way most people would scoff at a one-megapixel camera today. And when every \$300 digital camera shoots 16-megapixel photos, won't we be glad we shot 8-megapixel photos back in 2005?

Similarly, although there's a massively stupid format war brewing between two incompatible formats of high-def DVD's, both kinds of players and recorders are supposed to start shipping at the end of this year. Sooner or later, it's likely that high-def DVD's will replace today's players. Shouldn't we prepare for that day?

Ordinarily, I'm highly cynical about the marketers' campaigns to make us think we need unnecessary power, whether it's sport utility vehicles, Pentium chips or Microsoft Office versions. But when it comes to futureproofing our creative efforts — our photos, our movies, our music — I have to admit that Harris and Karl just may be right.

David Pogue
Circuits NYT
DavidPogue.com



Charlotte

Policies

This newsletter is published monthly for the Redding Macintosh Users' Group and is distributed to all club members.

No other individual, group or business may use any portion of this newsletter without prior written permission.

RMUG News welcomes articles and questions relating to Macintosh or Macintosh compatible computers. Articles may be hand written, typed, or submitted on a 3.5" floppy disk (using any popular word processing program).

Submissions must be accompanied by the author's full name, address and telephone number. The submissions become the property of RMUG unless otherwise specified.

If you have a change of address or other questions, please notify the newsletter editor or other RMUG officer as soon as possible.

Deadline for submissions is the last Saturday of each month. E-mail or deliver all material to:

Ken Lorenz

E- mail submissions to:
krlore@cwnet.com

OR

rmug@rmug.org

(stuff files if possible)

Ad Rates

RMUG members are invited to place "Wanted", "For Sale" & "Trade" ads in the newsletter at no charge. Business cards or commercial accounts are welcome at the rates listed above. One of the best reasons for belonging to a user's group is to let other people know about your activities, as well as learning what other people are doing with their computers and software. Please give your business cards or ads to the newsletter editor.

<p>AD Rates</p> <p>\$4-business card</p> <p>\$6-quarter page</p> <p>\$9-half page</p> <p>\$15-full page</p>
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Advertisements in the RMUG newsletter will not influence reviews or critiques of hardware, software companies or stories.

RMUG does not endorse any specific dealer or product, but we do encourage the distribution of information which may assist club members in identifying best buys and services.

Editorial

Are you excited? I sure am! The meeting this Saturday at the new location "Yaks" is the biggest change for the group in many a year. Especially considering the fact that the place is wy-fy enabled. I just had to order a reconditioned wy-fy card for my iBook and am really looking forward to trying it out. Everyone should plan to attend the meeting so we can make a proper impression on our new hosts. A bit of good news this week. A court ruled that the FCC was out of bounds in ordering that all TV's, computers, etc. would have to have anti copying circuitry. Seems to me that was a close call, what will our lot and that of our hobby be if the ultra conservative pro business folks manage to pack the courts as they would like to do?

The only thing that is not currently under the control of the right wing in Washington and elsewhere are the courts, and they are working hard to change that. As a dues paying member of PBS it is very discouraging to see the network being forced to forfeit objectivity, in favor of right wing political correctness in order to insure the governments share of operating funds for children's and health related programing.

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EDITORIAL CONTINUED:

I sincerely hope that everyone is paying attention and letting your elected officials know how you feel about the publics right to know, fair use rights, and your views about the erosion of our civil liberties through the Patriot Act.

Ken

