



Rmug News

August 2004

This Month

PICNIC

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President's Letter

August is the annual RMUG picnic and this year we are holding it at Jim & Donna Pace's home in South Redding. On August 14th we will meet at Jim's place and proceed to celebrate until we drop. Please remember not to show up at the Little Country Church on Aug 14th, as we won't be there.

This last month has been an exciting one here at JETT Technologies. We are starting to see the new AirPort Express base stations arrive and they are working quite well and their \$129 price is very reasonable. The new AirPort Expresses have a neat feature where by we share iTunes across our network and we have speakers plugged directly into an AirPort Express and beautiful music just happens.

We have also had a bit of reorganization here at JETT as Al and I have brought Kate & John on as partners. To make things even better at JETT we have incorporated so our official new name is J.E.T. Technologies LLC. The old JETT partnership will be going by the wayside as soon as we get the books and the banks all agreeing with one and other. Along the lines of "things are a changing" I must let everyone know that Dolores has purchased "The Trim Gourmet", a low carbohydrates food store in Los Altos (<http://www.trimgourmet.com>). We all wish her the best and we can't wait to go buy something in her new yuppie store.

Here at JETT we always try and use the best computer for the job. To that end we have been using the same LINUX Domain Name Server (DNS) since 1997 since no one seemed able to hack or attack it in any meaningful way. So after seven years we finally replaced our 200Mhz K6 computer that had 128MB of RAM with a 350Mhz Blue & White G3 with 250MB of RAM and a 133Mhz ATA card controlling the new 80GB 7200RPM HD. On our old LINUX server when I ran a network diagnostic from my laptop the server would take three minutes to reply with all the settings parameters. Our new Macintosh DNS server takes approx 30 seconds, so it appears to be six times

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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 at Little Country Church, 873 Canby Rd. Room B-6. (we are not church affiliated) 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, Dale Josephson at 244-7262 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: Don Lapray, 1745 Crosby Lane, Redding CA 96003. Please make check payable to: Redding Macintosh Users' Group.

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

CONTINUED

faster and it is a Macintosh! We now have four Blue & White G3 DNS servers: ns1.jett.net, ns2.jett.net, ns1.concow.net and ns2.concow.net. Here at JETT we have 10 Macintosh servers, a LINUX firewall and a LINUX box that just sits in the server rack and monitors the network for unauthorized use or abuse. No Windoze servers are allowed in the rack.

The Frontier Senior Center (TFSC) in Anderson is the proud owner of a new 1Ghz eMac thanks in part to the members of RMUG, as RMUG contributed \$100 towards the purchase. Michael Peters was most instrumental and helpful in procuring this new computer for TFSC.

From the files of this is too strange to be true but it is: In early February JETT leased a 4.5Mb/s data line from Charter Cable. Since day one the line could download data better than any other line I have had the pleasure to work with. There was just one GIANT problem. The DNS for our leased line was all messed up and Charter's Redding personnel had not received adequate training in DNS issues. I kept telling them my servers would not resolve to their names and they kept telling me that it must be something on my end. I accepted Charter's conclusion, as I could not prove otherwise. Finally, after 4 1/2 months of me paying more than \$1,000 per month for a non-functioning line, I went ballistic and told Charter it was on their end, as I had hired two outside experts who gave my DNS set-up a clean bill of health. One of the experts even found a way for me to show Charter the problem was on their end. On at least ten occasions I had asked Charter for their Network Operation Center (NOC) phone number only to be told that they were looking into my DNS issue so I did not need the NOC number. Then about four weeks ago on a Friday the whooping crane of happiness smiled on me and a letter arrived from Charter with the phone number to the NOC! I was so excited that I could barely finish reading the letter before I called the NOC

Engineers. When I called the NOC I identified myself and asked just two questions:

1. Is 68.186.37.XXX assigned to JETT Technologies?
2. Is the Start Of Authority (SOA) record pointing at JETT Technologies?

The engineer said "yes" and "no" so now I knew that my local Charter Sales Rep had been blowing smoke at me for the previous 4 1/2 months.

I asked the NOC Engineer if he would finish setting up the SOA and he said he would as soon as he verified some details with my sales rep. Sure enough 96 hours later my DNS was resolving to domain names in my network.

Now here is where it gets interesting. I was reading my contract with Charter and there is a clause that says Charter will give me 24 hours of free service for every hour that my service was down. So doing a little quick math, 24 hours times 24 hours in a day times 135 days is 77,760 hours. So I divided 77,760 hours by the 168 hours in a week and I got 462.86 weeks. So then I divided 52 weeks in a year into 462.86 weeks and I get 8.9 years of free service! Of course when I informed Charter of my calculations they saw it totally differently. They tried to give me less than one months refund and of course I said no. I want more than that as they had caused me to do at least 80 hours of work as well as I had to hire two outside experts to prove where the problem was. Charter then asked what my best offer would be and I told them that 4 1/2 months credit on my bill would be almost fair and I would accept that amount discounting my time and the cost of my outside experts. Charter was outraged that I wanted so much time and they flatly refused. Charter did offer to terminate my 5-year contract with them if I was not satisfied, but I told them I wanted to be one of their best customers so no - I did not want to terminate anything. The lady I was dealing with at Charter Headquarters even told me she was upset and sorry that I had received the NOC phone number. I asked her why she was sorry since it was I getting the number that had finally fixed the problem? She said, "Can you imagine how hectic

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PRESIDENT'S LETTER
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it would be if just anybody could call the NOC"? I said, "Hey, I am not just anybody - I have been an ISP for more than seven years and I pay more than \$1,000 per month for my bandwidth, so I am not a home or small business user." She still said that they were not going to offer me anything more even though I had proven the outage was on their side and not mine. That is when I hired the local good guy attorney Walt McNeill and asked him to deal on my behalf. Over the next few weeks or months I will let you know how this comes out. By the way, Charter is not returning Walt McNeill's phone calls so it looks like a long protracted fight.

Now some might ask would I recommend Charter Cable for home or Small Business and the answer is an unequivocal yes. Charter has good solid bandwidth and they experience about 1/10 as many outages as SBC's DSL.

dalej

SECRETARYS NOTES:

PICNIC TIME:

Well, it is that time of the year, time for our annual picnic. It will be the second Saturday of the month just like our regular meetings, Aug. 14th. Your family is welcome to come. This year the picnic will be held at Jim Pace's house. It starts at noon. It is a great location. Nice big grassy area, with lots and lots of trees for shade. There is also a pool, to keep you cool if you want to use it.

Jim has plenty of chairs and tables. The board will provide tri-tip, beans, and bread, again from Kents Meat Market (it was so good last year we had to do it again this year). We will also have plates, napkins, silverware, and condiments.

You need to bring a dish to share, a salad, or a dessert, and also whatever you want to drink. We will have ice chests with ice in them to

keep your beverages cold.

If you have any questions about the picnic please call me or any of the board members.

On to another subject. If you have empty ink cartridges from your printer please save them and bring them to the RMUG meetings. Kim Farrar is collecting them for her school. Hope to see you at the picnic.

Mary Gililand
Secretary

LIBRARIANS CORNER:

I subscribe to QuickTime News, a very interesting newsletter & the following was in the July 23rd edition. If you're interested in subscribing go to <http://www.apple.com/enews/subscribe/>

People say that photos are worth more than words.

It's true — no words could ever completely represent the beauty of the Shirakawa Village in Japan, the Zurich China Garden in Switzerland, the windmills of Kinderdijk in the Netherlands, the north rim of the Grand Canyon in Arizona or many other spectacular locations.

During the summer solstice weekend, June 19 -21, more than 110 photographers in 32 countries captured QuickTime VR panoramas to represent the UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) theme of "World Heritage." <http://geoimages.berkeley.edu/wvp604/>

UNESCO seeks to encourage the identification, protection and preservation of cultural and natural heritage around the world at sites considered to have outstanding value to humanity. Currently, 788 World Heritage sites are designated.

Take a 360° visit via QuickTime VRs to many of the sites on UNESCO's ever-growing World Heritage list.

What Are VR Panoramas ?

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LIBRARIANS CORNER CONTINUED:

A VR panorama (VR for virtual reality) is a specially created computer image that goes all the way around the viewer. It is a revolutionary way to document a particular place and time – the next best thing to being there.

VR panoramas are interactive. Use the mouse to rotate the panorama, use Shift and Control to zoom in and out. Some VR panoramas are cylinders, 360° around but with limited vertical view. Others are cubic (or spherical), with a view that can go straight up and straight down, as well as all the way around. There are also VR objects, where the viewer circles around an object of interest.

To view the panoramas on this site you will need QuickTime. If QuickTime is not already installed on your computer you can obtain it (free, versions for both Windows and Macintosh) from Apple Computer.

Charlotte

APPLE'S BASE STATION:

IN his weekly "60 Minutes" commentary a couple of years ago, the inimitable Andy Rooney grouched about the number of cables in our lives. "Look behind the television set in your living room. It's a rat's nest of electrical cords," he said. "All different - no two the same. If Thomas Edison was so smart, how come he didn't come up with one cord that fits everything?"

Of course, it wouldn't be very hard for Mr. Rooney to answer his own question. To find out why cords are designed to fit only specific connectors, all he'd have to do is plug his headphones into an electrical outlet, just once.

A slightly less painful approach might be for Mr. Rooney to look into Apple, a company with an official corporate disgust for cables.

Apple was the first computer company to offer built-in Wi-Fi wireless antennas (also known as 802.11 - or, as Apple more charmingly calls it, AirPort).

Apple was also the first company to offer built-in Bluetooth, a short-range wireless technology designed to eliminate the cords between computers, printers and other gadgets. And when a cable can't be eliminated, Apple goes to ridiculous extremes to at least make it good-looking and color-coordinated.

Last week, Apple introduced yet another way to eliminate wires from your life. It introduced the AirPort Express, a \$130 something-or-other for both Windows PC's and Macs. There's no single pithy term or phrase for this invention; it has more tricks up its sleeve than David Blaine.

Trick No. 1: the AirPort Express is a wireless base station. That is, if you connect it to a cable modem or D.S.L. box, your wirelessly equipped Mac or Windows PC can get onto the Internet and connect to other machines in the building, at high speed and with no waiting, from anywhere in the house - or at least within about 150 feet of the base station, even through walls.

(Note for geeks: Like all of Apple's current wireless gear, the AirPort Express uses the 802.11g standard - which, in English, means that it works with both modern, superfast 802.11g laptops and the older, more common, slower 802.11b equipment. It also offers both WPA and WEP security, state-of-the-art password-protection systems that prevent desperados hiding in your bushes from getting onto your wireless network without your knowledge.)

If you already have an AirPort wireless network, the Express can act as a wireless bridge that extends its range another 150 feet. That's a handy perk, but it would be even handier and perkier if it worked to extend the range of other base station brands. (Apple won't guarantee that it doesn't work, but it won't guarantee that it will, either.)

The twist here is that the AirPort Express is literally pocket-size. It's a round-cornered white acrylic device that looks for all the world like the

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APPLES BASE CONTINUED:

power adapter for one of Apple's laptops. In fact, Apple says that the Express is the world's smallest Wi-Fi base station. Asus makes one whose dimensions are slightly smaller, but only if you ignore its external power brick; that's cheating. Apple's device is entirely self-contained. Apple has even eliminated the power cord, instead opting for electrical outlet prongs that rotate cleanly into the body when not plugged in.

Now, you might reasonably wonder why the size of a wireless base station is an advantage. Isn't that an irrelevant characteristic, like a muffler that's available in designer colors? After all, most people just plug into a base station behind the desk and forget about it.

But having your own personal base station means that you can move it from place to place (like home or office) at will; the Express can even store and switch among five different network configurations.

And if you take it with you when traveling, you can sign up for your hotel's \$10-a-day high-speed in-room Internet access. Then, instead of remaining shackled to the desk, you can lie on the bed 10 feet away to do your e-mail. (All right, that's not a life-or-death business essential, but you've got to admit that it's cozy.) More practically, your traveling companions can hop online simultaneously, sharing the Internet signal and the \$10 fee. (The AirPort Express can handle up to 10 people at once. That's one difference between this model and Apple's standard AirPort base station, which costs \$200 and handles up to 50 connections at once.)

Trick No. 2 is called AirTunes. The AirPort Express has, of all things, a sound-output jack that you can connect to a stereo system, self-powered speakers or even a TV. iTunes, Apple's free jukebox software for Mac or Windows, can then wirelessly broadcast your music (like MP3 files and songs you've

bought from Apple's iTunes online store) to the sound system from your computer. In fact, if you've bought more than one AirPort Express (in Apple's dreams!) and plugged them into different sets of speakers around the house, you can use a little pop-up menu on the edge of the iTunes window to specify which one you want: Patio, Living Room, Bedroom or whatever.

To pacify the record companies, iTunes encrypts the music before broadcasting it, so that the sneaks in the next apartment can't intercept it. And to pacify audiophiles, the software delivers the music to the speakers at full original quality (as it's stored on your computer). It sounds terrific.

There are, however, some flies in all this ointment. First, you can only send the music to one set of speakers at a time. Rival wireless-stereo gizmos, like RCA's Wireless Lyra, can broadcast simultaneously to several sound systems (if you've bought a receiver for each one).

Second, note that the connection between the AirPort Express and the stereo is not wireless. You have to supply your own cable to connect them. (Apple sells a \$40 kit containing two beautiful white Monster cables for connecting to your stereo - one with standard RCA stereo connectors and one with a so-called Toslink, a digital connector capable of carrying five-channel surround sound.) But the point is that the AirPort Express needs a power outlet that's close to your stereo.

Finally, it's a weird and heady experience to use, say, your computer upstairs as the control center for the stereo across the room, complete with playlists and real-time volume control. On the other hand, if you're downstairs with the stereo, you can't pause playback when the phone rings, see the name of the current song, or skip a truly awful song, without having to run upstairs to the computer. (This fine print, of course, applies to most wireless sound systems.)

Trick No. 3: On the bottom of the AirPort Express you'll find, of all things, a U.S.B. connector where you can plug in an inkjet printer, and then every computer on the network can send printouts to it wirelessly. It works like a charm, and offers further

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APPLES BASE CONTINUED:

proof that Macs and PC's in the same household can all be friends. (This feature requires Mac OS X, Windows 2000 or Windows XP.)

Now, as the usual crowd of Apple-grouches is certain to point out, you could buy each of the Express's features for less money. A regular 802.11g base station costs about \$60 at www.buy.com. If your aim is to extend your existing network's range, you can buy a range extender from Linksys or D-Link for \$80. The idea of streaming music from a PC wirelessly to a stereo isn't new, either; Linksys and many others sell wireless media adapters for another \$80.

But Apple is the first to combine all of these functions, effortlessly and elegantly, and the fact that the Express comes with supremely simple setup software, looks great and fits in your pocket or laptop carrying case is just Wi-Fi gravy.

Apple reports having 80,000 AirPort Express

pre-orders to fill, and stores are reporting at least a three-week wait to get one. Rack up a point for Apple in its mission to dominate the digital music world (and, not incidentally, to infiltrate the homes of Windows PC owners), and rack up one for Andy Rooney and the rest of us in the never-ending battle against household cable infestations.

Pogue@nytimes.com
submitted by meboy@jett.net

OBSOLETE ELECTRONICS:

Bring old computers, electronics to Office Depot... It costs money to get rid of old computer equipment the right way because there is so much lead and other harmful chemicals in them. But two companies have gotten together to help solve this problem. Office Depot and Hewlett Packard, one of the pioneers of computer recycling, are taking electronics and computer equipment off your hands for free this summer. Just bring your items to any Office Depot store. They will take monitors, computers, PDAs, digital cameras and fax machines. They will also take televisions that are smaller than 27 inches and TV/VCR combos. The only catch is that they will only take one item per person, per day. The promotion will run through Labor Day, so gather your old goods and make a couple trips.

Charlotte



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APPLE IPOD MINI

Some pooh-poohed the assorted colors of Apple Computer Inc.'s iPod mini as frivolous, but the digital music players are a smash hit and have become fashion accessories in and of themselves.

Beyond being just a nifty way to listen to music while riding on a bus or working out at the gym, the iPod mini's eye-pleasing design in five metallic colors has made it a reflection of the user's personality, analysts said.

"They are a point of differentiation for the individual and they're almost a status symbol, said Tim Bjarin, an analyst at Creative Strategies. Because of the colors and its small size, it really is an expression of personality."

Phil Leigh, an analyst at Inside Digital Media, says: "Even though those white ear buds aren't really that great, people want to wear them with an iPod so others know that they're carrying an iPod".

And while the larger, white iPods that are about the size of a deck of playing cards have been a huge success, it's the smaller business-card-sized iPod mini that has resonated with the digerati and could spawn design innovation in other compact digital music players, analysts said.

"We can only hope," Bjarin said. "I would hope that Apple's innovation in industrial design spills out to the rest of the industry."

Of course, any cultural revolution has its downside, with scattered reports of the mini's headphone jack producing ear-splitting static and some skepticism about its steep price. Some complain it is too complicated to set up.

The January announcement of the iPod mini, which weighs 3.6 ounces and holds about 1,000 songs was Cupertino, California-based Apple's (Nasdaq:AAPL - news) answer to

cheaper, flash-memory based players. Since going on sale in February, the mini has been much in demand -- and in short supply.

As with all popular items, rivals abound. Players from Creative, Dell Inc., iRiver and others are just as portable as the Mini, analysts say. Moreover, Dell's player, while not quite as small, costs roughly \$50 less and holds 15 gigabytes worth of songs, nearly four times as many as iPod mini...

"Apple believes that their products need to stand out in order to be successful and, as a result, put a significant amount of time and investment in creating products that are unique and innovative," Bjarin said.

He said other compact digital music players are considerably cheaper, hold fewer songs and are perfectly serviceable, but none has yet matched what he called Apple's elegant user interface.

"They're just not the sleekest, Bjarin said. "You look at the products coming from Creative or Gateway and they're clever in the way they're put together, but in the end, the ease of use with the buttons and everything else aren't in the same class as Apple..."

Leigh pointed to three factors for the iPod mini's success, which has seemed to generate even more buzz than the older, larger iPod. Some have gone so far as to argue that the original iPod was just a prototype for the iPod mini.

First, the 1,000-song capacity is at the sweet spot of the market -- not too many songs, but not too few, either. Second, the colors --silver, gold, green, pink or blue -- which Apple has said have been especially popular with women. And, third, the ease of use in using the mini while exercising...

"A lot of work is going to have to be done on these very compact players in terms of their user interface," Leigh said, who owns an original iPod as well as an iPod mini.

In the end, even analysts who make their living covering technology trends seem to have a need for individual iPod expression...

By Duncan Martell
Add Technology - Reuters

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.

AD Rates

\$4-business card

\$6-quarter page

\$9-half page

\$15-full page

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

As much as I enjoyed the getaway, fishing and change of pace, it is kind of nice to be back home again.

There is a lot of catching up, remembering and relearning to do but I feel as though I am gaining.

WiFi sure is the hot ticket now. As the presidents letter and a lengthy article by Mr. Pogue attest, the technology just keeps getting better and more convenient all the time (which is not to say that learning to use the latest gizmos is easy or practical for everyone). Fun to read about and anticipate.

Of course the big thing this month is the picnic. I have been looking forward to this for the last year, since I attended my first one. It looked like I would not be able to attend this year but things have changed, so we will be there after all.

I hope attendance will be good this year, bring your tech toys!

The political year is grinding along with not much being said about the abridgment of our fair use and civil rights. The patriot act is lined up nicely for expansion and extension, even though it violates many civil rights. Big business, through the courts, are quashing any and all business or individuals who they deem a threat to their bottom line without consideration of consumers rights. I hope you are all paying attention.

Ken



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