Apple Bytes

July 2004

A publication of San Leandro Macintosh User Group

The new meeting place...

Last Saturday was a long work day for a few stalwart members. The Shop 7 Computer Lab is somewhat improved. Much cleaner, the Airport Extreme is installed and working, the old Tray Loaders have been swapped for Slot-loaders, the clock batteries have been replaced, the machines were thoroughly cleaned with high pressure air. The broken and missing ceiling tiles have been replaced and it really looks a lot better. All that remains is the cloning process which will be completed before school starts in the fall. A vast project as reported to all by Bob Shayler.

Now we wait for Tiger. It is scheduled to be demonstrated to the development community this week at WWDC in Moscone Center. The rumor mills talk about new larger monitors and maybe even new iMacs. Who really knows what all? Only his nibs knows for sure.

Prosoft Engineering has released a new version of their backup program for Mac OS X. It is downloadable from their website <http://www.prosoft.com>. Use your existing serial number as directed by the website.

Will the rumors ever stop? Not likely. We still need to have something to talk about...

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Club Calendar for July

July 2004

1...   SLMUG General Meeting 7:30 pm
       San Leandro High School
       Room 507 (Shop 7 Graphics Lab)
       2200 Bancroft Ave.
       San Leandro (Info: 510 828-9314)
       SLAEUG Board Meeting. Normally held after the general meeting at a nearby eating establishment.

15... SLMUG Mac SIG
       The Mac SIG meets on the third Thursday in Room 507, the Shop 7 Graphics Lab. Items for discussion are brought by you, the attendees. Discussions are specific to your problems and requests.
       (Info: 510 828-9314)

August 2004

5...   SLMUG General Meeting 7:30 pm
       San Leandro High School
       Room 507 (Shop 7 Graphics Lab)
       2200 Bancroft Ave.
       San Leandro (Info: 510 828-9314)

Kline's Korner
Mac OS X

What is firmware?

Firmware is a combination of software and hardware. Computer chips that have data or programs recorded on them are firmware. These chips commonly include the following:

ROMs (read-only memory)

PROMs (programmable read-only memory)

EPROMs (erasable programmable read-only memory)

Firmware in PROM or EPROM is designed to be updated if necessary through a software update.

The Jaguar/Panther Firmware Trap

If you come across (meaning acquire) one of the colored CRT iMacs, 400 MHz and above, you may be tempted to install OS X 10.2 or newer. Prior to doing the install, you must assume that the previous owner only ran Classic OS and never installed OS X. The risk is that the previous owner never installed the Firmware 4.1.9 update. If you forget to install the Firmware update prior to booting the OS X install CD, this is what will happen:

On starting up from the Panther CD, you will get an error that a firmware upgrade was needed, and be presented with a close button. By that time the damage is already done. The iMac will not work. A search of the web will lead you to think you need a new motherboard, as the graphics chip gets whacked. Fortunately, the solution is much simpler and is another reason for belonging to a user group.

Simply hook up an external monitor to the VGA connector on the back of the iMac and boot into OS 9, either from a CD or from the hard drive (if you can still boot into OS 9 from the HD). The external monitor will display, though the built-in one will still be black. Download and install the firmware update. Reboot! Now your iMac is back to normal!

If you know where to look (Apple Support\iMac CRT\iMac Slotloading Firmware 4.1.9 Before Mac OS X 10.2) you will find excellent advice from Apple.

"If you own an iMac (Slot Loading) computer, you must install the iMac Firmware Update 4.1.9 before you install Mac OS X 10.2. The iMac Firmware Update 4.1.9 is available on the Mac OS X Install CD Disc 1. It also available online and can be downloaded if needed.

"To install the iMac Firmware Update 4.1.9, your iMac (Slot Loading) computer must be started up from Mac OS 9.1, or 9.2, which must be installed on the hard disk. You cannot install the firmware update if the computer is started up from a CD-ROM or a network disk. If you normally start up the computer with Mac OS X, you must start up from Mac OS 9.1 or 9.2."

The problem is that Firmware update should be better advertised. If the OS X installer doesn't do a check for the Firmware, then the responsibility rests with you. This is not fair. This is why I have repeated this information.

Statistics

Secunia has a database with tables and graphs showing the number of security vulnerabilities by OS. The scores are based on the number of security bulletins in a given year. The conclusion, as stated by a Techworld article, is that Mac OS X is no more secure than any other OS.

One problem with statistics is when the categories are limited. They may not paint a correct picture, or one that I want to see. For example, I think there should be another statistic for actual attacks. A recent report indicates that Internet users visiting popular Web sites may be unwittingly downloading malicious code that compromises their computers and sets up a relay network for a future onslaught of spam. This can occur if you access the web on an unpatched Windoze machine with Internet Explorer.

Odds and Ends

Remember, to print using a LaserWriter 8 compatible printer in Classic as well as in OS X 10.2 or 10.3, use Print Center (Mac OS X 10.2) or Printer Setup Utility (Mac OS X 10.3 or later) utility to add and set a default PostScript printer for the Classic environment. Printers added via the Classic Chooser or Desktop Printer Utility are not available to Mac OS X native applications until they are selected in Print Center or Printer Setup Utility. The latest HP LaserJet drivers require using at least Laser Writer 8 version 8.6.1 or newer (8.7.1 is the latest,) if you are using classic or System 9 for printing.

The eMac HLDS Combo Updater 1.0 page is still not available as of this last weekend. If you were able to download the updater, it is not recommended that you install it.

If a USB device isn't working, make sure all USB cables and power cords are plugged in properly. Also, make sure you installed any software that came with the device. You may be able to download the software from the manufacturer's website.

If the device or the hub in which it connected to doesn't have a power cord or is plugged into another USB device that doesn't have a power cord, try plugging the device directly into your computer. If the device now works, you should purchase a powered hub (one with a power cord).
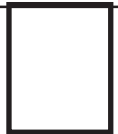
Enjoy !!

Once again our wandering commando is missing in action. Must be on an important mission. I thought he would return in time for publication. Could he have been captured?? How could such an elusive commando get caught in a wireless environment?

July 1st meeting features...

This month we will have a review of several popular programs that probably a lot of us use and like. However this review should reveal some new or unkown tricks. It is summertime and we will meet in the refurbished Shop 7 Lab. The Airport Extreme is working. Try it, you'll like it.

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Main Meeting - July 1st