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Views,
Tips and
Cool Techniques
for CCC Members

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We
speak
Geek,
so you
don't
have to.



After five years of waiting, Mac OS X (10) is finally, kinda, sorta, here. On September 13, Apple released a public beta version of the new operating system to all of us wackos who are just dying for the opportunity to completely and totally mess up our Macs.

Mac OS X was discussed in depth in the January 2000 issue of CCC News (available at <http://www.calcompcare.com/news.html>). See that article for information about Mac OS X. Following are observations about a fool and his new toy.

But first. . .

Definitions—

Operating System (OS) This is the software heart of your computer. The OS defines the look and feel and basic functionality of your machine: it finds your files, polices the passage of data, communicates with your printer and modem and underlies everything that you do.

Beta New software goes through stages of completeness before being released to the public. Alpha software is very rough, but just capable enough to allow others to test its capabilities and find its bugs. Beta software is fairly polished, but usually has many rough edges.

Public beta Public relations boon or gaff depending on the amount of problems. It takes guts to release beta software for public testing (usually beta testers are individually chosen for their abilities to find, report

Mac OS X Public Beta

*You, too, can really
screw up your Mac!*

and cope with problems in new software. A public beta is risky because many people will install it without appropriate backups and precautions and then complain loudly when all heck breaks loose!

9/12–13, 3:00am— Up late waiting for Mac OS X to be announced at the Paris Mac Expo. Steve Jobs unveils the goodies at 2:20 am (PDT), Apple's web site adds links to the Apple Store for OS X at 3:00am and OS X is now available for order. I do.

9/15, 7:30pm— After calling UPS three times (because they missed the delivery earlier in the day), it's in my hot, little hand!

9/15–16, 10:30pm–2:00am— Fresh backups of everything on the primary hard drive of my main Mac, George III. Reformat and partition the drive. Copy back Mac OS 9.0.4 (required for OS X to run older applications. This, of course, means any application that doesn't come with OS X since there is no non-Apple software for an OS that isn't even finished yet.)

9/16, 2:00am— Boot George III from OS X CD-ROM and begin install. Installer reports that install will take six hours! Sit and watch imperceptibly moving progress bar, imperceptibly move, in the hope that the estimate is wrong. It isn't. Go to bed.

9/16, 8:30am— Is it done? Is it done? Nope, installer crashed within minutes of leaving it on its own. Start over.

9/16, 9:00am— Erase hard drive partition for OS X. Reboot George III, start installer

again. Ah! Installer reports 21 minutes. That's more like it.

9/16, 9:21am— Done! Reboot. It works! The setup assistant kindly takes me through the setup procedure. The new Desktop appears!

9/16, 10:00am— Cruise the new Finder, read appropriate help files, personalize the System, Desktop and internet settings. Got it just the way I want it. Very nice. Time to try running an application. Double-click FileMaker Pro and it launches! Move the window a bit and uh, oh: didn't redraw correctly. Launch ClarisWorks and OS X's Classic Environment (used to run those old applications) goes quietly to its grave. But OS X doesn't bat an eye. (One of OS X's greatest features is the ability to keep on going when an application crashes.) Launch FileMaker again, Classic Environment starts to load and dies again, but won't vanish from the screen. OS X is still running but the Classic/FileMaker window won't get out of the way! Give up and reboot. Rats. More of the same.

9/16, 3:10pm— Boot George III from OS X CD, erase hard drive partition, re-install OS X. It appears to load OK, but OS X's application folder is empty. Sherlock can find the files, but

nothing can launch them. Give up for now, go back to OS 9.

9/16, 4:45pm— Boot George III to the OS 9 partition. *Oh no!* Drive partitions that hold OS 9 applications, files and CCC databases do not show up on the desktop! Also, backup ZIP disk doesn't show up either. Check partitions with DiskTop (a great old file management utility that has saved me many times). DiskTop sees all the invisible files and can launch them, but this is a very funky way to work. Process the day's paperwork.

9/16, 11:15pm–3:30am— Connect external hard drive to copy the invisible files. *Oops!* When the external hard drive is attached the second *internal* hard drive (which holds the files) dies. Disconnect external hard drive and internal drive comes back to life. So, use Airport network to shuttle the files from George III to iBook and then to the external hard drive.

9/17, 10:25am— Erase and format George III's internal hard drive, copy files back through iBook and Airport. Erase and re-install OS X, launch. Everything works well until I launch into the Classic Environment which dies quickly. Switch back to OS 9 and drive partitions vanish again.

They say that the definition of *insane* is doing the same thing over and over and expecting a different result. Well, I'm not that crazy.

9/20, 8:15am— Order 20GB hard drive to replace both of George III's internal hard drives.

9/23, 11:15am— Pick up new hard drive. Pull both hard drives out of George III and replace with new drive. Format and install all software anew (no copying back old applications). Restore data files from external hard drive. When everything is just right, back up the brand new, perfect OS 9 partition to external hard drive. Install OS X on a special partition.

9/23, 10:35pm— By golly, it works! It all works. Classic Environment is solid, OS X is fast and fun. Everything works that should work. Return to OS 9 and everything is fine there, too.

9/24, 10:58pm— Finish writing and assembling this newsletter using OS X. Everything working just as it should.

Man, that was fun!

September Tip—

Please visit CCC's remodelled web site at <http://www.calcompcare.com>. Your criticism is appreciated.

California Computer Care
P.O. Box 9445
Santa Rosa, CA 95405
(800) 540-8989

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