

Mac OS X... when?

Maybe now.

If you are about to buy a new Mac, when you unbox it, set it up and turn it on, you will be greeted by Mac OS X. Looks like we can't ignore it any longer.

A quick overview

Mac OS X (pronounced Ten not Ekks) is the latest operating system devised by Apple to power our Macs. As the operating system is the underlying power behind a computer, that essential software controls the entire look, feel and functionality of the machine.

Mac OS X is wholly unrelated to any previous Mac OS. OS X has been created anew with features and capabilities that the old Mac OS could not provide. Apple has wisely used the UNIX operating system for the core of Mac OS X. UNIX is the operating system that runs the computers that run the telephone system, major corporations, universities and government agencies all over the world. UNIX is the most stable, mature, proven and dependable operating system ever created. Far more so than the old style of Mac OS or *Microsoft's Windows*.

On the practical side

Mac OS X can only provide a small amount of its potential right now for two reasons. First, this is a huge undertaking and OS X is just emerging from its infancy. Remember, it takes years of real world use to perfect an operation system (and they're never really perfected). The Mac OS 9, that most of us are using today, is 18 years old and still reaching for perfection. *Microsoft Windows* is 16 years old and much less polished. Mac OS X is only one year old.

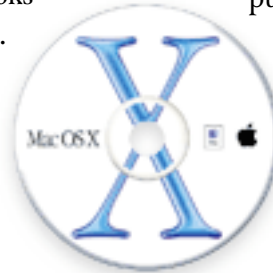
The second reason that Mac OS X is not able to fully provide all of its potential ad-

vantages is that those advantages need to be incorporated into the software made by other companies. Right now application publishers are just beginning to bring out OS X savvy applications. They just haven't had the time to add in the new wiz-bang features.

OS X advantages

As new as OS X may be, there are lots of great new features that OS X already provides to us average users. Here are four capabilities that I like, a lot!

- 1) **Protected memory.** A geek term meaning that when you run several applications at the same time, they can't step on each other and cause crashes.
- 2) **Modern memory management.** No more manually allocating system memory. Instead OS X will automatically parcel out memory on an as-needed basis. So, say goodbye to worrying about too many applications running at the same time. Yes, a bunch of unneeded applications running will slow you down a bit, but no, they won't cause a System crash!
- 3) **Quartz.** Apple's term for OS X's revolutionary method of drawing your work to the screen. Clearer, sharper and faster than the old Quickdraw method. Quartz also lets you turn your documents into .pdf files without needing Adobe's expensive *Acrobat* application. This is great for sharing your documents with other users in a way that is fully compatible with all other computers. See this month's tip for how.
- 4) **The Dock.** It'll feel weird at first, but the bar at the bottom (or side if you like) of the screen that helps you to launch, hide and keep track of your applications and documents is a great tool. Think *Launcher* and *Control Strip* on steroids.



Old and new

All of the cool new features are great, but there's a catch (isn't there always?). The new protections and enhancements only work with applications that are written specifically for Mac OS X.

Yes, you can run your old Mac OS 8–9 applications, but they run in a shell on top of OS X that Apple calls *Classic*. As far as OS X is concerned, *Classic* is an OS X application and receives the new benefits, but OS X is not aware of the older applications that are running in OS 9/*Classic*. The *Classic* environment uses Mac OS 9 so perfectly that old applications behave just as they always have including memory problems and crashes (Most older games, because they are programmed differently than normal applications, do not run smoothly in *Classic*.).

An aside

If you buy a new Mac and find OS X greeting you and you'd rather not use it, you have a choice. In order for *Classic* to work, your new Mac has a full Mac OS 9 System Folder. You can activate Mac OS 9 by using the *Startup Disk Preference Pane*. Do this:

- 1) Mouse down to the Dock.
- 2) Click on the *System Preferences* icon.
- 3) In the System Preferences window, click on *Startup Disk*.
- 4) Find the Mac OS 9 System Folder in the list and click on it.
- 5) Click the *Restart* button.

You'll now restart in Mac OS 9 and will do so with every restart until you use *Startup Disk* to change back to Mac OS X.

Mac OS X applications

There are over 2500 applications written specifically for Mac OS X. Some are exclusive to OS X and some work equally well in Mac OS 9. Here are some popular apps:

Art

Adobe Illustrator 10
Adobe Photoshop 7
CorelDRAW 10
Deneba Canvas 8
Graphic Converter 9.2.1

Business

AccountEdge v.2
AppleWorks 6.21
Microsoft Office v. X
Quicken Deluxe 2002
Via Voice for Mac OS X
VirtualPC 5

Internet

America Online for Mac OS X
Internet Explorer 5
Netscape Communicator 6.0.2

Mac OS X now?

If your new Mac came ready to go with OS X you'll probably keep it as your main operating system. If not, and you have a G3 or G4 powered Mac, OS X may still be premature unless there is OS X specific software that you want to run or you want to learn your way around the new OS. In any case,

Mac OS X is now a viable choice for day-to-day Mac operation.

February Tip—

Sharing documents is hard because we all have different applications and the application that saved the document must be used to open it. That's where .pdf files come in. A document saved in .pdf format is readable on any computer having the free *Adobe Acrobat Reader* (included with every computer sold). Mac OS X makes turning your documents into .pdf files easy (without paying \$200.00 for the full version of *Adobe Acrobat*). Do this:

- 1) Create your document and choose *Print* from the *File* menu.
- 2) Click *Output Options*.
- 3) Check the *Save as file* check box.
- 4) Set format to *PDF*.
- 5) Click the *Save* button.
- 6) Name the file and click the *Save* button again.

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