November 2004

Recently David Sindt was talking to me about computers and which one he should purchase, ibook, powerbook or iMac. He did all the research comparisons, talked back and forth over the pros and cons before deciding which he was going to get. I asked him to write a paper for the newsletter on the off chance anyone else might be having the same thoughts.

For here, or to go?

By: David Sindt

So what's it going to be? This is a difficult question for many, especially for myself, a college student with a growing mountain of financial aid debt. For those without the resources to indulge themselves in the paradise that is Mac OS on the desk and on the lap, careful consideration must be put into this decision. And Apple has made this an increasingly difficult question with September's release of the all-new iMac G5.

Let's examine two very powerful Apple computers: the iMac G5 and the PowerBook G4. These two product lines present a fundamental difference in Apple's offerings since the introduction of the original iMac in 1998. Never before has the consumer-level iMac outperformed the pro-level PowerBook. The current iMac G5 is offered with either 1.6 or 1.8 Ghz processor speeds, 533 or 600 Mhz backside cache speeds, 400 Mhz DDR SDRAM, nVidia GeForce 5200 Ultra graphics processors with 64 MB DDR VRAM, and serial ATA hard disks. The PowerBook G4 is offered with either 1.33 or 1.5 Ghz G4 processor speeds, 167 Mhz backside cache speed, 333 Mhz DDR SDRAM,

nVidia 5200Go or ATI Radeon 9700 Mobility graphics processors with 64 MB or 128 MB DDR VRAM, and ATA/100 hard drives. Both are available with the same Combo or Superdrive. Examining the iMac G5's specifications, it clearly out-specs the PowerBook G4 significantly, and performance benchmarks from a variety of sources confirm this.

So based on these facts, the fair-minded Mac Geek would think that the iMac G5 would cost much more than the PowerBook G4, right? Sorry kids, but this is not the case. When it comes down to brass tax, the iMac G5 is a far better deal when factoring performance alone. The entry-level iMac G5, which features a 17" flat-panel screen, 1.6 Ghz processor, Combo drive, 256 MB RAM and a fast 80 GB hard disk can be had for the very reasonable price of $1299. On the other hand, the entry-level PowerBook G4, which features a 12" flat-panel screen, 1.33 Ghz processor, Combo drive, 256 MB RAM and a much slower 60 GB hard disk can be had for $1599. This is a $300 premium for the ability to carry your computer wherever you go, and you must compromise performance. This difference becomes starker after examining the high-end models. The top-of-the-line iMac G5 features a beautiful 20" flat-panel screen, 1.8 Ghz processor, Superdrive, 256 MB RAM and a fast 160 GB hard disk. On the other hand, the top-of-the-line PowerBook G4 features a 17" flat-panel screen, 1.5 Ghz processor, Superdrive, 512 MB RAM and a slow 80 GB hard disk. So what damage can be done to one's piggy bank for these? The iMac can be had for a very reasonable $1899, while the monster PowerBook can be had for a breathtaking $2799. That's a staggering difference of $900.

But despite all the iMac's impressive specifications and price that would make any Mac Geek lose control of their bowels, there is something that a PowerBook offers that an iMac can never offer: the ability to throw that

thang in your bag and Go Go Go!!! There truly is something to be said of this. For myself, working on projects at the University's library, or sitting at the local coffee shop chatting with friends thousands of miles away, or sitting in an airplane piloting a 747 with X-Plane are more important than all-out performance.

And at the end of the day, it is entirely up to the individual to make the decision. Everybody has differing lifestyles, expectations, and budgets. For me, it was a difficult decision. But in the end, mobility is the magic word. And as I type this on my wonderful little Apple portable, sitting outside underneath a massive oak tree in the park, I can feel good about myself and my decision. So, will that be for here, or to go?

riday - October 22, 2004
Update iTunes for access to store - Apple

By Macworld staff

 Apple is warning users of old versions of iTunes that it plans to stop allowing those versions to connect to its music store.

 iTunes Store customers who are using versions that pre date iTunes 4.6 receive a message from Apple that says: "You are using a version of iTunes that will soon no longer be supported. Upgrade today to take advantage of the latest application features and music store enhancements."

 Any changes to the store are likely to be announced next week. Apple plans to hold a music-related event. Members of the band U2 will join Apple.

 Other announcements may include the extension of the facility to other European countries – something Apple had said it would do in October.

 It is also likely that changes will enable Apple to protect tracks bought at the iTunes Music Store from workarounds and third party software that allows the DRM on protected music to be broken.

Apple iTunes locks out older versions

By Macworld staff

 Apple has activated previously-announced plans to close its Music Store to users of earlier versions of iTunes.

 The company revealed its intent last month, when iTunes users accessing the store using older versions of the software were greeted by a message urging them to upgrade.

 Last night Apple finalized the move, so that iTunes versions before 4.5 will no longer access the store.

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Real People Reviews by Daniel M. East
Product: Business Card Composer v2.3
VERSION RELEASED: August 30, 2004
Manufacturer/Vendor/Developer: BeLight Software, Ltd.
MSRP: Download: $39.95/CD: $48.95
Review date: 25 October, 2004
MIN. SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS: 10.2 or later
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    Business Card Composer is many things for anyone who
wants to create a business card for nearly any purpose.
For the novice, you'll be delighted by the easy
interface and wide range of images, formats and
layouts to choose from; additionally, graphic designers
will find inspiration and a ton of great looking
(although now a little dated) Apple products clip art
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as well as a generous variety of backgrounds, icons and other goodies. Great for a quick card when you need it or to make that "calling card" to insure a good first impression.

PULL QUOTE: "one really well thought out, useful and effective card creation tool"

Right from the start, this is an easy application to get into and play with. The AddressBook integration allows for easy first attempts from your own contacts by making the selection or using drag 'n drop. You can enjoy the WSIWIG (what you see is what you get) changes to the styles by scrolling through the menu bar options and images. Once you select the style and specific format, the data presents itself with little tweaking required. Regardless of the style that suits your tastes, be that 3D, traditional, futuristic, classic or whatever, there is so much to choose from and you can import your own images as well.
In fact, your iPhoto library is a built in option right from the interface and that product image, portrait or scenery can be implemented into your new card. BCC supports transparency and anti-alias so the images and text look outstanding when printed on the RIGHT paper.
In fact, having said that, I would recommend using a very good grade of satin or semi-gloss/glossy ink jet paper to get the most out of your cards appearance, then use a straight cutter or take them to a local Kinko's/Sir Speedy/OfficeMax type place since some of the ready-made papers aren't nearly as precise and saturated as a quality photo paper, especially if you plan to use photos and/or 3D images in your card.

While I have no real gripes about this product, I did find that adding some personal touches makes all the difference to the final and finished card. The text and images will snap to and align with the other objects in your card so getting it all placed is quick and easy. Business Card Composer is also great for creating a "personal" card for a home business or just to recreate your business card with a cell phone number or iChat information.

When you consider the cost of professional card creation services, page layout applications and even your local copy center, this program may provide all of that and more. The assistant is simple and walks you through every step, or go solo and place your images and information as you see fit. It is that easy. BeLight has included nearly every inkjet ready-made business card stock available in the page format library as well as the ability to upload for out source printing, It even supports odd sizes, styles and formats so that you can really have a unique statement from your new card. BeLight Software has themselves one really well thought out, useful and effective card creation tool here.

Given the "fun-factor" of Business Card Composer, this is one that is worth the demo download, at the very least. Once you realize how easy it can be to create extremely high quality, professional and effective business cards, you won't go back to traditional page layout for everyday use.

OVERALL RATING: 5 out of 5 stars EXCELLENT

For more information, visit: www.belightsoft.com

Daniel M. East is a freelance writer, featured speaker
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"PC Talk Radio”; and an Apple products consultant.

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