udos & Criticism

by Ambrosia Software Users

This section features reader responses to Ambrosia's software & service. We will include the good with the bad, and address any problems brought to our attention. These are real people, writing real letters about real issues. Feel free to drop us a line.

>>"Cool product [Snapz]! I could even make a Snapz after a system crash!!!"

Manuel Grund, Switzerland

— Wow! that is great news. That is one thing we did not run tests on. I guess this shows that Snapz was not involved with your crash. You can now print out copies of screen crashes, a neat diagnostic tool.

>>"I was typing up a story and suddenly my computer locked up. I had to go to class in less than five minutes, and I didn't have time to retype it, so I tried Snapz and it worked! I restarted my computer and printed up my story as a PhotoShop document. Thanks guys, you're lifesavers."

Craig Beck

— Quick thinking Craig. I have been taking Snapz's of phone orders that are waiting to print. This way I can blow through our "did it print ok?" dialog box, knowing that if it doesn't print I have the info saved.

>> "I'm one of your registered users (Maelstrom). I will not be trying out Snapz because it has an extremely annoying notice every time I start my Mac. I could understand it if this notice appeared after the software had been installed for a reasonable time — say two weeks. But to start up from day one — even before I have even used it is a bit much. I have therefore trashed it. If this policy changes, I may give it another chance — it sounds good on paper!"

Joe

>> "I have a friend who has his Mac set to go directly to Excel when he turns

—These are just two of the recent complaints sent in about Ambrosia's registration reminder. This is the dialog box that pops up at start up when you have an unregistered Ambrosia utility on your computer.

There are many different ways software developers handle registration reminders. A lot of games are released with only the first few levels. When you pay your fee, the rest of the game is sent to you. Other games, and many utility products release demo versions of the program that are limited by time or what you can do. Some developers do not even give you a taste, but rely on full color print advertisements to show what their software is capable of.

Currently, all of Ambrosia's products are distributed as fully functionable programs (WYSIWYG). We encourage our users to put the software through its paces before they make a decision to purchase it. This would be the same as if a car dealer let you take a vehicle home for a month before requiring you to make a commitment. We feel this is good business. All of our customers have made the purchasing decision after putting our software to the test.

Of course there are many people out there who are using our software but have not paid the registration fee. Some of these folks are pirates, but a large percentage of them just have too much going on to remember which piece of shareware is paid for and which is not. So we remind them. Not all of our software has this reminder dialog box at start-up. Ambrosia titles without

the reminder box do not generate nearly as many registrations as those equipped with it. As a company, we cannot afford to do away with some sort of active reminder and still bring you the quality software and service that you deserve.

Now where should this reminder go? With our games it appears when you use the game. Sounds fair enough, we could make the notice appear only when the utility is being used. So, with an unregistered version of Eclipse the notice would appear instead of your personalized graphic when the screen dims. I like our notice, but I would not like it to be burned into my screen. With Snapz it would be just as awkward. When trying to grab an action shot I hit my Snapz hot key and instead of a picture I get the reminder notice. Same with ColorSwitch, I would have to go through the reminder each time I want to adjust my colors or volume.

One suggestion listed above would be for the notice to be passive. Simply appear and disappear after a set amount of time. Sorry, no good. It is not a reminder if it is only displayed while you are away from your Mac, you could have an unregistered version on your computer for months without realizing it. That small bit of interaction has to stay.

Another suggestion was to have a two week or so grace period before the software appears. We consider building any sort of time limitation into our software a time bomb. We may very well be able to code in a two week grace period but the next logical step would be for the program to disable itself after the 30 day review period. Not fair to our folks who only get to use their Mac's once a week or so.

Enough of pointing out what we cannot do. What we can do is make the registration real easy. By calling 1.800.231.1816 with your credit card we can get rid of the reminder screen instantly. Just take ten minutes and do an evaluation of the program to see if it is worth the fee. With utilities this is very easy. Does this program do something that could not have been accomplished before? Does this program do something better or easier than is currently possible? Is this program less expensive, better supported or more easily obtainable then a competing product? Just a few short questions should help you with your decision.

>> "I've received a postcard as my evidence for my payment for the game. Unfortunately, they stole my wallet with this card in it, before I could really enter it into the computer! So my question now is: can you send me another card, or just the number by e-mail, 'cause I'd love to enter my own number, so I'll have my own game "

Leo van Grunsven, France

— Hooligans! What will the dark forces of evil stoop to next? We have dispatched Hector to you with a new card immediately. Cajun is down at the airport duct taping him to the Concord as we speak. You will have your rightful code post haste.

A note of caution to other users: do not underestimate the value of your shareware registration cards. I am sure the villain received ample compensation for the stolen card. Ambrosia products always fetch a premium price.

We suggest sealing it in a zip lock baggy and burying it deep in your back yard, or at least filing it away. Never fear though, Ambrosia is always willing to dispatch a new registration card if need be.