

President's Letter

by Andrew Welch

arning: The following article is not self-promotional, has little to do with the Macintosh, and may have no redeeming social value. Heck, it isn't even FDA-approved. Do not fold, spindle, or mutilate.

I'm sure you've all seen the surveys: despite the massive investment businesses have made in computer technology over the past decade, productivity has not been increasing to match pace. In fact in some cases, it's been declining.

The reasons for this are numerous, and to be honest with you, mostly uninteresting, so I'll just list a few: training, inappropriate use of technology, maintenance, expense, and insidiously addictive computer games.

Part of the frenzied computer technology race was due to a mental infection that spread as fast as any social disease: "computerize it" -- with little thought to the appropriateness of such a proposition. Not surprisingly, this mantra was chanted the longest and the loudest by the peddlers of computer technology.

Businessmen are a notoriously paranoid lot, forever in fear of falling behind the times or getting a tear in their golden parachutes. So it's not surprising that they made the fatal mistake of asking "how?" instead of "why?" when bending an ear to such a sales pitch.

Wait a minute. Forget for a moment that you're reading this article in the dim glow of a computer screen -- probably when you should be sleeping or kissing your lover -- look beyond the trees to get a glimpse of the forest.

I can't think of a damned thing in this world that hasn't had negative side-effects to go along with the benefits, and of course technology is no different. Industrialization brought on pollution. Medicine gave us overpopulation and the ills associated with it. Science brought us the atomic bomb. And on.

Has anyone stopped to ask if technology was actually increasing our quality of life, let alone our productivity? Certainly.

Why have these few faint voices in the whirlwind gone mostly unnoticed?

Because they miss the point entirely.

We are truly relative creatures. There is no scent that possesses such beauty that keeps it from fading slowly away from us, like a flower that has wilted from basking too long in sunlight. Stagnation in a pond is death to that tiny world, just as surely as it is to ours.

Technology isn't so much about moving forward as it is about simply moving. Striving. Discovering. Changing. Fighting the malaise of languor.

Our problems today are no greater and no less than those of the generations that came before us. Don't fool yourself into believing that we're moving forward, but rather understand that we're simply moving.

A few decades ago, we tinkered under the hoods of our cars, wracking our knuckles on a cankerous crankshaft. Today we tinker with our computers, dancing mystical invocations while plugging SCSI cables in. Tomorrow we'll be transfloping our transflobutors, and I wouldn't have it any other way.

Just as there is no happiness without sorrow, there are no sweet smells without acrid ones. Remember that the next time you have to use a porta-potty and smile to yourself.

"Some people are extroverted. Others are introverted. We're Interverted." ...said Andrew as soon as Ambrosia's Internet connection was up and running.

Regards,

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[Ed. Note: ClarisWorks' spelling checker doesn't know the word "geek" -- it suggested "gee" instead. What has the world come to?]