



It's the business

Chris Cain finds the answers to some common problems with running Microsoft Office on Macs. There's bumps, raves and sprockets, too.

While Microsoft is often seen as the baddie of the Mac world, in reality, almost everyone prefers to use its software. Despite the fact that Apple bundles the integrated suite ClarisWorks with its Performas, Word is the most popular Mac word processor with over 3.6 million units sold. Excel is also up there in the high numbers, and many businesses with both PCs and Macs have standardised on Microsoft Office.

On the opposite page we take a look at the top ten support questions regarding Microsoft Office. If you can't get Excel to load or are having trouble with Word file formats, then this is for you.

Bumps bounce prices

Apple is set to release its "Speed Bump" PowerMacs, officially known as the 7600 and the 8200.

The former is a 120MHz 604-based desktop model in the same case as the 7500, while the more impressive-sounding 8200 is a mini-tower based on either a 100MHz or a 120MHz 601. Both machines have all the usual Mac goodies and the 7600 comes with a 256Kb second-level cache as standard.

The launch of these machines has brought PowerMac prices down and the range now starts with the 7200/90/8/500/CD at a street price of around £1,150. An 8200/100/1.2Gb/CD will go for £1,500 and a 7600/120/16/1.2/CD for £1,875. All prices exclude VAT.

Card sharp

Apple has announced two new DOS compatibility cards for PCI systems,

which should fit into any current PCI model. They feature a choice of either a 100MHz Intel Pentium or another "586"-class processor.

The Pentium version is a 12in card with 256Kb of secondary cache, 8Mb of RAM expandable to 72Mb and SoundBlaster 16 compatibility. It supports networking via Ethernet and both VGA and SVGA video displays, driven

by 1Mb of VRAM and an ATI Mach64 graphics controller.

The 586 version will be slightly cheaper and is a 7in card with 128Kb of second-level cache, a maximum of 64Mb of RAM and 1Mb of non-expandable DRAM or video. Both boards will run DOS, Windows 3.1, 3.11 and Windows 95, and come with System 7.5.3 and MSDOS 6.22.

I'll be writing more about these products when I get my hands on them.

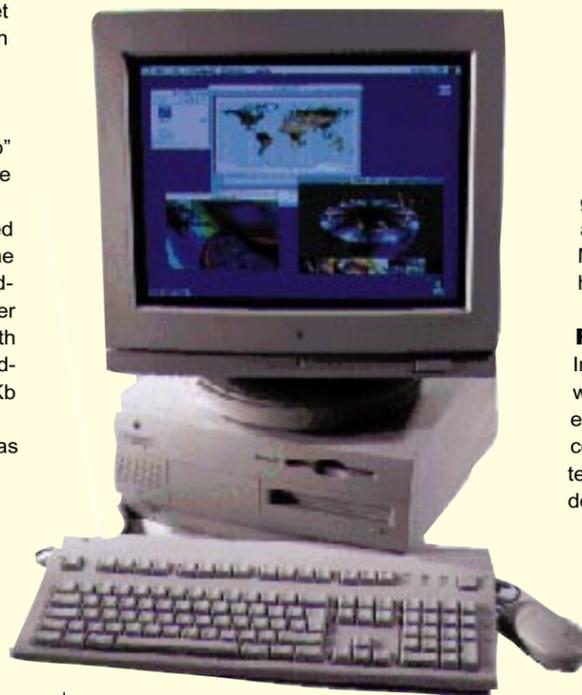
Goodbye, David

The down side of the Mac news this month is that Dr David Nagel, Apple veteran and head of the R&D Labs in Cupertino, has resigned from Apple to head up a division at communications giant AT&T. David was a likeable, prominent figure on the Mac scene and I for one will miss his evangelistic presentations.

Rave on

In a bid to carry PowerMacs forward in the 3D graphics and entertainment arenas, Apple has come up with two new software technologies designed to give developers the flexibility they need and get maximum performance from the hardware without breaking the rules laid down in the operating system. The first new arrival is Quick-Draw 3D Renderer Acceleration Virtual Engine, or RAVE.

According to Apple, this is a software



New "Speed Bump" PowerMacs boast even better performance

Microsoft Office sort-out: the top ten support questions... and answers

Q Designed for both 68K and PowerPC machines, Microsoft Office is the standard business office suite for the Macintosh. The current version, 4.2.1, is bigger and better than ever before but sometimes it just doesn't want to work the way you do. Thanks to Microsoft's Mac software support team I've got the answers to the top ten most commonly asked technical support questions. If you're having problems with Office, read on.

Q When I open Excel I get the message "Cannot find English Lexicon" and the program fails to load. How can I fix this?

Having made sure that the Excel icon is in the Excel 5.0 folder, the first step is to rebuild the desktop by holding down the Command and Option keys on startup until prompted to Rebuild. Answer yes and then try to run Excel. If the Lexicon message still appears, remove the Registration Database and Embedding Preferences from the Preferences Folder and try again. If it works, then the program will create new preferences and the old file can be deleted.

If this doesn't work, ensure that Virtual Memory is switched on in the Memory Control Panel and restart. Finally, try running the program after booting with a clean system disk.

Q PowerPoint gives me the message "The Server Application or Source File cannot be found". Why?

This can happen when inserting an object from the Insert menu. To fix it, first make sure that the Shared Code Folder and Shared Code Manager are in your Extensions folder and that the Microsoft Folder has not been moved from its original position (it's normally installed on the root directory of your hard disk). Next, double-click on the ClipArt gallery application in the Microsoft folder in an attempt to re-register it.

If this doesn't help, there are three more steps you can try. First, try increasing the program's preferred memory size in its Get Info box. Next, check for an extension conflict by turning off all other extensions except those required to run Office. Finally, try removing and re-installing the ClipArt Gallery and files using the Office Setup program.

Q I'm running System 7.5.2 and now that I've installed Office my Mac won't Shut Down. Why should this be?

There is a known conflict between System 7.5.2 and version 4.2.1 of the Microsoft Office Manager (MOM). A free patch called Office Manager 4.2.1b will fix this. The only other workaround is to use the applications without the MOM Control Panel.

Q Why do I keep getting an Error 11 in all the Office applications?

Error 11 can crop up when running Office on a PowerMac, usually in Word and Excel. To fix this, you need to place a patch called Office 4.2.x PowerMacintosh Update into your Extensions folder.

Q Is there a way to increase the number of Import/Export file options in Word 6?

Yes. A supplemental converter kit is available from Microsoft Product Support Services.

Q How can I open a file created in Word 6 with Word 5? A supplemental converter is available that lets you open both Mac and PC Word 6 files in Word 5. The converter is installed by dropping it onto the Word Commands folder in the main Microsoft Word folder.

Q When I bring ClipArt into PowerPoint via the ClipArt Gallery, a grey box is displayed instead of the image. Can I fix this?

Yes. This problem occurs on PowerPC 603 machines and a temporary workaround is to go to the Memory control panel and turn off the Modern Memory Manager, then restart. This isn't an ideal situation, but it works.

Q When I launch PowerPoint I get the message "Please Locate the Speller". Why?

This usually occurs when the PowerPoint preferences file is damaged, and there are two ways you can try to fix it:

Fix method 1: Drag the file Microsoft PowerPoint Settings (4) to the wastebasket, run Office Setup in maintenance mode and choose Add/Remove. Under installed components click the option triangle for PowerPoint. Leave the PowerPoint option on the second level selected and click the following options to clear them: Presentation Translators, Help, Quick Preview, Templates, Genographics Drivers, Clip Art Files. Under Installed Components, click the option triangle for Tools. Leave the spelling option selected but click the other four options to clear them: Microsoft System Information, Setup, Fonts and Shared Resources. Now Click continue and then OK. After the program finishes its business run Setup again, choose Add/Remove and select Microsoft PowerPoint and Tools. Click Continue and then OK.

Fix method 2: If you can select the UK English Dictionary but cannot spell-check your document, reset the spelling checker locations in the following way. Drag the Microsoft PowerPoint Settings (4) file to the Wastebasket and empty it. Start PowerPoint and on the Tools Menu click Spelling. When the dialogue box appears, click MS spelling and then UK English Dictionary. If you're still having problems remove all installed components and re-install Office.

Q When I try to load Excel I get the message "OLE2 cannot be found" or "Visual Basic Apps Lib Cannot Be Found". Everything is installed so what's the problem?

Both of these errors occur on a PowerMac when virtual memory is switched off. Due to the way in which PowerMac code is written, with VM turned off the entire code base for Excel must be loaded into memory in order to run it. So you must have enough free memory available.

With VM turned on, the Mac becomes more flexible and the PowerPC can load its programs in component chunks when they are needed. The amount of memory required to run the software is drastically reduced. Unfortunately, using VM with System 7.5.2 has quite a performance hit and a better solution in some cases is to use a third-party product such as Connectix RAM Doubler. This flips the component switch and uses data compression rather than swapping files to hard disk.

Q I have to use virtual memory to load Excel but the application startup time is ridiculous. Is there a way to speed things up?

Yes. Installing Apple's System 7.5 Update 2.0 will take your system software to version 7.5.3 and significantly speed up launch times when using VM.

If you were having trouble with Office, then hopefully one of these solutions will have cured the problem. Special thanks to Janine and colleagues at the Microsoft Mac Support Team who can be contacted during office hours at the numbers given in our Contacts panel, page 328).

layer designed to support the low-level rasterisation operations required for interactive 3D rendering. In other words, it's a low-level 3D driver that works in a similar way to traditional 2D APIs except that it provides support for Z buffering, used to perform hidden surface removal; double buffering, to conceal the flashing that occurs when images are drawn and re-drawn on screen, and to decrease those awful tearing artefacts as seen in Doom2; and texture mapping.

RAVE is aimed primarily at specialist application vendors (i.e. games and entertainment developers) and at third-party hardware manufacturers who can produce 3D accelerators. It doesn't replace Apple's existing QuickDraw 3D technology; rather, it works with it to accelerate applications.

Sprockets abound

Apple's other new technology is Apple Game Sprockets, a series of developer tools designed specifically for game creators. The set comprises DrawSprocket, for 2D graphics routines and buffering; SoundSprocket, for 3D location-based sound; NetSprocket, for developing multi-user titles; SpeechSprocket, for user-independent voice recognition; and InputSprocket, for controlling joysticks and other input devices.

QuickDraw 3D RAVE is a spin-off of the new Sprockets.

Just how good any of these tools are remains to be seen. Whether developers will start to take Mac game development seriously is another matter, but rest assured that as soon as the first Sprocket-assisted title appears I'll bring you a full report. Plus, I'll be checking out both these developments in greater detail in a future column.

Utility of the Month: Fat Cursors

Enables/disables Fat Cursors

Selects Fat or Standard arrow

Selects Fat or Standard i-beam

Enable/disable fat keys

Enable/disable find keys

Display about & shareware info

Catch that cursor! Why give yourself a hard time trying to find the standard cursors on your screen when you could have a nice fat arrow and a big broad I-beam? It's useful enough on a standard Mac screen but could also make PowerBook users' lives a lot easier. The documentation claims that Fat Cursors v1.2.1 works with just about all applications, even those that install their own cursors.

It installs simply and displays its icon at startup. With the set of buttons provided, you can switch from fat to standard cursors whenever the fancy takes you. There are "Fat" Keys and "Find" Keys options — you use the former to enable or disable the fattened cursor while selected modifier keys are pressed. "Find Keys" can be used to select modifier keys to enable (or disable) the "find cursor" function: when invoked, a large circle will flash around the cursor's present location.

Fat Cursors is shareware. It costs \$10 to register and can be downloaded from Scott's Place which has some useful Mac shareware (some of which has been written especially for disabled computer users): <http://www.ecnet.net/users/gnorris/place.shtml>

Patrick Ramus

Mac's best friend

There's a wonderful little program I've been playing with, called Dogz. "Dogz — your computer pet" is a hilarious piece of software that gives you your own virtual dog on the Mac.

You start by adopting one of five puppies, each a different breed with its own characteristics. You train your puppy

using various toys and treats, and watch it grow into a fully-fledged pooch.

The things you can do with your dog include playing fetch with a ball, teaching him tricks, and indulging in a bit of tug-of-war with an old shoe. You also have the option of making him into a Guard Dog screensaver when you're not at the keyboard.

Totally useless but tremendous fun, Dogz is a must for all mad Mac owners. ■



PCW Contacts

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Microsoft's Mac Software Support Team 01734 271580; Fax 01734 271974
Microsoft 01734 271676;
Web www.microsoft.com

Dogz is £14.99 from Mindscape
01444 246333