A touch of **gold**

Polish up your System 7.5 with the Golden Master version of update 2.0. Chris Cain reviews the new features and improvements.

The rumours were true. As predicted last month, the US Golden Master version of System 7.5 Update 2.0 is available now for download on Apple's Web sites and AOL. When installed, this takes your Mac to System 7.5.3.

Although this is just a maintenance release, it is nevertheless a big one which boasts much-needed improvements and bug fixes to the MacOS — and it's getting a lot of good press coverage in the US. There's more native code for PowerMacs and a faster Finder for everyone. It generally makes the Mac feel more solid than ever before.

I'll go though some of the new features, tell you what they're all about and how they might affect the way you work. I'll also be handing out a few tips on Apple's ResEdit that I picked up recently, along with the latest on news and updates — it's been a busy old month here in the Mac world.

Apple offline

First the news, and perhaps the biggest event this month was the announcement that eWorld, Apple's graphical online service, is no more.

The service has been discontinued and the company is encouraging existing users to turn to AOL and the Internet instead. This move isn't surprising, really, given that eWorld only had around 200,000 subscribers worldwide, and that it was more or less Mac only. But I, for one, will miss those well-designed pages. They looked a lot like the ones on AOL UK, except with more class.

Just as it should, Apple is offering to bounce existing users' email to another address for a period of 90 days. For more information, talk to Apple's Customer Services department.

On a more positive note, QuickTime 2.2 has been announced. This new version will feature a QuickDraw 3D data track and a change to the MIDI side of things that Apple claims will give PowerMac users CD quality General MIDI music in software. It will provide greater control in this area, too, allowing third party developers to create their own instrument file plug-ins.

It's about time this area was addressed: the original idea of a software sound card was great, and the system has the potential to be very flexible. The current samples sound completely flat when compared to their hardware equivalents.

Other QuickTime developments coming down the line include software MPEG playback and a plug-in for Netscape designed to optimise streaming video playback over the Internet. There's also possible support for multimedia scripting languages such as Macromedia's Lingo.

This fits in well with the news that Macromedia has released a version of ShockWave (its technology for playing Director Movies over the Internet) for the Mac. This is certainly an exciting time to be in the Mac multimedia field.

Finally, on the monthly updates front, Connectix has released yet another patch for its popular Speed Doubler utility.
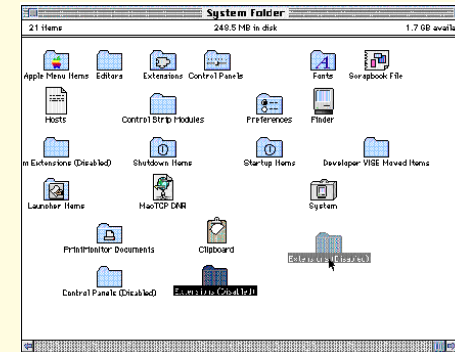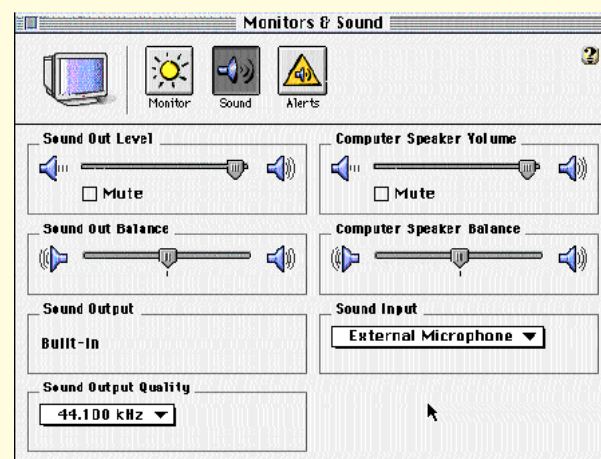
The new version is 1.1.2 and mainly fixes compatibility issues.

System 7.5.3

From around mid-April 1996, any new Mac that you buy will come with System 7.5.3 installed. Existing users can upgrade by installing System 7.5 Update 2.0, or by obtaining a complete copy of the new software. Although everything looks the same as the old 7.5 at first glance, there are some subtle differences and improvements you should know about.

● Monitors and Sound

The Monitors and Sound control panels (or single Sound and Display panel if you have a PCI Mac) have been replaced by a new control panel which is not really a control panel at all: it's an application. But either way, it's now the main method by which to switch graphic resolutions, colour depths and deal with the audio ins and outs on your Mac.

● Translucent dragging (PowerMac only)

When you drag an icon around the Mac screen, you normally get its outline displayed under the mouse pointer. In 7.5.3 you get a more stylish "translucent" image, as seen on systems like Windows 95. If you drag more than one icon, only the image directly underneath the cursor is displayed.

● Open Transport 1.1

The Open Transport 1.1 networking architecture now works on 68030 and 68040 models as well as PowerMacs. It boasts a few more options, supports PC Card interface cards and NuBus as well as the PCI bus, and has several bug fixes which should please anyone currently experiencing troubles.
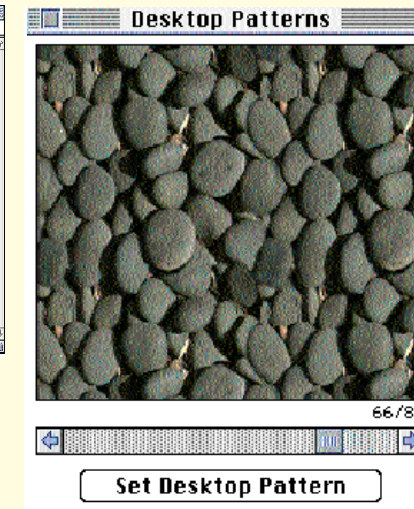

● Control Strip

Originally designed for Powerbooks and installed only on PCI desktop models, the Control Strip is now standard operating equipment.

It enables users to quickly set the sound volume, switch screen resolutions and bit depths, and turn file sharing and AppleTalk on and off. Third party modules for the panel can be added by dropping them into the System Folder.

● Desktop Printing

Another extra that originally came with QuickDraw GX, desktop printing gives you icons for your printers, on screen.

Now you can print a document by simply dragging it on to the icon for the printer you want to use. If it's an application-specific file, such as a Word document, the Mac will launch the package, evoke the printing facilities, and quit the application — handy.

● Desktop Patterns

Yes, there are some new desktop patterns. These aren't particularly important but they are something that everyone uses, and the more you've got to choose from the better. There are ten new ones, and the roses are my favourite.

● Desktop Rebuilds

The final user-noticeable change is that program comments in Get Info windows no longer delete when you rebuild the desktop. Perhaps this will encourage more people to use this facility?

Fig 1 Adjusting preferences in Aaron

1. *Make a duplicate copy of Aaron and open it using ResEdit. When the main window appears, find the resource called WPrf and double-click on the icon. Another window will appear with a couple of numbers in it. Double-click these*

2. *You now have access to the preference settings. Change the Zoom Rects option to False by clicking the button next to it, then close all the windows and save changes. Place this new version in your extensions folder, removing the old one first if you already have it installed, and restart*

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ResEdit rules

One of the most useful utilities ever produced for the Mac is a small program called ResEdit. As its name suggests, it's used for editing the resources and components in Mac applications. The latest version is 2.1.3.

This month, I used it to solve a couple of problems I was having with Aaron and Adobe Photoshop. Aaron, for the uninitiated, is a small shareware extension that changes the Finder's appearance so that it looks more like Apple's up and coming Copland operating system.

It gives you bas-relief shaded menus and windows, cool-looking 3D icons for folders and a nice new Wastebasket. But it also gives you really annoying spinning windows that slow everything down on low-end PowerMacs, which is where ResEdit comes in.
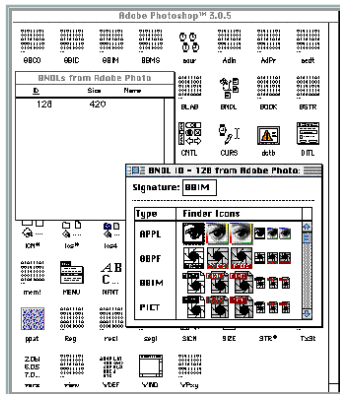
With the help of ResEdit you can open up Aaron and adjust its internal preference settings to turn off this feature. To do this, follow the simple steps shown in *Figs 1 & 2*. ◾
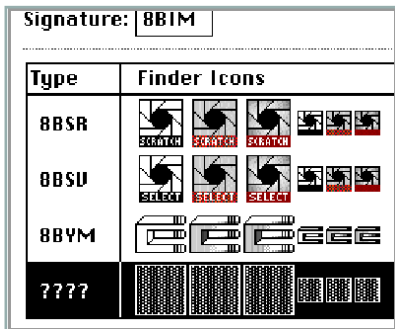
Fig 2 Patching Adobe Photoshop

The Adobe Photoshop manoeuvre is a delicate operation. It comes courtesy of *PCW*'s DTP guru Gordon Laing, and Photoshop programmer Doug Olsen.

It fixes a problem with Photoshop 3.0.4 or above, which prevents the application from recognising drag and drop operations with non-Photoshop files. This can be extremely annoying if you constantly need to edit images generated in another package, or on the PC.
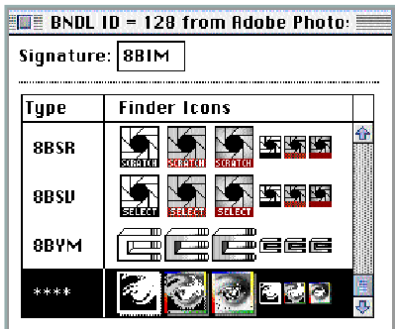
Before attempting to patch Photoshop, it is advisable to make a duplicate of the main program in case anything goes wrong. Once you've done this, open the program with ResEdit and perform the following steps:

1. With the main ResEdit window open, find and double-click the resource labelled BNDL. As in Aaron, this opens a window with numbers in. Double-click them to reveal another window

2. The new window shows a group of Photoshop Finder icons associated by the program to different file types. We need to make a new file type, so select Create New File Type from the Resources menu. A new line of empty icons will appear with the File Type ????

*3. Click on the question marks and change the entry to ****, then select Choose Icon from the BNDL menu. Scroll all the way to the top of the window that appears and double-click the first Photoshop icon. The icons will be assigned to the new file type*

4. Finally, close all windows and save changes when prompted. Restart the Mac and rebuild the desktop by holding down Option and Command during startup. Photoshop should now recognise those foreign files

Did you know?

The Mac's interface is renowned for its ease of use, but occasionally you do come across something that's highly annoying.

One particularly irritating thing, especially for those used to Windows 95, is the way in which windows can become cluttered and disorganised when in the normal icon view. Icons often become overlapped, or move out of the viewable area.

Apple's "Clean up Window" command offers a partial solution and, when selected, slowly moves every icon on to the nearest gridline. This can still leave you in a mess, however, especially when you've got icons outside the view.

The solution is to hold down the Option key while selecting the Special menu — "Clean up Window" becomes "Clean up by Name". Selecting this will quickly sort the contents into alphabetical order and line up the icons as much as the filenames will allow.

PCW Contacts

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Apple Computers **0181 569 1199**
Apple Customer Response Centre **0990 127753**

Apple's home pages are **www.apple.com** and **www.euro.apple.com**