(This is a reply to the Daley/Scoble editorials concerning Apple's new distribution policy.)

SYSTEM 7.1: Apple doesn't <u>have</u> charge for it!

by Leonard G. Warden

I am a System 7 convert. The Macintosh had no appeal to me as a computer user whatsoever until August of 1991. A friend of mine was getting married and left his Classic 2/40 at my apartment. He had just installed System 7. Despite the limits of the hardware, I was hooked on System 7 in a week. I quickly sold my previous system and bought a Macintosh.

Having said this, I will no doubt purchase the System 7.1 upgrade package as soon as my dealer has copies in stock despite the fact that my dealer is an hour drive from my home. I want to keep my Macintosh current. I pay to upgrade applications. I'll pay to upgrade System software.

None of this means that I should <u>have</u> to pay for such and upgrade. Mr. Scoble points out that DOS and Windows users have to pay for upgrades to those products. He neglects to point out that people using Intel-based or compatible PCs have always had alternative operating systems from which to choose. In particular: UNIX (several flavors), DesqView, OS/2, and even CP/M. Those of us who elected to purchase Apple hardware have no such alternatives. AU/X, you say? Who makes it? Apple. And they charge a lot for it. Yes, there are also third-party UNIX systems, but most of them require a running Mac OS. Because Apple has this monopoly over its hardware, I feel they owe us (Macintosh users) the option of going to our dealer or user group and copying the newest System for the price of a box of floppies.

The fact of the matter is that Apple must not do what Microsoft has done. Apple is an innovator; Microsoft, an imitator. Yes, I know that the Mac interface is based on Xerox PARC research, but Apple was the first company to build a personal computer using such a visual interface. It took Microsoft years to get it "right," and Windows 3.1 is a pale imitation of the Mac interface, to be kind. Even MS-DOS is just a watered-down UNIX. Apple, on the other hand is striving to break new ground with the Newton (which they will license, I know). And hopefully, the Power PC computers will run a new non-Mac/non-

Taligent OS in addition to Taligent and the Mac emulator.

No OS is going to dominate personal computers the way DOS did in the '80s. If Apple feels the need to increase its share of the market, alienating its customers is not the solution. How about a card for PCs that will allow them to run Mac OS? It wouldn't be as good as the real McCoy, but it would allow people who feel obligated to run a DOS machine to see how a real user interface should work.

In 1995, I hope to be using a new computer(perhaps a Power PC-based computer from Apple). If I so desire, I hope I can run Mac applications. However, I realize that I probably won't be able to do so. I might be running and OS developed by Taligent. Or NeXT. Or Sun. Or, hopefully, by Apple. I think Apple can develop good operating systems. I hope Apple will continue to develop good hardware platforms. Just imagine if the original Apple II had been considered good enough.

BTW, if a person owned an appliance just like mine but didn't have the manual for it, I'd make him a copy. I'd feel he bought the right to use the appliance to its fullest potential. However, if he wanted a copy of a novel I owned, I'd give him the address of the bookstore. (The analogy is strained, I know. It's just that with software and computers, there are very few appropriate "real world" analogies.)

Justification by appeal to "what everyone else is doing" is poor excuse for a bad policy. The computer company for the rest of us seems content to treat their customers like cogs in the wheel of commerce. Apple used to say that the Mac of tomorrow is the one you own today. That's still true...for $99.95!

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