

Apple User Groups

User Groups have become increasingly important sources of influence and support in the computer industry. There are now more than 1200 registered Apple® User Groups, and the number is rapidly increasing. There are also many kinds of User Groups, enough to meet almost any user's needs. Groups have formed within communities, corporations, government agencies, national organizations, and universities.

User Groups in large corporations and government agencies provide an important source of product information and support for members (employees). They supplement the training and support services that MIS departments offer to employees. In some organizations, User Groups are the only source of in-house training and support.

How Can a User Group Support Your Customers?

User Groups provide a variety of services to their members. They can:

- distribute information on Apple and third-party products.

Virtually all groups hold regular meetings and publish a newsletter. Some have special interest groups (SIGs) that meet to share information about specialized topics like desktop publishing.

- offer hands-on training to users.
- provide technical support.

Many groups have special telephone hotlines; others have bulletin board service (BBS) for technical support.

- maintain software libraries containing third-party demo disks and public domain software.

How Does Apple Work With User Groups?

The Apple User Group Connection, part of the Strategic Relations organization within Apple USA, is a group that provides an ongoing communications exchange with members of the Apple User Group community. Apple supports registered User Groups in a variety of ways through the Connection.

First, Apple provides information in the form of a bi-monthly newsletter, regular mailing containing Apple product information and programs, and a quarterly video focusing on important Apple developments. In addition, User Groups have access to a wealth of information on AppleLink,® Apple's on-communications network.

Second, Apple offers on-line technical support to User Groups through a variety of bulletin boards on AppleLink. User Group leaders can use these bulletin boards to communicate with Apple, with developers, and with other User Group members. User Groups can also opt to distribute Apple system software to members, speeding and simplifying the update process.

Third, Apple holds semi-annual meetings of the User Group Advisory Council, giving User Group representatives the opportunity to provide feedback to Apple on its products and User Group programs.

Fourth, Apple assists new User Groups with the start-up process and helps develop existing groups through a telephone hotline that refers individual users to the nearest group (see below).

Next Steps

If you have customers that want to join a User Group, direct them to the Apple User Group Referral number: 1(800)-538-9696. This service will refer your customers to the nearest User Group.

For more information your customers that want to form a User Group, may write to:

The Apple User Group Connection
Apple Computer, Inc.
20330 Stevens Creek Blvd., MS-36AA
Cupertino, CA 95014