.01   What's a FAQ?

The word FAQ has two meanings:

1.   A Frequently Asked Question. Asking "What's a FAQ" is an example of a frequently asked question. Twisted, eh?

2.   A document that answers Frequently Asked Questions. (You're reading this sort of FAQ right now! Sort of like _Tales from the Crypt_, where the kids being eaten by zombies find the comic book where the kids are being eaten by zombies.) FAQs are common on the Internet, where they reduce the number of questions that are asked over and over as new people gain access to the Internet.

In case you're interested, it's pronounced "fak," with a short "a."

1.02   Where can I find next month's FAQ?

America Online For obvious reasons, I'll send each issue of the FAQ to America Online post haste. To locate the file, do a file search for "aol faq". That is, choose Keyword from the Go To menu, type "file search" in the keywords dialog box, click OK, and type the words "aol" and "faq" (separated by a space) in the file search dialog.

BBSes If you belong to a BBS that carries Macintosh files, you or another member of the BBS can download the latest FAQ and post it to the BBS, where everyone can download it for free.

CompuServe   I'll upload the current version to the Macintosh Communications forum (go maccom).

GEnie   The FAQ will be uploaded to GEMUG Macintosh Roundtable.

Delphi I'll upload each issue of the FAQ to the Communications forum in the Mac databases (files).

FTP   I will also send each issue to macgifts@ mac.archive.umich.edu, a mail exploder that delivers the file to the sumex and umich FTP sites and their mirrors, as well as other, lesser-known FTP sites.

FTP SITE	DIRECTORY
mac.archive.umich.edu	mac/misc/documentation
sumex-aim.stanford.edu	info-mac/comm/info
wuarchive.wustl.edu	systems/info-mac/comm/info
mrcnext.cso.uiuc.edu	pub/info-mac/comm/info
amug.org	pub/ftp1/info-mac/comm/info
ftp.hawaii.edu	mirrors/info-mac/comm/info
daemon.ncsa.uiuc.edu	info-mac/comm/info
grind.isca.uiowa.edu	mac/infomac/comm/info
gopher.lcs.mit.edu	pub/info-mac/comm/info

1.03   Is the FAQ published by America Online?

No. I wrote the FAQ independently. The FAQ is not endorsed or sponsored by AOL, Inc., and does not constitute official AOL, Inc. policy. I am not an employee of America Online.

1.04   Is the FAQ available for Apple][, DOS, or Windows?

At this time it isn't. If the Macintosh version is successful, I may write a FAQ for the Windows version of AOL. I'm also investigating some of the cross-platform document readers like Adobe Acrobat, No Hands Software's Common Ground, and Farallon's Replica. If anyone knows of a program for other platforms similar to DOCMaker, I'd be interested to hear about it!

1.05   Where's the table of contents?

Choose Table of Contents from the Contents menu, or type Command-K. You'll see a complete list of chapters and sections. To go to a section, select it and press the return key, or doubleclick the section.

.06   Where's the index?

You don't need one! Just use the Find command under the File menu and search for the word you're interested in. As a shortcut, type Command-F. You can search the current chapter or the entire FAQ. If you were looking for information about MacInTalk, you could search for it with the Find command.

.07   How do I move around in the FAQ?

To jump around, use the table of contents (Command-K). To move the page up and down, use the vertical scroll bars, or use the up and down arrow keys on your keyboard, or use the home, end, page up and page down keys if your keyboard has those. To move between chapters, use the horizontal scroll bar, or use the left and right arrow keys on your keyboard.

1.08   Can I copy text from the FAQ?

You can, but there's a trick to it. The FAQ was created with DOCMaker, which doesn't support copying. The workaround is to use James Walker's Text Capture FKEY, described in chapter 15.

1.09   Why doesn't my copy of AOL do that?

I'm using AOL 2.1, the most current version. There are some new features in 2.1, and some of the windows look different. In a few cases I've included instructions for AOL 2.0 and 2.1, but the FAQ is intended to be used with version 2.1.

1.10   What about the Internet, big guy?

AOL's Internet Center is in a state of flux. I decided to publish the FAQ now rather than waiting until it settled down. I'll add an Internet chapter in one of the next two issues.

1.11   What should I do to print the FAQ?

One of my goals in founding Softwords was to help pioneer the paperless publishing industry. Too many trees are being cut down for books and magazines that get thrown in the landfill. We're in the computer age now. There's no need to print computer magazines on dead trees.

If you read the FAQ on the computer, you'll get the advantage of the hypertext table of contents, the Find function, and color graphics. I've designed the FAQ to be as readable as possible onscreen. To make onscreen reading more comfortable, try adjusting the brightness control. If the monitor is bright enough for playing games, it's probably too bright for reading.

There is a Print command for anyone who needs to print the FAQ. ,Make sure your printer has plenty of paper. The FAQ is a nearly 100 pages. You can print individual chapters to reduce printing.

olor/Greyscale Printing   If your Print dialog has an option for Color/Greyscale printing, choose that option. The graphics will look much better. Most laser printers can print in greyscale.

Fonts   If you don't have 12 point Times or the TrueType version of Times, and you're not using Adobe Type Manager, choose Page Setup from the File menu and check the option for font substitution. The printer will use New York instead of Times. It won't look as good as Times, but it's the next best thing.

1.12   Ever heard of a spelling checker?

Computer terminology and spelling conventions are evolving rapidly. I chose to omit the hyphen

in the words "on-line", "off-line", "e-mail", "double-click", and "single-click". Hyphens are clumsy, and tend to indicate in-between words that the writer has yet to become comfortable with.

From _The Elements of Style_, third edition: "The steady evolution of the language seems to favor union: two words eventually become one, usually after a period of hyphenation."

1.12   Haven't you read The _Mac is Not a Typewriter_?

I've read Robin Williams' slim classic, and it's a great style book for the printed page. In formatting the FAQ, I violated many of the rules, and for good reason. The FAQ is meant to be read on a computer monitor, rather than on the printed page. That necessitated some design changes.

Curly (smart) quotes   Professional publications use this style of quotes, not the feet and inch marks of a typewriter. Curly quotes are a great example of why the rules don't always apply. Curly quotes look great when printed, but don't look so hot onscreen.

Italics   The title of books, magazines, and other significant works should be italicized. Italics look like terrible onscreen, so I tried underlining. As you can see, underlining throws off the line spacing in DOCMaker, the program I use to create the FAQ. As a compromise, I use underline marks around the title, like this: _Title of Book_.

Recommended reading:

The Mac is not a Typewriter. Robin Williams. Peachpit Press, 1990. ISBN: 0-938151-31-2. U.S.A. $9.95.

>   Robin Williams and her husband
>   met on America Online.