How YOU Can Help Save the Macintosh

Ramblings by Michael Dortch

So Apple's in trouble. So what?

Now wait a minute. I'm not about to say "Good! Let 'em die!" or anything like that. I am an unabashed Macintosh bigot, and I've been a big fan of Apple for a long, long time. But I've finally figured out how to divide my love for the Macintosh from my increasingly ambivalent feelings about Apple itself.

Today, I think I'm resolved on the whole issue. I believe the Macintosh has enough entrenchment and enough momentum in enough markets to keep Macintosh technologies alive almost indefinitely. And I believe two of the areas in which this is most true are graphics/image manipulation and gaming -- a couple of areas in which the publishers of this newsletter have no small amounts of experience, investment or success.

John Dvorak, long-time industry expert and wise guy, says one of the things keeping the Macintosh alive is that almost any Macintosh runs Adobe's Photoshop application faster and better than almost any equivalently configured PC running Microsoft Windows (or UNIX System software, for that matter). And a quick perusal of Ambrosia's offerings will show almost anyone how easy it is to find really killer games for almost any Macintosh system, old or new. (I'm still loving Malestrom on my ol' Quadra 630, myself!)

Clearly, there are a lot of things Apple could do (or not do) that would significantly affect the future of the Macintosh. But you know what? The Mac's now bigger than Apple. Consider that Power Computing, Umax, Motorola and IBM are expected to all be shipping Mac-compatible clones Real Soon Now, prices on Macs are falling, and no significant supplier of Macintosh software's abandoned us yet, and you've got a market with some momentum on your hands.

Even Microsoft, the Colossus of Redmond, has formed a product group devoted to the Macintosh. At Macworld Expo in San Francisco in January, Microsoft said its Mac group is the largest single group of Mac developers outside Apple itself -- and say what you want about Microsoft, they're not traditionally known for throwing large amounts of money down rat-holes (the early relationship with IBM around OS/2 and the first few iterations of Microsoft Network notwithstanding).

So am I worried about Apple? A bit, but then, I don't own any Apple stock, so my worries are more limited than those of some folks. Am I worried about the future of the Macintosh? Not a bit. Not as long as folks like Ambrosia and its loyal fans and customers are still growing and thriving. And what should YOU be doing?

1. Evangelize! Whenever any of your friends thinks about buying a new PC, repeat "get a

Mac" until they
        refuse to talk with you any more. Then sign them up for mail-order catalogs from the discount Mac
        vendor(s) of your choice.

    2. Make sure people know that in most cases, Macs are cost-competitive with PCs now, and run all the
        important "useful" applications (as well as way more cool recreational software).

    3. Show and tell your friends how easy surfing the 'Net and/or building Web sites can be on the Mac (and
        how the Internet and the Web are extending the lives of older Mac systems, making a perfectly useable,
        used color system for gaming and Web-surfing as cheap as a few hundred dollars).

    4. Keep your software current and legal, by buying full versions whenever possible, registering and paying
        for your shareware and cheerfully patronizing those companies which support the Mac as enthusiastically
        as you do. (And keep your hardware in good shape, too!)

    5. Make sure you and those around you realize that the computing industry has a history of good technologies
        outliving less-than-perfect companies. The Macintosh, with help from savvy companies, enthusiastic users,
        the Internet and the Web, could outlast Apple -- and, probably, many of us!

Ed Note -- Michael Dortch is Director of Special Projects for NetGuide Magazine, a publication of CMP Media Inc. He's been thinking, writing and talking about computers and networks (as well as using them!) for more than 20 years, and welcomes e-mail from Ambrosia Times readers at medortch@aol.com or just medortch for America Online subscribers.