

LA MUG

LEWISTON - AUBURN MACINTOSH USERS GROUP

TIMES

VOL. 4 ISSUE 1

January 12, 1999

Happy Birthday LA MUG!

New items are in store for LA MUG's fourth year... Many thanks to Mike Baita for all of his hardwork on the newsletter for the past 16 months. Mike has passed on editorship to Nicole Laverdiere so that he may lead the Appleworks SIG. He has been busy preparing for this informative, hands-on class.

The newsletter will be receiving a new look and an online version is being planned. Remember, publication of a newsletter takes a team effort and a good newsletter is a valuable asset for the group. Continuing thanks to the people who contribute. This newsletter is a way to share your knowledge and experiences with other members. Please share your thoughts.

Ron Cormier, our librarian, is also the new webmaster for LA MUG. Feel free to offer suggestions on what you would like to see at LA MUG's site.

Oxford News

A December meeting was not held. At the November 19th meeting, about 45 people attended a demonstration by Adobe's Tim Plumer. Door prizes were awarded, including Adobe's newest web publishing program, Image Ready 1.0. The group is growing quickly, five new members were added in November for a total of about 20. The next meeting is January 21st, at the offices of Oxford School Department - located at the Oxford Mall, next to the Theater.

Items for all:

1. January is election month. The following positions are open:
President, Vice President, Secretary, Software Liason and Marketing.
Don't forget your ballots from December's newsletter!
2. LA MUG will be changing the day for its meeting - see inside pages.
3. Who would you like to see in March and at future meetings?
Adobe, Apple, or other computer related companies? Tell Us!



User Group
Network

Check our web site and the User Group Network.

www.nceexpo.com

<http://www.user-groups.com/>

READ ME FIRST

Ted's Tips

1999 Monthly Calendar

January
Elections
Web Shopping
Beginners
Appleworks - Discussion

February
Freehand by Skip
Appleworks, SIG

March
Adobe or Apple
Appleworks, SIG

Corrections Requested

The following e-mail addresses were undeliverable:

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The officers would like to update their lists for the upcoming online newsletter and for other communications. Please e-mail your corrected address to David Bergeron, membership director, at davnic@exploremaine.com
Thank you!



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One year's membership in LA MUG is \$20 per person. Other family members...a spouse, son or daughter...may attend the meetings, as long as facilities can accommodate us, but only one person gets the newsletter.

Checks should be made out to LA MUG and sent to:

Ted Moreau
LA MUG treasurer
34 Martha Ave.
Lewiston, ME 04240

Confused by Graphics Formats? Here Are Some Basic Answers

by Ken Fermoye

Judging by questions I'm asked regularly, many computer users don't really understand the differences between vector (or object-oriented) images produced by graphics draw programs and bit-mapped (raster) images produced by paint programs. The differences are significant, and knowledge of what they are will help you choose the best tool for a given graphics task. First, a few basic definitions are in order.

Draw programs use mathematical expressions to create objects (lines, curves, circles, squares, etc.) that make up the drawing. Paint programs create an image dot by dot, by turning the pixels that represent each dot on or off. When you draw a line in a program such as Corel Draw, for example, you create a mathematical formula that describes that line and its location. When you draw a line in any paint program, you create a series of dots that make up the line.

Each method has advantages and disadvantages. Draw images are resolution-independent; because of the way they are described, objects are printed at the resolution of the output device, be it a 300-dpi (dots per inch) laser printer or a 1270-dpi imagesetter. Moreover, they can be made smaller or larger without affecting their quality and sharpness.

Paint images are created at a given resolution that can't be changed. So an image created at 72- or 300- dpi will print only at that resolution even if the output device is capable of 1270-dpi or more. Nor can they be made much larger or smaller than originally painted. Blow them up much and paint images become coarse, with obvious "jaggies." Reduce them significantly and the dots merge, making images muddy and indistinct.

Paint image file sizes tend to be much larger than draw image files, though introduction of compressed image formats such as JPEG and GIF in recent years has reduced this imbalance to some degree. To illustrate the size differences, I saved an identical piece of art in several formats; here are their respective sizes: CGM, 20KB; JPEG, 45KB; TIFF, 46KB; BMP 8,974KB! CGM (Computer Graphic Metafile) is a draw or vector format; the others are bit-mapped formats.

Metafile formats such as CGM, WMF, EPS and PostScript basically use draw techniques to create images, but bit-mapped fills can be added to to add richness. Programs like Corel Draw and Xara or Adobe Illustrator allow image layering to produce illustration-quality images.

All this made it a no-brainer for desktop publishers to select draw art whenever possible, especially back in the 1980s when much of the paint clip art available was in PCX, native format of Zsoft's PC Paintbrush. It usually was quite low in resolution: 150 and even 72 dpi (the latter to match screen resolution). Many of us preferred the CGM format or, if using a PostScript device, EPS (Encapsulated PostScript) graphics-native or proprietary format of Adobe Illustrator, first of the high-end illustration graphics program.

When scanners began gaining popularity, the TIFF (Tagged Image File Format) bit-mapped format developed by Aldus, Microsoft and others specifically for capturing scanned images, was used widely. Digital cameras will further popularize bit-mapped formats, and we can only hope that a standard will emerge from the many proprietary formats now used.

Biggest boost to bit-mapped graphics, however, has been the World Wide Web, which requires bit-mapped images, usually .JPG (short for JPEG, Joint Photographic Experts Group) or .GIF (Graphics Interchange Format). Both formats greatly compress the size of bit-mapped files; .JPG files may be 20 times smaller than the original image, but images may lose something in the translation.

Graphics professionals may argue that this information is too simplistic, but space is limited and I believe it does cover the basics. Perhaps your group has several members with wide graphics experience and they could provide more detailed insight into different facets of computer graphics in future meetings.

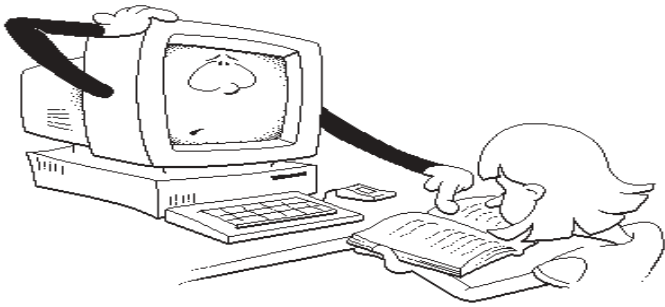
Ken Fermoye

Ken Fermoye (kfermoyle@earthlink.net) has written some 2,500 articles for publications ranging from Playboy and Popular Science to MacWeek, Microtimes & PC Laptop. He was cohost/producer of radio talk show on computers and a partner in a DTP service bureau during the '80s. Fermoye Publications currently offers editorial, consulting & graphics design services. Copyright 1997, Ken Fermoye, Fermoye Publications.



Important!! New Meeting Day

Due to a scheduling conflict with other events happening at Fairview School, LA MUG will be changing its meeting day (after this month's meeting). Our options are: The **first Tuesday** of the month, the **first Wednesday** of the month or the **second Wednesday** of the month. Please contact Skip at stalemand@exploremaine.com or 784-0098 with the day that you would prefer.



Tips...
Mainly
by Ted M.

Maintaining the Hard Drive II:

Hard drive performance can be dramatically improved by defragmenting your files. File fragmentation is a normal occurrence on any hard drive. When opened and edited repeatedly, files get saved in scattered chunks on the hard drive. It's not uncommon for pieces of a single file to occupy dozens of locations on a hard drive. Fragmented files slow down performance considerably, because your hard drive must search numerous locations just to gather all the pieces of a single file each time you open it.

Defragmenting takes all the files on your hard drive and puts them back together in continuous files. This means increased performance because the hard drive no longer has to search all over just to gather all the pieces of a single file. Several commercial applications exist that safely defragment files, such as Norton Utilities and MacTools Pro both available from Symantec Corporation. How often? Every three months.

Along the same vein as defragmenting files is optimizing your hard drive. Optimizing takes all the files on your hard drive and prioritizes them. It takes fonts, extensions, control panels, etc. and groups them together instead of having them scattered about. It also groups applications, system files and documents in the same manner. Optimizing increases performance by decreasing the amount of searching your hard drive has to do for a file or files. Use Norton Utilities or MacTools Pro. Both have optimizing applications built right in. How often? At the same time you defragment.

Protecting your drive: A surge suppressor protects against lightning strikes, brownouts and power surges that frequently occur when electricity comes on after a power outage. This inexpensive piece of equipment is a must have. Uninterruptible power supplies (UPS), while more expensive, not only provide surge protection, but also supplies power to your system should you experience a power outage.

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Next Meeting: January 12, 1999

6:00 PM (early birds)
6:30 PM to 8:30 PM

Fairview School, Computer Room

**Don't Forget,
Our Next Meeting!**

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