Making the Switch to X

Apple and its developers are ready; Are you?

-Many of you are now aware that there is a bold new world awaiting you on your computer. Mac OS X is a powerful and flexible new tool that can make life easier for the digital publisher. But how and when should you take the plunge? This article will provide some guidance.

The Power of X…
Mac OS X is the triumphal grafting of the famous Macintosh ease-of-use interface on top of a powerful UNIX operating system called Darwin. With Mac OS X, all your tasks can take place simultaneously.

…there is a bold new world awaiting you on the other side!

Under earlier versions of the Mac OS, the priority of various tasks was absolute and could cause your system to grind to a halt or even to crash.

For example, watch what happens when you hold down the mouse button in Mac OS 9; The entire system grinds to a halt. Click on anything during a Palm hotsync and watch the synchronization abort. Crash in QuarkXPress and be forced to restart your entire system before Quark or anything else will work properly.

In Mac OS X on the other hand, everything runs along merrily using pre-emptive multi-tasking. The super-powered implementation of Virtual Memory in UNIX allows you to have all your programs open all-the-time! Protected memory means a crash in Quark can't take down your whole system like it may in OS 9.

Say goodbye to the continual starting and restarting of applications and the computer itself. Hallelujah!

…Comes at a Cost
Not surprisingly, all this power comes at a cost. Your computer may need a faster processor, more RAM memory, a larger hard drive, and a better video card to get all the benefits Mac OS X has to offer.

To really take advantage of virtual memory (which is always on in OS X), you will need more physical RAM and free hard drive space than was the case in OS 9. We estimate that to really get the benefits of Mac OS X in a digital publishing environment you will need 512+ MB of RAM and 30+ GB on your hard drive. This is roughly double what OS 9 required for efficient work.

In the rush to make OS X a reality, Apple didn't have time to optimize the code for video cards. That means that in current versions (up to 10.1.5) your main processor is doing most of the video work. That, combined with the graphic-intensive Aqua interface, is why

OS X generally requires a faster processor than OS 9 for any given task. Apple is promising to remedy this situation in the upcoming Mac OS X Jaguar (slated for late Summer delivery).

In Mac OS X Jaguar, the video acceleration will be passed from the main processor to the video card – where it should be. Apple recommends your video card have at least 32 MB of VRAM to take advantage of this. Note that until very recently, Mac video cards topped out at 16 MB of VRAM.

You've Got the Power; Have You Got the Software?
Supposing you have bought a Macintosh in the last 6 months, you now have hardware which can handle Mac OS X – Jaguar or earlier. Is your applcation software up to the challenge?

Most of the major digital publishing applications and system utilities are now available in a version that will run in Mac OS X natively (see the Precursor Software Catalogue — back page). The only exception to this rule is currently QuarkXPress. However, Quark and other applications will run in Classic mode.

Classic mode is the name of

Mac OS 9 running within Mac OS X. This is extremely practical albeit not truly efficient. Classic is stuck with the limitations of OS 9. Furthermore, small but significant details differ. For example, Command-N yields a new folder in Classic. But in Mac OS X you will get a new window! If you want a new folder in Mac OS X you have to choose Command-Shift-N.

…the tradeoffs aleady favour switching to Mac OS X now!

This is only one of many small details that can drive you crazy if you have to switch in and out of Classic all day. If your software assets (or your software acquisition budget) will force you to do this constant switching then the time may not be ripe for your OS X transition.

Missing P-P-P-Pieces
The major features of OS X are ready today. What is still missing? The three Ps; plugins, peripherals, and printers.

While most applications are indeed OS X native, most of the third party plug-ins are not. If you rely heavily on Photoshop plug-ins for example you will have to check with the developer.

Scanner vendors have been notoriously slow at providing OS native drivers for their peripherals. Third party shareware software is available to take care of this need but it doesn't offer the user interface you are accustomed to.

While many printer drivers are now available in OS X flavour, some are not and may never be. Check carefully before converting.

Is X Really OS 9 on Steroids?
While Mac OS X is so much more powerful than the Classic Mac OS, you are in for a shock if you convert today. Missing-in-action are keyboard shortcuts you've come to rely on. Also notorious for its absence is Spring Loaded Finder folders (promised for Mac OS X Jaguar later this year).

Print architecture is also somewhat weaker than what we have come to expect from Classic – even if we can create a PDF from any application so much more easily in Mac OS X! And Jaguar can't come soon enough to address the deficiencies of the Mac OS X Finder's Get Info command.

Most will agree that the trade-offs already favour

switching to Mac OS X now, but Apple is not standing pat. Mac OS X Jaguar – promised for late Summer – will fill in many of the features that didn't make the cut when OS X first hit the streets. (For more on Jaguar see E:7 this page).

Fonts
Somehow it always gets back to fonts! OS X has great font handling capabilities. But that doesn't mean it's going to be easy. Mac OS X has at least three places where the System automatically stores fonts (see the previous issue of *digital-roadmap*). Add to this your Classic System Folder fonts folder and your master font library and you are in real need of a good font management utility.

Unfortunately, the designer's old friend, Adobe Type Manager Deluxe, won't be there to help (again, see the previous issue of *digital-roadmap*). Adobe has stopped devleloment of ATM and this means you will need to migrate to either Extensis Suitcase or Diamondsoft Font Reserve.

Conclusion
Mac OS X is the unavoidable future – but that is a good thing!

Before you are ready to take the plunge you will need to: Put resources into both hardware and software; Prepare for some intitial disorientation; and, Manage your fonts in a more complex way.

Precursor Systems will be offering seminars on Mac OS X to help you transition. Stand by for adventure! ✦

Reading the Signs
The Times They Are Changing!

- ❏ All new Macintosh computers now come with Mac OS X as the default operating system
- ❏ All major digital publishing applications now run natively under Mac OS X (with the exception of QuarkXPress!)
- ❏ Steve Jobs brought a coffin on stage at Apple's May/2002 Developer Conference to signify the death of Mac OS 9.
- ❏ Mac OS X 10.2 "Jaguar" is set for August 24th delivery with many new features that fill in the missing gaps from Mac OS 9.
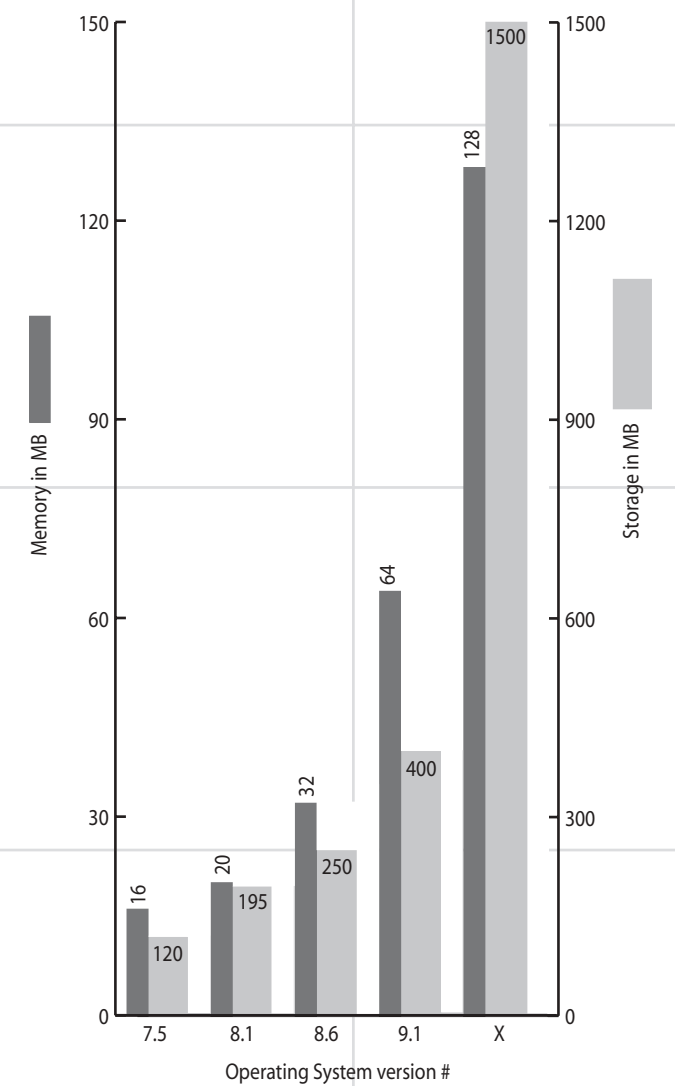
The Requirements
How Much is Enough?
Mac OS X has the power. But can your computer handle it? Take a look at our chart of Minimum System Requirements below. This is based on Apple's recommendations for the minimum system required for the installation of the operating system. Experience over the years has taught us to multiply these figures to get a level of performance sufficient for digital publishing.

The Precursor rule of thumb is to multiply Apple's minimum requirements by 4-8 times for RAM memory and by 20-40 times for hard drive storage space.

Using our rule of thumb we project that you need 512 MB to 1 GB or RAM and 30-60 GB of hard drive space to make OS X efficient in a design environment. (Computers used primarily for Internet and Office use will require less). ✦

Chart axes: Memory in MB (left, 0–150), Storage in MB (right, 0–1500), Operating System version # (7.5, 8.1, 8.6, 9.1, X). Data values shown: 16 / 120 (7.5), 20 / 195 (8.1), 32 / 250 (8.6), 64 / 400 (9.1), 128 / 1500 (X).

Codename: Jaguar
… August 24th
Apple continues to hone Mac OS X. The newest rendition – 10.2 – is codenamed Jaguar and will be available August 24th. Apple has already demonstrated some of Jagaurs major enhancements and it looks like they fill in certain gaps that OS X suffered over OS 9.

Jaguar will have enhanced graphic support called Quartz Extreme which will offload graphics processing from the main processor to the video card. Now you can have that luscious Aqua look and the speed you want too.

A technology called Rendezvous will automatically search, configure and connect to IP network devices – much as AppleTalk works now in Classic Mac OS 9.

Springloaded folders and instant search capabilities directly in the Finder will also make Classic folk happy.

And, look for QuickTime 6, Sherlock 3, iCal, iSync, Inkwell, and much more! ✦

www.apple.com/switch/
Apple is Now Targeting the Other 95% of Personal Computer Users

Apple doesn't just want you to switch from Mac OS 9 to Mac OS X. After all, Steve Jobs announced at Macworld Expo – New York that 20% of the user base had already done so and another 20% are expected to by the end of the year.

No, Apple has bigger fish to fry. The company recently unleashed its Switch campaign to lure Wintel users to the Mac platform. As Jobs has repeatedly said, by getting just 5 of the remaining 95% of PC users Apple can double its market share.

The switch campaign is based on testimonials from real former Windows users who have successfully and happily switched over to Macintosh. The interviews were filmed by the same documentary film maker who produced the intro to this year's academy awards. They feature real people, unadorned, and with real stories.

The campaign's web page kicks off with this quote from Walt

Mossberg of the Wall Street Journal:

"Macintosh computers are the best-designed computers on the market, and handle every common computing task as well as, or better than, a Windows PC."

In addition to the testimonial movies which are available on the net, Apple's web site includes a Guide to Switching to help answer practical questions about moving files over from the PC to the Mac.

At Macworld Expo – New York, Steve Jobs even highlighted a great new PC program called Move2Mac <www.detto.com> which will runs on a Windows PC to automate the process of creating a disk image with all the users files and preferences.

Is the Switch campaign working? If web traffic is any guage of success then it is. Apple claims 60% of visitors to the new switch site are coming from Windows web browsers. ✦

LEGEND

Slow Down	Speed Up	Snafu	Fubar	Clear Sailing	Waves Ahead	This way	Precursor Systems

Precursor digital.roadmap

is a quarterly publication for digital publishing professionals that helps show the way.

This includes Digital Publishing, Printing, Prepress, Imaging, Video and the World Wide Web.

Precursor Systems

was founded in March 1994 to provide service and support for the computer-based business in the field of electronic publishing.

Adobe Photoshop 7
Worth the Wait

Adobe Photoshop 7 was one of the last of the company's major assets to be released in OS X trim.

Users will agree it is well worth the wait.

In addition to taking advantage of the G4's velocity engine for all its tasks, Photoshop 7 comes with new tools like the Healing Brush and Liquify tools. Add new features like the File Manager, Paint Engine and Pattern Maker and you have a real winner.

An upgraded version of ImageReady also comes in the box. Photoshop is of course tightly integrated with all of Adobe's digital publishing tools including Illustrator, InDesign, GoLive and LiveMotion. The company even offers three different package deals to designers.

Check the Precursor Software Store for details. ⚡

Macromedia Studio MX
King of Web Packages?

While Adobe is the undisputed colossus of print, Macromedia has been busily occupying that space in web design. If there is a designer that doesn't use Flash and DreamWeaver to make web pages then I haven't met them.

And now, the marketing gurus at Macromedia are ready to leverage this situation by providing the whole shooting match in the new Macromedia Studio MX.

Studio MX offers up both Classic and Mac OS native versions of Flash, DreamWeaver, FireWorks and FreeHand and provides attractive upgrading pricing for the initiated. (Windows users also get a version of ColdFusion for XP).

Macromedia Studio MX is the essential tool for web designers and we're proud to be able to offer it at the Precursor Software Store. ⚡

FileMaker Pro 6
With XML Added

FileMaker is now offering its second iteration Mac OS X native update to its flagship product FileMaker Pro.

One of the big new features is the ability to easily import large numbers of images from a folder into a database and, on Mac OS X only, capture digital images and image-data directly from cameras.

FileMaker's use of XML even makes it possible to capture meta-data like aperture, shutter speed, date/time, etc.

XML (Extensible Markup Language) is to data formatting what HTML (HyperTextual Markup Language) is to text formatting. Many designers have a familiarity with FileMaker Pro and now they can leverage that knowledge to create digital asset management solutions costing hundreds of dollars less than the commercially available alternatives.

Precursor Systems is pleased to be able to offer it at the Precursor Software Store. ⚡

Jaguar Technology Primer

BlueTooth
Wireless connection to peripherals, the Internet and other computers.

iChat
Integrate AOL Instant Messaging with Apple's .mac.

iSync
One button synchronization of calendars and contacts to Cel phones, Palm OS and other Macs.

Quartz Extreme
High performance accelerated 2D and 3D graphics.

Rendezvous
Self-discovery and configuration of peripheral devices (like printers).

Precursor Systems

Precursor Systems was founded to meet the need for high quality support at a price that even the small business could afford. We help companies save time and money —keeping employees productive and customers satisfied.

Our Story

In 1994 Precursor's founder, Alex Narvey, had 10 years experience with electronic publishing from design and creation right through to production. During this time he participated in the migration from traditional publishing methods to the new electronic platform. This electronic technology is continuing to evolve: Processor speeds double every 18 months; Application manufacturers introduce major upgrades on an eighteen month cycle; Operating Systems are rejuvenated on a twelve month cycle; and, minor upgrades and patches appear on the internet weekly!

Mr. Narvey observed that most businesses are unprepared to deal with the pace of change. After an initial capital outlay to purchase electronic hardware and software, small and medium-sized businesses shy away from the costs of platform evolution and support. In no time, the company's head operator is swamped with the chores of taking care of workstations and the network itself. Under these conditions, computer departments waste time rather than saving it; burn money rather than making it!

Our Method

Using a combination of on-site and remote (via the internet) access, Precursor Systems is responsible for administration of computer departments in design studios, advertising agencies and printers in Alberta, Manitoba and Ontario.

If you require high quality support at an affordable price please contact us today.

Telephone (204) 793-1880
Toll-free (866) 220-3221
email support@precursor.ca

Alex Narvey

Alex Narvey has been involved in the digital publishing since 1986 when he authored, designed, illustrated, typeset, and marketed two books under the imprint of the Thunder Enlightening Press. The second, "The Canadian Canoeing Companion", (ISBN 921959-01-X), sold across Canada, the U.S. and Europe.

A Desktop Pioneer

Needless to say, in 1986 there was next to no support for digital publishing. Through necessity, Mr. Narvey became self-taught and proficient in a variety of programs from their introduction to the marketplace including QuarkXPress, FreeHand, Photoshop, and Illustrator.

Alex began to offer his expertise to others as MacTuneUp™. During this time, his contributions appeared in such publications as *MACWORLD*, *MacUser*, and *ALDUS* Magazines.

After MacTuneUp™ was called in to solve various problems at Winnipeg's Embassy Graphics, Mr. Narvey was hired on as Systems Manager. Over an eighteen month period Alex oversaw Embassy's expansion from a small desktop computer service bureau to a large prepress installation.

Alex Narvey left Embassy Graphics to found Precursor Systems in March 1994. Precursor Systems is now a trusted name in computer support in three provinces.

A Web Pioneer

In July of 1995, Mr. Narvey took Precursor Systems into new territory when he started up a World Wide Web service bureau. The Precursor Systems web site quickly expanded to T1 internet access and served over 10,000 visitors a day. During this period Mr. Narvey had an eighteen month association with *MacSense* —an electronic publication produced in Eastern Canada and published to the WWW from the Precursor Systems site. Alex served as Executive Editor and Webmaster of *MacSense* until the publication was sold to the California-based *Mac Home Journal*. Before folding up the Precursor web server, the innovative *MacSense* site was featured in a five page spread in the June 1997 issue of ZD-Internet Magazine.

Alex Narvey has a long and strong history with the desktop computer as a tool for both single, multimedia and virtual publishing. He combines his first-hand experience in computers with an diverse background in the printing/publishing/prepress industries. If you are looking for honest computer expertise without compromise, then you need look no further than Alex Narvey of Precursor Systems.

The Precursor Advantage

Technical Advantages

- Top quality Systems Administrator at your beck and call!
- Over fifteen years experience in digital publishing!
- Ongoing familiarity with your system/network!
- Ongoing expertise with other systems/networks in your marketplace!
- Dedicated and focused on digital & virtual publishing!
- Able to provide unbiased purchase recommendations—unaffiliated to dealers!

Economic Advantages

- A fraction of the cost of a full-time employee—with greater experience!
- Protects your budget with Annual Support Plan pricing!
- No Employment Insurance!
- No Canada Pension Plan contributions!
- No Payroll Tax!
- Multiple computer discounts available!

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MP3
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JPEG
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PNG
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GIF
DSP
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1394
SMTP
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SSL
DVD
SCSI
PRAM
V.90
Ti
GB
WebDAV
CMS
CD-RW
TFT
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