

LRDC Computing Services

Computing Services Newsletter

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In This Issue:

Apple Hardware News	Page 1
Office 2001 for Mac Available to LRDC	Page 2
Network Security Revisited: Another LRDC Computer is Compromised .	Page 4
Changes to the University Computer Account System	Page 5

Apple Hardware News

by Karen Bassett

At the January San Francisco Macworld Expo, Apple unveiled its latest product line. The new titanium PowerBook G4 and four new Power Mac G4's, including a super fast 733 MHz model with a DVD-R/CD-RW SuperDrive, were featured. New models ship standard with Mac OS 9, iTunes, iMovie 2, and QuickTime 4. With iTunes, you can listen CD's, convert CD tracks to MP3 files, and also burn your own music CD's. iMovie 2 simplifies the process of editing digital movies. Models configured with DVD-R/CD-RW (currently only the Power Mac G4 733MHz) also include iDVD, Apple's new, easy-to-use DVD authoring software. With iDVD, you can burn an hour-long movie in just two hours.

Titanium PowerBook G4: This new PowerBook features a mega-wide 15.2" active-matrix display, slot-loading DVD-ROM, 10/100BaseT ethernet, 56K internal modem, two USB ports, and one FireWire port, yet it's only 1" thick and weighs just 5.3 pounds! You can custom order a system by selecting either a 400 or 500 MHz PowerPC G4 processor. Hard drives are available in 10, 20, and 30 GB sizes and memory configurations are available in 128, 256, 384, and 512 MB sizes. Prices start at \$2,339.00 for the 400 MHz model.



New Power Mac G4: The new G4's are faster than ever, with speeds available in 466, 533, dual 533, 667, and 733 MHz. Prices start at \$1,529.00 for the 466 MHz processor with 128 MB RAM, 30 GB hard drive, and a CD-Read/Write drive. The 733 MHz model starts at \$3,149.00 and comes standard with 256 MB RAM, 60 GB hard drive, and a combo DVD-R/CD-RW SuperDrive that lets you create your own CD's and DVD's.

Apple is currently offering special savings on most 2000 model computers. The chart on the next page details pricing information.

GREAT DEALS FROM APPLE ON 2000 MODELS:

- PowerBook G3's are available for \$1,799.00 (while supplies last).
- Save \$200.00 on iMac DV+ or iMac DV Special Edition (offer ends 2/14/01).
- Power Mac G4 400 MHz starts at \$1,169.00 (while supplies last).
- Power Mac G4 dual 450 MHz starts at \$1,799.00 (while supplies last).
- Power Mac G4 or Cube bundled with an Apple Display (offer ends 3/19/01):
 - L Power Mac G4 400 MHz with 17" display ~ \$1,499.00
 - L Power Mac G4 Cube 450 MHz with 17" display ~ \$1,749.00
 - L Power Mac G4 Cube 450 MHz with 15" flat panel display ~ \$1,999.00

Office 2001 for Mac Available to LRDC

by Shari Kubitz

The long-awaited upgrade to Microsoft Office 98 for Macintosh has been released. Office 2001 offers several benefits over its predecessor:

- A new interface features a Project Gallery that makes the suite easier to use.
- There is greater compatibility with Office 2000 for the PC and other Mac applications such as FileMaker Pro.
- Along with enhancements to individual applications, improvements and additions to the suite as a whole create a more tightly-integrated software package.
- There is a powerful, new, integrated e-mail client and calendar/contact manager called Entourage.



New interface:

When you want to create a new document, spreadsheet, or presentation in Office 2001, you will encounter the Project Gallery – a new palette, which allows you to select a project from a series of templates without first knowing which Office application you want to use. The Project Gallery will then load the appropriate program for you.

Greater compatibility:

One feature that sets the new Office suite apart from previous versions is its unprecedented compatibility. A common complaint – and problem familiar to many Mac users at LRDC who frequently share work with PC users – is the lack of consistent formatting when transferring files between different operating systems. Office 97 and 2000 for Windows and Office 98 for Mac will open Office 2001 documents without any special file converters. In addition, when you save an Office document for a Windows user, you can now include the required three-letter filename extension in the Save dialog box. For further help, Compatibility preferences provide suggestions and options for sharing files with Word and WordPerfect users.

Office 2001's enhanced compatibility extends to other Macintosh applications as well. FileMaker Pro database files import easily into Office 2001, allowing one to use Microsoft Excel's tools to analyze information stored in FileMaker databases.

Improvements:

Microsoft improved upon the individual components of Office 2001, as well as the suite as a whole. For example, Excel 2001 has a new interactive calculator, which automatically creates a formula from the numbers entered. It now also supports four-digit years. PowerPoint 2001 can implement QuickTime Transitions and generate QuickTime movies from PowerPoint presentations, making it possible for anyone with QuickTime to view presentations created in PowerPoint. In addition, a new tri-pane view makes it easy to create slides by allowing the user to see raw text, the current slide, and notes simultaneously.

Improvements to the entire suite include a new Formatting Palette, which makes the appropriate formatting options available as needed. For example, if text is selected, the Formatting Palette provides a choice of the most common text formatting options. If a drawing object is selected, options for drawing objects are displayed. Another useful feature is the ability to flag a document for follow-up. This feature is incorporated with Entourage, Microsoft's newest addition to its Office suite for Macintosh.

Entourage:

Microsoft has added a powerful, new combination contact manager and e-mail client which builds on the same basic features as Outlook Express, but adds a more full-featured address book, calendar, and event-planning tools. Entourage can import your messages and address books from such applications as Outlook Express, Eudora, and Netscape.

Its bookmark-like features, such as follow-up flags, work from all programs in the suite. For example, if you click the Flag button in any Office application's toolbar, you can specify the time and date you want to return to the document to update it. Flagging a document for follow-up automatically creates a task in the Microsoft Entourage Tasks list, and sets a reminder that will alert you at the date and time you specify. At that time, you can dismiss the reminder, extend the time before you're reminded again, or open the document.

Another useful tool, Links, lets you connect a message to events, documents, or even other messages. Entourage's event calendar can remind you about an event ahead of time or send out invitations about it to anyone in your address book.

As part of LRDC's Microsoft agreement, all LRDC faculty and staff are entitled to upgrade to Office 2001 without charge. Office 2001 does, however, require large amounts of memory and hard disk space. Requirements include: PowerPC running at 120 MHz or faster; 32 MB RAM for Mac OS 8.1 through Mac OS 8.6 and 48 MB RAM for Mac OS 9 and later (with virtual memory on); and at least 170 MB free disk space.

If you would like to have Office 2001 installed on your computer, contact Computing Services at x4-7033. If you would first like to preview the suite, contact Shari Kubitz at x4-2881 to schedule an appointment.

Network Security Revisited: Another LRDC Computer is Compromised

by Gary Wilde



Over the holiday break, a computer intruder, or “hacker,” compromised an LRDC computer running Linux and used it to probe other systems both at Pitt and other universities. No real damage was done to any LRDC systems, but this story could have ended much differently. The user (and administrator) of the Linux server fortunately had all important files backed up. Also, since we had records of the owner and location of the affected system, when CSSD’s Incident Response Team notified us of the compromise, we were quickly able to locate and shut down the computer. However, the user lost hours of work rebuilding the system from scratch with the latest, more secure version of Linux.

This computer was broken into using a technique called scan and smash, which is one of many methods used to break into a computer with a security hole. With scan and smash, a computer (or multiple computers using a range of IP numbers) is scanned, checking for port information. If an insecure port is found, the intruder crashes the process running on that port to gain access to the computer. In our case, port 21 (FTP) was the insecure port. The intruder overloaded the FTP process, causing it to crash. Since FTP has root privileges, the intruder then had full access to the system. Once access is established, hackers can delete files or passwords; use the computer as a holding site for downloading illegal software; run sniffing software to capture passwords; or use the computer as a stepping stone to break into computers in other locations, thereby covering his/her tracks.

Almost any computer can be broken into with enough effort, but Linux and Windows NT computers are the most popular targets. Below is a review of precautions you can take to help protect yourself (and the LRDC network) from intruders:

- Install the latest security patches as soon as possible.
- Back up files regularly.
- Disable network options that are not needed, such as DNS, Gopher, and FTP.
- Change passwords regularly; use a combination of letters and numbers.
- Routinely check log files to help determine if your computer is being accessed without your knowledge.
- Log out when you leave the building; turn off your computer whenever possible, especially over weekends and holidays.
- Keep servers in a locked room.

We also ask that you notify LRDC Computing Services if you install a server. This way, if a break-in occurs, we will be able to contact you quickly. If we are more cognizant of security issues and take steps to secure our systems, we can prevent the majority of computer break-ins. If you have any questions, call Gary Wilde at x4-7042.

Changes to the University Computer Account System

by Karen Bassett

This past September, Computing Services and Systems Development (CSSD) converted their Computer Account Program (CAP), which ran on an antiquated VAX/VMS system, to a new, web-based **Computer Accounts Management** (CAM) system. Among the goals of this project were to provide easy-to-use, web-based user tools and administration, and to have a single, **primary** account per person. Whereas the old CAP system gave departments full control and responsibility for creating and deleting computer accounts, the new system is automated. Primary computer accounts are now automatically created upon hire and deactivated upon termination.

Each responsibility center is allowed two computer account administrators. The administrators for LRDC are Karen Bassett and Shari Kubitz. If your employee record is with another responsibility center, you can find your account administrator(s) at <http://accounts.pitt.edu/Public/RCAdmin.asp>. Account administrators can view the account quota of any persons within his/her responsibility center. However, only the user can edit contact information, change a password, or set an e-mail forward. Account administrators also have the authorization to create **sponsored** accounts, change the expiration date of a sponsored account, and sponsor unaffiliated accounts.

Primary Computer Accounts

The new CAM system is linked to the payroll system—all newly hired faculty and staff will automatically have a primary computer account created along with their employee record; student primary accounts are created automatically once registration and payment have taken place. The default username is the person's initials followed by a number(s). The default password is the last four digits of the person's social security number, followed by the middle two. Usernames cannot be changed.

When an employee is terminated, he/she is no longer entitled to a primary account. Their primary computer account will automatically convert to an unaffiliated sponsored account and will be set to expire. The user will receive e-mail notification of the account expiration date. If the account is not re-sponsored by that date, it will be deactivated. If your employee status ends, but you will still be collaborating with LRDC, please contact either Karen or Shari to make arrangements to have your account sponsored and the expiration date extended. Expiration dates must fall within the current fiscal year (July 1), at which time the account can be renewed.

Sponsored Computer Accounts

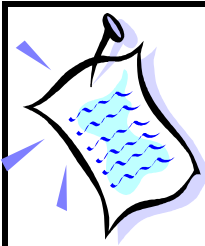
Individuals who are not on the Pitt payroll, such as a visiting scholar, are permitted sponsored accounts. Sponsored accounts require a link to a valid primary account within their responsibility center. In many cases, a person's supervisor is a research scientist whose primary appointment is with another center. In this case, since the supervisor cannot be the sponsor, either Karen or Shari will sponsor the account. Sponsored accounts require justification and must be renewed annually. A sponsored account can also be

created for a new employee before they are in the payroll system. In this case, the sponsored account will automatically be promoted to a primary account when their employee record is processed.

Computer Account Tools Available On-line

Easy-to-use, web-based user tools are available at <http://accounts.pitt.edu>. To enter the system, type in your username and password. From the Accounts Management page you can view quota information, edit user contact information such as room and fax number, change a password, and set an e-mail forward. Note that a person's phone number is not an editable field. If your phone number is incorrect, please contact Susie Shin at x4-7022 to update your employee record. You can also search for contact information about other people from this page. When you are finished, you need to ***completely exit your browser*** to log out of the Computer Accounts Management system.

If you have any questions or special needs, please contact Karen (karenw@pitt.edu or x4-7037) or Shari (skubitz@pitt.edu or x4-2881).



Eric Fussenegger and Tim Cooper have been evaluating Windows Me and Windows 2000. While both operating systems have new features, there are still hardware and software compatibility issues. At this time, most users will find the risk of problems outweigh the benefits of upgrading. Eric and Tim will continue to follow developments, such as new patches and drivers, and will report their findings in our next Newsletter.

Computing Services Staff Roster

Karen Bassett, Manager	Room 508A, x4-7037
Gary Wilde, Manager	Room 506A, x4-7042
Tim Cooper, Systems Analyst	Room 507, x4-7060
Eric Fussenegger, Systems Analyst	Room 507, x4-7060
Shari Kubitz, Systems Analyst	Room 504, x4-2881
Kim Flotta, Media/Computer Assistant	Room 505, x4-7032
Jeff Flotta, Student Operator	Room 506, x4-7033
Chris Huber, Student Operator	Room 506, x4-7033
Katie Lawrence, Student Operator	Room 506, x4-7033