



Apple Blossom Computer Club
A registered Apple/Macintosh User Group



Jun '07
still only
\$2.00

The

ROSE BYTER

Next Meeting

Thursday

June 21

5:30 ~ 7:30 PM

**Church Annex Bldg,
Corner of Douglas
Ave. and Fowler St.**

Agenda

1. Meeting starts at 5:30 P.M.
Parking to the east.
2. Introductions of members and guests
3. Old business
4. New business
5. Program: Good luck on that one.
6. Questions & (maybe)Answers

New variable and tentative meeting schedule:

- July: Wednesday, the 18-th**
Cookout at Dogwood Motel
- August: Tuesday, the 21-st**
- September: Monday, the 17-th**



ALERT! Google is doing nefarious things with your private data

by Walt Pawley <walt@wump.org>

... Or, FUD and cyber-terrorism go hand in hand

On Wed, 6 Jun 2007 12:59:13, Richard Bolz <bolz@dcwisp.net> sent me a note. To wit:

Walt, I think that that the following should be included in the Club's next Newsletter. Dick B.

I tried it and sure enough the information came up

Google has implemented a new feature which enables you to type a telephone number into the search bar and hit enter and you will be given the person's name and address. If you then hit MapQuest, you will get a map to the person's house.

Everyone should be aware of this! It's a nationwide reverse telephone book.

If a child gives out his/her phone number, someone can now look it up to find out where he/she lives. The safety issues are obvious, and alarming.

...

The message goes on in pretty much the fashion one has come to expect of such things, fawning concerns and exhorting one to send it on to everyone they have an email address for.

If you want to be concerned about this issue, that's perfectly within your rights as far as I know. Besides, it's a neat Google-ism that everyone *should* be made aware of.

I just have to wonder where the logic is in indicting Google for doing something nefarious because of this. Perhaps some perspective is in order.

In the first place, the only thing Google has done is, perhaps, a reduction in the number of mouse clicks needed to get this data. Nationwide reverse telephone books (Oh, my!) have been available on the Internet for several years. Yes, indeed, Mohammad Wantstoblowyoutobits only needs your phone number, a computer and an Internet connection to find you.

But Mohammad doesn't need a computer or the Internet to do that anyway. An ordinary phone book (remember those big fat books with small print and thin pages) will have a reverse directory in them these days.

Indeed, over fifty years ago, if Mohammad were really wanting you scattered all over your living room, he'd still have been able to get the data. Of course, he'd have had to pay for it at the local credit reporting business. Sadly, the time to have done something about this fear has come and gone. Paranoia strikes deep.

Letters

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The **Apple Blossom Computer Club** (ABCC) is an Apple Computer Inc., registered Macintosh and Apple][family user group. The ABCC publishes *The RoseByter* newsletter monthly which is posted to each paid up member and reciprocating user groups. ABCC participates in user group newsletter content exchange. The ABCC also [no longer] maintains a WWW site at:

<http://www.abccmug.org>

Membership

Just \$20/year! Send with your name, snail- & e-mail address & phone to:
ABCC
13748 Lookingglass Rd.
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Current ABCC Leadership

President

Walt Pawley <walt@wump.org>

Treasurer

Jim McClellan
<mcclellan@charter.net>

Apple Ambassador

none

Web Master

none

AppleScript Guru

Jack Webster <jackw@rio.com>

AOL User Group Rep

Phil Bowser <philip574@aol.com>

Send your stories and newsletter ideas to the Editor, Walt Pawley, at <walt@wump.org>. Plain text files are preferred, sent within the body of an email message or as an attachment. Mail physical media to:

**676 River Bend Road
Roseburg, OR 97470**

Please understand that materials submitted may not be used and those that are will likely be edited.

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From: Terry Cooper
<tscooper@charter.net>

Date: Fri, 1 Jun 2007 16:01:44

This is an open letter to all the members of the Apple Blossom Computer Club.

I hereby resign as both a board member and as Ambassador. It has been my pleasure to have known all of you and to have served you for 23 years.

However at this point in my life I do not need or want undo aggravation. With what is happening to the club, I do not feel I should remain as an officer.

Jim will be your new Ambassador. Please give him your support as you have me.

Thank you.

Terry Cooper

[Ed. Note: Apparently Terry presumes Jim will be your Ambassador. When consulted on this issue, Jim pointed out that he'd not been consulted and, indeed, has no intention of taking the post.]

From: Bernard Fox
<brownfox@rio.com>

Date: Sun, 27 May 2007 13:03:49

How frequently have you wondered where the spammers get your E-mail address from? One way of finding out is to type your E-mail address into google, and you'll see where your address is available on the Internet.

I discovered that my address is available at AOL (via ABCC having an account there) and in older RoseByter newsletter .pdf files. I'm really glad that I now have a new E-mail address and in the future will make sure it does not appear in any future newsletters.

Bernie

[Ed. Note: TRB has long had an unwritten policy of including authors' and "officials'" email addresses so they may be contacted. Perhaps we need to vote on a policy to move

into the future. OTOH, I suspect that very few who've had their email addresses published here are dogged by resultant spam.]

From: Phil Bowser
<pbowser@roseburg.k12.or.us>
Date: Mon, 11 Jun 2007 07:42:31

I recently let the district know that I would no longer be the ABCC contact for use of the room at Jo Lane. If ABCC wants to use _any_ school district room for evening meetings, it is as simple as filling out a one-page agreement. It basically says THE DISTRICT will let us hold a monthly meeting in X location so long as ABCC doesn't mess things up and the person signing below will be in BIG TROUBLE [if] we do.

In general, the district wants the public to make use of the facilities. Our very limited use of the computer gear comes from security fears and worries that if we fiddled with their setup, some teacher would click on an icon to start a lesson and it would crash, leaving him/her facing 30 students with nothing planned for the next hour. But I suspect we could do better if we looked around a bit.

Philip B. Bowser, NCSP
National Certified School Psychologist

From: Philip B. Bowser
<pbowser@douglasfast.net>
Date: Thu, 24 May 2007 22:04:24

... I resign my commission on the board effective immediately.

From: Bernard Fox
<brownfox@rio.com>
Date: Sun, 27 May 2007 13:03:49

... you can find someone else to be the Webmaster. I'll give you until the 10th of June to provide the information below. If not received by then, I'll cancel the domain name and the domain hosting.

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<— Letters 2 I will need to have someone's credit card number, etc. as well as their mailing address so that I can make the changes at the hosting company as the account is under my name and credit

card. A while ago I changed the log-in, passwords, etc. ...

[Ed. Note: As you can see from some of these letters, some members of ABCC are experiencing some strain. You're strongly urged to attend the

next meeting to witness the lynching of the president for his litany of horrible misdeeds. You may be surprised to learn what they really are.]



Sending Large Files via eMail?

I was recently sent a file via email. It didn't arrive. The sender called to see if I'd gotten it. When I pointed out that I hadn't, it was sent again. That didn't arrive either. Shortly after we'd discussed this, I got another email from the sender of the file. He'd finally gotten a bounce message complaining of lack of space at the receiver (my ISP) for his message.

This turns out not to have been all that surprising ... to me, at least. The file was over 10 megabytes long. Long ago, in a land far, far away, no one but a clueless newbie would have even tried sending such a file in email. These days, on the Internet which we've managed to craft for ourselves, no one seems to think even once about dragging an icon into an email message, much less twice. After all, Google Mail gives you a couple of gigabytes of storage. Well, it seems not everyone is Google. Big surprise, eh.

Unfortunately, for most modern Internauts, there are essentially two ways to do everything. The one that goes from one Internaut to another Internaut is email. The other is by web surfing, but that's a one way street for the most part. So, what does the modern Internaut do send a big file to another modern Internaut?

Clearly, the tried and true methods of file exchange that have been part of the Internet for a long time will not do. They are too complicated to set up and don't use either a Web browser or email client to function necessarily. Example? How about FTP - File Transfer Protocol. Made for the job. While it's easy enough to download the file once someone has placed it on an Internet FTP server (a Web browser will do that just fine), putting the file on an FTP server in the first place generally

is more challenging.

Amongst Mac users, you could put the file in a Shared folder and enable file sharing across the Internet. Most people don't care for what might be the potential security risk. Besides, they are often sitting behind a firewall they can't control to let AFP - Apple File Protocol - work across the Internet anyway. The latter is too bad as AFP's not just for Mac-to-Mac these days.

If you're the patient sort, you could download a program to break the file up into smaller pieces. Then you send the URL for the program to put the pieces together along with the pieces to the other party. But you have to do this one at a time, letting each piece clear the email server that has the limitation. Of course, this also assumes that the receiving party will have no trouble getting the glue program and using it to glue the pieces back together at his end. It could happen.

Another technique is to use an "upload site". This is a web site that will let you upload files, often with size limitations, and give you a URL that you can send to someone else to download what you've uploaded. Of course, there are issues other than file size limitations to contend with. If you're sending something that's private, this is not a good idea—the file is going into the hands of an unknown third party for the indefinite future. Of course, you could encrypt the data but that is its own can of worms. If you're interested, here are some URLs: <https://www.mediamax.com/home/share.aspx>, <http://www.mailbigfile.com/>, <http://www.yousend-it.com>, <http://www.box.net/>, <http://digitalvault.bt.com/>, <http://www.greatnow.com>. Most probably, there are a great many others.

Walt Pawley
<walt@wump.org>

If you're willing to move a little away from the browser/email combo, I've heard that iChat's file transfer ability is limitless. It's free to sign up for either AIM (<http://www.aim.com>) or .Mac (<http://www.apple.com/dotmac/>) iChat "handles" (your chat identity) though you may experience a bit of hard sell to convince you that you should pay for things you don't need for the purpose at hand. Personally, I think AIM is easier and less invasive. Choose your poison.

Finally, I'd like to mention another means of file exchange. Most of us have at least heard of peer-to-peer networking. P2p had gotten something of a bad rap since it can be used to transfer copyrighted material around. But so can email ... or any other data transfer protocol. But one thing you can do with some p2p software is true one-on-one file transfers. This is done by running your p2p software configured not to share files publicly but visible though what are known as "magnet links" or "magma links" (and probably some other link types as well). You put the file you're sending into place (the folder for things to share—perhaps just where the file sits), it's hash code gets computed and then you can tell it to return a link to the file. The link is text that includes the hash code and is thus almost certainly unique. You can then send this text to the receiver and they can plunk it into their p2p software at their end. You can get a rather comprehensive looking list of such software at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peer-to-peer> along with a discussion of much more than you probably want to know about the subject. So far, my favorite is called Phex. It provides a lot of detail about what's going on. Most people prefer Limewire.

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Any trace of organization in these paragraphs is entirely coincidental

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The image shows a screenshot of the Apple Bug Reporter login page. At the top left is the Apple logo followed by the text "Bug Reporter". Below this is the instruction "Please enter your Apple ID and password". There are two input fields: "Apple ID" and "Password". At the bottom left is a button labeled "Forgot Password?" and at the bottom right is a button labeled "Login".

Since “alien worker” issues are rising to the surface of national politics, the H-1B and “outsourcing” issues are getting quite a bit of media play of late. **One of the mantras recited is that there’s a shortage of “trained” American technical workers.** I guess I fall into the pool of highly untrained technical worker (perhaps non-worker would actually be more appropriate). The part that puzzles me about this is that “training” may be appropriate for getting a dog to sit on command whereas I’ve never known anyone trained to be an inventive problem solver. IMHO, that is at the root of our difficulties with technology. Once upon a time, inventing technological things mattered a lot. Not so much today. Today, technology is about cranking out “bigger and better” copies of things long in existence to enrich the people who own the cranks. Clearly, they make more money if they don’t pay much to have the cranks turned. Colleges and universities have adopted the mantra, choosing to avoid education in favor of marketing “job training”. Compared to the mind bogglingly silly subjects you can get PhDs in today, “computer science” as a subject almost makes sense.

Amazon.com has a service that web site’s can subscribe to called “Amazon Honor System Paybox”. It allows a web site to produce a personalized “pay me” arrangement when their pages are viewed if the viewer has ever done any business with Amazon (at least that—perhaps the Globally Omniscient Database is its real

limit). Disquieting.

One of the things I hear people wondering how to do quite a lot is **filling out PDF forms** on their computer. I recently encountered a little freeware ditty called “Formulate” that should suffice for most needs (<http://gizmolabs.org/~andrew/Formulate/Formulate-0.0.1.dmg>). It’s small and, judging from its version number, far from well developed but it works well enough already. I did have some difficulty with the instructions as they neglect to tell you that you must hit “Enter” to active an item for placement. That and the reference to “clicking” to place things didn’t point out that you can simply drag an item anywhere you care to—much easier than guessing the precise spot where you must click to get some complex item just so.

A lot of people think there are far too many acronyms associated with the computer field. I don’t disagree. In my time I’ve had to constantly learn the new meanings for more combinations of capital letters than I can recount—after all, **there are only so many sets of letters to go around and there’s a constantly changing techno-babble to use them up.** As bad as that is, it doesn’t begin to measure up to the exponentially expanding flood of acronymic gibberish one has to contend with in biology. Our opportunities for misunderstanding one another are expanding rapidly, something that is probably not a good thing in a finite environment like The Earth.

OK. It’s no secret I don’t get out all that much. **I’d probably die of sticker shock if I had to buy groceries.**

Recently my peephole into the world out there (aka TV) has been running commercials about some product that you can get in the “fiber aisle”. The what? Has dietary fiber become so nominal a food item that supermarkets have a whole aisle carrying that moniker? I’m beginning to wonder whether

I could find food if I went to a supermarket.

I’ve been messing with some software that runs in Java. There are a panoply of things that puzzle me about Java; so many that I won’t recount them here, even if I were able to dredge them all from recesses of my atrophying cranium. I have mostly older computer equipment—as do many of you. **It ain’t broke too bad so I ain’t fixed it yet.** The trouble with this is that when developers update their applications, they do it by using the latest stuff. They’re “up to date”. They seldom pay attention to backward compatibility. Unfortunately, this means that, to use their new programs that reportedly work comparatively well, you have to update your Mac OS and perhaps even the computer it’s running on. Why? In the case of Java, it’s because Apple chooses to provide no upgrade for Java without also using their newest OS. Actually, I found about 100 MB of “updates” to Java for OS 10.3.9. But they left the version of Java at 1.4.2_12, not at 1.5.x. It’s not that Apple couldn’t update the Java for 10.3 or even 10.2, I suspect (I guess there’s some chance that an issue might revolve around some fundamental OS capability but I sincerely doubt it), they just operate on the principle that you must constantly be buying upgrades, both hardware and software.

I just got done reading into an article about “advances” in the technology of stock trading. In it they were decrying the distance from one machine to another. **It seems that the speed of light introduces too much latency for their tastes.** Then I ran into, “Computers make both the decision process and the execution so much faster that eventually everything will be done electronically.” Is this a “good thing”? I certainly have my doubts. Take the “Terminator” series of movies as a harbinger. In them, it was a military program that pervaded **5 -->**

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all the ubiquitous electronics on the planet with a distributed intelligence. But how much more sensible that it be the result of a world wide “investment” system in which its believed events must take place faster than humans can twitch so that everyone has their computers tied in 24/7.

Does the number 802.11 ring any bells for you? How about if we add one letter suffixes like “a”, “b”, “g” and “n”? If you use wireless networking, you probably use at least one of them whether you know it or not. These codes are the designations for IEEE standards for various wireless networking protocols. **I have to admit to being a bit worried about the use of letters so far down in the alphabet as “n”.** It seems there is some relevant 802.11 standard for all the letters from “a” to “n”. Er..., well now to “r”. If this keeps up, we’ll run out of alphabet in the not too distant future. I can hardly wait for 802.11z; maybe by then, they’ll have gotten wireless networking right.

My trusty, and very old, CTX monitor began acting up a few weeks ago. It’s pretty sad when such things happen. The cost of repairing such things has become exorbitant. Not only has the expertise nearly vanished from the planet but the companies which manufacture things don’t want them repaired. **Repairing old stuff interferes with profits ... even if people are paying to have it done.** Sorry. I digress. Anyway, I needed to have a “reliable” monitor so that I could do things like laying out this newsletter. I found a well spec’d 22 inch LCD monitor on Staples’ web site for \$250. Unfortunately, it illustrates why Apple is getting \$900 for their 23 inch LCD. Oh, it’s not horrible. I have more working area than before. It’s bright. I found a setting that doesn’t seem to mangle text too badly. But it isn’t beautiful. Apple’s is.

I was watching an episode of Nature on PBS about eagles and this fellow

who’s spent most of his life studying them. He made the statement that it was a privilege to be able to learn to be patient. My initial reaction was that it was just another platitude. But as the meaning sunk in, I realized it wasn’t a sentiment that I’d heard before. Especially as children, we’ve almost all been repeatedly admonished to be patient. Of course, this is not the nature of children. As we grow older, the pace of life becomes more strident. Dawn to dark is divided by ticks of clocks and overloaded with both your own expectations and the expectations of others. Frenetically, we’re busy being “Busy. Busy. Busy...”. Against such demands on us, **it is a privilege to be allowed to learn patience.**

From the cover of a recent techno-rag: “Intelligent video analysis can locate potential terrorists, detect suspicious objects, and even spot card cheats—all without a human operator.” Does this scare you? No? Great, you say. I have to wonder. If, in fact, people with the money to employ such techniques on a large scale, do just that and have any success at all, it won’t be too long before the loop is closed. By that I mean that **machine identification will be taken as a priori guilt, which will result in the machine acting to eradicate said guilty party** also without human intervention. After all, if there’s a mistake, who’s going to be there to complain ... even if there were someone left to complain to? And, just to cap it off, in an article inside the rag, there’s, “M2M [machine to machine] will take advantage of ubiquitous communications to accommodate billions of connected machines pushing trillions of tiny transactions.”

A “local boy”, U. of O. theoretical physics professor and cofounder of Robot Genius Stephen Hsu, reportedly claims, “Our Web crawling and analysis farm has scoured the entire [Web] and downloaded every single software package that runs on Windows, and we determine which are malware.

We know all the URLs that point to infection.” I get kind of skepti-

cal when superlative claims of this nature are made. It would be interesting to know whether it’s really true and even more interesting to find out how they know it’s true. I doubt an estimate of the number of web sites in the world would be highly accurate. After all, there are about four billion IPv4 addresses. Many of these for web hosting use a virtual hosting approach in which one IP address harbors many web sites. Many thousands of sites come and go every day. I would not be surprised if some billions (though I suspect the number is smaller) of web pages got deleted, added or changed every day. Certainly the number is what most of us would consider “large”.

To a casual observer, scanners would seem to be a pretty simple and standardized sort of thing. For example, there’s TWAIN. That works, right? Yes it does ... as long as it’s supported from application (the program you run with your mouse) to driver (the “under the hood” stuff propeller headed geeks write). In other words, as a standard, TWAIN is not quite completely useless. Of course scanner vendors are mostly to blame, going out of their way to do pretty much the same thing over and over again using radically different software time and again, all without publicly documenting their work. **So what do you do if you come across an old scanner and want to make it work in the brave new world?** Mac users can turn to Vuescan, which really does an amazing job of covering lots of bases. I just bumped into the SANE (Scanner Access Now Easy) project which is an open source effort to bring some useful standardization to the scanning process. Mac OS X appears to have good support.

If you’re a mouse, you’ll soon have the potential to receive readily available embryonic stem cell therapy. Not that anyone has been all that concerned about using mouse embryonic stem cells but it will no longer be necessary to actually take

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them from mouse fetuses. It seems that one can infect adult mouse cells with four viruses to genetically reprogram them into cells which seem to be truly embryonic. Just to verify that in a simplistic way, such cells have been implanted in mice and have produced viable adults. **Just what we need; the ability to clone mice on a massive scale.** But if the technique can be segued to humans, it could be the beginning of practical embryonic stem cell therapies for many maladies. One down side—if these viruses get loose, we could have epidemics of people turning into puddles of undifferentiated embryonic stem cells in their easy chairs.

Nanotechnology is growing as an economic entity extremely rapidly. Reportedly, in 2006 nanotech was a \$50 billion market. Estimates are that by 2015, it should be a trillion dollar market. It's a pretty deceptive thing, however, since miniscule amounts of material may cost millions of dollars. Despite that, plans are in the works for numerous products in the consumer marketplace. While most nanotech involves using essentially invisible amounts of stuff to do this or that, **some suggested uses of carbon nanotubes are expected to consume them by the ton.** And, indeed, production methods to produce them in tons are being developed. Example: take this quote from Nanochip's CEO Gordon Knight who is reported to have said, "Hopefully by [2017] you'll have 10 to 20 terabytes [of memory] in your cell phone." I have to admit this sounds idiotic to me ... until I start thinking about it a bit. You've almost certainly seen the latest iPhone commercials. I believe Apple sees iPhone as a device connected to the Internet for the most part. That works great if you're in range of your GSM cell phone network. But if you're running around a place like ours which is replete with cumulus granite, even if you can afford the connect time, there's often nothing to connect to.

That's when memory can come in handy. Things like detailed maps of anywhere, a couple of weeks worth of movies, the source code for all the open source software for your platform, an encyclopedia, a complete phone book for everyone in the world and any number of other things that you might want to know something about could come in handy. How about this: you paint your walls and ceilings with self organizing nanopixels which read your mood and set their color and pattern to suit.. They'd also be consciously controllable so you could visualize your thoughts and the thoughts of others to collaborate, communicate or just play. These nanopixels would double as environmental assistants as well, varying their thermal conductivity as needed.

Have your heard of Gary McKinnon? He's a UK "hacker" who's likely to be extradited to the US for "breaking into military computers". There is a good chance he'll be sentenced to as much as 70 years of jail time. Gee, he must really have done something awful. The thing is, that **the most awful thing he seems to have done is annoy "the powers that be"** and get caught at it. It's claimed he did \$700,000 worth of damage. From what I can tell, the "damage" is an accounting cost for getting people who're already employed to actually do something. Of course, that money would have to be accounted to something else if it wasn't lumped on McKinnon. Take his sophisticated "cracking" algorithm for example. It was a script to try sequences of addresses for logins that didn't require a password. So, it's illegal to access a computer on the Internet that doesn't require a password? I have a hard time with that notion. Sounds like an invitation to access if I ever heard of one. Perhaps McKinnon actually did something that is "bad". I certainly haven't a clue about that. However, I'm pretty sure that there are scads of people who're guilty of doing much worse than he's reportedly done. And I have to wonder, are there still

military computers on the Internet that don't require passwords for access? Maybe McKinnon ought to be sending us a bill for pointing out a bunch of 'em.

Recently indicted for a laundry list of financial transactions no-no's such a money laundering, E-gold's chairman Douglas Jackson reportedly said, "E-gold in no manner condones persons or organizations attempting to use E-gold to support criminal acts." A curious statement considering that one supposedly needs no more than an e-mail address to open an E-gold account. Apparently the idea is that **you send them cash and they back your account with an equivalent amount of gold.** At that point, you can use your account to pay for things. From the sound of it, there are absolutely no checks or balances that deposited funds are from legitimate sources. While they may claim not condone illegal activities, the mechanics of their operation certainly provide a venue for them.

Did you see the **breakthrough in wireless power transmission** in reported in the New-Review? Wow! Oh, so you know something about physics? Yeah. But it is really good publicity, right? To be fair, I suppose there may actually be some practical application of this sort of thing but it's hardly a breakthrough. Believe it or not, we've been doing this sort of thing for over a century. Frankly, it's difficult for me to envision the bulk of us wanting to spend more wealth on energy just to blow most of it on unwanted heat getting the energy from the outlet to the coffee pot.

Finally ... **have you ever wanted to tell Apple Computer about something that irritates you?** You know, you really can. All you need is an Apple ID and **<http://bugreport.apple.com>** to give them a piece of your mind. Don't have an Apple ID? No matter, go to the page and there's a link to setting one up. One thing: just don't expect a meaningful answer.

That Bane of the Macintosh User

To the right, you should see a colorful bunch of rectangles in a window. This display is brought to



you by a program known as **Grand-Perspective**.

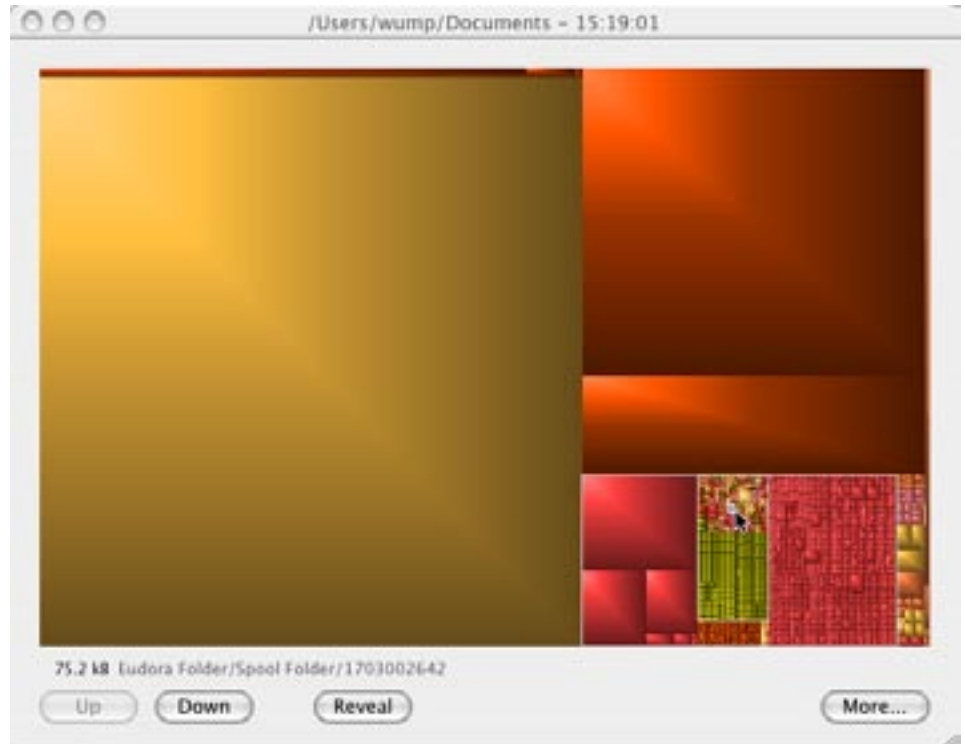
The ostensible purpose of **Grand-Perspective** is give you a feeling of control over your hard disk space. Might even help. What it actually seems to do is fit rectangles together the sizes of which are similar to the sizes of your files in a folder heirarchy of your choice so that they fit in the window you've opened.

You can then point at the rectangles and see the name and size of the associated file appear near the bottom of the window. If you look carefully you may be able to see the little highlighted rectangle the cursor is pointing at. It's a 75.2 KB file in the Eudora's Spool Folder with the rather unglamorous name 1703002642.

With the very large number of small files that make up much of Macintosh data these days, a sea of small rectangles may be pretty and may not mean very much. You can get a closer perspective than the grand one by clicking on a rectangle and then clicking the Down button. Or, you can click the Reveal button to open the Finder window containing the file.

That really big area is a CD ISO image file. So, **GrandPerspective** can be handy at spotting things that you might not realize are space hogs. In this case, I did know about it. But seeing that big blotch will goad me into getting on with it and getting it deleted as soon as possible too. So I intend to keep **GrandPerspective** around for

7 a while longer. I might learn to really like it.



Now since this column is about using Terminal to do things, it's time we did. Suppose you want to know some things about a folder heirarchy. What can Terminal do for you?

The answer is ... much more than I'll ever know about. Since files are an integral part of most operating systems for computers, many of the commands provided in the CLI (Command Line Interface) have to do with files.

One easy to remember command is **file**. The purpose of **file** is to tell you what sort of data is stored in a file. The **file** command pays little or no attention to the file's name to estimate the nature of the file's content. This means it can be really handy at figuring out what sort of stuff is in that file with the blank icon that won't open. For example, I have this file named "mumblepuz"—not a very demonstrative name. So ...

file mumblepuz

```
mumblepuz: ISO-8859 HTML document text, with CRLF line terminators
```

... and sure enough, I can pop it into TextEdit and read all about it. Now **file** doesn't know about every possible type of file. But it does know a lot and can be very helpful.

Of course, there's the **ls** command. It's the main command for listing the contents of directories (folders). One can use gobs of options with the **ls** command. For example, suppose you want a complete "long form" listing of all the files mounted on your computer. You could **sudo ls -lR /** but I don't recommend it. It's generally a pretty big list. But the **ls -lR** form is very useful used in more moderate pursuits. For example:

```
ls -lR Library |  
  awk '{print $5}' |  
  sort -rn | head -10  
122972160  
43796480  
38983680  
38604800  
34365440  
31600640  
30771200  
30300160  
28958720  
28938240
```

This is a "top 10 list" of the file sizes in my Library folder heirarchy. The **awk** command has cut out all but the sizes. But if you want to get the files' names as well you can do

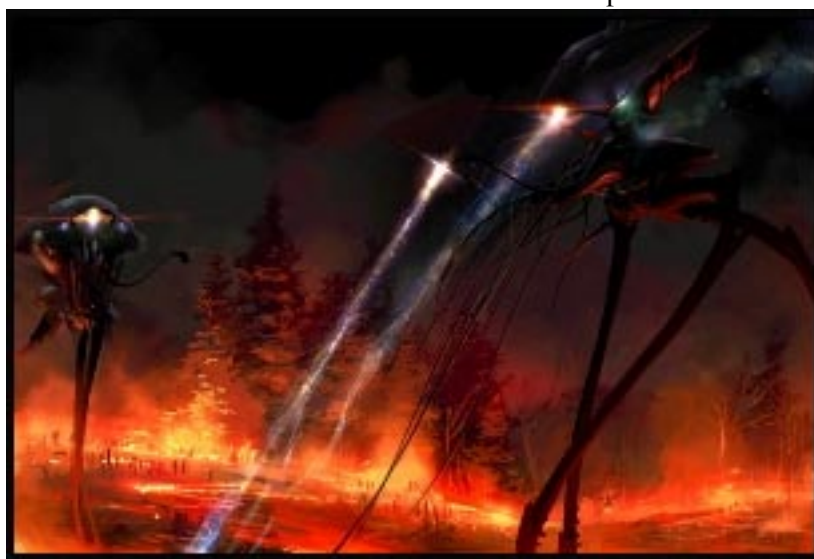
```
ls -lR Library | sort -rn +4  
  | head -10  
since the sort command can sort on just parts of its input data.
```

SBI-net

Perhaps you're familiar with DHS's (Department of Homeland Security) 2 gigabuck (for the time being) SBI (Secure Border Initiative) program of which SBI-net is a part. If not, you may find it of interest to poke around at http://www.cbp.gov/xp/cgov/border_security/sbi/sbi-net_information/ or Google up the several tens of thousands of Web pages referring to it.

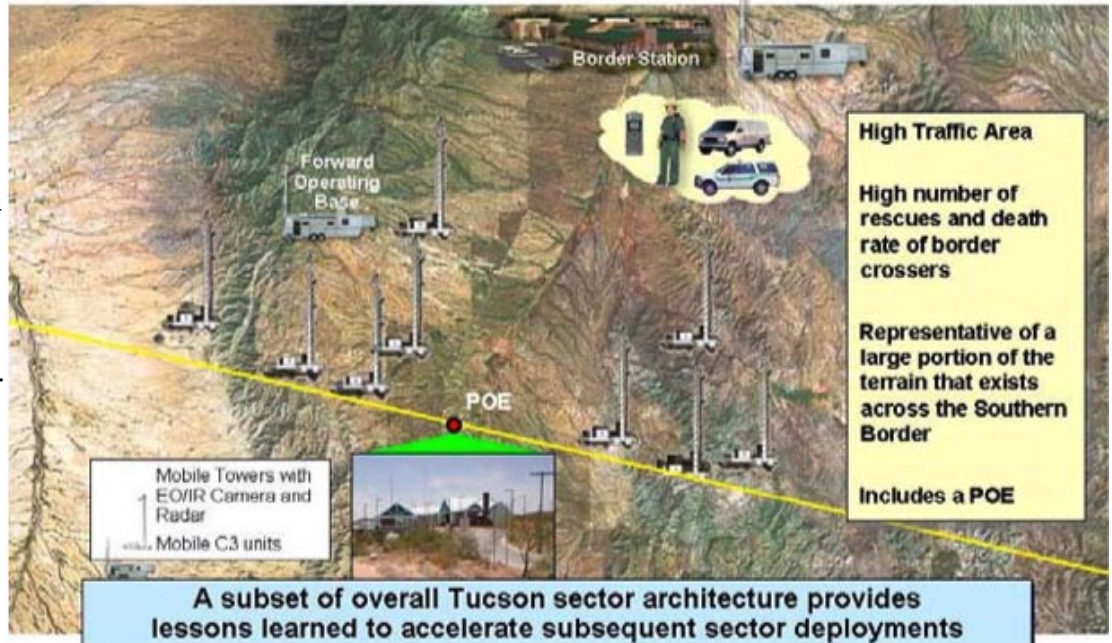
I initially got interested in by seeing a bit of email that referenced Boeing deploying systems along a part of the border in Arizona to operate as a prototype—Project 28 is this activity's name. One might infer that there are at least 27 other projects in some condition or another. Anyway, what struck me about it was that they were deploying mobile towers. Having just seen a video of War of the Worlds, this rung a bell in my noggin.

You can download a PDF from Boeing about it (which is where the above image above came from). Project 28 is supposed to have just become operational. I suspect their generators are at least burning fuel to keep their lights lit and the coffee hot by now.



but it may not be particularly robust in the face of efforts to damage the mobile towers. Perhaps six or eight legs makes more sense—at least until

Project 28 – A Quick Start



Now if we could just get those mobile towers to look like the stuff at the bottom of the page, we might have an adequate deterrent.

Who knows, it may be a “good thing” to have such systems anyway. If we get really good at them, they could become an economic boon too. Just imagine. Boeing would be able to garner billions selling such surveillance gear to contractors who'd sell their services to really rich people who think they need to be “safe”.

However, I'd question the sense in the tripod form. It does have the inherent advantage of not being easy to tip over compared to some other stances

we learn how to make better machines. Of course, China could come up with a “personal” version that could patrol gated communities ... just to keep out the riff-raff ... like me.

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