



## INTRODUCING A WOLF INTO THE SHEEP HERD: MAC USE IN A PC WORLD HAS COME OF AGE

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I must admit that when I was informed that the “theme” of the next Solo & Small Firm Section's next e-newsletter, the *TechReport*. Would be about Apple computers, I had more than a bit of trepidation. First, I knew that Joel Bernbaum, who is a long-time MAC user, can run rings around me with his superior knowledge. He’s a terrific resource, but also amazingly overwhelming in the knowledge that spills out of him when he happily and enthusiastically talks about his MAC. And I admit that on the rare occasion I have been called upon to use a MAC, such as when studying for my web design certification at Temple University, I did not find it as inherently easy and intuitive as I expected, based on all the hype cast about by long-time MAC users.

I’ve done a considerable amount of research in order to give a fair overview of some of the challenges one might face when introducing a MAC into a PC network environment. Separating the hype from the reality is a little difficult. It seems that MAC users have the same unwavering loyalty to their product as WordPerfect users have to reveal codes.

Before I share some of my findings, by way of an introduction to the upcoming *TechReport* – none of which will be new news for Apple users by the way — let me request your participation. Please send any of your MAC experiences, tips, tricks and software recommendations, 100 to 300 words in length, to the *TechReport* editor, Don Martin, [djmartin@donaldjmartin.com](mailto:djmartin@donaldjmartin.com).

Ok, first, let’s establish a basic fact. It’s a PC world when it comes to law firms. Our vertical market is dedicated to PCs to the tune of 98+% of installed computers. The American Bar Association technology survey confirms each year that MAC has not taken any significant foothold in law firms. For that reason alone, there is little incentive for software developers to pay attention to the MAC side. That’s the bad news. If you want legal-specific software, you’re probably looking at PC-only software with few exceptions. Functionality offered by document management, litigation support, document assembly and a host of other legal applications will, for the foreseeable future, require a PC operating system to run.

On the flip side is some good news. The MAC world is a limited target of opportunity for virus and spyware generators. Some people think they are bullet-proof. The reality is that they are just not worth the effort and investment from the underbelly of society right now. However, if market share grows considerably, you will see a sharp increase in MAC-based spyware and viruses. It's all about the economic incentives, after all.

Here's another basic fact. MACs are built better than PCs. There, I've said it. The operating system on the MAC is eloquent and well-designed. The MAC operating system is not bloated like the PC operating system. It does not eat tons of RAM just to wallow along at a lumbering pace. New releases don't destroy previously working applications or integration links between programs.

MACs tend to be fleet of foot even with far less horsepower. It never takes 5 minutes to boot up. They boot quickly and reliably. I have never heard a report about the BSOD (blue screen of death) popping up at inopportune times on a MAC. On the other hand, I have never had a PC which did *not* occasionally reward my power-usage with the BSOD.

At more and more firms, renegade lawyers are insisting that their MAC laptops find a home and acceptance on the office network. What does that mean to the firm in terms of support?

My initial exposure to MAC in the law firm was that of solo practitioners using a MAC laptop. In this type of environment the MAC offered a reliable computing platform requiring far less outside support. Stability and reliability trumped any lack of software. On the other hand, MAC has always excelled in handling sound and video. For a trial attorney comfortable enough to make his or her own exhibits, this tool is ideal. But when advanced abilities offered in such packages as CaseMap, NoteMap, TimeMap, Concordance or Summation are required, one must return to the PC platform.

There are a number of firms in our state, and nationally, which operate entirely on a MAC platform. A MAC-only network functions quite well, with little mention of reliability problems. For the basic day-to-day computer needs, MAC offers whatever is needed with little support required. What a concept — it just works.

Things started to change in a big way on June 6, 2006, when Apple



announced that MAC computers were going to switch to the Intel processor. Since Windows runs on Intel processor chips, it seemed logical that one would be able to run Windows software on MAC computers. And that became reality in April 2006 when Apple introduced a beta version of Boot Camp software. Boot Camp splits the hard drive into two separate partitions, one for the MAC side, and one for Microsoft Windows.

Being able to get essentially two computers out of one makes the extra cost of the MAC justifiable. But as much as this dual environment was a computing marvel, it was irritating to most users to have to reboot the computer every time one needed to switch from a MAC to a Windows application or vice versa. Still, it was the best option for a dual operating system environment. So when Apple released the Leopard operating system, Boot Camp was automatically included.

Eventually, Parallels was introduced. For only \$79.99 it creates a virtual machine which allows one to run a full Windows computer within the MAC operating system. No more need to boot back and forth between operating systems; Parallels handles the communication between the operating systems, as well as hard drives, peripheral devices, and wireless network connections as well. Parallels tools synchronize the mouse and clipboard between Windows and MAC, so that the cursor moves smoothly between the two operating systems, and whatever is copied in one will paste into the other.

The addition of a utility called Coherence allows one to run the Windows software in a MAC window, making it seem like it's a native MAC application. In other words, you can utilize both operating systems without managing two different desktops.

Although Parallels is the best known virtual machine software, two additional contenders are vying for market share; CrossOver and VMware Fusion. I haven't heard much about these two options yet.

One more thing to mention is that the Leopard-based MAC has something called Back to My Mac, which automatically finds your MAC over the internet and displays it in the Leopard Finder on whatever MAC you're using. No need to buy GoToMyPC or LogMeInPC to access the home computer. With the use of an AirPort Extreme or AirPort Express base station router, you can use Back to My MAC right out of the box.



I read an interesting article about how a stolen MAC laptop was retrieved and the thief caught thanks to this feature. The owner of the stolen laptop got a call from a friend advising that her laptop was on the internet, and appearing in her Leopard Finder. The owner used her friend's MAC to connect to her PC, turn on the built-in camera to take a picture of the thief, determine the IP address of the laptop, and promptly notify police. The thief was apprehended while still using the stolen laptop. Don't you just love a story with a happy ending?

Of course, not everything is quite that simple. I spoke to an attorney who is fairly tech savvy, about his experience trying to introduce a MAC into a PC network. It was a total failure. The file sharing between the two operating systems didn't work like it should have. As a consequence, all of the Windows files became corrupted on the MAC. Apple was extremely supportive and accommodating, but were unable to resolve the issues. It's a long tale of much frustration and disappointment, especially because the attorney really liked his MAC. But ultimately he concluded that "each operating system is like a virus to the other operating system." While he struggled with the corruption and incompatibility issues, he spoke to many MAC users. What he found was that offices which operated entirely with Apple were ecstatic. Those with a mixed environment were encountering some difficulties.

A discussion on one of the MAC listservs revealed another interesting thread regarding some incompatibility and resultant file corruption when transferring files between PowerPoint and Apple's equivalent Keynote. One experienced cross-platform user explained that one cannot use additional design elements besides what is included in the slide master in PowerPoint. Use of text boxes, graphics, or other layout changes often does not translate adequately and results in file corruption upon transfer.

It's not a perfect world. Yet. On May 13<sup>th</sup> Microsoft announced release of Service Pack 1 for Office for MAC. It offers better Excel compatibility for file exchanges, improved formatting for Word and greater printing accuracy, and PowerPoint improvements. Knowing the Microsoft track record, we will probably see a Service Pack 2 shortly to correct aspects of Service Pack 1. But since Microsoft acknowledges that Office 2008 for MAC is selling faster than any previous version of Office for MAC in the past 19 years, it stands to reason that they will keep working at improving this software. And it also indicates that MAC is becoming a much more acceptable tool for mainstream business now that it can run PC applications with aplomb.



If you have an Apple MAC and want to run all your familiar Microsoft Windows applications on it, you'll find it amazingly simple to do so. If your office is all Apple, you are probably delighted. However, if your office has a Microsoft network and wants to run some Apple computers on it, you can expect some challenges here and there. The good news is that all the drivers exist now to use all of the network devices. That wasn't the case not so long ago.

Yes, there will be glitches. They will take the form of document corruption when they occur. The good news is that you probably will not experience any of the nasty Windows-side symptoms of unreliability, like network crashes and BSODs. And as long as you have a copy of your documents stored safely on each "side" of the operating systems, you will be able to recover from any corruption glitches. Over time, fewer of these will occur.

Hmmm . . .who knows . . . maybe my next laptop will be a MAC.

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