

Hit the road Jack ... with your computer

computer notes from the road

by WILMA MELOT

Many publishers are in a constant time crunch and laptops are giving them the ability to be in the office one minute and on the road the next. This versatility can give you everything you need to get a paper published on the road, if needed.

If you're thinking of using this no-huddle business practice, which allows you to take your show on the road within minutes, consider what you'll need in the office or at home, whichever will act as a home base for your computer.

First, the external monitor. Many laptops these days require an adapter for the monitor. Make sure you have the right connection. You can get adapters at an Apple dealer or online at the Apple store. The most common types of connections for a Wal-Mart monitor or an old monitor from the junk pile is a VGA (Video Graphics Array), but newer types are DVI (Digital Video Interface).

Apple's adapters are Mini-VGA on some laptops and Mini-DVI on newer laptops. A few brands that work well

are LG, for durability, and ViewSonic, a Mac supporter for a long time. Others are Samsung, NEC and the wonderful, but pricey, Apple monitors.

All the rage today is the wide screen monitor, which starts at about \$200 for a 19-inch. Most common is the 22-inch, but it starts at around \$300. You can also go to your local store and buy a monitor for a Macintosh computer. Many people buy two – a small one to view style buttons on the side of your program, and a big one for page layout.



If you plan to run two monitors, expect to pay more for the extra video card. But remember, not all Macs, including the Mini, can run two monitors. In a G4 or G5 tower you can add an extra video card in the PCI slot. This can be confusing so check with someone who knows which cards work in which computers. There are online programs that provide this information or call your local dealer.

Another option is one large monitor. However, the bigger the monitor, the bigger the price. A 42-inch starts at around \$1,500.

Now for a new keyboard and mouse. If you've been putting up with a worn out mouse, there's something better. An OSX

Mac can run any PC USB mouse.

Go to the store, try a few and find one that fits your hand.

A USB mouse starts at \$20 and goes up from there.

Avoid wireless keyboards or mice since a low battery can mess with your machine. If you keep fresh batteries in all the time, freedom can be a good thing.

Windows keyboards will work with a Mac, but if you want a Mac layout keyboard look at Logitech and Kensington, as well as Apple's keyboards.

Apple sells two types of keyboards on their Web site, as well as wired and wireless mice. A Kensington SlimType keyboard is \$39.99 and has Apple keys. Kensington has been a Mac supporter for a long time.

Logitech is the bigger brand. They have Mac-labeled keyboards, including the diNovo at \$99, which looks like a good product. This company also makes good mice.

Since a mouse and a keyboard are things you use every day in the office, and now everywhere else, sometimes it's good to go for quality.



plugged IN

FTP client software

When several papers began having trouble with Fetch, I started looking at alternative FTP software.

There are a couple of good ones that work with Mac OSX that you may want to use as a backup to Fetch.

First is a software package called Transmit 3.67. The icon looks like a small truck. It's easy to set up and work with. The Shareware price is \$29.95, but you can download it for free to try it. This reliable software can be found at www.panic.com/transmit/.

Another good program for FTP client software is Cyberduck for Mac OSX. It's the fastest of the three, and very stable. You can also find older versions for Mac 10.3 at <http://cyberduck.ch/>. Cyberduck is an open source software so it's free, although it's just a little more complicated to set up.

Another good place to look for software is www.veriontracker.com. Just click on the link for OS Windows, Mac or even for iPhone software.

How about some protection?

There's a debate about whether Macs need antivirus protection.

Apple recently took down a Web page about antivirus software saying it was inaccurate.

Mac users aren't accustomed to worrying about antivirus software; we've assumed for years that we're too small of a target to be a real problem.

With the popularity of iPhones, Apple soon became a target for hackers. However, Apple still says there's no need to worry.

If you're worried, look at putting Norton for Mac on your computer. Many business are requesting it for all computers, Mac and PC.

If you buy it, get the box, not the download, which is a good practice for whatever software you want to use.

Norton AntiVirus 11 for Mac is \$49.95 per year, per computer. Look at <http://shop.symantecstore.com/store/>. It's a small price to pay for insurance.

Here's where to look for used Mac or PC computers

I answer this question a lot, but since you still seem to be asking I thought I would share my bookmarks with you. Many people are still looking for Power PC Macs that run OSX 10.4 and Classic for their older software.

Lately the hot buys on G5s and G4s have been at DVWarehouse.com.

For around \$1,000 you can get a Power Mac G5 2GHz Dual-Core 1GB 160GB Super Drive. These machines are fast and will last a while. You can easily replace parts, which are easy to find, such as the hard drive and memory. DV Warehouse also has G5s for around \$500.

Don't forget to get a copy of OSX 10.4 so OS 9.2 can run. Then up the Ram to at least 2GB, if you can. One gigabyte is now the minimum if you plan to run InDesign CS or Photoshop CS.

Another place to look for used equipment is www.megawatts.com. This is a local store based in Tulsa, but mainly an online dealer that deals both in Macs and PCs. They have a good selection of G4s starting at \$265.

If you're going the used direction, another item to put on your shelf is a generic copy of Mac OSX 10.4, something every paper that wants to keep running Classic should own. If you're a visual person, look for the CD with the black and silver X.

Another place I look for older items is www.lowendmac.com. They have the lowest prices from Web dealers listed as a comparison. It's a fast way to shop if you know what computer you want or are just browsing.

ProMac Computers in Oklahoma City

often have clean, used computers they take as trade. Check them out at promac-computers.com.

On the PC side, I just don't think buying used is a good idea. New PCs are so cheap that buying something used just isn't a good choice. And although you don't want to give up PageMaker, it's not worth buying an old computer.

If you insist on buying a used PC, check with a local dealer. They may know the history of the computer you're interested in.

A full generic copy of XP is a good buy if you plan to buy a new computer. Most new computers only come with Vista.

If you have more questions or recommendations, just give me a call or send an e-mail.