Subject: Re: Mac Cursor
Posted by Kenneth P. Bowman on Thu, 09 Nov 2006 02:44:06 GMT

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In article <eitsmt$t1b$1@news.nems.noaa.gov>,
 Paul van Delst <Paul.vanDelst@noaa.gov> wrote:

> I have zero knowledge of computer work-environment on-screen ergonomics, but the concept
> of a *single* top-menu bar like on Apples totally befuddles me[*]. Typically I have about,
> oh I dunno, 15 or so windows open at any one time (in linux they are nicely organised on
> 10 separate desktops) and, not being a hot-key type of person, the fact that I have to
> move the mouse all the way over to the top left to access the menu also drives me nuts. I
> have one of those ridiculously large cinema displays and I'm wearing a patch through the
> finish on my desk racking up those mouse-miles.

I'm not an expert either, but I think this has a good ergonomic/user interface basis,
particularly as displays get larger. With only a single menu at the top, rather than
multiple menus attached to windows, it is easy to "throw" the mouse to the menu because
it has a "hard" edge. That avoids PIO's (pilot induced oscillations) as you try to
center on a point. Additionally, it is very consistent. You don't have to find
menus that are scattered around the display. The "Edit" menu is always in exactly
the same place. That's why all Apple menus are Apple ... App name ... File ... Edit ...

You can adjust the acceleration on your mouse so that small motions are sensitive
and large motions are quick (see the Mouse System Preferences panel). Some third party
mice include drivers that let you tune the acceleration curve. I use a standard-sized
mouse pad and don't have to leave the pad to navigate my cinema display.

OS X 10.5 will include multiple desktops. There are a couple of commercial utilities
to do multiple desktops now, but I don't use them. I prefer to use the Hide command
(cmd-H except in those damn Adobe applications) to hide apps I am not currently using.
Also, cmd-M will minimize an individual menu.

Some people really like the Expose hot keys to shrink various sets of windows, but
I find the shrunken windows hard to see.

> However, as you said in another post, you have to learn new tricks with a Mac. For me
> these are starting to "sink in" and productivity is picking up. :o) Luckily my editor of
> choice (nedit) is an X11 app so it still retains its grip on its own menu bar!

Give Textwrangler a try (barebones.com). It is free and very well thought out.
Designed by programmers for programmers.

> [*] I'll ignore for now the fact that apple windows only have *one* corner (I mean,
> really, what the hell?) where you can grab and resize.

I like the fact that the user interface is visually cleaner and doesn't waste pixels
around the edges of every window, but maybe I'm rationalizing. It does sometimes

mean: move the window, then resize.

Another short tip. Start Terminal.app. Open a set of windows and arrange them in a neat stack (whatever arrangement you prefer). I like windows that are about 100 columns by 45 rows. Select save from the file menu. Change the pop-up menu to "All windows". Check "Open this file when Terminal starts up." Save it someplace handy. Now, whenever you start Terminal.app, it will automatically open a neat stack of empty windows.

Cheers, Ken