
Subject: Re: Mac Cursor

Posted by [JD Smith](#) on Mon, 06 Nov 2006 17:58:38 GMT

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On Sat, 04 Nov 2006 08:58:08 -0700, David Fanning wrote:

> Jeff Hester writes:

>

>> In the world I live in -- Astronomy -- there is currently a dramatic
>> move away from PCs and Linux boxes to the Mac platform. I'm sure that
>> is the case more broadly as well. A compilation of Mac-related
>> questions/answers/discussion would probably be well-read. I'm not the
>> right person to maintain the list, but if I knew someone was keeping
>> track, I'd certainly contribute anything that I ran across.

>

> Having spent five weeks in Hawaii last year in the
> company of astronomers, I witnessed this dramatic
> enthusiasm for Macs, and also noted the almost
> universal inverse correlation of this enthusiasm
> with UNIX knowledge.

Actually, most astronomers are from a Sun/Solaris background, or, more recently, Linux background [1], yet want a laptop that:

- a) Works well out of the box with no driver/kernel futzing.
- b) Runs Microsoft Office for those occasional yet unavoidable brushes with NASA HQ, the aerospace industry, etc. (where sending a complete Word document containing a single sentence with an agenda item is considered completely acceptable).
- c) Has support for all their favorite X11 tools, like DS9.
- d) Runs all of their accumulated C and/or FORTRAN code, usually compiled with GCC.
- e) iTunes, iChat, iMovie, iPhoto, iMaSuckerForPrettyApps.
- f) Has Apples' Keynote, for postscript/PDF-savvy presentations.

Macs do all of the above, though not without some compromises. And it appears Apple knows this is a growing user segment, and occasionally throws the sci-users a bone (Control-key remapping, virtual desktops in Leopard: <http://www.apple.com/macosx/leopard/spaces.html>, etc.).

Though I don't know of an "IDL for Mac users" guide, there are several astronomer-written guides for OSX converts, e.g.:

<http://satchmo.as.arizona.edu/~jrigby/osx.html>

and links within.

JD

[1] Primarily differentiated by whether they remap the Control key to its God-given location, just left of the "a".
