

CAMP News

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January 2005

Upcoming CAMP Meeting

The Capital Apple Macintosh Performa User Group will meet on **Wednesday, January 12, 2005, at 7:00 p.m. in Room 204 at Gardiner Area High School.**

Jeff Frankel will be demonstrating two PhotoShop plug-ins from Akvis: **Chameleon** and **Enhancer**. All shutterbugs will not want to miss this information!

- **Enhancer** helps you retrieve details from under and over exposed areas on your photograph.
- **Chameleon** allows you to copy an object, insert it into another picture, press a button, and have the object blend in to the collage background.

For more information, please call Sue Westlake at 685-4510.

Once Upon A Time In New Harbor, Maine

Will the iPod Save Apple?

John Davulis

Once upon a time, Steve Jobs is said to have been lost in Maine, on one of its many coastal peninsulas. He stopped and asked a local PC user how to get to Boothbay Harbor. The native replied, "You can't get there from here." In fact, the response was almost true. You can't get from New Harbor to Boothbay Harbor *directly*. First, you must drive north to Damariscotta. Then south on Route 1. Then south, again, on Route 27 to Boothbay Harbor.



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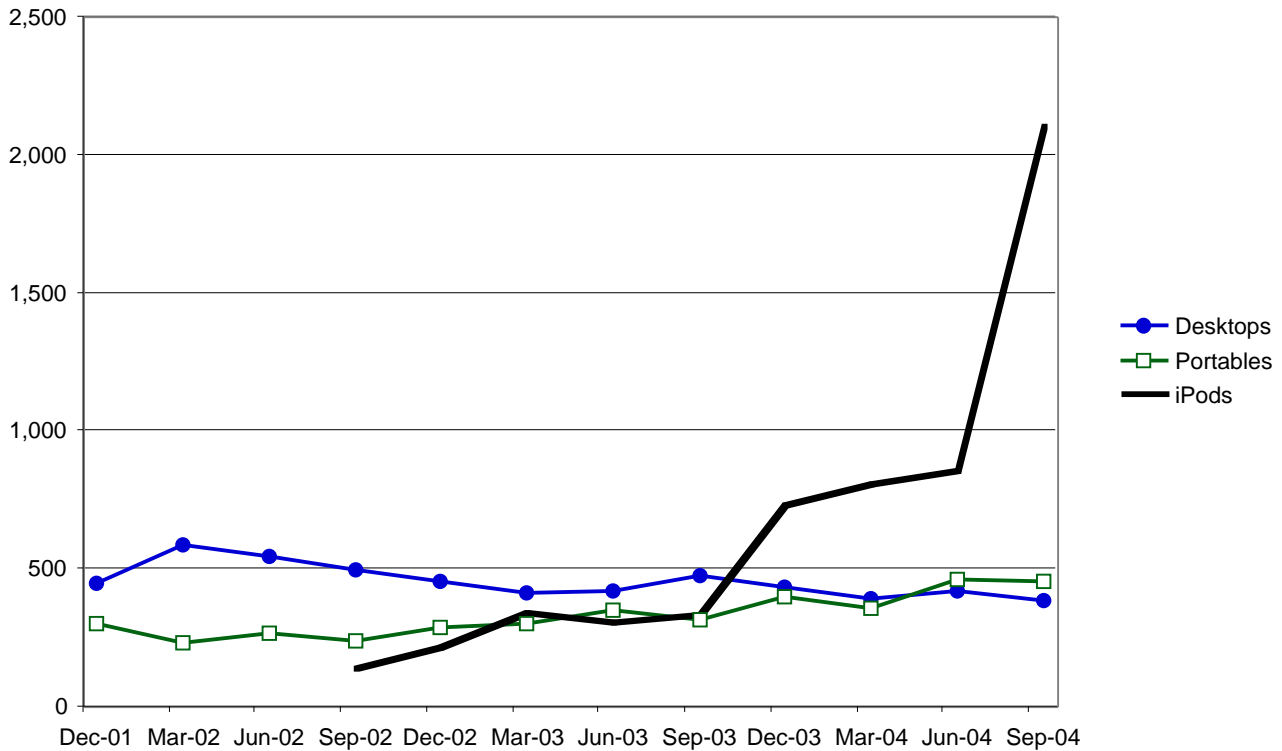
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Thus, the iPod was born. And, the iPod and iTunes just might save Apple and create more Macintosh users in the process. We should know soon.

In case you haven't noticed. The iPod is really hot. Apple sold 2.1 million iPods in the three-month period ending September 25, 2004. Some industry analysts expect Apple to sell four million more in the last quarter of 2004. As of December 14, 200 million songs have been downloaded from the iTunes website. In turn, Apple's stock price has tripled in the past year!

Thousands of Units Sold, Apple Computer



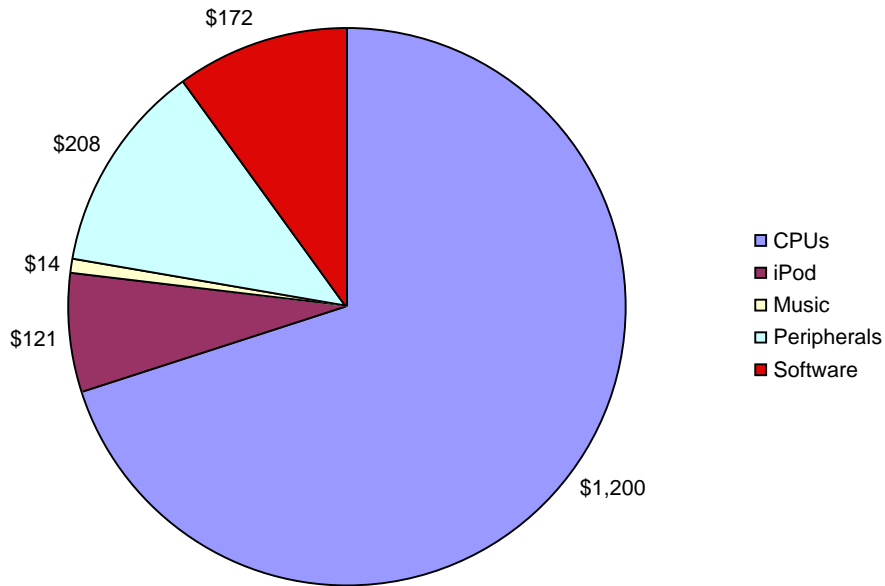
The Halo Effect

The iPod and iTunes are experiencing exponential growth. And, it is unlikely to slowdown soon. Further, according to a survey done by Gene Munster of Piper Jaffrey, 13% of iPod buyers, who are PC users, are so impressed with Apple that they plan to buy a Mac as their next computer. To capitalize on this, it is rumored that Apple will announce a \$500 iMac, without a monitor, at Macworld next week.

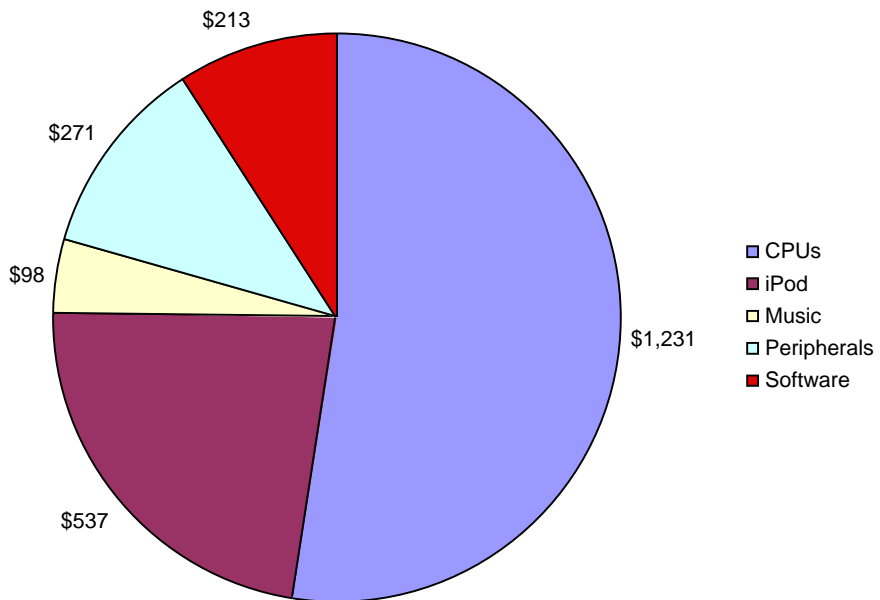
Will iPod sales really impact Mac sales? Time will tell. What is reasonably certain, however, is that the iPod and iTunes are transforming Apple. The pie charts below show how Apple's source of revenue has changed over the past year. In the current quarter ending September 25, 27% of Apple's revenue came from the sale of iPods and music. That's up from 8% a year ago.

So let's relax and see what happens.

Apple Computer Revenue (mil. \$), Quarter Ending 9/27/03



Apple Computer Revenue (mil. \$), Quarter Ending 9/25/04



Two Photoshop Plug-ins From Akvis, LLC

Akvis Chameleon \$69 (10-day trial demo available)

Akvis Enhancer \$69 (10-day trial demo available)

www.akvis.com

Jeff Frankel

It's probably fair to say that most serious digital photographers spend more time in front of the computer than behind the camera. In my case, it's the rare shot that doesn't benefit from at least some post-processing. Image editing software, as I've previously written, is its own self-contained universe. The dizzying array of choices, strategies, tools and techniques boggles the mind and blurs the eyes. On good days, inspiration abounds, intuition reigns, and results please. On not-so-good days, nothing seems to work, and enthusiasm dissolves into frustration.

Many products offer a silver bullet of one sort or another that promises a desired result without the painstaking craftsmanship otherwise required. My experience with one-click wonders has not been positive. The two key criteria for evaluation are (1) does the product deliver on its promise of simplifying and/or speeding up the operation in question, and (2) is the outcome at least as good as the results one typically obtains manually?

Akvis Chameleon and Akvis Enhancer are two image editing utilities of this nature. The primary function of Chameleon is to produce more lifelike montages by matching the tonality and borders of a selection from one image into the color texture of the new image into which the selection is being inserted. In the words of Akvis, "The tool is very easy to handle as it does not require precise selection of objects. You copy an object, insert it into another picture, press the button and the object adjusts to the new background as chameleons do - adapting to the new color range and blending with the environment." The three frames below, taken from the Akvis user manual, show how the sailboats in the middle photo, after resizing, are adjusted to blend more uniformly into the shot of the orange sunset sea. This function of Chameleon is a simple one-click operation with no user-adjustable settings to speak of.



Enhancer is a more general purpose tool for exposure compensation. In the words of the publisher:

AKVIS Enhancer is a tool for revealing details on a picture. Enhancer allows detecting details from underexposed, overexposed and mid tone areas of a photo without manipulating exposure.

The tool is useful in the cases when a photo lacks details. For example, when a picture has been taken with the background overexposed and consequently the foreground is hardly discernible, which is especially annoying when you take a picture of a person. If the background of a picture represents an undistinguished spot and

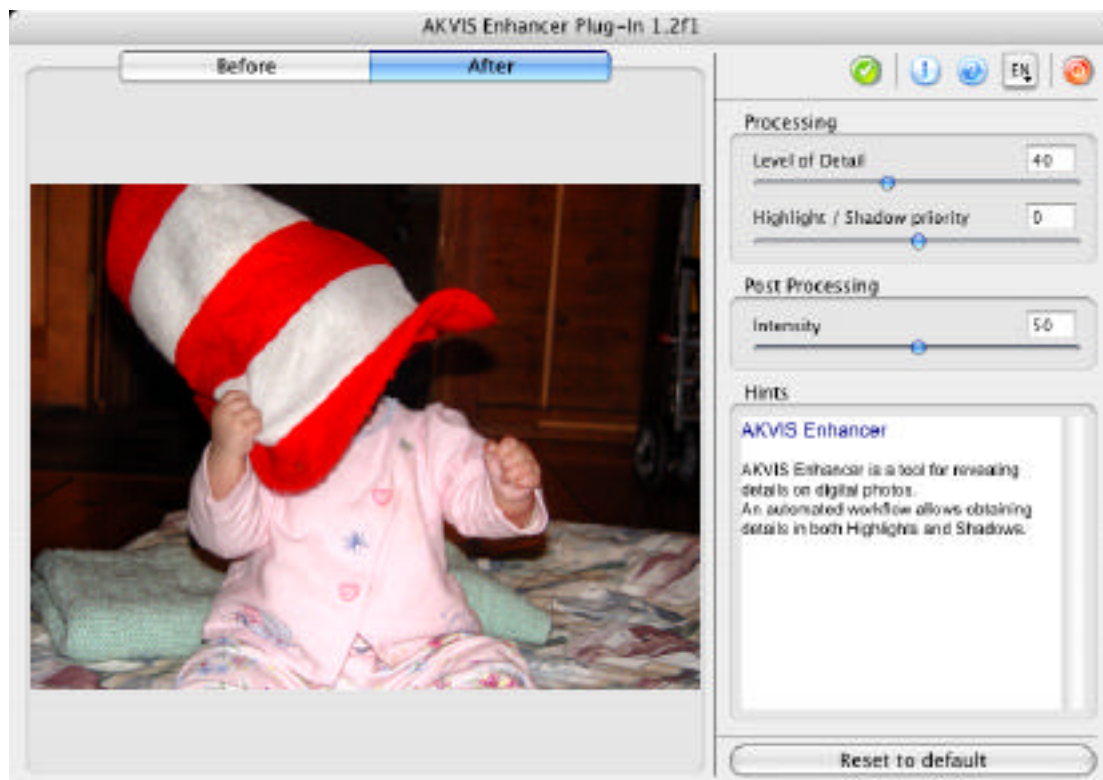
you wonder what was the scenery like. If a photo lacks dramatic effect due to vagueness of the scene.

If you try to reveal details in highlighted or overshadowed areas using exposure correction (for example, Levels) you run the risk of spoiling the parts of the image that you want to leave unchanged.

The idea behind Enhancer is entirely different. AKVIS Enhancer brings out details by intensifying color transition. It means that Enhancer strengthens the difference between adjacent pixels having different color gradations and therefore allows revealing not only details in the shadow but even details in the overexposed and mid tone areas.

Earlier it was possible (and such programs exist) to achieve the same result by manipulating with 2-4 shots of the same scene. AKVIS Enhancer does it all out of one shot thanks to the advanced algorithm of photo correction.

Unlike Chameleon, Enhancer operates via a slider-based interface with Before and After preview tabs. This allows the user to experiment before committing the adjustment to the image:



Enhancer appears to manipulate values ordinarily accessed via Photoshop's levels, curves, contrast, saturation, layer masking and unsharp masking controls. In the comparison shot below from the Enhancer user manual, shadow detail was brought out with highlights left relatively unaffected:



The user manuals for both programs display an impressive gallery of before-and-after photos. In my own experimentation, I had difficulty obtaining such dramatic results, particularly with Chameleon. In addition, Chameleon severely taxed the limitations of my Powerbook if the selection for insertion was overly large. (The only system requirement specified for either plug-in is OS 10.3.) On the Mac, the plug-ins will work with Adobe Photoshop and Adobe Elements (versions uncertain). On the Windows platform, the plug-ins will also work with Corel Photo-Paint and Jasc Paintshop Pro.

To see Chameleon and Enhancer in action, come to the demo at the January 12 CAMP meeting. At that time, I'll put both plug-ins through their paces. As the saying goes, you be the judge!