

Editorial

THE DEMISE OF THE MACINTOSH AS A FAVOURITE COMPUTER FOR UNIVERSITIES AND STUDENTS

Over ten years ago, in 1997 the editor began to explore the multimedia capability of computers for education, especially in engineering using a Macintosh computer and Hypercard software. The Macintosh was way ahead and at the time the only lower cost computer with a reasonable GUI. Original developments of multimedia software, significant to medical applications, were made with this computer and Hypercard. But the use of the Mac has always been confined to certain campuses such as Dartmouth and Bonn University. With the advent of Windows, partly emulating the Mac GUI, the threat to the Macintosh campus supporters has been on the increase. CD-ROM developments for Macintosh alone have had a limited market as the computer was only being used by a fraction of the students. Competition intensified when standard development tools for multimedia software became available for IBM-compatible PC's. Toolbook was originally available for the PC, whereas Authorware, originally for Macintosh, quickly became ported to PC. By now multimedia developments are being started on the PC and are ported to the Macintosh if a demand is thought to exist. Recently the company attempted a comeback with the fast G3 processor and the iMac. However, support for Macintosh use at universities has not really taken off again. Yale University has announced that it cannot guarantee support of the Macintosh beyond the year 2000. Faculty have by now little motivation to consider the Mac as an alternative, as most software appears first to be available for the PC. Are we experiencing the end of an era that began with such excitement for an original pioneering computer system, which has not quite made it? Somehow it is sad; the pioneering excitement of the Mac will never be there again.

JOURNAL ELECTRONIC ACCESS AND SPECIAL ISSUES

Changes planned for the near future include the introduction of coded access to recent complete issues of the journal. This has been triggered by the financial necessity to safeguard a preferred access for journal subscribers. Free access will still be available to contents, abstracts and selected papers, but subscriptions will be mandatory for the complete volumes. On the editorial side, plans are in hand for special issues on LabView Applications, Mechanics Education, Engineering Education in Ireland for the near future. Some special issues further ahead are on Engineering Mathematics, Accreditation, Multimedia Applications, Student Learning in Engineering, and Virtual Universities

Michael S. Wald