



# News You Can Use

## NEWS

In early November, I upgraded to the latest MacBook Pro laptop. So now I'm part of the new Intel-Macintosh crowd. It's a great computer!

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## QUICK TIP

### RESETTING THE CABLE

If your Charter Internet connection goes dead, don't bother troubleshooting on the computer.

#### Try this first:

1. Turn off the cable modem and your router (if you have one). Shut down the computer or put it to sleep.
2. Turn the cable modem on again.
3. Wait a *full minute* for the modem to restart.
4. If you have a router, turn it on and wait another thirty seconds.
5. Wake or start the computer.

This same tip applies to those using DSL Internet service, but they rarely have the need to do so.

**Where You Been? Dept.** \_\_\_\_\_ **all**

## It's Baaaack!

Been wondering why you haven't received a copy of this newsletter? It's because I've just been lazy since May. No, wait, make that "busy." Yeah. Busy sounds better. Even if it is laziness.

In any event, I'm going to try to get back into the swing of writing the newsletter again.

**If They Didn't Tell Us, We Wouldn't Know It** \_\_\_\_\_ **all**

## Intel Macintoshes

By now you're aware that Apple made the decision to switch the processor chip (CPU) from the PowerPC to the Intel one. Apple announced the switch in summer 2005, and shipped the first new machine in January 2006. Last October, the entire Macintosh product line completed the switch to the Intel processor.

### Is It Still A Mac?

It sure is. I've set up a few of the flat-panel iMacs and a few of the laptops, and they're Macs, through-and-through. You can't tell that the chip is different; everything works as we expect.

### What About Software?

Though the new computers run Intel versions of programs best, they will run all of the older programs designed for the PowerPC (PPC) chip. Those older programs don't run as quickly as Intel versions, but they're fine.

Most software companies have *Universal* updates available. A Universal program is a combination version designed to run well on either CPU chip.

### How About Classic?

MacOS X came with the Classic subsystem, which ran the old MacOS 9 programs. Classic, however, is no longer available on the Intel Macs; you'll have to give up those old programs forever. It's been five years since MacOS X came out, so Apple has decided those old programs aren't worth the expense of reinventing Classic.

### Windows Capable

The only reason to run Windows on a Mac is if you have no choice: you need to run a program that just isn't available on the Mac. I suggest you don't go online at all with Windows; otherwise, you'll have to protect it with antivirus and anti-spyware

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**Standard Rate** is \$52/hr.

**Apple Remote Desktop** help is billed at the reduced rate of \$35/hr.

**Phone support** is free, except if the call runs to a half hour. Then it's billed at the further-reduced rate of \$30/hr.

**Email support** is always free. Ask your questions and you'll get an answer, usually within a few hours.

**Invoices** are mailed on the first of each month, covering charges incurred during the prior month. (So, for example, you'll be billed on May 1st for work done in April.)

**New Clients** receive a one-time half hour discount !

**WHAT'S IMPORTANT**

**Solving your problem** the *right* way, as much as humanly possible.

**Not making things worse.**

Some support folks try to fix one problem and end up creating new ones. Where does that leave you?

**Keeping your costs down.** It's more important to provide good service than to squeeze out a few more bucks. When you see a "comp" item on an invoice, it's my way of helping to keep your costs low.

stuff. Even though the Mac side of things won't get hurt, the Windows installation can get into trouble.

There are two ways to run Windows on the new Macs if you're so inclined. One is Apple's *Boot Camp* software: after it's installed and set up, you can reboot into Windows. Then reboot again into MacOS X. Though Boot Camp is free, Apple provides no tech support.

A better alternative is a product called *Parallels Desktop*. This \$80 software lets you install and run Windows in a "virtual machine." Parallels makes Windows think it's running on a real PC, when in fact it's just another MacOS X program. For further info, see <http://www.parallels.com>.

I think Parallels makes more sense because you don't have to reboot: you just launch it like any other program. I've started to experiment with Parallels just to learn how it's used.

Note: In either scenario, you have to buy a copy of Windows.

## **They Claim it's Our Fault** \_\_\_\_\_ **all** **Charter Cable Slowdowns?**

I've heard reports from several Charter users in town that the Internet slows down at times. The problem is intermittent, however: one day there's a problem, then things are fine a little later. The symptom (at least for me) is that a web page gets mostly loaded, then things stall for about ten seconds, then the load finishes. The "blue progress bar" usually gets most of the way across before the stall happens, then it jumps the rest of the way.

The problem seems to have begun in October. Those who have called Charter have been given the usual "Restart the cable modem, restart your computer" solution. It often works, but the problem may still come back.

**What I Think**

Because people around town have experienced the problem, I'm guessing that there's a problem somewhere in the Charter network. Maybe one of their systems is flaky. Maybe it's a capacity problem. I doubt the problem is our computers. Some folks have wireless, some have wired routers, and others just plug into the cable modem. The common factor is Charter's network, from our homes to the rest of the world.

**Where Do We Go From Here?**

I suppose we should still keep calling Charter and going through their usual troubleshooting motions. Tell them that others in town are experiencing the problem, and that it comes and goes at random. Let's hope they track the phone calls and do some troubleshooting of their own.