About the Gestalt Manager Information on a new orientation package

With the proliferation of types of Macintoshes, it becomes increasingly difficult to keep track of which version of ROM, which CPU and what kind of hardware and software configuration comprise an operating environment. Formerly, SysEnvirons performed these duties but with System 7.0, Apple decided to package a comprehensive set of utilities in a new **Gestalt Manager**. "Gestalt" is a German word for the concept of affirming a whole and complete situational awareness as opposed to deriving an understanding by analyzing a situation's individual elements.

With the **Gestalt Manager** your applications get the ability to determine: type of machine; System file version; CPU; keyboard; type of FPU (if any); type of MMU (if any); size of available RAM; amount of available virtual memory; features of the various drivers and managers (including version numbers); QuickDraw version; and the presence of the A/UX operating system.

Two additional functions, after **Gestalt**, let your application register new software features with the operating system (**NewGestalt**) and change a particular **Gestalt** function to something else of your choosing (**ReplaceGestalt**). Through **Gestalt**, they let your application announce itself and offer its services to other applications.

Gestalt replaces both **Environs** and **SysEnvirons** for all applications and Apple recommends its use over both of the earlier pieces of orientation software.

To use **Gestalt**, your program passes it a selector code. The selector code is just a request for a specific piece of information. Some selectors are pre-defined, while others can be application-defined and registered with **Gestalt** by calling the **NewGestalt** function. Further, there are two sub-types of pre-defined selectors: those that give an indication of a feature's existence; and those that only provide information. They are referred to as environmental and informational selectors, respectively.

Once **Gestalt** gets a request, it looks for an answer and (if successful) returns it in a response parameter. An error code results if it can't find the requested information.

Apple supplies a strong caveat when it comes to the difference between environmental and informational selectors. Informational selectors, it says, are only for educational purposes and should never be employed as an indication that a feature is actually present.