



Smug as a bug



The millennium should hold **no fears** for Mac users says Cliff Joseph.

The good news for Mac users is that the millennium bug is not really a problem. On Apple's web site there's a quote from writer Douglas Adams (a well-known Mac fan): 'We may not have got everything right, but at least we knew the century was going to end'.

Apple decided not to use the two-digit date format, the cause of the Y2K problem, when it introduced the first Mac back in 1984. All Macs store the year number using four figures so even the oldest Macs should tick over to 1st January 2000 without any problems.

In fact, Apple recently bought one of the most expensive advertising slots on US TV, slap in the middle of the Super Bowl championship, to boast about the Mac's invulnerability to the millennium bug. The ad is unlikely to be used in the UK but it's quite good fun. Take a look at the version at www.apple.com.

Just to make extra sure, Apple has conducted additional tests on all versions of the Mac OS since 7.5.5 and confirms that these are all compliant. Apple's official advice, therefore, is that to avoid any problems you should only use one of the versions of the OS which is specifically listed as Y2K compliant.

For more details about which Mac hardware and software products are compliant, check out Apple's Year 2000 web site at: www.apple.com/about/year2000/. This site also includes Y2K information relating to peripherals as well as applications like ClarisWorks and FileMaker which have been developed by Apple subsidiaries.

➤ **There is a glitch** of some sort in the Date and Time control panel which means it can only store dates up to

December 31, 2019. However, the problem only affects this particular control panel and the underlying operating system is still Y2K compliant, so as long as Apple revises the Date and Time control panel before the year 2020 we should be OK.

...at least we knew the century was going to end

➤ **The only recent** Apple products that might be affected by the Y2K bug are the PC-compatible models which have a PC-card built into them. Apple has not tested these for compliance so there is a possibility that PC applications running on one of these systems could be affected.

➤ **The only other** possible source of trouble comes from third-party software which you run on your Mac. It is possible that some applications have been programmed to use dates in a way that makes them vulnerable to the millennium bug. However, any program that follows Apple's standard programming guidelines should be

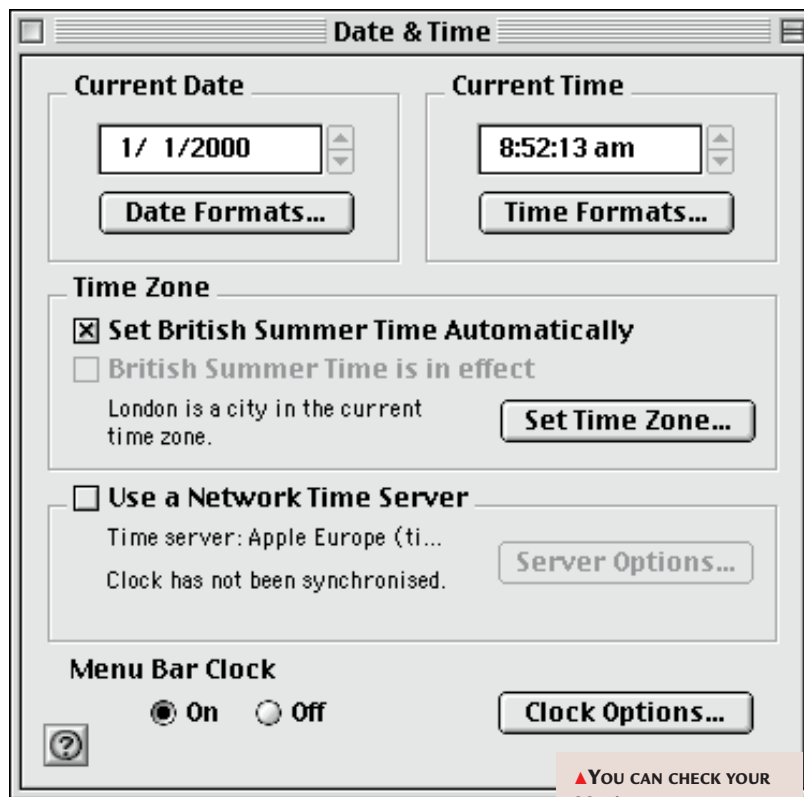
unaffected and we've not heard of any Mac applications which have a problem with the year 2000.

If you want to reassure yourself about your Mac's year 2000 compliance, just

open the Date and

Time control panel which can be found in the Control Panels section of the main Apple Menu. Underneath the date listing is a button labelled 'Date Formats'. Pressing this button opens a dialogue box where you can select a variety of formats for displaying the date.

Select the 'Show Century' option and your Mac will then display the date using the full four-figure year format (i.e. 1999, rather than 99). Close this dialogue box to go back to the Date and Time control panel and then just change the time to 11:59pm on 31st December 1999. Leave the Mac for a couple of minutes and it should happily tick over to 1st January 2000 without a hiccup.



▲ YOU CAN CHECK YOUR MAC'S SUPPORT FOR FOUR-FIGURE DATES IN THE DATE AND TIME CONTROL PANEL

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