



Bussing it

Confused now that Apple has adopted USB, wholesale? Make the connection, with Cliff Joseph.

A few months ago I looked at the implications of Apple's adoption of USB and promised to publish occasional updates on the availability of USB products for the Mac.

We're now starting to see quite a few printers, scanners and other devices that use USB, so availability of new peripherals isn't that much of a problem — except now there's a new problem to deal with.

Originally it was only the iMac that used USB but since then Apple has adopted USB across its entire range. All the new G3 Power Mac models have USB and FireWire ports built in and have completely done away with SCSI and the old Mac serial ports that

many users have existing SCSI drives and scanners, as well as serial port printers and modems that simply cannot be used with these new machines.

As a result, there's now a confusing array of adaptors and converters being advertised in magazines and on the internet. But most of these products have not yet



▲ LURID YELLOW
USB-TO-SCSI
ADAPTER FROM
2NDWAVE

reached the shops so in this month's column I am only going to look at products that are actually available here in the UK.

► IMATION'S SUPERDISK IS THE ONLY USB FLOPPY DRIVE CURRENTLY AVAILABLE FOR NEW MACS

were used to connect to printers and modems. And, like the iMac, they don't have floppy disks built in, either.

The iMac is aimed at first-time users who will, presumably, be buying brand new USB peripherals to go with their brand new iMac. Yet most of the people buying the new G3 Power Macs are upgrading from an older Mac, so



Floppy disk drives

IT'S NOT AN ADAPTOR AS SUCH BUT MY FIRST RECOMMENDATION HAS TO BE THE IMATION SUPERDISK. AS WE GO TO PRESS IT'S THE ONLY USB FLOPPY DISK DRIVE AVAILABLE IN THE UK. I KNOW ORDINARY 1.44MB FLOPPY DISKS ARE ON THE WAY OUT BUT THEY HAVEN'T GONE YET, DESPITE WHAT STEVE JOBS SAYS.

I'VE BEEN USING ONE OF THE NEW G3s FOR A COUPLE OF MONTHS NOW AND I COULDN'T GET BY WITHOUT THE SUPERDISK. AND, OF COURSE, IT ACCEPTS 120Mb SUPERDISKS AS WELL AS 1.44Mb DISKS.

NEWER TECHNOLOGY AND TEAC HAVE BOTH ANNOUNCED PLANS TO LAUNCH A STRAIGHTFORWARD 1.44MB FLOPPY DISK DRIVE BUT NEITHER PRODUCT HAD ACTUALLY SHIPPED BY THE TIME THIS ISSUE WENT TO PRESS. IOMEGA'S USB ZIP DRIVE IS AVAILABLE AND WORKS PERFECTLY WELL, BUT IT IS NOT COMPATIBLE WITH ORDINARY FLOPPY DISKS, SO IF YOU NEED TO SHARE FILES WITH OTHER MACS OR PCs THAT STILL USE FLOPPIES THE SUPERDISK IS YOUR BEST OPTION FOR NOW.

Printers

After floppy disks, the next most common question I get is about connecting printers to USB Macs. Epson and Hewlett-Packard both produce adaptors that will allow you to use some of their existing printers with USB Macs, but if you want to use a printer from any other manufacturer, you'll need an adaptor that will connect a USB port to a standard PC printer port.

These are available from Entrega and Infowave but Entrega's USB-To-Parallel Printer adaptor currently only works with Epson printers, and even then you have to download new printer drivers from Epson's web site. That's not entirely Entrega's fault, as it's actually Apple that has been taking its time releasing the Mac USB driver software that Entrega's products need.

Right now, though, you're better off looking at InfoWave's PowerPrint, which comes with a CD-ROM containing drivers for a wide range of printers. You can check the compatibility list at www.infowave.com to see whether or not PowerPrint supports your particular printer.



IMAC CONNECTIVITY

Most Macs produced in the past few years have Ethernet built-in as a standard feature, which makes it easy to network Macs together. However, I've had a number of enquiries from readers with models such as the Mac Classic and LC, which don't have Ethernet and who need to connect the older Mac to a new iMac, either for file-transfer or to share a printer.

Apple seems to have given no thought at all to this problem. Fortunately, though, there is a third-party solution.

Older Macs which do not have Ethernet interfaces can use Apple's own networking system called LocalTalk, and networking specialist, Farallon, has come up with a device called the EtherMac iPrint Adapter LT which is able to act as a bridge between LocalTalk and the iMac's Ethernet connector.



The iPrint is an adaptor which can connect to the iMac's Ethernet interface at one end and also has an RJ-11 port that can accept a PhoneNet cable. You use PhoneNet cables to connect to one of the serial ports on the older Mac model and then use the Mac's built-in filesharing facilities to share files. The iPrint adaptor can also connect to a variety of printers allowing

you to share a printer between the two Macs. However, there are different versions of the adaptor for use with different types of printer, so

you should check which version you need before buying.

If the idea of Mac networking seems a bit daunting, there are some useful getting-started guides on Farallon's web site at www.farallon.com.

➔ EtherMac iPrint Adapter is £90 (ex VAT) from Principal Distribution on 0175 6704000.

If your printer only has a Mac serial port, or you want to use a device such as a modem or digital camera that requires a serial port connection, you need to look at Keyspan's USB-To-Serial-Adaptor. There are versions available with one, two or four serial ports built in, although the two-port version that mimics the standard two ports on older Macs will be best for most people.

■ SCSI devices

Before USB came along, all Macs had SCSI interfaces and there must be thousands, if not millions, of Mac users who have SCSI scanners and hard disks that are incompatible with USB Power Macs.

When it launched the new G3s, Apple did say that it would be supplying a low-

cost PCI card that would provide a SCSI interface. Take a look at Apple's US web site and you'll see the card listed as an option, for \$49. However, this card is actually supplied by Adaptec and UK users will have to buy it direct from

Adaptec. The company's PowerDomain range of SCSI adaptors includes two new cards

called the PowerDomain 2930 and 2906. The 2906 is the cheaper of the two: unfortunately, it costs £49 (ex VAT) in the UK, compared to \$49 in the US. It provides 10Mb/sec throughput, which should be adequate for devices such as Jaz and Zip drives. If you've got a scanner or a high-end AV disk that needs even higher performance you'll be better off with the 2930 model. This costs £99 (ex VAT) but runs at 20Mb/sec.

Of course, iMacs do not have PCI slots so your only option for using SCSI devices is the SCUS-Bee from 2ndWave. This is a USB-to-SCSI adaptor, moulded in a rather lurid yellow plastic, and costs £70 (ex VAT).

■ USB

Finally, it is also worth remembering that there are still plenty of people with non-USB Macs who are missing out on all these handy little USB printers, cameras, and other devices. If you have got a spare PCI slot in your Mac you can install an adaptor card that provides you with either two or four USB ports.

Keyspan's USB upgrade card provides two USB ports and costs £59 (ex VAT). Entrega produces an even cheaper two-port card which sells for only £29.99 (ex VAT) and a four-port card for £59.99 (ex VAT).

The catch here, though, is that as we went to press only Keyspan had the official Apple USB drivers which are needed to upgrade pre-USB Macs. Entrega assured us that it would have the final drivers by the time this column was actually in print, but check with the company before buying its cards. And, be aware if you download the drivers from Apple's web site — if they are just beta drivers, Apple will not provide technical support.

So be warned — do not buy the card if the drivers are not actually included in the box.

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PCW CONTACTS

Cliff Joseph welcomes your feedback on the Mac column. He can be contacted via the PCW editorial office (address, p14) or by email at mac@pcw.co.uk

2ndWave SCUS-Bee is £70 (ex VAT) from AM Micro 01392- 426473

Adaptec PowerDomain 2930 is £99 (ex VAT); Adaptec PowerDomain 2906 is £49 (ex VAT) from Adaptec UK 01276 854500

Entrega USB-Parallel Adaptor: USB upgrade card; 2-port is £29.99 (ex VAT) or 4-port is £49.99 (ex VAT) from Entrega Europe 0118-965-7751

iMation SuperDisk is £120 (ex VAT) from iMation UK 01344 402006

Infowave PowerPrint is £75 (ex VAT) from SoftLine 01372 726333

Keyspan USB-Serial adaptor is £69 (ex VAT); Keyspan 2-port USB Upgrade card is £59 (ex VAT) from AM Micro 01392 426473