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To: Macintosh BU Program Managers; Macintosh BU Managers
Subject: MacOffice 2K

I started to think about stuff that I feel are important for us to focus on for our next release. This is a high level list of areas to get some thoughts and discussions going. Things are not listed in any particular order here. What key things are missing? What is wrong? What do you think?
Never mind the 2K. I just don't have a good name for this thing.

ebbe



Things to start thinking about for next version

TCO

We made great strides with Office98, but there are clearly more cool stuff we can do. Incremental install on demand tops my list. But things like automatic updates from the web, "spring cleaning" or removal of stuff that you have not used the last few months. Smart behavior dealing with travel and laptops. Further simplification for administrators to configure and roll out bits. Even stronger self-healing. Clean up system folder further.

HTML

Enormous investment in Office9. Not as important to us, but we have to do better than today and we have to be very careful so that people feel we are "compatible" with Office9. Round-tripping would be critical so we can be selective in features we want to add or support but still not damage Office9 HTML files on save. No more internet assistant, but native in-house code that sings.

Ease of Use

Our primary investment outside of "must do in order to stay compatible with Office9" is ease of use. This release needs to be a consumer release, not a corporate release like Office9. This covers all the areas listed here. The key for us in anything we do should be that it is making things easier for people. We should steal the Office9 stuff that do cool stuff in this area. Click 'n type, improved Table Drawing, improved AutoCorrect, automatic language detection in Word are great examples. All-in-One View and AutoNumber bullets in PPT are cool. Real Wizards that solve real problems in a dynamic fashion, not just pre-canned attempts. This is the stuff we need to go totally nuts on. Find out what Office9 would have liked to do more, but cut because of HTML, and do those things too. And then invent some more really cool stuff on top of that.

Web

Lots of Office9 investment here as well, such as improved Hyperlink UI, HTML Publishing, and link management. As with HTML we have to be compatible at some level. And customers will expect and should get good web integration.

Office9 Compatibility

It is vital that we are compatible with Office9 where users would notice. The binary fileformat is not changing in Office9, but Office9 is adding features that do not roundtrip through Office97-98. Word has added support for millions of colors and nested tables for example. And HTML is basically an optional replacement for the binary format and customers can find us incompatible if we don't do a reasonable job here. People may also consider web server integration as a compatibility issue.

Outlook Express

It is very important that Outlook Express becomes strong enough to be called a real Office component and we want integration with the other apps to be really cool.

Performance

It is really important that we keep performance flat in general and improved in some key areas.

ClarisWorks

Our biggest competitor. We should remove all reasons anybody might have for sticking with this product rather than upgrade to Office. What features do we need to steal? What scenarios do we need to improve to make us a superset. Conversion needs to be simple obviously. Do we want to be able to switch to ClarisWorks UI or have special ClarisWorks Help that tell users how to deal, kind of like WordPerfect Help we had in Word6 for Windows?

FileMaker

People complain about us not providing Access. That would be too much work so we need to make sure that we work really well with the leading db out there. Make common scenarios with FileMaker trivial. Also gives us a db story to play against ClarisWorks.

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UI

We need to follow Apple to a large degree, but also push Apple to make improvements we need. I think we should also leverage the Assistant, Wizards, and more to make people feel that we're friendlier and easier. Less complex where possible. Simplify.

System

Need to pick up key features added by Apple. We get lots of bonus points for supporting their technologies. Need to be selective and careful as it is not all worthwhile.

Education

Key market for Apple. This is where they make the majority of their sales. What can we do to get a big chunk of this market? What can we do to make them willing to spend money on Office when they have ClarisWorks already for free? What scenarios are important to teachers and students. Ease of Use and TCO are key, but we should also do specific work to target key scenarios that speak to these users.

Small Business, Publishing, Home

Other pockets of Apple users. We need to focus more on these users rather than the LORG customers Office9 is targeting in general. This is why we will focus more on Ease of Use, but we need to do this with these users in mind. Do we need to provide some tools to deal with digital imaging, scanners, cameras? Party invitations. Family albums. Inventory. Customer contact management. Things Publisher, Home titles, and Small Business pack on Windows can do. These types of scenarios need to be targeted.

Short term issues

IA AutoUpdate

We want this to be done really quick so that international versions get all, or at least most, of the fixes in their shipping boxes. No new features, just bug fixing so that quality is on par.

Office98J

Big project in motion that we will ship this summer.

ClarisWorks

What can we do shortly after we ship to make it more obvious and easier for people to migrate to Office98? Provide converters would be key.

FileMaker

What can we do short term as value add to promote interoperability with FileMaker. We should provide value shortly after we've shipped so that we can reduce the "ClarisWorks has a database" and "why don't you provide Access" problems.

Website

How much attention do we/should we spend on this on a continuous basis?

HTML Help

Both Win and Apple are implementing this stuff and Office9 will take advantage of it. How can we influence Apple to make the same implementation, or maybe better, so that we don't have to deal with random differences and reduce the need for us to provide stuff here.

Allegro

What changes may it include that makes us look out of touch or style? Do we need to provide an "A-release" in this timeframe that smoothes out these things. May make sense since we could "hide" any real bug fixes in this "because of Allegro"-release and turn a very positive spin on it.

Some things that are not important

Programmability

We are not a development platform like Office9 and we don't feel a need to become one. We only want to be as compatible as we have to be. Would be nice to fix VB memory problems, but I don't see the need for any major investment here. Do we care about the new Office9 Add-In architecture? Do we need to bump to VB6 to stay on par? Digital signing of macros? New applications events? Script?

Office Web Server

IIS/NT only. We certainly don't want to make the server stuff working, but should our applications work ok if the Office Web Server is around on a mixed network so that we can participate in web-based collaboration with Windows users? This is one of those tricky Office9 compatibility questions we have to deal with.

International

I put it here because Office9 is doing so much here and it is a key focus area for them. We have a smaller market and it is not clear that we have to do as much as they are. But we have to think about these features and consider unicode across

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the board etc.

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