he truth has been revealed. I was kidding myself that I wouldn't be found out. But, alas, it was only a matter of time.

As an independent consultant with pre-school age children I have the luxury and responsibility of often working around their schedule. The couple of hours after Matthew and Jessica go to bed is "Daddy's work time" to finish the day's projects or to simply gather and collect my thoughts, surf the web, read my e-mail, and try to relax. More often than not, I don't have much work to finish at this hour but I like the discipline of setting aside that time if just for play. The need for Daddy to have play time, too, is not difficult to explain to pre-schoolers, but since their life revolves around play and learning from play, they know of no reason they shouldn't be allowed to join in. This is why it's called "Daddy's work time."

This particular night was to be no exception. After starting out in my room with a couple of pop-up books, a short story, one of Daddy's tall tales, and our evening prayers, it was time for them to go to bed. "OK," I said. " It's Daddy's work time, everybody to their own beds." "But Daddy," Jessica exclaimed, "we want to watch you work." They were already comfortable and sleepy so I thought why not, I simply advised them that they had to be extra quiet because, after all, it was "Daddy's work time."

For a little while, I sat and worked quietly at my desk. I finally had the time to review one of the "Read Me" documents that came with a new software application. By impulse, and just to have a little amusement, I pulled down the SimpleText sound menu and listened to the first few lines in the voice of "Bad News." This brought muffled giggles from underneath the comforter. For whatever reason I continued with the voice of "Bubbles," then "Good News," by the time I got to "Pipe Organ" the room was filled with laughter and no one was about to sleep. Just then Jessica exclaimed "Daddy, you're not working, you're playing." It was a good secret, while it lasted.

My kids do equate the Mac with having fun. Quite frankly, so do I. We mustn't forget what got us all here: ease-of-use, the opportunity for creative expression, and the ability to be productive — at any age and any time — from the moment we opened the box. And, let's not forget the millions of Mac users who love to share ideas and offer generous support to others.

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The Macintosh was not designed to "compete" with other PCs; it was designed to set the standards for personal computing. And, it has done its job very well. The Macintosh forced software developers and hardware manufacturers to work harder because we wanted to

work better. They no longer had the excuse "No personal computer can do that," because people saw it being done on a Mac. We all know that if it wasn't for the Mac OS there would not be a Windows, and desktop publishing both for print, and for the web would not be where it is today. Just remember that America Online was first designed for the Mac, and that software such as Adobe Photoshop and a long list of other titles were first written for the Mac as well.

For a little over a year when the big hype for Windows '95 began, then quickly followed by Apple's short-term difficulties, the many advantages of the Mac OS have been overlooked or forgotten. Quite simply, in all the confusion and industry diversion we have allowed the "Wintel market" to set the agenda for debate and discussion.

Believe me, I like technology. But if you want to spend hours discussing processor speeds of CISC and RISC chips alone I'll get you the number of a techno-junkie support group. If you want to discuss how a new RISC processor coupled with a solid, easy-to- use operating system and the latest version of your favorite software is helping you with a cool multi-media project or helping you with that web site you're building in your spare time, come on over, let's have dinner. I'll introduce you to my kids. We'll all have some fun.

Apple's short-term problems may ultimately be a long-term blessing. At the opening of last month's World Wide Developer's Conference, Dr. Amelio stated that Apple will be structured to reduce it's break-even point (i.e. the amount of revenue needed to cover costs) by implementing a more efficient and responsive corporate structure, and by reducing the number of different motherboard designs. Not by unnecessarily cutting R&D, not by reducing customer support, not by lopping off whole divisions or selling Claris, but by common sense, and clearly delineated areas of responsibility and accountability. Apple Computer will end up doing more and overspending less.

There will be big changes in the personal computer market. Companies will need R&D dollars in order to develop new products and to continue to compete effectively. This will require more than razor-thin margins. Pippin and other computing "appliances" that effectively meet a particular need such as Internet access and CD-ROM games will also make it more difficult for low-end manufacturers to sell cheap clones that do nothing in particular very well.

Apple has taken its hits to market share. It has written down its inventory and it has smartly moved to a more efficient product line. Other computer companies are now feeling more of the effects of the over saturation of the PC market during 1995 and the early part of 1996. Stagnant or slower-growth sales immediately reduce profits, especially if they expanded operations during that time.

PC manufacturers will need to adapt quickly to the changing market. For many, this change may be painful. The lesson from Apple's recent inventory problem is that people don't want what they perceive as old technology (i.e. 68k Macs). They would rather not buy, then buy what they perceive as outdated — we don't see many 486 Wintel boxes on display, either. When the industry changes occur, Apple will be uniquely positioned not only to gain market share for the operating system, but it also will be releasing new technologies developed from ample R&D budgets over the past few years that will once again serve as industry standards.

Apple, Motorola, and IBM will make good use of the 604e microprocessor and its successors. As Mac OS 8 (formerly Copland) is slowly released to developers and ultimately to the public, more top-notch software will be written by more companies for the Mac OS than at any time in Apple's history. I'm willing to wait...

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In the meantime, at the Apples, Kids and Attitude household we've had a busy month. It began with the arrival of some cool children's software for Jessica's birthday. Among the titles was a game that was "guaranteed to keep children enthralled for hours." The problem is the little lady finished it — clicking on every tree, object and animal — in less than two. The next time through it was about thirty minutes. As I mentioned in my e-mail to Mike Shields, our ATPM Opinion Editor, I'm afraid that by the time she starts Kindergarten she'll be reading Run, Spot, Run in the morning and writing Macintosh game code in the afternoon. Maybe by the time she's ready for Orthodontia Apple will have a spot for a Junior Assistant Apple Fellow. I'll need the funds to keep her stocked with software.

As for Matthew, he's not so goal oriented. He lingers, laughs and clicks...repeatedly. I think at three and one-half years old he's happy something responds immediately to all his requests. By the end of the month we were all having fun with Cyberdog. I did the inputting, and they came up with the search topics. We were web surfing, sometimes even during "Daddy's work time." I've come to realize that it's not only pre-schoolers that can sometimes be a little selfish. Dads have selfish moments, too. Just because they're pre-schoolers doesn't mean they're the only ones in the house that have to learn how to share as they play.