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## **Parodies**

***I thought I'd add a little more fun than usual to my column. Ever seen a Parody?***

***A parody is something that us little people poke fun at. In the case of a mac user, Microsoft. I've managed to find two very cool Microsoft parodies.***

***One take off, is definitely made by someone with way to much time on their hands. "Microsnot" Corporation looks exactly like the Microsoft web site (before the recent renovations). It can, obviously, be found at <<http://www.microsnot.com/>>. In the text, literally every word has a trademark symbol next to it. Hilarious headlines like "Microsnot buys the atom bomb" and "Bill Grates shoots for White House" make this seemingly real place as funny as it is. The site is only 1 dimensional though, and if you click any of the headlines it takes you to the real Microsnot-err..soft web site. Bummer.***

***The other Microsoft parody I found? Well, it's made by our own R Kirk McPike! Check out <<http://members.aol.com/fireballkm/>>. This site also has it's own witty title "Microsmuch". Although Kirk plans on a CrabApple parody, this one is great. It has a little more content to it than the Microsnot site did, and also carries a funny slogan. The best thing about Kirk's site is that it is up to date. The Microsnot site is still behind on updating itself, but I hope it'll be up soon. The Microsmuch site features all of the goods Microsoft has up now, the horrid flying windows logo, and all the goodies.***

***You can also find hypertext links on my web page if you don't feel like writing the URLs down. I have also made a link of other sites that are parodies of both Microsoft and Apple. You can find it at <<http://www.macsavvy.com/bk/>>.***

***More AO-hell***

***More and more people do it everyday, of every week, of every month. What am I talking about? They quit America Online. Now, I'm joining the large crowd of online service dumpers as I ditch the big daddy of commercial online services.***

***I have this problem, which seems to be an addiction. I have to keep AOL. I chat with the ex-eWorlders in the new Town Square at keyword aloha, and am just one big chat factory, I am what AOL loves most. An online addict. I believe it's the human interaction with thousands of people across the globe at the same time. But then again Earthlink has saved me from that. I log on to Earthlink and fire up the MacIRC software, where I'm not charged per hour for chatting.***

***Now, starting in July America Online users could call the billing services department and start the new \$20 a month for 20 hours plan. I was going to do that, but then my dad is paying two AOL bills. One for myself, and one for my mom's account. This makes an opening for my AOL account to still be active in some way.***

***I really didn't want to cancel my account, but I knew it had to come sometime. The screen names I had were the best, and once you use them you can never get them back. I had some cool ones too, MacGod 15, B3Bomb, AppleCan. I wanted to have them on my new account. Oh well.***

***After starting up my mom's account (I asked first) I hit keyword screen names and the wheels in my head started turning. I thought up the nice name "MacSavvyED". Then I created another for my personal use, but only a few will know that one, for the sake of a private eMail junk less name. Now that I had the names, I signed on and, surprise! I had more annoying mail from AOL. They told me what I could do if I needed assistance and all the other commercial load of B.S. Now, I addressed a letter to all my friends under my new screen name telling them yes, I am still on AOL, no my MacGod 15 screen name doesn't work and yes, I can be mailed at Bobby@macsavvy.com. still.***

***I probably could quit America Online for good, but one of the major reasons I kept it was because I needed it to upload TMS. I really do need the AOL name to upload, because most of the feedback, etc comes from AOL. But that will all change soon. Let me explain why.***

***To save my time, and devote more of it to this magazine and my schoolwork starting this September, I am looking for someone out there that considers them self very connected. I need a person that will upload TMS on other online services. So for those of you out there that have a CompuServe account, please contact me if you can help out.***

***Getting back to the subject-I can now be reached at MacSavvyED@aol.com if you need to chat with me about TMS like subjects. I have even considered the 20/20 plan for this account, but that's up to my mom I guess. The sign-ons I do on these screen names will be nothing but flash sessions, and maybe an occasional instant message or chat room chat, and of course the downloading and uploading TMS and reviewing the downloaded products. This, I hope, will be the most I do on AOL, and I'm glad that I'm getting a step closer away from quitting, but it'll be awhile before I finally can.***

Besides, everyone that has had America Online knows it's not the family oriented service like they make it out to be. AOL has built a large enough blanket around themselves that they think no company, no corporation, no nothing can compare to their usage. AOL wallows in their ego, and I sit back and laugh. The way I see it, AOL is only a bigger bug in all the buggy online services. Compuserve is a friendly service, with chat rooms full of friendly people, all the time. (I had Compuserve for awhile). Although their help and mac areas are slim, I'd say it was still better than AOL. I also had Prodigy, which its only good points were the chat rooms.

America Online is slow at times, its internet connection royalty bites it, and the artwork is a slow and grueling process to endure. The fact that they say their mac browser is better (they just made a new version) is a joke. Give me a break people, the connection to the net is way too slow, plus you force the few that dare to surf with your excuse for a browser to your homepage. This confuses me by the tons. Why, would any user of AOL actually use the browser and then actually want to go to the AOL homepage?

The majority, they say, always wins. And in the AOL browser case, it does. Windows, the majority of stupid users, gets to use Netscape. But they're still charged per hour. I mean, what person, devoted to the web, would actually spend their time surfing on AOL. You're charged \$2.95 per hour, or you could get an ISP and be charged \$19.95 per month. If you say "I'll stick with AOL", then you're probably a Windows user.

I later found out (before quitting) that you can change your billing policies from keyword Billing. Of course, whenever I asked a AOL Guide I got the response "Here's the phone number you have to call". Yeah right. When I'm not on AOL or Earthlink, I'm usually taking up my line with calls to and from friends. Besides, if I did this I'd have to get my dad to do it, and he's always busy. Why my dad? Another somewhat stupid AOL rule. Even though my mom's name is on the account, she can't get the password or change any of the billing info.

The most annoying thing about AOL was the times when you would sign on, only to be greeted by an advertisement. If I wanted this stuff, wouldn't I go get it?? There was even an offer for an America Online Visa card. The more you spend with this card, the more free hours you earn. This, in my opinion is totally stupid. The members of my family have enough credit cards already, and plus, I'm the only person that uses AOL at the rate I do.

Sure, AOL has its good points. The major attractions are the file libraries, the chat rooms, and the message boards. That's about it. Their bad points? The uncontrolled rooms, the junk eMail, the slow connections, the browser, the software, about 90% of it isn't worth it, and about 10% of AOL is good. The mail service is good, but could use some fixes. All in all, to be frank-America Online is a glorified BBS with still quite a few bugs in its system.

After doing all this, I set up a "virtual mailbox" from some service. They charge me per month for getting all my AOL mail, so I still have time to tell people the new address in case I

forgot the first time around.