



By Cynthia E. Field
Review Board

The graphics environment of the Macintosh on the Apple II, with pull-down menus, windows, and icons, can make the underlying software all the more attractive.

Two products that today best emulate the Macintosh environment on the Apple II are CATALYST 3.0 from Quark Inc. and Mouse Desk 1.00 from Version Soft (distributed by International Solutions). Both programs provide a Macintoshlike desktop that you use in place of issuing cryptic system and file commands. They are similar in intended use, though differing in appearance and features. Apple Computer Inc. officially supports Catalyst in the United States, selling it with the Unidisk 3.5; Apple Europe, on the other hand, supports Mouse Desk.

FEATURES: At first glance, both CATALYST and Mouse Desk look quite similar. Both give you a Macintoshlike user interface, complete with menu bars, bit-mapped graphics, and icons that represent disks and files. And both let you install multiple ProDOS applications onto a single mass storage device, such as Apple's 5- or 10-megabyte Profile hard disk or its 800K Unidisk 3½-inch floppy disk drive. You can view multiple files and disks and point and click to open particular files. Both programs support the use of a mouse but can also work keyboard commands.

Both programs require 128K of random-access memory (RAM) and one drive — either a 5¼-inch floppy disk drive or a 3½-inch Unidisk drive. To run CATALYST, your Apple IIe must have the enhanced read-only memory (ROM) upgrade that allows the monitor to display Apple's alternate character set, known as mouse text. The upgrade is not required to run Mouse Desk, but the screen appearance suffers without it.

Like the Macintosh desktop, both Apple II desktop management programs use icons — symbols that represent applications (volumes, subdirectories, or files) and activities. CATALYST and Mouse Desk both have the trash can icon, which you can use to delete programs or files from a disk. Only CATALYST has the Macintoshlike wrist-watch icon for "please wait" during disk access. CATALYST and Mouse Desk both represent disks by icons that look like 3½-inch or 5¼-inch disks.

CATALYST and Mouse Desk make mass storage devices more convenient to use, because they make it easier to deal with the numerous files you can fit on such large-capacity drives. Both CATALYST and Mouse Desk support internal RAM disks such as Apple's Memory Expansion Card and can copy selected programs to it from external storage devices, either automatically at start-up or later during your work session.

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Making the Apple II Emulate Macintosh

Although both programs create a very Macintoshlike front end on the Apple II, close scrutiny reveals a number of differences between them. The CATALYST desktop offers four menus, with about two dozen choices, while Mouse Desk has eight menus with more than three dozen choices.

True to their Macintoshlike nature, both programs have windows that you can open, grow, move, stack, and close. In CATALYST, the active window has horizontal stripes in the title bar; in Mouse Desk, the active window's title shifts from black letters on a white background to white letters on black.

Both programs display their desktops in double high-resolution mode, but only CATALYST offers you a Change Desktop feature with which you can switch from the default appearance (black text on a gray background on our Apple Color Monitor II) to any of nine others, including black text on a white background.

In addition to the CATALYST program, Quark includes other programs on the 3½-inch version we tested, such as Quark programs *Finder* (which is similar to Apple's ProDOS utility), *Quick Copy* (a faster disk copying program), and *Backup II* (for backing up hard disk drive files) and *Apple drawing program Mousepaint*. Apple *System Utilities*, Version 2.1.1 and *ProDOS Basic* are also included. The 5¼-inch version comes on three disks, while the 3½-inch version is on one disk.

CATALYST has some built-in desktop accessories, such as an on-screen clock that works if you have a hardware clock installed, a four-function calculator, and a sliding-letters puzzle similar to the one the Macintosh has.

Though the programs are similar, they take a different tack at looking at files. Mouse Desk generally displays every file on the disk, either as an icon or as a file name; file folders are displayed where

subdirectories have been created. CATALYST, on the other hand, displays icons representing programs but not the individual files that make up that program. For example, it will show a single icon representing the entire complex of programs and overlay files that constitute Appleworks.

The Mouse Desk shows menu display files by name, date, size, or type as well as by icon. With CATALYST, if you want more details on the individual files than are provided by the program icon, you have to leave the CATALYST desktop and go to the System Utilities program to catalog a disk in the conventional Apple II way.

PERFORMANCE: The necessity of leaving the CATALYST desktop to work with files or format a disk is an inconvenience that mars CATALYST's otherwise nearly flawless performance. Just when you get used to using the mouse, you're forced to go back to the arrow keys on the keyboard to use ProDOS utilities. Quitting the utilities takes you directly back to the CATALYST desktop, though, so this really is a minor aggravation, and our working style doesn't require us to use the System Utilities often. Others may find it more annoying. A Quark spokesman told us that the company is aware of Mouse Desk's built-in file-handling features and may take steps to improve CATALYST in that direction.

Both CATALYST and Mouse Desk may be able to help you install your most frequently used applications on one 3½-inch disk or on a hard disk. CATALYST enjoys a slight edge in this regard by being capable of installing even some copy-protected ProDOS programs. CATALYST can copy any copyable ProDOS program for you. It can also install protected software if the software developer provided a CATALYST identification file in its program (CATALYST locks the program to itself using a CATALYST serial number). Not all third-party developers offer such a number, nor does International Solutions.

The CATALYST from Quark Inc. makes the Macintosh graphics environment available to Apple II users.

When you try to install a program from a cooperating vendor, CATALYST works in straightforward fashion. When you try to install another copyable or copy-protected program, a CATALYST dialog box opens and tells you that the program is a "custom" program. It will then put a program icon on the desktop, but you must use System Utilities to copy the files associated with the program. If you follow these directions, copyable programs install easily. Copy-protected ones seem to install (the files are transferred), but these programs may crash when you attempt to load them.

Using CATALYST, we successfully installed Appleworks enhanced with the Pinpoint desk accessory program (from Pinpoint Publishing); the Pinpoint program itself; *Applewriter II*, Version 2.0; *Mousewrite* (from Roger Wagner Publishing); and *Procom-A Communications Software* (from Prometheus Products). We were not able to install *Mouse Word* (from International Solutions), a copy-protected program lacking a CATALYST identification file.

When asked to list some other CATALYST-installable programs for us, a Quark technical representative mentioned the ProDOS version of PFS File, Business Words, Sensible Speller and Grammar, Supercalc 3A, and Quark's Word Juggler. Apparently, they all have CATALYST serial numbers.

Using Mouse Desk, we installed *Applewriter II*, *Appleworks* with Pinpoint, Pinpoint accessories, and *Mousepaint*. According to International Solutions, some users have experienced difficulty in installing Mouse Desk-installed *Mousepaint* and *Pinpoint*. We encountered no problems with *Mousepaint*, but we could not get one of the Pinpoint accessories to work properly.

Besides using CATALYST and Mouse Desk to manage files and install programs on hard disks, you can use these desktop organizers as program selectors. Both CATALYST and Mouse Desk have Run options that can be accessed either by the mouse or by keyboard command.

Non-ProDOS programs can be started after quitting CATALYST and pressing several keys to restart. Mouse Desk does not have a formal quit option. Instead, Mouse Desk offers its start menu where you can directly

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Excellent/5 Symbols/9 - 10:
Tops in its class
Very Good/4 Symbols/7 - 8.9:
Offers special benefits
Satisfactory/3 Symbols/5 - 6.9:
Meets essential criteria
Poor/2 Symbols/3 - 4.9:
Falls short in essential areas
Unacceptable/1 Symbol/1 - 2.9:
Fails to meet minimum standards

Also Included in This Section

- Videoworks Page 37
- Software Review Capsules Page 40

