

# KEYMAC

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## JOURNAL

### Snow Leopard Mauls Many

*The latest big cat arrives and it's not always friendly.*

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## Thar Be Dragons!

Oh, what a difference a month makes. In the opening to the August edition of the KeyMac Journal, I was lamenting on the lack of computer news. I attempted to use a nautical theme to express where we were at that time pointing out that the situation was akin to being “stuck in the doldrums.”

This month the Mac community in general has picked up some wind, and we have definitely sailed out of any area resembling the doldrums. It's as if we eked our way out of the doldrums right into a South Atlantic hurricane. There is an abundance of computer news. I had plans for a few stellar articles, if I do say so myself, but I'm going to have to shelve those plans for now.

The most important of these new themes was to be the impact of Snow Leopard, the latest Operating System from Apple. There's a lot to be said about Snow Leopard, and some of it would be very colorful language. Unfortunately, Snow Leopard doesn't seem to like me talking about it. You can read these details on the second and final page of this month's Journal.

To pick up the analogy from last month, we have sailed out of the doldrums and off the edge of the map. In the early days of sailing, these areas were often marked with such colorful phrases as “thar be dragons.” It is thought that these markings were because many ships that sailed into those regions never returned. Some speculated those ships had fallen off the edge of the world and plummeted into a nameless abyss.

I don't think I've sailed off the edge of the world, but I'm definitely floundering in a shallow rocky area. I'm currently waiting for Apple's tide to lift all boats, but for now I'm stuck.

Read on . . .

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## Snow Leopard Mauls Many

The most important thing I can say about Snow Leopard, Apple's new 10.6 Operating System, is if you haven't already installed it, then don't. Wait for a patch or two.

Snow Leopard (SL) is turning out to be very buggy. Apple is not releasing any info, but third party Apple news sites are estimating that as many as 40% of the people installing this system update are having problems. These problems range from minor inconveniences all the way up to making their systems so unstable that they are unusable. Some sites are even comparing this upgrade to the Windows XP to Vista upgrade experience.

Now the good news in all of this is, if you turn out to be in that 60% of people that have a problem-free upgrade experience, then you're good to go. For these people the new OS is faster, smoother, and everything it was advertised to be. If you have upgraded and you fall in this fortunate group, then congratulations - you won the coin toss.

The bad news is, of course, that 60/40 are not the type of odds Mac users should expect from an upgrade. This means that almost half of the people upgrading are having real problems. For this group, this new OS is very temperamental. SL can be unstable for this group in a wide range of programs and in seemingly random situations. One day a program will repeatedly crash. The next day it may behave normally. Endless beachball cursors and other strange behaviors have been reported. This group of people are understandably not happy with Apple as of this writing, and the Internet is abuzz with

complaints. It is always wise in these situations to remember that the people who have problems are going to be the loudest group. If someone does not have problems, they are less likely to post, but these issues are widespread and real.

This new OS was released early. It was originally scheduled to be released in September, but Apple bumped it up to August 28th instead. Some developers have complained that they were caught off guard by this move, and that they did not have the time they expected to finalize their SL related program updates. It's possible that Mac users will see a wave of bug fixes to third party programs as a result, but the problem seems to go deeper than just applications.

I had promised the KeyMac club that I would report on the new Operating System and let everyone know when it was safe to upgrade. Currently, I cannot give such assurances. Unless you have a risk-taking personality, my recommendation is to wait and not install SL until the dust settles.

Indeed the problems with SL on my computer are so bad that I am forced to release this very short, abbreviated version of the Journal this month. Rather than spending my time working productively on the Journal, I am being sidetracked into hours of Snow Leopard problem solving. Some things I have managed to figure out, but many more, I have not. So I am admitting defeat and wrapping things up early. My apologies to you all. Please feel free to complain to Steve Jobs about it.

In our KeyMac general meeting for October, we will take a more in-depth look at Snow Leopard and update everyone on whether or not there have been improvements. For now, because the system has only been out a little over a week, there

hasn't been much time for things to improve.

When Leopard (10.5) was released, it did not become fully stable until the third patch was installed (version 10.5.3). There is no way to know if this will be true for SL. Apple has already seeded 10.6.1 to its core group of developers, so they are working on the problem. I have installed SL myself, and I am encountering some of these issues. I will keep the group posted going forward. In the meantime, all we can do is wait.



**I'm pretty sure it's laughing at me.**

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