



This Old Mac

Giving a PowerBook G3 (Pismo) a new lease on life.

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I love Apple products but I can't turn around and buy the newest toy half as often as I'd like. My principal machine is a dual gig QuickSilver with a SuperDrive that should serve my needs for a while. My portable machine is a G3 PowerBook better known as a Pismo. I love this machine. I like the rounded corners, its rugged case, 14.1" screen size, AirPort, and the fact that it has USB, FireWire, S-video, and VGA ports. With a DVD/CD-ROM drive, this machine also functions as the family portable DVD player and repository of digital pictures while on the road. The machine accepted all versions of OS X without a whimper although the need for a larger hard drive soon became paramount. At the San Francisco MacWorld Expo, I purchased a 60-gig drive from OtherWorld Computing (otherworldcomputing.com). This took care of storage issues and I have OS 9 and OS X on separate partitions. This allows me to start up recalcitrant client machines in FireWire target mode or copy files from older machines with a crossover cable. Although it ran 10.3 at a respectable speed, it was becoming noticeably slower. Should I update to a new PowerBook? The iBooks were more in my budget but didn't fit all my needs.

Once again, OWC came to the rescue with a G4 upgrade for the Pismo. When my husband and I first tried the upgrade, my PowerBook failed to boot and we erroneously faulted the new processor. A little more detective work revealed a short in the keyboard cable. After locating a new keyboard, we again installed the processor (about 10 minutes) with the help of a wonderful website which gives complete take-apart instructions for the Pismo: <http://homepage.mac.com/sysop/PhotoAlbum7.html>. If you have any questions about how to replace any part of your Pismo this independent site is indispensable.

You don't have to do it yourself!

After purchase, you will receive a padded container with detailed instructions on how to send your system for upgrading. While we installed the upgrade ourselves, mainly out of curiosity, your purchase price includes installation by trained technicians at Newer Systems Technology, Inc—something you should definitely take advantage of as they will fully test your machine.

Don't expect miracles—your PowerBook must be in complete working condition with a fully charged battery to participate in this upgrade. And please, back up any important data before shipping your computer. Your upgraded PowerBook should be returned to you within 1 –2 business days of receipt.

Now my Pismo has a the following specs:

- Motorola 500MHz PowerPC G4 7410 Processor
- 1MB Level 2 Backside Cache running at 2:1 (250MHz)
- Velocity Engine (AltiVec) Support
- Compatible with up to 1GB of memory
- 2 Year Warranty

Velocity Engine (AltiVec)!

Remember the buzz about the Velocity Engine when the G4s first came out? Upgrading to the NuPowr G4 Pismo really speeds things up in AltiVec enabled applications such as:

- Apple iTunes
- Apple iMovie
- Apple Final Cut Pro
- Apple DVD Studio Pro
- Adobe Photoshop (5.5 & later)

She wants more!

I now envision using this machine in new ways. I am looking around for a VST removable floppy drive and am thinking seriously about getting a Combo drive to replace the CD/DVD ROM. With the ability to read customer floppies and burn backup CDs on the spot, I'll be able to help more customers make the jump to OS X and protect their data. This old Mac has a longer, more useful life thanks to the products from OtherWorld Computing. You can reach OWC at 800-275-4576 or through their website at otherworldcomputing.com.