

It is my contention that encouraging OEM software developers to use funny mode is both a short cut "panic" response to insufficient system sales, and a major threat to the success of the Apple ///, short-term and longterm. What follows is an analysis of the dangers funny mode poses to the Apple ///.

Short-term Effects - The first 9 months

The short term effects of funny mode fall into three categories, customer dissatisfaction, delays in SOS OEM software products, and the impact on the "turnaround program."

Customer Expectations. Funny mode products will not support advertised features which are standard in the SOS environment. Specifically, interrupt capabilities, e.g. typeahead, buffered printing..., and large disks will not be supported. In addition, services, such as the hotline, vendor technical support, dealers, etc., will not be in a position to help the customer using a funny mode product.

SOS-based OEM Products. The simple fact that funny mode is available to OEMs will encourage them to "take the path of least resistance," undermining our strategy of creating an environment in which they can leverage their efforts in order to develop badly needed HIGH QUALITY applications. We should not underestimate the abilities of the OEMs. If funny mode is available to them a certain percentage will choose it as their applications environment and some of the applications will be very good, so good that they will force us to recognize their existence with consequent maintenance, enhancement and support costs at a later date. The case of Paul Lutus is classic. Paul strongly resisted converting Applewriter to run in the SOS environment, yet was able to convert to SOS in well under one months work.

Turnaround Program. The availability of funny mode products can undermine the effectiveness of the turnaround program. Specifically, there is a real danger that Apple will be perceived by OEMs, dealers and the public as backing away from supporting the standard Apple /// software environment. Thus a short-term effort to generate more sales via funny mode can result in serious questions as to the longevity of the Apple /// itself.

Medium Term Effects - The second 9 months

Medium term impacts of the existence of funny mode are twofold. Large disk support and our ability to meet severe competition by IBM, Xerox, and the Japanese.

Large Disk Support. The existence of useful funny mode applications will cause customers, dealers and OEMs to pressure Apple to support both the Pippin and Twiggy mass storage systems in funny mode. Since our whole strategy for supporting large mass storage systems is based around SOS on the Apple /// and XDOS, a SOS subset on the Apple II, we will not be in a position to satisfy the market need created by these applications. Nor will we be able to offer file backup support for these applications.

A /// # 53 2/6 [215]