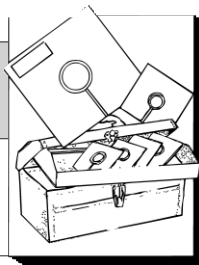


## Mac's System 7

by Craig Savage



**S**ystem 7 is the newest Macintosh operating system. Like MS-DOS on the PC, it controls the central processor and coordinates your keyboard and monitor. It also creates the mouse interface or "desktop" screen you see when you turn on the Mac, and helps you create and delete files, store files on disk, and find them again when you need them.

### Publish-and-Subscribe

System 7 is much more, however. One of System 7's magic tricks is the way it integrates simple applications using what Apple calls Inter-Application Communication, or "Publish-and-Subscribe." Simply put, Publish-and-Subscribe links applications and lets them "talk" to each other. By sharing information, individual applications dedicated to a single function, like drafting or number-crunching, can combine to form hybrid applications that perform more than one function.

With applications designed for System 7, you can "publish" information from a CAD drawing to a spreadsheet that "subscribes" to the CAD data. In other words, you can both design and prepare your cost estimate at the same time.

For example, all the data associated with the doors in your CAD drawing — quantity, type of trim, cost, color, labor to install — is automatically transferred to an estimate in the spreadsheet. If you

add another door to the drawing, the change is updated in the spreadsheet estimate, adding costs for material, labor, and markup to your estimate.

The chain of publish-and-subscribe can be extended so that the spreadsheet data is published to a third application, such as a word processing program. Simply stated, the drawing is linked to the estimate, which is linked to the letter. A door added to the CAD drawing changes the estimate and alters the data in the letter. This all occurs in real time, all on the screen, all at once. For the first time, designers will get feedback on design decisions well before the contractor bids the job or the owner faints over the price. Programmers of integrated construction software have been trying to do the same thing for years with little success. But you can do it today with the Mac and System 7 (also soon available for Windows users).

### Networking

System 7 also has built-in networking. Networking means connecting computers together so they can share and transfer files, share peripherals, like printers, and communicate with each other through the use of electronic memos (E-mail). The same documents can be worked on by different people in the office, at the same time, with constantly

updated information. Since networking is built into Macintoshes and System 7, setting up a network is as simple as running a phone wire between two machines.

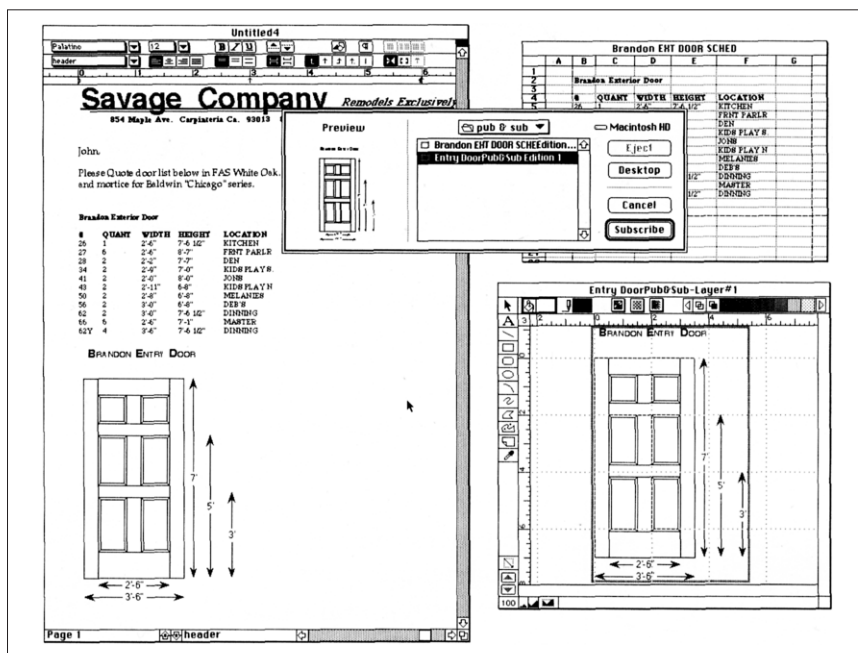
### Phone Home

A piece of software from Apple called *Remote Access* works in conjunction with System 7 and a modem to let computers connect over the telephone line. Using a computer on the job site, for example, you can call up a file from a computer at the office and print it out at the site. From the office computer, you can connect to the site computer to look at the weekly payroll file. Even better, Remote Access allows the superintendent on the job site and the project engineer in his office to look at, manipulate, and discuss a drawing simultaneously. One of them can literally point to parts of the drawing with the mouse while the other watches it happen on his own screen.

### On-Screen Help

Another System 7 feature that will be helpful to beginners is called "Balloon Help." With Balloon Help turned on, wherever you point the mouse, a little cartoon balloon appears with text that describes what you are pointing at. Balloon Help is the perfect way to scout out the workings of a new program. When you no longer need the help and the balloons begin to drive you nuts, you can turn them off. ■

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Using System 7, the door schedule in Microsoft Excel (upper right) and the drawing in MacDraw (lower right) can be "published" to a letter written in Microsoft Word (left), which "subscribes." The letter is now a "compound" document and will be updated every time data changes in the spreadsheet or CAD programs.