

Switching to the Mac **to be** an indie Mac developer

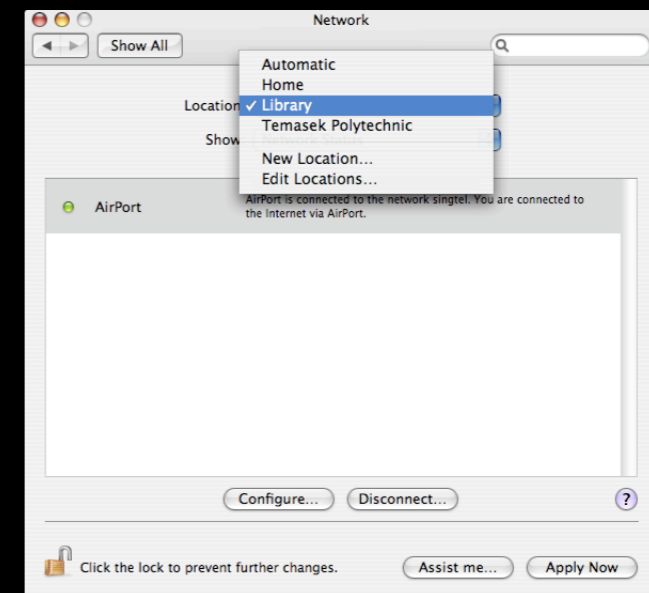
A bittersweet true story in 15 slides
by Joe Goh

<http://www.funkeemonk.com/>



You had me at System Preferences

- *“What’s this silly Mac thing you’ve got over there?” - me to sister on her new iBook.*
- *“You can switch between networks in 2 clicks?! That takes ages to do in Windows!”*



- In **love** with the Mac - in **5 minutes**.

The Big Switch

- Borrowed the iBook for a few days and discovered lots of other things even more cool than System Preferences.
- I've gone from an Apple][to DOS, to Windows 3.11, to Windows 95, to Windows 2000, to Linux, to FreeBSD, to OpenBSD.

- Mac OS X is **The One**.



- I have to create something for the Mac - fulltime. Now. And i'm going to switch to the Mac to do it.

The Blue Pill or The Red Pill

- The Matrix - stay in a well paying, stable job as a software engineer and be able to afford to eat nice Mexican food and drink microbrewery beer every weekend.
- Or take the Red Pill everyday as an indie developer, risking all your savings and living like a college student again on rice and tea.
- Just to scratch the incredible itch to create something for the Mac.
- Let's see how deep this rabbit hole goes!



What should I make?

- One rainy afternoon, The Girlfriend and I started reading a year's worth of SMS from my Treo 650.
- *“This is pretty fun to read!”* - Girlfriend and me.
- *“A program to take the SMS from a Treo 650 and put it on a Mac! Why isn't there something like this?!”* - Me.
- And thus, **a new Mac application is born.**

Do I even have a chance?

- How to **motivate yourself** to do anything **using nutty statistics**.
- When I launch the app by the end of 2006, there should be 3 million Treo users.
- Maybe 5% of them have a Mac?
- That gives 150,000 with both a Mac and a Treo.
- If 5% of those people buy my app at \$25, that's \$187,500! There's a chance of making this work!

1068 days?

- <http://www.gusmueller.com/blog/archives/2005/12/25.html> - “How to become an independent programmer in just 1068 days.”
- 1068 days?! I’ll be like... 30!!! And married, with kids and a house. And a cat.
- My day job takes all the mental energy out of me, no way I can do this part-time on nights and weekends (without doing a poor job at the day job).
- No way i’m going to be an indie developer at 30 with mouths to feed and a house to pay off.

Let's see...

- I have **less than 24 hours** of hands-on time with a Mac. Total. In my entire lifetime. Yeah, this lifetime.
- I know zilch about writing software for the Mac. All I know is that i'll love to do it.
- This is going to be easy! Hahahahahahahahaha...
- /me sends resignation letter to The Boss.
- Yeah, i'm known to be a really cautious person.

Learn. Code. Repeat.

- Did I mention that i'm a total Mac n00b and never written any software for the Mac before?
- Learn Cocoa and Objective-C. Experiment and code. Marvel at how beautiful Cocoa is. Curse and go nuts when I hit those nasty edge cases that nobody else seems to hit.
- Live off savings, eat cheap food, code all day, without any promise of any reward at the end.
- Great times!

What's the Catch?

- I used up all my savings. And then some.
- **Working all day without any pay** is draining.
- *“I miss Mexican and beer!! Man, I want to quit! This stuff is hard - i’ll go back to my day job!”*
- *“Oh wait, there’s nothing to go back to - this is my day job. And this stuff is getting fun. And remember those nutty statistics? Just hang in there!”*
- *Back to work!*

Woohoo! 1.0!

- After 8 tough months of working without pay
- its finally ready!



- Introducing FunkeeStory 1.0!
- A trickling of sales in the first 2 weeks.
- Fight real hard not to be depressed and continue working harder than ever before, while you have **not one sale for the next 2 weeks.**

The Story So Far

- 4 months later - about one sale every weekday.
- FunkeeStory costs \$20 now - take away eSellerate's charges gives \$18.
- My operating/living expenses costs \$9 a day.
- \$9 left and I work at minimum 12 hours a day...
- Gives **\$0.75/hour!** I'm going to be rich!
- In a hundred years.

Your app is too expensive!

- I've had such comments even after I discounted FunkeeStory from \$25 to \$20.
- Is \$20 or even \$25 too much for my customers?
- A Treo costs \$600 and the cheapest iMac is \$1,000.
- $\$20 / \$1600 = 1.25\%$ of the price of your Treo + Mac. \$25 gives 1.5%. Not 15% folks - just 1.5%.
- Would you tip your waiter 1.5%?



What Keeps Me Going

- **I love my work.** Creating Mac software is great fun.
- People buying my app - without people paying for my app, I would have given up by the 2nd month.
- Belief that sales will be better when I polish the app further and add more features.
- Emails telling me how much they love my app and how long they've been waiting for something like this.
- Unfortunately, **I can't live on good feelings alone...**

We Need Your Help

- Software isn't created by computers or robots - its created by **real people** with bills to pay and need food to stay alive to continue working on these apps you use everyday.
- There are hundreds of other indie developers just like me living off sales from their apps.
- We need your support to keep going - and that means buying a license straight from the developers.