

CROSSCURRENTS

THE CLICHÉ EXPERT TESTIFIES ON COMPUTER MAGAZINES

(With apologies to Frank Sullivan)

Q: *Mr. Arbuthnet, you claim to be an expert on computer magazines.*

A: I'm an ink-stained wretch, yes.

Q: *What exactly do computer magazines do?*

A: They're cutting-edge avatars of the digital revolution. They're real world, with real solutions for real people. They help you buy smart, shop smart, think smart, and just plain be smart!

Q: *Clearly you're committed to the business.*

A: Nah. I'm just doing this until I finish my novel.

Q: *Which is?*

A: *Microsoft Bad, Apple Good.* It'll slay the kids in Redmond.

Q: *How does a computer magazine review a product?*

A: We put it through a grueling set of real-world benchmarks managed by our expert staff of technicians. No whetstone goes unturned. We test usability, sustainability, feasibility, and flammability, because user safety is Job 1.

Q: *What about bias? Don't manufacturers pressure you to write positive reviews?*

A: We stand behind our reviews. They're fair, objective, and based on empirical testing until we say otherwise, in which case we'll run a correction on page 68.

Q: *Is the Mac a key player in the industry?*

A: Steve Jobs is a genius. And the iMac is not just a completely new computer but a completely new idea. It's designed around a simple pre-

mise: that the Internet should be as easy to use as a Macintosh.

Q: *Um ... did you get that from the Apple Web site?*

A: Are you accusing me of plagiarism? Are you threatening my First Amendment rights to lift, er, write not just the facts, but the *truth*?

Q: *My mistake. So what is the real story on the iMac?*

A: Ahahaha. I don't have an asbestos e-mail box, so I'll pass on that one. Suffice it to say, with easy online access and a stunning new design, iMac combines all the excitement of the Internet with all the capabilities of a Macintosh.

Q: *What's your take on Y2K?*

A: The Year 2000 "problem" is a myth. Or a disaster. Planes may fall out of the sky. Hair dryers may explode. The lion will lie down with the lamb. Or not. Only time will tell.

Q: *What about Bill Gates? Isn't he trying to bribe every magazine editor he can find to guarantee positive coverage?*

A: Sure, people accuse us of selling out. But if I was in Bill Gates' pocket, don't you think I'd drive a nicer car? Or have a copy of Windows that doesn't crash? Besides, he never signs the checks he sends, so why should I boost his products?

Q: *Thank you. ★*

Your comments, as always, are welcome. E-mail me at rluhn@aol.com or rluhn@compuserve.com or write me care of Computer Currents.

