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# Personal Computer Satisfaction

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*An Independent Study of People Who  
use Both Macintosh and Windows 95 Computers*

**EVANS**  
RESEARCH  
ASSOCIATES

## SUMMARY

This report summarizes the key findings of a personal computer satisfaction study conducted in March and April, 1996, by Evans Research Associates, an independent market research company.

The study was conducted with 150 people who regularly use both Apple® Macintosh® computers running System 7.5 and Windows 95-based PCs in business, home, and education. Since these “dual users” are experienced with both systems, they can provide an informed and balanced comparison.

Overall, people who use both systems rate the Macintosh computer higher in overall satisfaction, user productivity, ease of use, creativity, and other categories.

Here are the details:

- **Macintosh computers are more satisfying than Windows 95 PCs.** Users rated Macintosh computers significantly higher than Windows 95 PCs in overall satisfaction.
- **Macintosh systems let users be more creative.** When asked which system lets them be more creative, dual users chose the Macintosh system by almost two to one.
- **Macintosh systems are more enjoyable.** When asked which system is more enjoyable to use, 52 percent of the participants said Macintosh, compared to 39 percent for Windows 95 PCs.
- **Macintosh computers rate much higher in a wide variety of attributes.** Dual users were asked to rate both of their systems on several attributes using a 1–10 scale, where 10 was excellent. Macintosh computers received very good to excellent marks (8–10) on these attributes from significantly more people than Windows 95. For example, when asked about “overall satisfaction,” 60 percent gave Macintosh computers a score of 8–10 compared with 41 percent who gave that rating to Windows 95 PCs. The following table lists the very good to excellent responses for the two computer systems

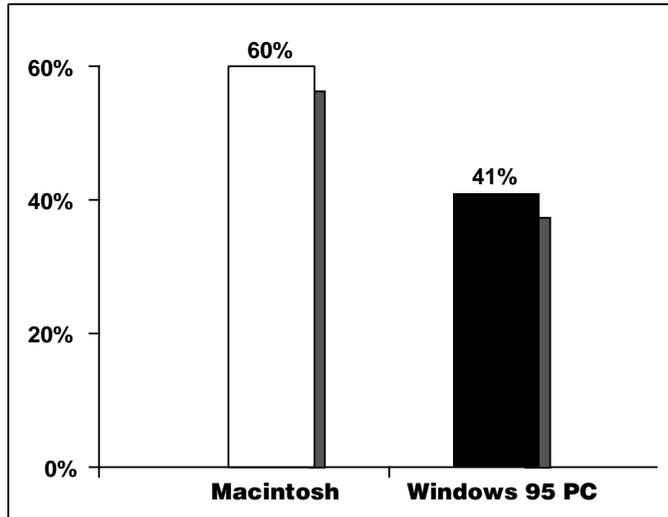
	<b>Macintosh computer w/ System 7.5</b>	<b>Windows 95 PC</b>
Overall satisfaction	60%	41%
Overall productivity	59%	42%
Overall ease of use	78%	37%
Graphics and publishing	85%	27%
Multimedia	71%	36%
Ease of learning	78%	29%
Ease of connecting peripherals	74%	39%
Ease of setup and installation	69%	33%
Ease of connecting to a LAN	62%	42%
Running educational software	46%	32%
Ease of troubleshooting	41%	21%

- **Verbatim responses.** Sample comments from respondents are on page 10.

## ATTRIBUTE RATINGS (on a 1-10 scale)

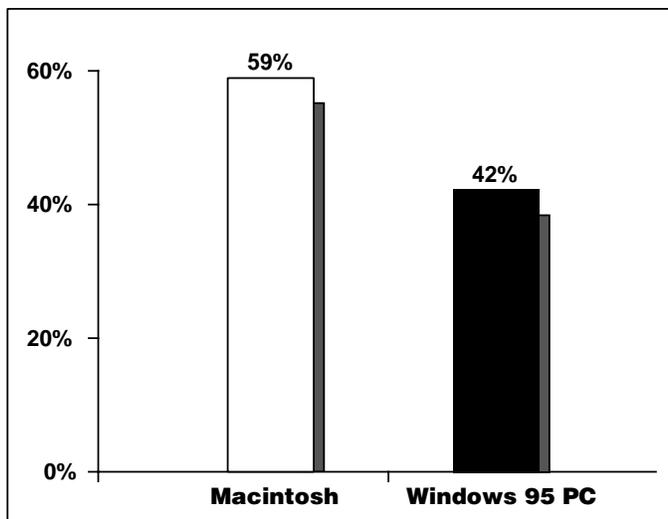
These questions asked dual users to rate each system on a series of specific attributes, using a 1-10 scale in which 1=poor and 10=excellent. The charts show the percentage of users giving a rating in the very good to excellent range (from 8 to 10).

### Macintosh computers rate higher in overall satisfaction.



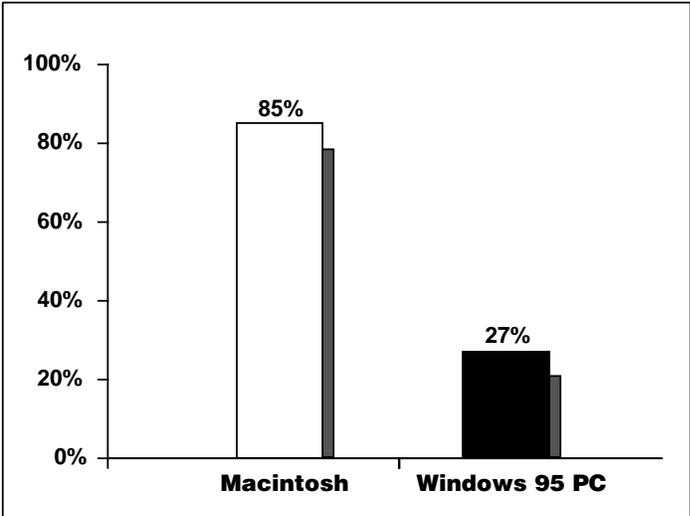
Sixty percent of the dual users rated their Macintosh system very good to excellent in overall satisfaction (8-10 on a 10-point scale). Only 41 percent gave their Windows 95 PCs the same rating.

### Macintosh systems rate higher in overall productivity.



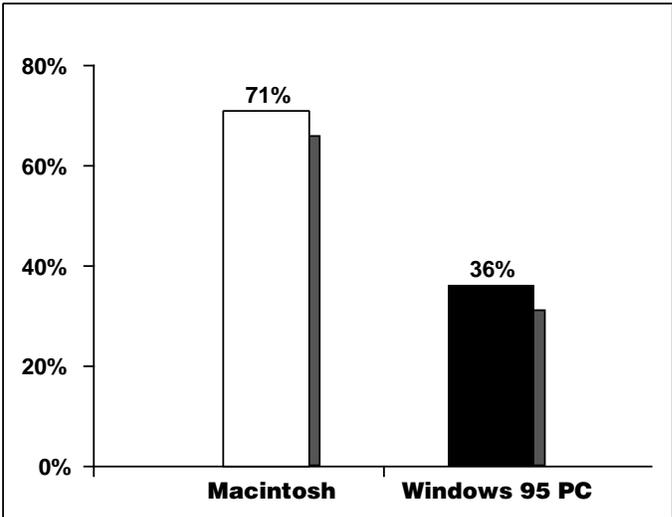
In overall productivity, the percent of dual users rating the Macintosh computer very good to excellent was 59 percent. Just 42 percent gave that same rating to their Windows 95 PC.

**Macintosh systems are ahead for graphics and publishing.**



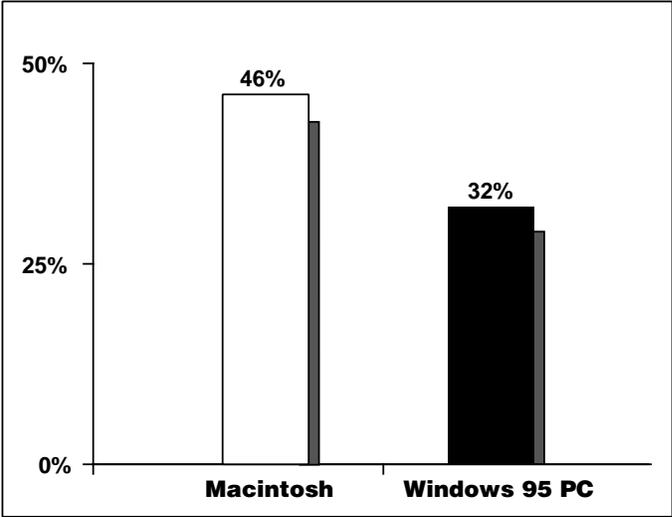
In graphics and publishing, the number of dual users who rated the Macintosh computer very good to excellent was more than three times the number giving a high score to Windows 95.

**Macintosh multimedia capabilities rate higher.**



In multimedia, almost twice as many participants gave a very good to excellent score to the Macintosh computer as compared to a PC with Windows 95.

**Macintosh systems are preferred for running learning and educational software.**

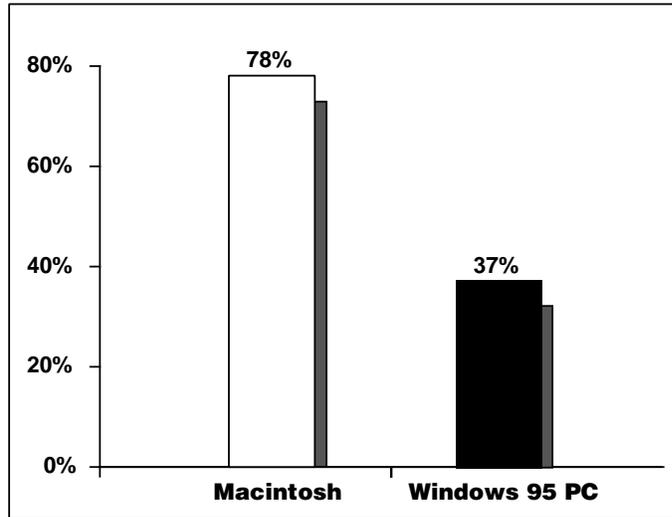


When asked to rate the systems on how well they run learning and educational software, 46 percent gave the Macintosh computer a very good to excellent rating. Only 32 percent gave the same score to their Windows 95 PCs.

## EASE OF USE

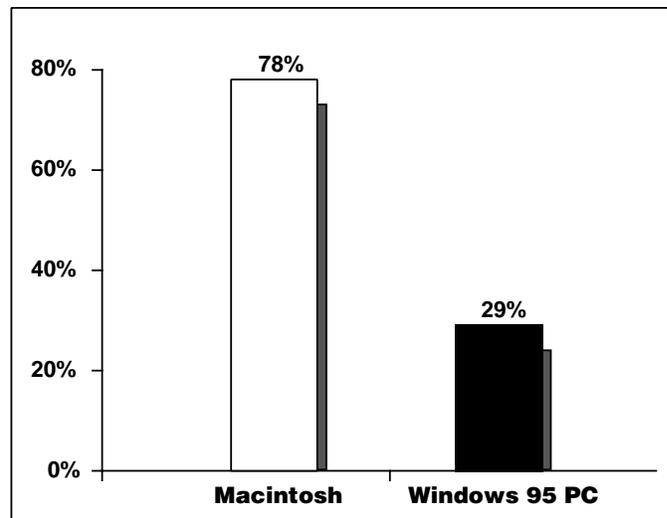
One of the most common claims made about Windows 95 is that it matches the ease of use of an Apple Macintosh computer. The study explored that question in depth by asking a series of ease of use questions.

### Macintosh computers are easier to use, overall.



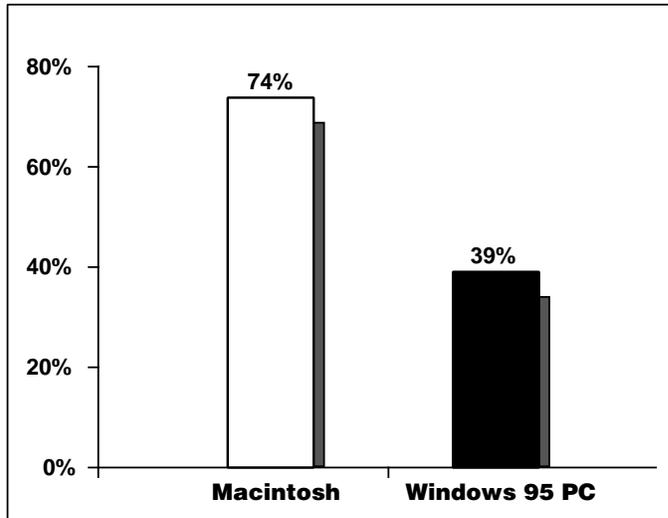
Macintosh systems were a major winner in overall ease of use, rated very good to excellent by more than three quarters of the dual users. Windows 95 received the same rating from fewer than 4 in 10 dual users.

### Macintosh systems are easier to learn.



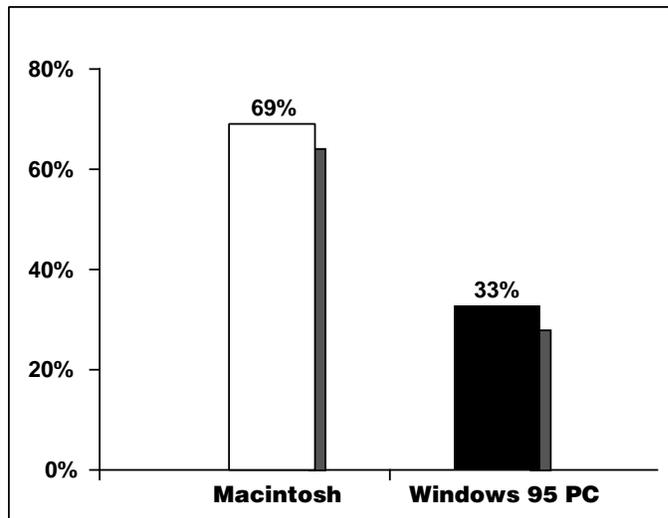
Seventy-eight percent of dual users rated the Macintosh computer very good to excellent for ease of learning. Just 29 percent gave the same score to a PC with Windows 95.

**It's easier to connect peripherals to a Macintosh computer.**



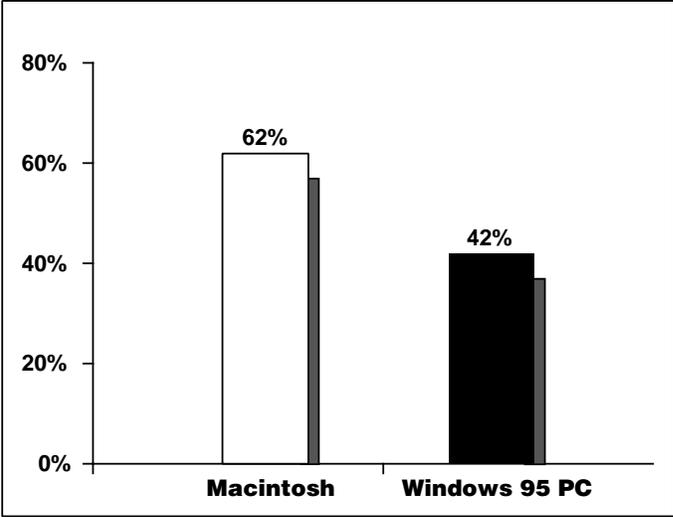
Only 39 percent of dual users gave Windows 95 a high rating in connecting peripherals, compared to 74 percent for Macintosh computers.

**It's easier to set up and install a Macintosh system.**



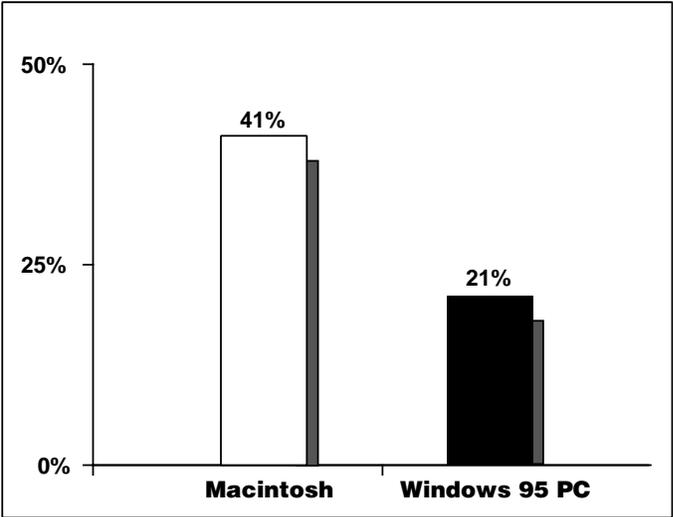
In ease of installation, Macintosh systems received top marks from 69 percent of the dual users. Windows 95 PCs received high marks from 33 percent.

**It's easier to connect a Macintosh computer to a local area network.**



Macintosh computers rated ahead of Windows 95 PCs in ease of connecting to a LAN. More than 60 percent of dual users gave a high rating to Macintosh computers; 42 percent gave the same rating to Windows 95 PCs.

**It's easier to troubleshoot a Macintosh.**

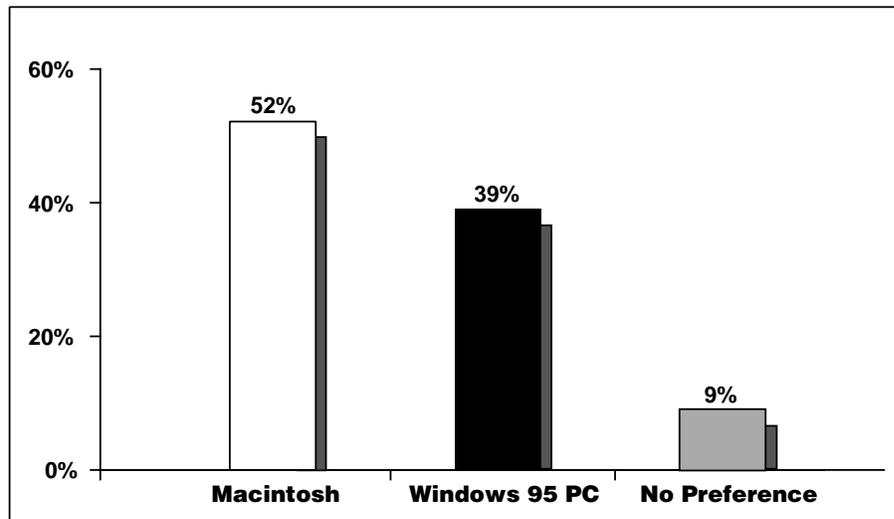


Macintosh systems were rated as substantially less difficult to troubleshoot than PCs with Windows 95. The percent of dual users giving the Macintosh computer a very good to excellent score was almost double that of the rating Windows PC rating.

## OTHER RATINGS

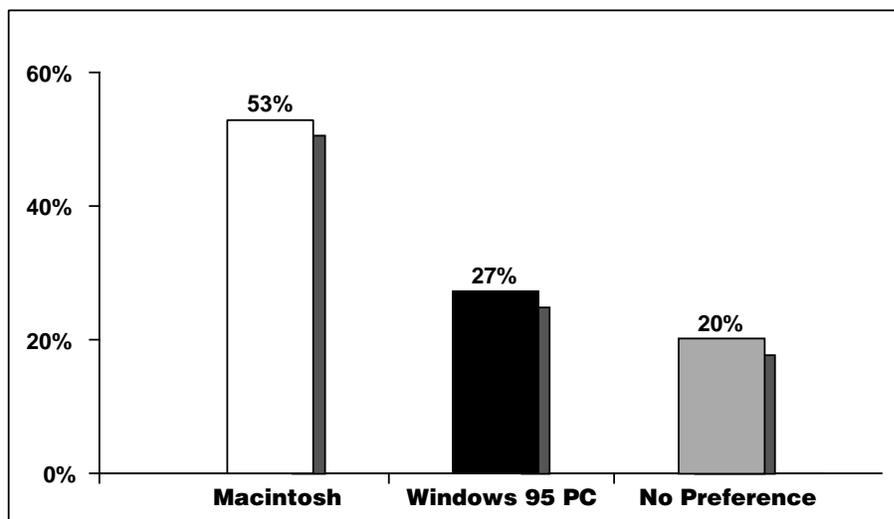
These questions asked dual users to pick which system is best for various uses. Survey participants had to choose one system, as opposed to the 1–10 attribute ratings in which they ranked both systems.

### “Which system is more enjoyable to use?”



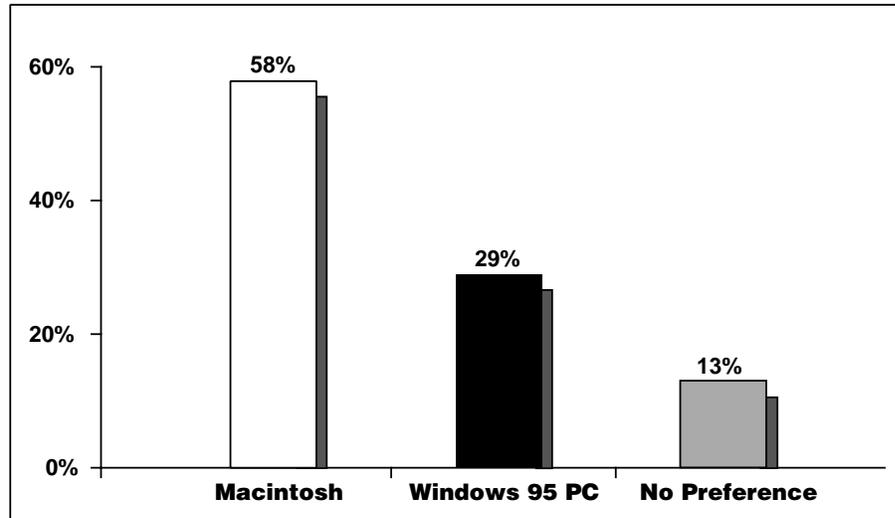
Macintosh computers were selected as “more enjoyable to use” than Windows 95 PCs by 52 percent of participants.

### “Which system allows you to be more creative?”



Macintosh systems were chosen for creativity by 53 percent of participants, with Windows 95 getting 27 percent.

**“Which system is more stable?”**



For stability, Macintosh computers were preferred two to one. (See the verbatim responses on the next page for detailed comments on stability issues.)

## VERBATIM RESPONSES

Respondents were also asked for comments. Here are some samples expanding on the findings of the study:

*"Anytime I want to do graphics, I do them on the System 7.5. I just find it more appealing. I like the feel of it, how easy it is to move around—from application to application, from task to task, from window to window."*

*"I find that the interface is always consistent no matter what application I install. On the Mac, I don't have to worry about where I put applications—on Windows, if you try to move an application from one place to another, it will break."*

*"I do networking hardware. If I have to install an Ethernet card, it's easier to install on a Macintosh, because the configuration process of the operating system is much simpler on the Mac. Windows 95 is not yet plug and play."*

*"The (Macintosh) interface doesn't change when you upgrade, to confuse users. Windows 95 upgrades to a totally different interface, very confusing for users—since I do training on both systems, I know."*

*"Windows 95 is a cheap [imitation] of the Macintosh operating environment. I specifically use Macintosh System 7.5 for multimedia work. It has a built-in plug and play that allows me to do sound manipulations, sound editing, video in and out, and other stuff."*

*"I prefer 7.5 for Internet connection because although there are some limitations, it stays up longer than with Windows 95."*

*"I can't get Windows 95 to work on my machine properly—it keeps crashing. It has taken a while to figure out and get it running right. 7.5 is more hardware compatible."*

*"(Windows 95) doesn't smile back me when I turn it on."*

*"Involving the PPP Internet account for the Macintosh, all I had to do was input data for usage in two places, while the Windows 95 was much more complicated and complex. I had to go four or five places to input the data, and tune and tweak it trying to get it to work with the Internet. It kept telling me how it needed to access the modem. I couldn't get it to work."*

*"What you see on the 7.5 screen is pretty much what you'll get, whereas you have to do a lot of bouncing with Windows 95, and it's very clumsy."*

*"(Macintosh) technologies are first and better."*

*"I have access to three computers. For power I use my Sun, for fun I'll use Mac, and the Windows is more like a paper weight. I'll use the Mac to cruise the Internet and send e-mail. It doesn't crash and the applications are easy to load. With Windows 95, you need all these drivers ....Chances are if I slap my system into your Mac, it'll work. With Windows, there's a million things that can go wrong."*

*"The Mac System 7.5 has been developed and refined over the past 10 years into a very intuitive product, whereas Windows 95 is too new a product, hasn't progressed as far, and is too clumsy and awkward at present. The drag and drop features between applications are something Windows 95 doesn't have—also the desktop interface is easier on 7.5, Windows is still running on top of DOS."*

## **SAMPLING AND METHODOLOGY**

### **Sample Selection**

The sampling source was a random list from CMP's merged data files of U.S. organizations that have Macintosh computers and Windows 95 PCs. Listings contained both small companies (less than 100 employees), medium-sized to large companies (100 or more employees), and educational institutions. A small portion of the sample was taken from Dun & Bradstreet's office-intensive database file.

### **Sample Specifications**

Participation was limited to people who use both Macintosh computers running System 7.5 and personal computers running Windows 95 on a regular basis.

The interviewers asked to be directed to people who use both Macintosh and Windows. Specifically, they asked for users in the following areas:

Finance/Accounting	Human Resources/Personnel
Marketing/Sales	Graphics/Art/Design
Legal	R&D
Engineering	Purchasing

The order of the departments was rotated to ensure equal balance. If no qualified users were available in these departments, the MIS/DP area was included. A total of 150 interviews were completed, 57 with people in MIS/DP departments.

### **Interviews**

All interviews were conducted by telephone between March 12 and April 1, 1996. Once the users were qualified, they were asked several overall preference questions, and then were asked to rate the systems they use on a series of specific attributes. Ten-point scales were used for rating the attributes where 1 equalled poor and 10 equalled excellent.

### **Data Processing**

Data were cleaned using standard procedures to check for proper use of skip patterns and internal consistency. All tabulations were checked thoroughly.

### **Data Analysis**

All results in this report are statistically significant at a 95 percent confidence level, with one exception: the "enjoyable" finding is significant at the 90 percent confidence level.

### **Evans Research Associates**

Evans Research Associates is an independent marketing research firm established in 1975 and located in San Francisco, California. Evans Research is experienced with sampling and market measurement issues in national and regional consumer and business markets. Recent clients include: Wells Fargo Bank, Levi Strauss, Charles Schwab, Dialog Information Systems, Logitech, Hewlett-Packard, Apple Computer, U.S. Robotics, Shaklee Corporation, North American Mortgage Company, World Savings, Intuit, 3Com, Raychem, The California Lottery, and Kaiser Permanente.

