

Re: ANN: New SBIG Camera-Control Software for Intel Macs

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- *From:* Davoud <star@xxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* Wed, 07 Mar 2007 20:54:34 GMT
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In article <1173273470.848171.106050@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx>, RMOLLISE wrote:

I've been idly turning over the idea of getting a Mac (again), and the Equinox programs look pretty good. What I couldn't find was any documentation as to the exact features of the star atlas/planetarium program...catalogs...number of objects, etc.

I have e-mailed you a copy of the Equinox manual -- a PDF document. It should explain most everything. There is an Equinox forum at <<http://tech.groups.yahoo.com/group/mpj-equinox>>. The author, Darryl Robertson, is very responsive.

This is not a rich-featured program in the way that TheSky 6 is; in the main sky window it displays stars only to Mag 6 and deep-sky objects to mag 16. Comets are displayed to mag 16 and minor planets to mag 24. In the field of view window, however, stars to mag 12 are displayed. A click of the mouse updates the comet and minor-planet database. Equinox catalogues can be modified, but the process is involved. I believe that the star and deep-sky catalogues each contain about 10,000 objects.

The FOV window is based on your telescope settings; Equinox 6 can remember five telescopes with 10 eyepieces each. Mount protocols include LX 200, LX200 GPS, AstroPhysics, NexStar 5, NexStar GPS, Temma II, MCU HEQ5/6, and Gemini. Equinox Image adds control for various SBIG filter wheels, AO7/AOL, and Robofocus and Optec focusers.

If you also have Astroplanner a Caps-lock click sends the FOV to Astroplanner where you have extensive control over a wide variety of catalogues, including a deeper magnitude range. If you haven't tried Astroplanner you can download a fully functional (limited number of databases) copy /for/ /Windows/ at no cost from <<http://www.ilangainc.com/astroplanner/index.html>>. This version is not time-limited. Try it with Cartes du Ciel. CduC and Astroplanner for Windows interact in the same way that Equinox 6 and Astroplanner for Mac interact.

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It's going to be great for Mac users as well as Windows users when Bisque completes their software transition. This isn't a port of Windows software to Mac OS X, but a complete re-write of all of their software for Mac and Windows, and maybe Linux (though stats I have seen [Illinois Institute of Technology and Rice University] say that OS X is making gains against Linux in professional astronomy.) I know that at least some of Bisque's development is being done on Macs now, and that bodes well for the result, because Mac-trained programmers bring strong human-interface discipline to the art and science of programming, and that leads to better software. I cite Excel, Word, and most of the Adobe apps as examples. Images Plus might be a good example of the opposite.

People used to -- still do, I guess -- talk about Mac and Windows as an either-or proposition. This is patently silly, since one could always own a Mac and an Intel computer. But things have gotten much easier with Apple's switch to Intel processors. One can boot either-or, or one can run the two OS's simultaneously with virtualization. I mostly do either-or. The Mac OS can read NTFS and read/write FAT32, so once I have finished doing whatever photon collecting and/or processing I want to do in Windows I reboot in the Mac OS for final processing, web page creation, and all the other things I do with computers.

Many people misunderstand Apple's Bootcamp software, which allows Windows to be run on a Mac. This software does only two things: it facilitates a non-destructive partitioning of a Mac HD to create an NTFS or FAT32 partition, and it writes a Windows driver CD. Once Windows is installed and running the Mac OS plays no part; it's not as if Bootcamp or some other OS X software is running in the background facilitating the Windows installation; the Mac *is* a native Windows machine at that point -- distinguished from other such machines only by the fact that it can *also* run the world's *best* OS. The video card, RAM, HD, DVD/CD drive, et al, are off-the-OEM-shelf and are identical to those found in any Intel-based computer; none of these is proprietary. A quick glance at System Info for this iMac reveals a Seagate HD, Matsushita CD/DVD, NVIDIA GeForce 7600 GT video, Intel High Definition Audio, etc.

As for me, in spite of what I might have said here and there I have been a Windows user for many years because I won't limit my ability to do what I want to do on ideological grounds. For now, I can't imagine why anyone who wants to do more than surf and e-mail would buy a computer that can *only* run Windows! Apple's sales figures since the Intel transition show that a lot of people feel that way.

Davoud

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