Interview with Logos Research Systems
Regarding the Announcement of a Mac Version
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Interviewer: Ken Ristau, http://anduril.ca/bible/biblesoftware.html

1. So, who's the Mac team at Logos Research Systems?

Everybody! While there are leads for certain responsibilities, our hope is to minimize platform wars in the company. We're all on the Logos Bible Software team.

2. When did development (that is, actual code development) on the Mac version begin? Are you at an alpha stage yet? When do you expect to begin beta testing?

Beginning in early March we put together a highly detailed specification, then refined it a number of times. It took a fair amount of effort to think through the implementation of existing features on the new operating system. Code development began in early April and is moving along nicely. Logos Bible Software is a large, feature-rich application so it will be some time yet before we begin beta testing.

3. Any "friendly wars" going on yet in the office between the Mac and the PC side?

Actually, we're working to expose everyone here to the new platform, whether or not they will be working on the Mac directly. We are putting Macs on desks all over the company, and we're passing around copies of MacAddict and Macworld so that those who are new to the Mac can get some exposure to the culture.

Frankly, we're really not into the either-or thing when it comes to platform. The Mac and the Windows PC each have features to love.

4. What's been the biggest challenge so far in bringing the Libronix Digital Library System and Logos Bible Software to the Mac platform? What future problems do you anticipate?

We've had to work out ways to deal with the fact that some Windows technologies don't exist on the Mac.

5. How does Logos envision the relationship between its PC and Mac products? Given that the PC platform is still likely to provide the bulk of sales, will this effect/hamper/delay ongoing development of the Mac product in the future? Will the cost of the programs be the same?

Many people don't realize this about Logos, but we're booksellers. Our business is books, which is why we've always given the engine away for free. We view the Macintosh as another place to sell our 4,000 books. It's a little like opening a chain of Barnes & Noble stores in a country where books have been hard to buy. We're opening up shop and saying, "Come and get 'em!"

There's no way to predict the future, but obviously we're investing a lot of resources and time into the Mac development and we want it to succeed. We think there's a pent-up demand for Bible reference books on the Mac and we're hoping to tap into that in order to pay for the development effort.

Pricing and product configurations have not yet been determined, but our goal is to make it easy and inexpensive for people who buy the PC version to use it on the Mac and vice versa.

6. Will Logos for Mac integrate with the new Spotlight feature in Mac OS X "Tiger"? Will Logos for Mac makes use of the Dashboard?

We don't want to talk about feature specifics yet.

7. Will the competition already on the Mac platform inform the way Logos delivers its Mac version? If so, how?

We haven't devoted a lot of time to studying other Bible software products on the Mac, and we're not trying to go head-to-head with anyone. We know there's a real deficit of Bible reference books on that platform, and we're focused on filling the need.

Obvious differences do exist between our software and that of others, but the differences don't derive from the platform. Instead they stem from a different design philosophy. For example, Logos Bible Software is built around the digital library concept, which is something we pioneered and have refined over the past 14 years. It's a powerful concept that transcends operating systems and can supercharge your study.

The digital library is an extension of the print library, and is built around established library science protocol. Libraries follow time-tested methods for organizing and retrieving information, and they're something you already know how to use. A **digital** library includes automation to eliminate tedious or time-wasting tasks involved with research, yet preserves freedom in how to access information. Logos Bible Software does not lock users into a "hub and spoke" system where they are forced to study a certain way but instead allows the user to pull any book off the shelf, move from one book to another book, or search the entire library. If the Logos user prefers a hub and spoke style of study, he or she can use the automated reports, context menus, and other features to study that way as well...it's just not mandatory.

I suspect we'll see the influence move the other direction, as other software publishers work to expand their booklists and loosen up their design architecture .

8. How will Logos' move to the Mac platform affect its relationship with publishers who already deliver their books on the Mac through other products? Will Logos be allowed to deliver all of its library on the Mac platform or are there agreements in place that would prevent that in some cases?

At this point, I don't know of any such restrictions. This announcement has met with a positive response from publishers, as it means a greater market for the electronic editions of their books.

8. The "Series X" moniker for Logos Bible Software has always struck me as playing on the Mac OS X name, especially because the previous version of Logos Bible Software before "Series X" was 2.1. Why did Logos jump from 2.1 to "Series X" and did the Mac OS X name influence that decision?

For one thing, Logos Bible Software Series X is a new app, built on the all-new Libronix Digital Library System. It's not really a descendant of Logos Library System 2.1, since it has a different code base.

Another reason is that X is simply one of the coolest letters around. Here's a bit of trivia for you...our original Series X box design started out as a solid-color surface with a big, embossed "X" on the front. Then Apple released Mac OS X and we had to scrap the idea. So I guess you could say we were riding the same wave as the people at Apple.

10. Are there any plans to support PPC, that is pre-Mac OS X platforms?

No.

11. What advantages does the Mac platform provide over the PC platform (and vice versa) for Logos Bible Software?

Cocoa has some rich components that we can use as-is instead of having to custom-engineer certain objects as we do on the Windows side. This provides some efficiencies.

12. Your website FAQ mentions that you will not immediately bring over all the features from the PC version? Why is this and what other features may not immediately appear in the Mac version?

Development costs and time to market. The ultimate goal is full feature parity between the Windows and Mac versions, and it's possible we may yet achieve that in version 1.0. But we have a timetable we'd like to meet and a start-up budget we have to maintain, so we're realistic enough to know that some lower-priority features might get cut. For example, we're fully scriptable on the Windows side because we use JavaScript and DHTML to drive the user interface. On the Mac we're doing native UI, and we may not have Apple Script support in the first release.

This is the real world of software development. Fortunately, software is a fluid product so it's only a matter of time until additional features can be added.

13. Will the Mac version have features that the PC version won't? If so, can you provide some examples?

We expect that both versions will have unique platform-specific features, but we can't see a good reason not to eventually have the same Bible study related features on both platforms.

14. Can you provide any screen shots of the new Mac product?

Not yet...we want to keep you in suspense for a little longer. :-)

15. Anything you'd like to add?

Thanks for the opportunity to do this interview!

Thank-you for the interview and I look forward to reading and posting your responses.