Macintosh Computers: What is SRS Sound? (11/96)

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TOPIC --

I have a Power Macintosh 5400/120 computer, and I've noticed that there is an
option in the Sound & Monitors control panel called SRS Sound. I can only Enable
or Disable it. However, I'm not really sure what SRS Sound is or what benefits
it provides if I enable it.

DISCUSSION ---

SRS (Sound Retrieval System) is proprietary technology from SRS Labs, which
Apple has licensed and implemented on the Power Macintosh 5400 and 6400;
Macintosh Performa 6400 series; and Macintosh Performa 6360/160 computers in
order to enhance the sound field of these computers.

The useability, compatibility, and performance of the computer is not affected
if SRS sound is enabled or disabled. However, enabling SRS yields a more
spacious stereo sound from the computer. You can try it both ways to determine
which you prefer.

Stereo, Surround Sound, and SRS are all common forms of sound expansion
techniques, but SRS differs primarily because it does not require special
encoding or recording processes or critical listening position ("sweet spot").

Instead, SRS uses psychoacoustic (how your ears and brain interpret the sound)
principles. The result is that any sound can be played back using SRS and you do
not need to listen to it from a specific location to experience the effect. SRS
accomplishes this by processing the ambient or reflected sounds so that they
take on the audio characteristics of sounds naturally entering the ear from the
side. The brain thus perceives these sounds as though they were actually coming
from the sides or, in some cases, from behind the head, rather than from the two
front stereo speakers.

The following chart provides an overview of the differences among stereo,
surround sound, and SRS. Additional information about SRS is available from SRS
Labs web site <http://www.srslabs.com/>.

Begin_Table

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Characteristics	Stereo	Surround Sound	SRS
Encoding	YES Using 2 or more microphones	YES Using 4 or 5 microphones or special techniques	NO Works with any source such as mono, stereo, or surround technologies
Channels	YES Left (L) & Right (R) channels.	YES 4 or 5 channels Front left channel to front rt. speaker, and so on.	NO
Speakers	2	4 or 5 Surrounding listener	2
Sweet spot?	YES	YES	NO

End_Table

Note: The word 'SRS' and the SRS Symbol - (•) - are registered trademarks of SRS Labs, Inc.

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