

macCompanion

YOUR GUIDE TO ALL THINGS MAC OS X

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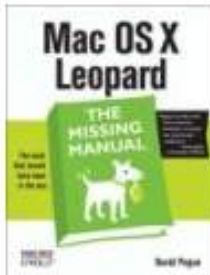
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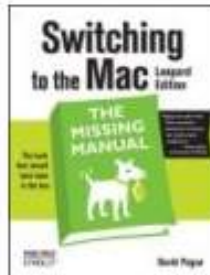
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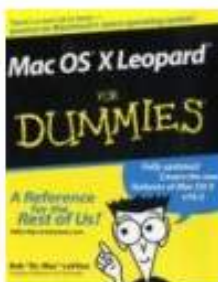
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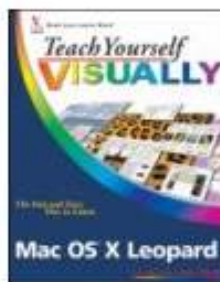
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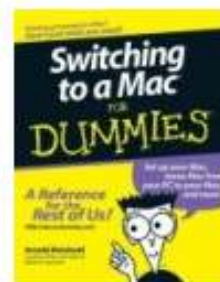
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Letter from the CEO

Political Remorse and Thanksgiving

By Robert Pritchett

Perhaps by the time you read this, we will have gone through another presidential voting cycle for the US "unscathed". Or not.

We have seen the US Stock Market do its dance of ten thousand stings, the "bailout" of the banking industry and the erosion of the US Constitution as the country continues its "experiment with Socialism". Oh yeah, and there is a global war on "terrorism" going on.

My mother sent me this not too long ago –

Redistribution of Wealth

"Today on my way to lunch I passed a homeless guy with a sign that read 'Vote Obama, I need the money.' I laughed.

Once in the restaurant, I notice that my server had on a 'Obama 08' tie, again I laughed as he had given away his political preference--just imagine the coincidence.

When the bill came, I decided not to tip the server and explained to him that I was exploring the Obama redistribution of wealth concept. He stood there in disbelief while I told him that I was going to redistribute his tip to someone who I deemed more in need--the homeless guy outside. The server angrily stormed from my sight.

I went outside, gave the homeless guy \$10 and told him to thank the server inside as I've decided he could use the money more. The homeless guy was grateful.

At the end of my rather unscientific redistribution experiment, I realized the homeless guy was grateful for the money he did not earn, but the waiter was pretty angry that I gave away the money he did earn even though the actual recipient needed money more.

I guess redistribution of wealth is an easier thing to swallow in concept than in practical application.

You might try this experiment yourself."

Now, I think we have earned our keep with publishing *macCompanion* magazine each month for the last 7 years. At least \$1 billion was spent by the political parties to get their person into the White House for the next 4 years. There is so much *we* could have done with that money! But all is not lost. You can practice a little redistribution of your wealth by sending some of it our direction via PayPal. At least you will know we asked for a hand up instead of a hand out. And we don't campaign on empty promises. If you are in business, you can always deduct the amount, because reading our magazine as a way to improve your business falls into the category of being a business expense.

And we had nothing to do at all with ACORN, but like the tree, we have been slowly growing over the years. Unlike the militant radical organization, we don't strong-arm, bully or commit any kind of fraud to get you to read us.

Staff Changes

You might want to "give it up" for Dan Robinson - <http://www.maccompanion.com/macc/info/AboutUs/danrobinson.html>, who is the newest member on our staff. He is a Macintosh Consultant by trade and joined our team in October. Please read his reviews and articles and let him know what you think of his writing. You can do that by registering with ...

MyAppleSpace

If you have been to our website recently, you will notice that the *macCompanion* Blog has been redirected to MyAppleSpace - <http://www.myapplespace.com/group/maccompanion/invitation/new>. Sign in, join up and leave your comments. You can also download the latest PDF of the magazine from there as well.

Hopefully you will enjoy the community there without feeling any remorse. It could be a nice change from all the "talking heads" and political frenzy we have been experiencing lately.

May each of you enjoy the companionship of your families, the love of your life and perhaps show a little gratitude, as we move into the Holy Day season.

We are hoping that with all the trouble and turmoil going on around the world, there will still be something left to be thankful for this Thanks Giving Day.

Until next time...

May we all be infected with Pollyannaism - <http://ezinearticles.com/?Positive-Thinking:--Polyanna-Syndrome&id=40786>

Robert L Pritchett

According to Hoyle...

C/C++ Language Updates

November 2008

By Jonathan Hoyle

jhoyle@maccompanion.com

macCompanion

<http://www.jonhoyle.com>

Early last year, I wrote about the upcoming changes in the C++ language <http://www.maccompanion.com/macc/archives/March2007/Columns/AccordingtoHoyle.htm>. It has been, by far, my longest article for MacCompanion, detailing most of the changes we can expect to see. (For those interested in a higher-level view, you can view my online PowerPoint presentation <http://www.jonhoyle.com/Presentations/ansiupdate/> on the topic.) I will not be repeating that information here, as the great majority of it remains unchanged. However, I would like to give an update on the subject and provide additional links for those interested in pursuing this further.

C++0x == C++09?

The original specification for C++ was ratified by the ANSI/ISO committees in 1998, and is thus known as C++98. After a deliberate five years of silence (to assess the state and usage of C++), a Technical Corrigenda was produced with recommendations for bug fixes in the specification, primarily rewording for clarification. This update to the language was called C++03 and had almost no real impact on compiler developers. The only one area that had a potential impact was formalized requirement that the memory allocation for a `std::vector<>` must be contiguous. (As this was original the spirit of this container class all along, I know of no compiler vendor which implemented it differently and needed to make this change.)

In 2004, the ISO committee began accepting changes for real language updates, the project name being C++0x, as it was anticipated that this initiative will be finalized sometime in 200x. Sometime last year, people began referring to C++0x as C++09, as it was obvious that this specification will not be completed prior to 2009. Unfortunately, there seems to be a realistic chance that this will not be finalized before the decade completes, thus making the working name C++0x possibly out of sync with a 2010 completion. (Bjarne Stroustrup has made the half-serious suggestion that the x be interpreted hexadecimally, so it would read C++0A if it does not finish in 2009.) In any case, the committee members are very much dedicated to finishing this in the 2009 timeframe, so hopefully we won't have to worry about that.

What's In, What's Not

Most all of the most basic changes are certainly in. These include C99 features (`__func__`, `long long`'s, variadic macros, and others), Standard Library enhancements (smart pointers, regular expressions, arrays, tuples, etc.), and in-class initializers. Also making the cut are delegating and inheriting constructors, `nullptr`, `auto` & `decltype`, rvalues references and concepts. Unfortunately, much less of the threading constructs will be found in C++09 aside from thread local storage. Some of the mathematical additions are also being held off for this release.

For a more detailed analysis of features being included (as of August 2008), read Bjarne Stroustrup's interview with DevX.com entitled *The State of the Language* <http://www.devx.com/SpecialReports/Article/38813>.

Forgetting to Take Out the Garbage

The biggest item not making it in C++0x is Garbage Collection. Although this is still on tap for a future rev of the C++ standard, it is very disappointing that this one is missed out. One of the key benefits of newer C++ like languages (such as Java and C#) are their built-in garbage collection capabilities. Older languages such as Objective-C are being updated to include this feature, just so they can stay relevant. Without GC in C++0x, there is the risk that there will not be a C++1x ... or if there is, it will no longer be relevant.

For the C++ programmer wishing to use pointers in a modern way, the new smart pointer `shared_ptr<>` (borrowed from the Boost framework) should be an adequate substitution. Thus instead of allocating a heap-based class in the tradition way:

```
ObjectType    *myObjectPtr = new ObjectType;
```

you should declare it as follows:

```
shared_ptr<ObjectType> myObjectPtr = new ObjectType;
```

By doing so, `myObjectPtr` is now "smart" and can dispose of itself when it is no longer needed.

What About C?

Long before the advent of C++, the C Language reigned supreme. Particularly as the 1980's progressed, C's popularity ballooned, and it quickly became the lingua franca of programming languages. Unfortunately, competing C compilers each had differing implementations, making it difficult for programmers to migrate from one C development environment to another. As the need for standardization grew, the ANSI committee took on the task of defining a single specification for the language, and ratified ANSI C in 1989. The ISO committee ratified this standard for international use in 1990.

By the mid-1990s, it was agreed that an update to the language ought to be considered, and the C9x project was under way, with its final ratification as C99 by decade's end (see: <http://www.open-std.org/jtc1/sc22/wg14/www/charter>) (To see an online PowerPoint presentation overview of C99, visit: [http://www.jonhoyle.com/Presentations/C99/.](http://www.jonhoyle.com/Presentations/C99/))

However, adoption of C99 has been relatively slow, unlike the strong developer embracings of C90 and C++98. Much of this has to do with developer focus shifting away from C toward C++. Just as the 1980's was the decade for C, the 1990's was the decade for C++. C++ was marketed to C developers as "a better C" anyway. Many compiler vendors simply stopped shipping separate C and C++ products, simply delivering C++ (as it is essentially a superset of C). Since many of the changes in C99 are simply adopting features of C++ (including new style comments, intermixing declarations and statements, inline functions, `bool` type, etc.), these "new" features weren't all that new at all. The worst part of it all involves C99 changes which introduce strict incompatibilities with C++, such as its `complex` type, and its `clog` macro (in C++ it is an ostream global like `cout`, whereas in C99 it is the complex logarithm function). For this reason C99 has not enjoyed the mindshare C90 and C++98 had. Although most C compilers today have the majority of C99 features available to you, they are not typically well advertised. Some openly question the continued need for C in a world dominated by newer languages.

Despite this, the ISO C committee is already underway its investigation of changes for a new version of the C language. It is called the C1x project, and it is very early on in the process (see the C1x charter: <http://www.open-std.org/jtc1/sc22/wg14/www/docs/n1250.pdf>). The first draft of the C1x spec has been released this past August: <http://www.open-std.org/jtc1/sc22/wg14/www/docs/n1336.pdf>. The current plan is for C1x ratification in 2012, but I am inclined to think will take a bit longer than that to come up with something more compelling.

What Will Come of C++0x?

Many in the development community are concerned that C++09 will receive only the same lukewarm response that C99 had. The parallels between C++09 and C99 are rather obvious. Both are second generation updates coming 10 years after their primary (and extremely popular) ISO ratifications. Both first generations were ratified when each language was considered dominant in the industry, whilst both updates come at a time where newer languages have evolved and are taking away mindshare. With Java, C#, Ruby and others on the upswing, will C++09 offer anything relevant? The answer to this will be evident only with time.

More Information

The Wikipedia entry for C++0x is also an excellent resource: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/C++0x> . To get direct information straight from the horse's mouth, view a video of Bjarne Stroustrup's presentation of C++0x to the University of Waterloo in: <http://mirror.csclub.uwaterloo.ca/csclub/stroustrup.mpg>.

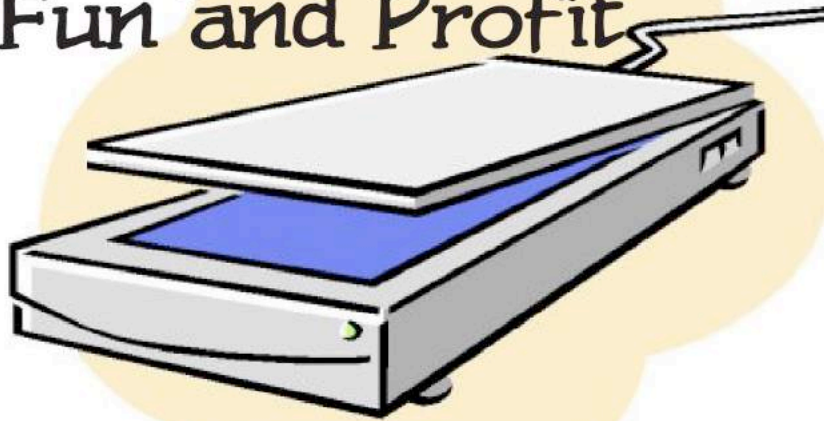
Coming Up Next Month: More development topics. See you in 30!

To see a list of all the According to Hoyle columns, visit:

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Dan's Scans

Scanning the Mac for Fun and Profit



Dan's Scans

Microsoft Says ~~Vista 2.0~~ . . . er . . . sorry -- Windows 7 Will Suck Less

By Dan Robinson

Microsoft had a party Tuesday (Oct 27, 2008) for software developers. Amid the gaiety and hail-fellow-well-met camaraderie, MS announced that the upcoming version of Windows, dubbed 'Windows 7', will nag users less with fewer alerts and warnings than Vista.

According to Steven Sinofsky, senior vice president in Microsoft's Windows group, "we had all the best intentions" (in trying to secure PCs) "for novice PC users who needed to be protected." He did not mention that it was Windows' vulnerabilities that those unprofessional new users needed to be protected *from*. That statement also infers that users need to be experts to know how to adequately protect their computers.

This is in direct opposition to the folks at Apple, who assume that users should not *need* to do more than accept occasional software and security updates.

MS really dropped the ball on Vista. Then they compounded their errors with denial and, most recently, a \$300 million ad campaign that not only fell flat, but caused even more derision to be heaped upon poor Vista's bruised and bloody head.

So, MS decides to cut their losses and start promoting Vista 2.0. Oh, they're calling it Windows 7, but it'll be Vista under the hood. Hopefully they'll have the bugs worked out of V2 before the projected 2010 release date. But if history teaches us anything, it is that projected Microsoft release dates are ephemeral in nature. Vista was originally expected to ship sometime in 2003 as a revision of Windows XP on the way to Blackcomb, planned to be the MS's next major operating system release. But, like Topsy, it 'just grewed' until it became the bloated Vista we love to hate released in 2006.

Reportedly what they'll do is give users the ability to turn off some of the warning messages. Another will be to streamline Windows so it will not be such a resource hog. This will allow W7 to run on cheapie laptops and netbooks that currently choke on Vista. Other than that, it appears that they're just moving things around and calling them "features." But few of those features offer anything that you couldn't already do your own self. A good ferinstance is "Libraries," which shows files meeting certain criteria like Photos or Word Documents. Sounds for all the world like the Macintosh Smart Folder with the addition of sifting through other local networked computers. Speaking of home networking, it is supposed to be much easier on W7,

I expect there will be many, many things the Gnomes of Redmond will improve in W7. It would be really sad if they loused it up again.

In a side note, MS Office will have online "cloud" versions similar Google Docs. Google isn't exactly setting the internet on fire with its cloud computing apps, but several organizations I know use them to share editing of documents among widely separated people. But I don't know of any individuals who are using them to the exclusion of onboard applications. The question there, is how are they going to promote their Cloudy Office without eating into sales of their retail version?

Stay tuned for the continuing saga of Vista 2.0!

doc_Babad's Macintosh Tips - A Macintosh Tip or Three...

By Harry {doc} Babad © 2008

November 2008 Edition



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Reviews were carried out on my iMac 2.8 GHz Intel Core 2 Duo with 2 GB 667 MHz DDR2 SDRAM running Mac OS X version 10.5.5.

Disclaimer: When briefly reviewing share-freeware I will often use the developers' product, functions and features descriptions. All other comments are strictly my own and based on testing. Why need I rewrite the developers' narratives, if they are clearly written?

This month I continue sharing my almost stumbled upon or homegrown tip related finds with you. As I was did some house keeping on my macCompanion folder, I discovered a trove of tips that space limits had not allowed me to use. I of course being a logical {sic} person had three choices. *Use them — Toss them — Ignore them*

Acknowledgements — As the occasion warrants, some of the Tips I share come from Paul Taylor's Hints & Tips column <http://www.mac-hints-tips.com/>, and are used with his permission. I also use user group published tips their consent. Where I use any one else's tips for this column, I acknowledge both their source and their contributors. Yes, I do write down and share some of the tips I've discovered while Macin' around. If a tip or hint comes from a more traditional commercial source, I both acknowledged that and often modify the tip to personalize for our readers

Oh, I almost forgot! Unless otherwise noted, all the tips and tidbits I share, where appropriate, work on my computer. If I don't own the software but if the tip sounds interesting, I'll so note that information at the end of that specific write-up.

As an aside — I'm still providing Office 2004 tips, despite the fact that Office 2008 has been released. Why? I have too many customizations created in 2004 — so far it's not been worth the time to switch although I own a copy of 2008.

Doc

Tips I've provided this month, as always in a random order, include:

- How to Extract All the Graphics, at Once, from MS Word
- Change MS Office's Registration
- Securely Removing Your Data – All or in part
- Missing A TWAIN Driver
- Dealing with Microsoft Font Problems
- *Cannot Eject An External Drive*
- Problems Resizing Pictures for Insertion into PDF Files

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How to Extract all the Graphics at Once from MS Word

I do a lot of work with Microsoft documents from colleagues and friends. Until I found this tip, I captured documents in a MS Word documents the hard way One at a time.

If you get a Microsoft Word document with embedded graphics, you can extract all the graphics at once by using Word's File > Save as Web Page feature.

This creates a text file that you can throw away, and a folder that contains the full-resolution images in PNG format and lower resolution versions of the images in JPG format.

Sandee Cohen — *InDesign Magazine via Design Tools Monthly January-February Hints and Tips – Used by Permission*

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Change MS Office's Registration

Question: I just recently noticed that I made a typo when I registered my copy of Microsoft Office 2004. When I select Word: About Word (or the equivalent in any other Office application), my name appears misspelled after "This product is licensed to." Is it possible to fix this? ~ Meng Thao

Answer: Launch Office's Remove Office utility (/Applications/Microsoft Office 2004/Additional Tools/Remove Office). In the "Welcome To Remove Office" window that appears, you'll see a "Continue" button in the lower right corner. Hold down the Option key, and the button name changes to "Remove Licensing Information Only." Click on that button to acknowledge that this is what you really want to do, and Remove Office will delete the files containing the registration information. When you next launch an Office application, the Office Setup Assistant will appear and prompt you for your name and product key, *which are to be found on the products DVD box. Doc sez there are only three keys so use them judiciously.*

*Chris Breen's Mac 911, Macworld
January-February Hints and Tips – Used by Permission*

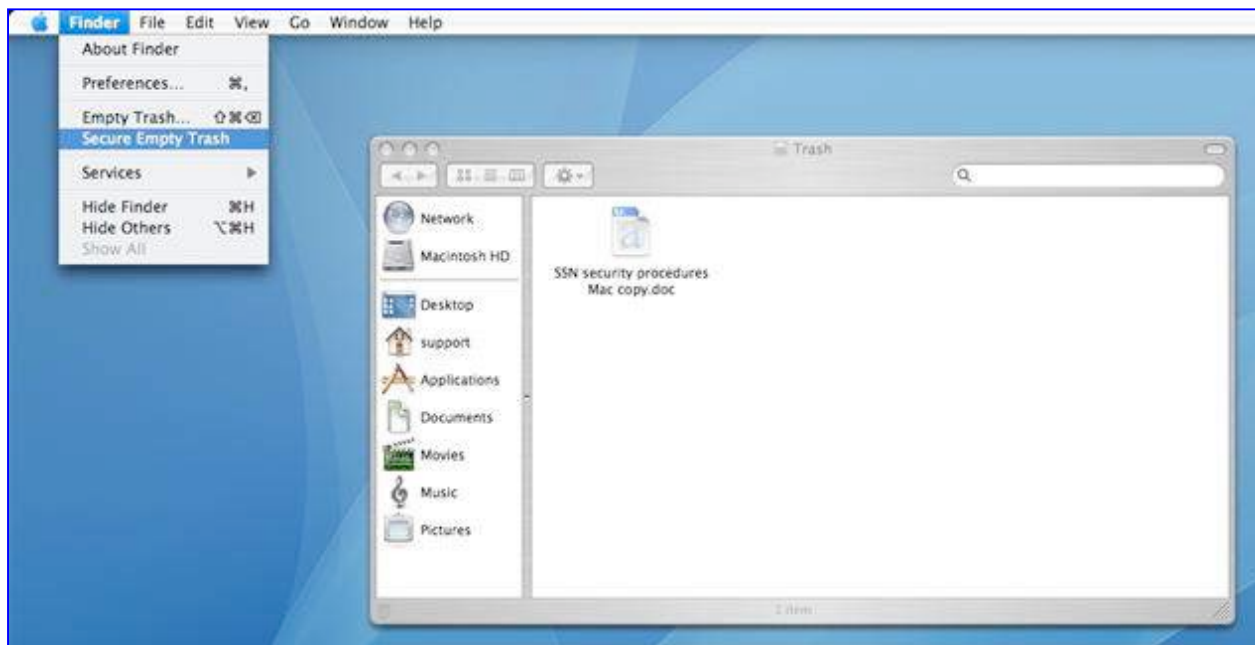
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Securely Removing Your Data – All or in part

Background — Doc sez that I've never tried this. My problem has always been to remove my personal files from an older computer before I pass it on to my children or grandchildren.

There are two circumstances data needs to be permanently deleted.

First, if I partitioned my hard drive e.g., (created several additional volumes on my hard disk to store unique information. I may want to erase permanently erase their contents before I pass on the computer. This can do that using Apples Disk Utilities, which offer a number of secure erase options. [Applications > Utilities > Disk Utility] These include zero out data, 7-pass erase or 32 pass erase. Obviously the more security you want the longer it takes. For my pass-ons I just zero out the data.



Second, I have files that need trashing irreversibly, but want to leave the contents of hard drive essentially intact. I use the secure delete option when emptying trash [Apple Menu > Finder > Secure Empty Trash.] Simple. Remember, secure trashing an item(s) will take longer than a normal empty trash. Although I suspect this secure delete just zeros out the data, I've not had time to research the subject. But again, I am only slightly paranoiac.

Back to the Delemain Tip — In essence the process of securely deleting files or data on your HD is just about overwriting that file data with binary data that is useless to any user, including yourself. I might add! The benefit of this is clear, but in what instances might you want to do this and how can you go about it?

- Well, when you have files that you are no longer using and would like to dispose of in such a way that no one else can retrieve them, via whatever means.
- You might also have sold your laptop or desktop computer and wish to remove all traces of data from the hard drive(s) contained within it, including files that contain credit card numbers, social security numbers and other forms of personal data.

Secure Erase with Apple's Disk Utility

Making the assumption that you do not have an external drive from which you can boot and run OSX, or that you do not have another Mac system you can plug the old Systems into using FireWire Disk Mode, then the best way to securely erase the data on your hard drive is by using the original OSX install CDs (Mac OS 10.2 or later).

The process is pretty simple and runs as follows:

1. Insert the install CD and reboot the system.
2. Hold down the C key directly after you hear the startup sound.
3. Once the installer appears, select "Open Disk Utilities" from the Installer menu.
4. In the left device menu select the drive you wish to securely erase.
5. Click the "Erase" tab in the window that loads on the right.
6. Choose the HFS+ format from the volume > format > drop menu options.
7. Click the "Options" button and select the "Zero All Data" checkbox.
8. Click OK and then Erase.
9. Hey Presto! It's Done

Remember there's no going back from this step!

And so there you have it, a simple guide on how to erase files, data and hard drives on the Mac. As you can see there is no need to purchase or use any third-party apps, as the functionality is built right into the operating system, though that being said, the functionality does not preclude third-party software from providing the same kind of functionality to the end user.

Harry {doc} Babad and Delamain IT © 2008

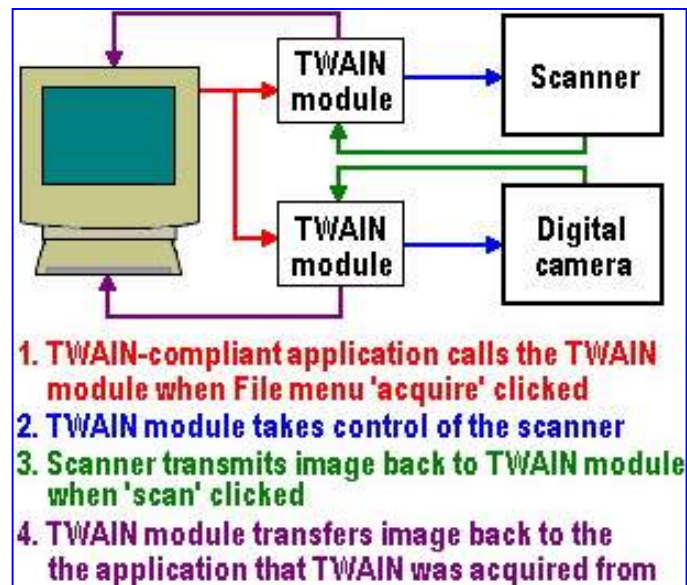
http://www.delamaincreativity.com/articles_how-tos/apple-mac-osx/secure-erase-hard-drive.html

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Missing A TWAIN Driver

Question: My PowerMac G5 had to have the software reinstalled and I reinstalled the Epson scanner software with the CD it came with, but I get a message about missing TWAIN driver? How can I fix it?

Answer: TWAIN is the scanner driver framework. The Epson installer will put in a TWAIN Data Source file. (It goes in the /Library/Image Capture/TWAIN Data Sources/ folder. You forgot to go to Epson's Web site and download the updated software that actually works with your Mac's operating system. You may have to uninstall what is there now, before installing the new version.



Apple changed things for scanners with Mac OS 10.3. A large number of printer and scanner drivers required updates. (Some models were left behind and not updated. Anybody got an old UMAX or Microtek scanner?) Pretty much 99.9% of any hardware you might find, the software that came with it on a disc is out of date and needs an update.

The Software Update (you find in the Apple menu) is only good for updating your Apple software. The third party software like Microsoft, Adobe, Epson, HP, you name it, all need to be updated separately. Even firmware updates for your cable/DSL router or your fancy printer come out every so often. You know there have been dozens of iPod updaters, right? Do you think anyone got it right the first time? There is a reason the current Mac OS is version 10.4.7, because there were problems with 10.4.0, and still more with 10.4.1, etc., up to 10.4.7 itself. There will be a 10.4.8 update.

When in doubt, go to <http://www.versiontracker.com/macosx> to see if there is a software update for something you use. You won't find every firmware update there, too, but some are listed. I remember calling a friend who had just ordered some new software but he hadn't received it yet. After checking VersionTracker, I told him, while you're waiting, download the update for it; it fixes a serious problem.

Updaters can be tricky, too. Some are very incremental, like FileMaker Pro 8.0v3 updater won't update the original release from the CD, version 8.0v1. You have to first download the 8.0v2 updater, install that before the 8.0v3 can find a valid application to update. More and more programs check for an update for themselves when they launch, but many require you to select from a menu to check for updates now. Some, like Adobe Creative Suite, can check for updates across most of the suite, but you have to check Adobe Acrobat Pro separately.

Bradley Dichter — *LIMac Forum, Long Island, NY*
January-February Hints and Tips - Used by Permission

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How to Deal With Microsoft Font Problems

Microsoft Office 2004 users sometimes have their programs report that numerous fonts are damaged and must be replaced — this *happens*, even though the fonts may be Microsoft's own and/or may have just been installed. Just what triggers this problem is uncertain, but at least a cure has been defined.

If you look in the Microsoft Office 2004 folder (inside your Applications folder) you'll find a folder named Office, and inside one named Support Files. Look in there and you'll find an item named Font Cache Tool. The remedy for the problem is to move this Font Cache Tool to a different folder (any one will do), or to trash it altogether if you feel adventurous.

As far as anyone has been able to determine, this has no adverse effect on the operation of Office programs, and it certainly fixes this problem.

Some time ago there was another Microsoft font problem, and if you seem to be having any trouble with fonts at all and are running an older (than 2004) version of Office, it's worth downloading the latest versions of Times and Arial from the Microsoft website. Go to <http://http://www.microsoft.com/mac> and look at the right hand column. Scroll down until you can see and click 'View all downloads'. Now scroll down to Office 2001 and click 'Core Fonts Update'. Download and install the file you find here.

Steve Cooper - *AUSOM News, Melbourne, Australia*
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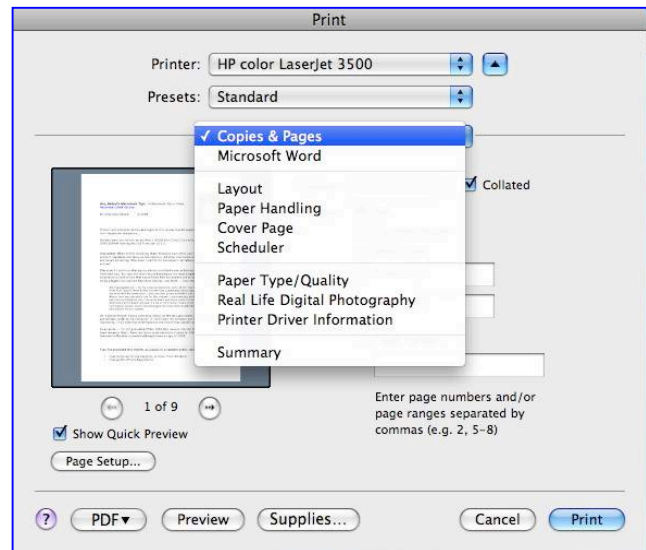
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Somewhat Hidden Printing Options

I've noted over time that many Mac OS X users are unaware of some very important options that are tucked away in the Print dialog: Whenever you use an application's Print menu command, you will normally arrive at the standard Print dialog.

One of the features of this is a pop-up menu which, when you first see it, is labeled "Copies & Pages."

No matter which application you're working with, or what sort of printer you have, you'll find groups of other useful settings in this pop-up menu. The first one is "Layout," where you can choose to print multiple (reduced size) pages of your document on a single sheet of paper — very handy for saving paper when printing long documents, as long as the font size is large enough to remain legible when there are two pages of it on each sheet.



There are several more groups of settings that you can investigate for yourself. Some of them are common to all printer and application setups, while some apply only to the current application/printer combination. There will often be one group that carries the current application's name (e.g. AppleWorks, FileMaker Pro), where you'll find settings that apply specifically to that application.

Other settings to look for are those that enable you to tell the software what kind of paper you're printing on (plain, matte, glossy, etc) and how you want color management to be handled. Often, you can tweak the printer's color settings in this area.

If you want to print documents using only black ink (to help avoid using up your color cartridge quite so quickly), there's usually a relevant setting here.

Of Special Note — If you establish a particular combination of all these options and settings, you can save it, *for reuse*, with an identifying name. Click on the "Presets" pop-up and choose "Save." Give your preset a name and in future, you'll be able to recreate that combination of settings simply by choosing its name from the Presets pop-up.

AUSOM News, Melbourne, Australia
January-February Hints and Tips – Used by Permission

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Cannot Eject An External Drive

Several users have experienced an issue in which an attached FireWire or USB drive will not eject. Instead, an error message pops up claiming the drive cannot be ejected because it is in use. This may occur with hard drives, flash drives, or any other storage system. As Apple discussion member, vburger writes:

"I have a Maxtor 500GB HD attached via USB to my laptop. Quite often, when I want to detach it I get the message: 'The Volume could not be ejected because it is currently in use'. However, I am not aware of any active application that is still using the HD."

Warning: Unless it cannot be avoided, do not unplug or shut off an external drive unless it is first unmounted. Data corruption and potential system crash could result.

Fixes:

Disable spotlight indexing for the drive The most common culprit for this issue seems to be Apple's Spotlight indexing services, which maintain an index of all local file system for quick finding of search queries. Many times the indexing can take a while, and will keep the drive in use. To disable spotlight indexing for the drive, open the Spotlight system preferences and add the drive to the "Privacy" list. If that does not stop the indexing, the drive's spotlight index could be corrupted, in which case Spotless 2.01 to manually remove the Spotlight index.

Spotless is a shareware program you can download from MacUpdate, as is CloneEject 1.0 a freeware program. [Disclosure: Doc has never used these products, I just wait the system out — the timeout a cup of coffee usually does the job. This usually happens to me after backing up my drive (cloning it) to an external drive partition using SuperDuper.

Download the utility Spotless.
Use the tool to erase the Spotlight index.
Restart your Mac.

Close all open documents and/or applications. If an application has a document open on the drive, then the drive will not eject. Ensure all applications on the computer are closed and try to eject the drive.
Check the file open status on the affected hard drive. Sometimes a utility or background process that might not present itself as an open application will access the drive. To see a full list of the files that are open on the drive and the corresponding applications/processes that have those files open, run this command in the terminal:

```
ls -l /Volumes/VOLUME_NAME
```

This will output a list, which will pinpoint the specific process that has an open file on the drive. You can then locate and quit the process using Activity Monitor. If the process is owned by anything but yourusername then it might be best to restart the system instead of quitting the process, as this may destabilize the computer. Restart the computer. If none of the above works, shutting down or restarting the computer will quit all processes and allow the release the drive. If the problem keeps returning then formatting the drive with Disk Utility may help.

MacFixIt — Trouble Shooting Solutions for the Macintosh
Wednesday, May 21 2008 @ 11:00 AM PDT

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Resizing Pictures for Insertion into PDF Files

As you might remember from my articles on altering web downloaded materials to make them better looking, I add graphics to many items that I download in text format as either MS Word or Adobe Acrobat (PDF) documents.

- *Annotating & Making Text Recipes Pretty*, March 2006 macCompanion. and
- *Tutorial: Shrinking and Enhancing Multi-Page PDF Recipes*, October 2008 macCompanion.

Now don't get me wrong. Most of the time copying an image from Google Images or a web site works fine. You can paste the image into a PDF or Word document and you get a good looking picture whose corner anchor points are available to you for resizing. When resizing, the picture quality is fine, and all that's may be need is to move the image to where it belongs.

Two Tidbits to Remember:

- An image pasted into MS Word can be easily resize by sing one or more of the eight anchor points that surround it when you selected it with your mouse. Then using the software's tools in the *Format Drawing* pallet to place the image not only where you want it with respect to the text, but to wrap the text around the image in a manner that pleases you. The tools you use are found in the Format > Picture > Layout.



When dealing with a PDF the pasted image dopes not extend beyond the right and left margins of the document, using the anchor points is easy. Note that unlike MSW (Microsoft Word), images in Acrobat can only be resized on the diagonal. Remember, , the software has a mind of its own and the image is usually both in the wrong place and covers up some of the text. No matter – Anchors aweigh! Or is that away?

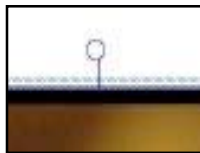
There are three kinds of problems that can occasionally occur when you try to add an image from Google Images" or other web source to a PDF;

Too Large	Too Small	Too Blurred
<i>If this sounds like a problem from Alice in Wonderland, so be it.</i>		

1. *Too Large* — The anchor points fall outside the margins of the PDF you can:

[a] Make the image larger, not by magnifying it with the enlarge pages tool with the zoom tools but by expanding the view window size using the enlarge window tool (Lower right hand corner a the bottom of every apple document window.

With a little bit of luck you will expand the window so that you can see the image anchor points beyond the edges of the document page. Grab an anchor point and size the image to meet your needs.



[b] An alternative that sometimes works when selecting the pasted image. Look for the rotate loop. Image See if twisting the picture diagonally allows you too see one of the anchor points. If so shrink the image, straighten the picture

and put it where it is needed.

[c] Finally, if all fails paste or drop and drag the image from its source into a blank MS Word document. Sometime s drag works better than paste; paste gives the Internet address link at times, not the image. The copy the image from MS Word into you PDF. It will now fit on the page. Why does this work — ask someone else... I have no idea

2. *Too Small* — Use the anchor point. If the image blurs, go to 1(c) above. Microsoft to the rescue. [Did I write that?]
3. *Too Blurred* — At times, moving an image from GraphicConverter to a PDF by cutting and pasting results in a badly blurred or pixilated image. This happens for some unknown reason despite the fact that the original image from the web source is greater than 35 to 50K. Okay, KISS — use alternative 1(c)

Of course you all remember the ways to grab an image from the Internet: You can grab a web image by right clicking on it (copy image) The you can paste it where you need it to be; your final document or into an image processing program to make it uniquely yours.

You can grab it, or part of it, to your desktop using Apple's Command-Shift 4. I like this for truncating large web headers into just the piece I want. Alternatively you can drag and drop the image on you desktop. Two things could then happen. A new image file results. You use as you would any other image. Or, based on the way I have my computer configured, the image downloads into my downloads folder. That can be done directly using apple's contextual menu feature, right-clicking on the image.

I'm sure there are more variations on this team but it's time to move onto another article

Harry {doc} Babad at macCompanion.com

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That's all folks...

Harry {doc} Babad



The Northern Spy

PIEA in the Sky

By Rick Sutcliffe
Technology News and Views Since 1983
November 2008

Our long time reader will be well aware of the Spy's wish device, the one well-equipped Hibernian characters in his novels never leave home without--the PIEA or Portable Intelligence Enhancement Appliance. By parts a Metalibrary Terminal (Internet access), computer, local storage, communicator, database, and book reader, it's the ultimate portable machine he's been waiting to buy since the 1980s.

We've been getting closer lately, so much so that someone asked the other day whether we're done and the iPhone is the PIEA. His answer: No, not so much because of a lack of functionality (mostly there), but because it uses the wrong communications paradigm.

Cell phone technology is merely a temporary stopgap. Universal Wi-Fi with telephony via voice-over net is where we go after the phone company becomes obsolete (or transitions to the real thing). He is therefore inclined to think the iPod Touch is closer to being his PIEA than is the iPhone.

Son Nathan seemed to confirm this the other day. His home computer is now set up to answer a land line, takes voice messages, and forwards them as email attachments to the mail account he reads on his Touch. He's giving up his cell line. He lives and works surrounded by Wi-Fi, so why not? Someday he won't need any phone per se. The Spy may go the same route, as he particularly dislikes locked phones. Besides, it should be apparent by now that the Spy's sixth law applies to hardware as well as software. Indeed, anything that can be used can be unlocked.

Been thinking, too, dangerous as Big Julie thought it was, about those August comments on where computers ought to be sold (tool stores, not specialty outlets). This observation goes deeper, to the heart of what these handy boxes are--problem-solving tools, not appliances. Time to formulate this as the Spy's tenth law:

Computers are not toasters. They are compound sliding mitre saws.

By the Numbers

iSteve's little Cupertino company is doing pretty well. Late in October 2008, it reported a \$1.14 billion profit for its fiscal fourth quarter, \$25 billion in the bank, increased market share, and the goal of ten million iPhones sold reached a few months early. Revenue and profit were up twenty-seven and twenty-six percent, respectively, and all the numbers beat both guidance and analyst forecasts. At \$1.26 per share, earnings are quite comfortable, thank you very much. Moreover, sales continue to grow at three-plus times the industry average.

How will the much-touted recession affect these numbers? Apple has given new guidance of \$1 earnings per share for the next quarter, but remember that iSteve's counters of potential beans routinely underestimate for public consumption. As in government, nothing beats suggesting good news, then producing even better.

The real story, as mentioned in this space some months ago, is that Apple seems poised to continue growth of computer sales by 25% year over year, while PC makers may now see flat or shrinking sales. Apple therefore appears on target to reach the Spy's intermediate goal of 15% market share in two years give or take a month (less time if the recession is very deep).

The company is also on track to completely dominate the cell phone market, having passed struggling RIM (Blackberry) on the turn and now lengthening the lead coming down the stretch. Put a takeover watch on medium fish RIM, with the most likely shark to swallow it being MS.

Meanwhile, asked about low-end computers, Jobs replied "We don't know how to make a \$500 computer that's not a piece of junk. It's just not in our DNA. That's not what we do." The Spy notes, however, that a small but powerful iTablet, an \$800 Apple-designed notebook, or a larger format iPod Touch wouldn't be \$500 junk computers, and iSteve is not a man to leave one or more obvious niches unfilled for too many cash register cycles. Assume he has variants of all three in prototype at least, and only has to select the first to go to market (or pass again for a while).

Not everything Cupertino does makes sense, though. The latest unibody aluminum MacBooks have no FireWire port (does not apply to the Pro, which does have one), a strange decision given FW is a homegrown Apple technology that has just seen an upgrade to its standard that promises much higher speeds. Even version FireWire one is faster than USB 2.0. Schools and others who depend on the FireWire port to connect to video equipment are suddenly very unhappy campers. An adapter just doesn't cut it.

The Spy realizes that for the computing world, eSATA may be the eventual way to go, but for cameras, FireWire remains the gold standard, and unless Apple wants all those video files processed on competitor's boxes, this decision will get changed. Mind you, when did iSteve ever change a decision? Perhaps there's a market here for Express Card slot FW adapters.

Neither is the Spy keen on the glossy screens iSteve seems in love with these days. They introduce too much glare, and the sweet angle for viewing proper colours and clear text is too narrow. He'll take matte, if he can get it, and still view the screen though tinted computer glasses.

Another thing that may or may not make sense, depending on one's perspective, is iSteve's continuing reluctance to include Blu-Ray drives in his products. Sure, the license fee is a bummer, but one cannot help but wonder if there is more than mere pique at play here. Has he something else up his sleeve, or is it a case of "yes, but not yet"?

And, getting back to that bank balance. Stock prices may have continued plummeting, but the Cupertino piggy bank just keeps growing. Since iSteve clearly believes in riding high on the waves of the economic storm, the Spy expects he will put at least some of that nicely stacked-up money to use in targeted technology purchases to strategically grow the company.

Speaking of things Redmond

billg's former emporium is starting to look pretty sad these days. Apple's latest "I'm a Mac" advert, featuring the PC bean counter who puts all the money into advertising and none into fixing problems is the best one of the series to date. Sure, it's a negative attack ad, of the kind he deplores in politics, but at the same time it's subtle, hilarious, memorable, and sadly, factual.

The Spy cannot understand why anyone buys PCs any more. The cheap ones are indeed junk (but who wants to throw away even \$500?) and even the better boxes don't last much longer than three years. As for the OS, a functional Vista remains pie in the sky, and worse, MS doesn't appear to understand what to do about it or how. For home or work, a decision to buy Vista over Mac OS X is simply irrational.

There is one good note concerning MSOffice, though. (Keep in mind that the Spy only uses the 2004 version, as the 2008 one is non-functional for someone dependent on macros.) LA couple of routine updates back, the Excel save function was broken by MS. The first save of a sheet worked, but a subsequent save on the same sheet during that session produced a dialog box saying that the backup could not be saved and asking whether the user wanted to proceed without a backup. If you said "yes" the backup was in fact saved, but one still had the annoyance and the uncertainty. As of the 2008 09 16 update, this bug in 11.5.2 appears to have gone away. That it could be introduced in the first place, and even survive one update cycle speaks volumes about the QA process (or lack of it) at MS. This thing simply wasn't pounded on for any length of time.

Speaking of updates, long ago and far away in computer time, the Spy employed a cross-application (system wide) OS-9 based spelling checker called Spell Checker. Loaded as an extension, it would check spelling in any application--important to him because application-specific checkers like the one in Nisus Writer Classic were weak at best, and he uses many applications in a day, so it was nice to maintain only one word list. At first, there was no such checker with OS X, and what Apple and others provide even today is uninspired and awkward.

Why not a cross-application checker that pops up a window of suggestions every time you type something not in its dictionary, and allows you to select a correction with a keystroke? Why not allow this to be configured on an application--by-application basis while still maintaining a single comprehensive word list for them all (in any given language), permit typing completions, fixes broken word pairs such as "and the", can be run interactively (correcting live typing) or in batch mode (whole file), and is configurable to death from either its own application preference pane or a menu-bar pull down?

Why not take advantage of OS X's input methods to make the interactive mode fast and efficient? Well, the old Spell Catcher's author Evan Gross of Rainmaker Research Inc. has done all this, in the process producing an absolutely must-have product, a more comprehensive and more accurate spell checker than any he has seen to date. Moreover, nearly ninety percent of the time, the first item in the suggestion list is indeed the correct replacement, and the Spy has yet to need anything beyond the third of sixteen.

Installation, license activation, and the attachment of the Canadian English language module (extra money needed) was somewhat clumsy. There was also some temporary nonsense about highlighting not matching font size, but a restart cured all that, and now that Spell Catcher 10.3 is up and running, it works like a wicked fast charm. The Spy has it set to produce suggestions in a window rather than a pop up by the word being questioned, and is in the process of teaching it specialized words and completions. More on this great writing utility at a later date, but initial impressions after a couple of weeks are good enough for it to earn an enthusiastic buy recommendation already.

Other must-have programs include the incomparable Cocktail utilities suite, now bumped with new features to version 4.2 (and still available for Leopard), and of course the Spy's new favourite book writing tool Scrivener, whose version 1.12 is still in beta. Good as Scrivener is for this, there are other text tools that excel in other situations. No one has only one kind of hammer or saw in the tool box. Likewise, there are specialty programs for handling text in various contexts. For less than book-length writing (and even for that it is good; Scrivener is just that much better) NisusWriter Pro is the software of choice (and even use it on the final book assembly), and for programming (applications or the web) BBEdit has all the bells and whistles one needs. Where does this leave W*rd? The Spy never uses it--too bloated and clumsy, too non-intuitive, too slow on large files. But lest a new reader think this is mere bashing, the Spy still holds that Excel 2004 is the single best and most important piece of software ever written.

Finally, the last and most important upgrade is to the Spy's own titles, which now include "Grampa" for the first time, as son Nathan and daughter-in-law Charlene have produced a new generation of wetware in the person of Elianna Sutcliffe, born 2008 10 22 at 1004 and massing 3654g (8lb 1oz for those still in the dark ages.) Can't wait to teach her how to play "hop on Pop". At the time of this writing she was barely a day old and already had her own web site. Check it out at elianna.sutcliffe.ca.

--The Northern Spy

Rick Sutcliffe, (a.k.a. The Northern Spy) is professor of Computing Science and Mathematics at Trinity Western University. He's written two textbooks and several novels, one named best ePublished SF novel for 2003. His columns have appeared in numerous magazines and newspapers, and he's a regular speaker at churches, schools, academic meetings, and conferences. He and his wife Joyce have lived in the Aldergrove/Bradner area of BC since 1972.

Want to discuss this and other Northern Spy columns? Surf on over to ArjayBB.com. Participate and you could win free web hosting from the WebNameHost.net subsidiary of Arjay Web Services. Rick Sutcliffe's fiction can be purchased in various eBook formats from Fictionwise, and in dead tree form from Bowker's Booksurge.

URLs

The Northern Spy Home Page: <http://www.TheNorthernSpy.com>

The Spy's Laws collected: <http://www.thenorthernspy.com/spyslaws.htm>

The Spy's Shareware download site: <http://downloads.thenorthernspy.com/>

WebNameHost: <http://www.WebNameHost.net>

WebNameSource: <http://www.WebNameSource.net>

nameman: <http://nameman.net>

opundo: <http://opundo.com>

Sheaves Christian Resources: <http://sheaves.org>

Arjay Books: <http://www.ArjayBooks.com>

Booksurge: <http://www.booksurge.com>

Fictionwise: <http://www.fictionwise.com>

Rainmaker (Spell Catcher): <http://www.spellcatcher.com/>

Cocktail: <http://www.maintain.se/cocktail/index.php>

Elianna Sutcliffe: <http://elianna.sutcliffe.ca/>

Organizing Your Mac

The Responsible Macintosh — Safe, Secure & Polite Macin' Things We Should Practice

A new column by Harry {doc} Babad © 2008



Introduction: As I occasionally go through my old files, including downloaded or scanned magazine column, I find many articles that are as fresh as they were 5–10 years ago. The Macintosh moves on — focus areas change — and we're finally starting to getting some respect from the PC community, members of which are either =switching of dual platform using their computers. I've recently spent a little time talking with friends who've taken the PC to Mac plunge or new users. I found they had very little concept of how to compute responsibly, efficiently and safety. The PC users were to busy staying alive and keeping ahead on their tasks to care. And the newbies were... Therefore I'm stating this new column.

Sidebar Acknowledgements: Unless otherwise noted I have provided the source of the material in these articles. I also found in my many notes I've stashed for future articles, that certain themes keep coming up, that parallel what I've read or practiced. In most cases I have acknowledged as well as modified the original document(s) to personalize them for our readers.

Organizing Your Mac (Adapted from Tonya Angst)

As an author, nuclear waste consultant and, packrat— information junkie, my office and at times my computer is a mess. I have developed, just during my 50-year professional career, three major different “paper” cataloging filing systems. These ranged from using punch cards as the tracking medium for my file cabinets for storing document abstracted contents and location, to trying the same thing with FileMaker Pro [FMP]. None of these ever outlasted the time I need to maintain them after the point that I'd lost my secretary and clerical help. I'm working on an all computer based paperless system, but time will tell whether I'll stick to it. My FMP database is complexly designed and a small pilot run, indexing several handfuls of documents worked. For the rest, I've accumulated ca. 2000 references for my new textbook, and am still at the accumulating documents (PDF and MSW) as I write my new sections.



Meanwhile, thanks to Tonya Engst of Tidbits fame and the well used and admired Take Control books; I've found and adopted parts of her four simple techniques that provide an oasis of order on my Mac.

Step 1. Clear the Desktop — *I did this last night after I read about slowing Macinish performance in another Tidbit or was it in MacWorld. I've cut the average number of desktop items in my 22" screen from over a 100 to under three-dozen, hurrah for step one.*

Tonya suggests you Take 10 minutes to clear your desktop. *{It took 30, don't ask — I'd been using the desktop as a detailed staging area for four or five different projects. Indeed some of my desktop folders were duplicates I'd staged to the dock — duh.}*

Follow these steps: Close any open windows. Then, click the desktop to be sure you're in the Finder. From the Finder menu, choose Preferences. Clear the first three checkboxes in the Preferences window's General pane. {Tonya, I chose to leave the top two checked since I get and send lots of traffic where extensions matter.}

You can access these items from the Go menu or Sidebar, so they don't need to clutter your soon-to-be tranquil desktop. Close the Preferences window. Make a new folder on your desktop.

Choose New Folder from the File menu. — Name the folder In Box. Move each item on your desktop to an appropriate folder — perhaps your Documents folder or a subfolder of your Documents folder — or put it in the new In Box folder. (You may wish to create a folder in your Documents folder, called My Documents. I did this because my software automatically put so many support items in Documents, I could hardly find my own stuff.) At the end of ten minutes, drag your new In Box folder into the Documents (or My Documents) folder.

Step 2. *Customize the Toolbar*

Identify up to six files (or folders) that you often want to open for reference. For example, files I (Tonya) often want to open:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ My "to do" list:▪ Several style guides	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ The phone list for my son's school▪ My In Box folder
---	---

Add these items to your toolbar. But first, clear any unwanted items from the toolbar with these steps:

- Open a Finder window. (Press Command/N or choose "New Finder Window" from the File menu.) If you don't see a toolbar, click the oval button at the upper right of the Finder window.
- Remove unnecessary items from the toolbar by Command/dragging them off. (You are not deleting these items, just removing their buttons from the toolbar.) You may wish to shorten the items file name so it reads well for display on the toolbar.
- Drag each item to a desirable toolbar location. You should see a green plus badge appear on the pointer when it is over an allowed location. If you don't like the location of an item on the toolbar, move it by Command/dragging it.

To further customize your toolbar, choose Customize Toolbar from the View menu. In particular, experiment with the Show pop-up menu at the bottom of the customization dialog.

Step 3. *Put Projects on the Sidebar*

It's time to separate the wheat of your active projects from the chaff of the other stuff on your Mac. Put folders for active projects in the Sidebar so you can find them instantly and save new files into them easily. Here are some examples of folders that might go in the Sidebar:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Holiday Letter• Finances	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Summer Brochure
---	---

You might also, for example, put iPhoto in your Sidebar, if a current project is to work with photos tracked by iPhoto. To clean up your Sidebar and add items, follow these steps:

Doc's Note: I don't like the sidebar so have almost all my window configured to hit it. Instead I've chosen to use Apple's dock as an alternative for launching active projects. See step 5.

- Open a Finder Window. If the toolbar is showing, you should also see the Sidebar at the left. Items above the horizontal line in the Sidebar are put there by your Mac. You may wish to remove some items in order to make this area smaller; you can drag them out or remove them by clearing their checkboxes in the Sidebar pane of the Finder Preferences window.
- Remove items from the bottom of the Sidebar that don't represent current projects by dragging them out of the Sidebar. You may wish to relocate default items, like Pictures and Movies, to the toolbar. (Drag the item off the Sidebar; then from your user folder, Command-**D**rag it to the toolbar.)
- Drag each project folder to the Sidebar and drop it in the desired location. Notice that a horizontal line shows where the folder will go after you drop it. If the Sidebar is the wrong width, resize it by dragging the vertical divider at its right. If space is at a premium, consider dragging the line almost all the way left – your Mac will show a tool tip for each icon as you move the pointer over it.
- Position and size the window as you want it to appear each time you open a new Finder window, then close the window to make your changes stick. Here are some tips for working with projects on the Sidebar:
- To open an item from a project, start by clicking its project folder in the Sidebar. When you save a file, use the Sidebar in the Save dialog to switch to the correct folder quickly. When you save a file, if you need to work on it not in relation to its project but in relation to the fact that you just saved it, save to your desktop — press Command-**D** to switch to the Save dialog to the desktop instantly.
- To move an item to a folder on the Sidebar, drag it to the folder and drop it when the folder is highlighted.



Step 4. **Combat Clutter**

Follow this clutter-destroying process periodically, perhaps once per day or week: If a file is on your desktop, file it correctly or stick it in your In Box folder for later review. If an item in your Sidebar (*or dock*) no longer represents an active project, remove it. If you have too many active projects, decide which ones aren't front-burner active and move them off your Sidebar.

Step 5. **Customize the Dock**, doc's alternative to using the sidebar.

The Apple dock is divided into two portions. On the left hand side you can place, for fast access, your most often used applications. The right hand side is reserved of what is loosely called documents. These items can be folders, actual documents and web links. The dock stores the aliases of the items stored and therefore like the sidebar can be changed to meet your current accessibility needs.



<i>Doc's List</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ <i>Active Links or Reverence Documents</i>▪ <i>Computer Related</i>▪ <i>Current Active Technical Projects</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ <i>Databases and Files</i>▪ <i>Home—to finish or file</i>▪ <i>macCompanion</i>▪ <i>mmmRecipes</i>▪ <i>Three Rivers Folklife Society</i>

Apple's help notes tell you how — I here share just the barest summary

- To add a file or folder, drag its icon from a Finder window to the right hand side of the Dock
- To add an application, drag its icon from a Finder window to the left side of the Dock
- To arrange or rearrange items in the Dock, drag them into the order you prefer. (This can be tricky since icons vary in *grab-ability*, so don't give up)

If this is enough to get you moving use Google — Check *Organizing Your Mac*.

More Organizing Tips from Tonya

To find out more, read David Allen's book *Getting Things Done*, which will inspire you to think about organization, and Matt Neuburg's eBooks *Take Control of Customizing Tiger*, and *Take Control of Customizing Panther*, which explain many nuances of Finder customization.

PS

Lest I forget, I customize many of my folders by either adding a one-word description or by inserting an image that represent their contents. The tools I use for this are FolderBrander (text) and IconCompo (images). Check the MacUpdate site for the latest versions.

Based on Material by Tanya Engst
TidBITS.com via LIMac Forum, Long Island, NY (Undated)



SchwarzTech.us

“The FireWire Controversy”

By Eric Schwarz

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FireWire 400 4-circuit and 6-Circuit FireWire 400 alpha connector (400 Mbits/s transfer rate) wire-to-wire and supplies its own power

USB 2.0 does 480 Mbits/s (280 Mbits/s sustained) through the CPU



FireWire 800 9-Circuit beta connector (800 Mbits/s transfer rate) wire-to-wire and supplies its own power

Future USB 3.0 theoretical speed of 4.8 GBits/s

I decided I'd wait the weekend before writing this article to collect some outside opinions and gather my own thoughts. Last Tuesday, Apple's new MacBook marked what many are considering the next step in the slow death of FireWire. First, it was the iPods, followed a few years later with the MacBook Air. Is this port really necessary?

Three years ago the same issue was brought up [when Apple removed FireWire from iPods](#). This made some sense to cut costs and allow everyone's favorite music player to work right out of the box with both Macs and PCs. Previously, iPods required PC folks to buy a separate USB/FireWire combo cable or get a FireWire port on the PC. This move, although hated at first, allowed iPod peripherals to work one way, and iPods to work with host computers one way.

A few years later with the first MacBook Pro, we saw a few changes. FireWire 800 was not included in the earliest of Apple's Intel-based professional notebooks, only reappearing a little later. This showed that Apple was a little less-than-confident that FireWire 800 was actually going to be the next step. It never made it to any consumer-grade Macs.

Last January when Apple showed off the ultra-small MacBook Air, many complained that it was not a true Mac because it did not include FireWire. This trend continued throughout the MacBook family with both the MacBook and MacBook Pro losing their FireWire 400 ports, and the MacBook Pro keeping its backwards-compatible-with-a-cable FireWire 800 port.

Why the change of heart for this odd-shaped high-speed connection?

One theory is that many vendors have backed USB 2.0. Although FireWire 400 is actually faster in most cases than the 480Mbps USB 2.0, USB 2.0 is a port people are already familiar with. It's around in the PC world a lot more than FireWire and can allow a computer to have one I/O port for everything. Just like in the Beta/VHS wars, convenience won out over the technically superior technology. Its death was predicted [even in 2007](#).

I'm Mac geek (duh), and also do quite a bit of video work. I edited quite a few things using a Sony DV camera and Final Cut Pro on a Mac mini. I was rather impressed that I could do this with such low-end equipment (the camera was actually pro-level and not mine). Would I buy a new MacBook? Probably not. Just like [all the people that are complaining](#), it is not geared towards me. Sure, I'd love a \$1000 notebook with every feature, but I decided to conduct some unscientific research regarding the FireWire port.

Most of the people I know who have MacBooks have not used the FireWire port. Some have had their MacBooks for over 2 years and have never connected anything there. Some have external USB drives for backup (because that's mostly what Best Buy/Wal-Mart/Circuit City sell). None knew about Target Disk Mode. My point is, FireWire is not something that people even think about nowadays unless they need it. It's not a consumer-grade connection.

The argument is that people need FireWire for legacy equipment. I'd buy that. However, most external drives can be converted to USB 2.0 and most camcorders are moving towards USB as the only way to get things to a computer (as they are file-based rather than linear tape). Those who do music editing and production who have specific devices probably are trying to do pro-level work on consumer-level equipment.

My point is, there's a reason why the iPods lost FireWire. There's a reason the first batch of iBooks didn't include FireWire (only USB 1.1). There's a reason why the first iMac didn't include FireWire. It was added later to consumer-level Macs primarily for video work, but with most cameras moving towards USB, the port just won't be getting as much love from the average Mac user.

Before you start writing nasty comments, think about it. Apple may indeed know best in this case—I'm sure someone was paid a considerable amount of money to research if people really use FireWire enough to need it on every MacBook. It seems like those who have been using MacBook Airs for the last 9 months are getting along quite nicely without it...as are the millions of iPod video, touch, nano, and iPhone users. Although it isn't an outdated technology (as was the case with serial, ADB, and SCSI), FireWire may just not be all that necessary for many users.

Editorial Note: Comments on this article can be found at <http://schwarztech.us/articles/the-firewire-controversy>.

Also there is this article by Joel West on "Apple: Perplexed by Ports" showing current Macintosh configurations at <http://seekingalpha.com/article/100679-apple-perplexed-by-ports?source=feed>

This story isn't over. Apple licensed "FireWire" <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/FireWire> after they developed it and the latest version (IEEE Std. 1394-2008) was ratified in June 2008 by the IEEE (1.6Gbits/se and 3.2 Gbits/s), so it is not like they are licensing the product (\$1-\$2 per port) to themselves. It may be an issue with hardwired security, since it bypasses the operating system for data flow. My MacBook Pro has one FireWire 800 port on it. Apple offered FireWire 800 capability in 2003.

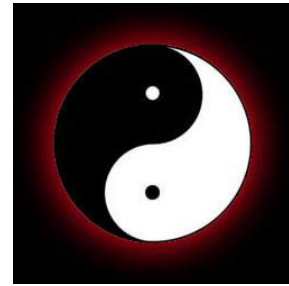
If Apple Corp had stated that the reason they removed the FireWire port(s) was due to power drain (7W for each FireWire port and either .5 W or 2.5W for each USB port - http://developer.apple.com/documentation/HardwareDrivers/Conceptual/HWTech_FireWire/Articles/FireW_implementation.html), then the curfuffle would have perhaps stopped. A 4-pin FireWire port does not provide power.

By removing FireWire from the portable computers it reduces the likelihood of port failure due to data flow, which has been an issue, usually due to a bad FireWire cable shorting out the port and not component failure on the peripheral device - <http://www.wiebetech.com/whitepapers/FireWirePortFailures.php>

USB 3.0 *may* reach a theoretical 600MB/s running full-duplex - http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/USB_3.0#USB_3.0

Rants, Raves and Revelations – November

Doc's Firefox vs. Safari Blues—Safari Glitches that drive me... err. Bonkers



By Harry {doc} Babad © 2008

Reviews or articles were carried out on my iMac 2.8 GHz Intel Core 2 Duo with 2 GB 667 MHz DDR2 SDRAM running Mac OS X version 10.5.5. I connect with Internet by Cable (Charter's medium speed) via a Motorola SB4200 Modem and a Linksys Wireless router to connect to my grandson's Macintosh.

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Introduction

I surf the Internet daily, often for hours as part of seeking background materials for the books and articles I write. Okay, some evenings I check our recipes and folk song lyric, chords and music. As the Internet becomes more integral to my daily life, the browser I use is of great importance to software companies too.

That's why, according to Nate Lanxon [1] every major browser developer is working on new versions of their product. I recently upgraded to Firefox 3.03 and to the latest version of Safari (3.1.2). When a Macintosh version of Google's Chrome browser becomes available, I'll work with it too.

I use, and have always used, Safari as my default web browser. As Firefox reached version 2.0 and beyond I started to play with it out of curiosity. As glitches in Safari arose, I several times switched my default to Firefox, but at then switched back.



I'm sure the things that continue to bug me about Safari have always been these, but in the last several years my work has become more Internet search dependent, During a standard working day, writing sections of a book on Radiation, I check out a half-hundred or more references; download ones I want to use as references. So these days I stumble (e.g., glitch) more. I'm writing this article with the hope that someone at Apple is listening.

When working in Safari, I too often run into several problems while trying to access websites from within Google Searches or within found references including Wikipedia. This doesn't happen continuously, just often enough perhaps one in a dozen or so links. Most of my connection problems are almost instantly solved by dragging that problem link either from Safari or Google into Firefox.

These bugs/glitches are the subject of this 3Rs column. I've not read of any folks reporting such problems, so here you be. As an aside, if you want to read and learn about the other features in either Safari or Firefox, I've attached a bibliography to the end of this article.

Safari Access Gripes – KISS Description


<p>Both my link to Google via <i>iSeek</i> and opening Firefox says I am. Opening the link in Firefox always works.</p>

<p>Almost all of time, Foxfire has no problem opening the page.</p>

Formatting Issues — Web (Safari) to MS Word 2004

In addition Safari has another bit of strangeness with MS Word. When I copy a Safari opened recipe page, from a blog that also has recipes I don't need, to a blank MS Word document; the results are often strange. (Drag and drop does not seem to be well supported for this task) At times everything transfers correctly in two copy and paste steps. [One gets the text, the other for each image.]

But all too often, on some sites, the copied recipe's ingredients are in a run-on paragraph format. The ingredients always look just fine in the browser, so I can't second-guess the outcome. Each website I work with displays one of these behaviors... never both on the same web page. If there are amounts associated with the ingredients, they also are part of the run-on list.

<p>Antipasti – Plate of assorted prosciutto and salame Marinated artichokes Baked red bell pepper quarters filled with a minced pork mixture Sliced leek baked in phyllo pastry leaves Primi – Asparagus risotto Spring vegetable lasagne Secondo – Baked stuffed rabbit Roasted lamb shanks Vitello tonnato</p>	<p>Antipasti – Plate of assorted prosciutto and salame Marinated artichokes Baked red bell pepper quarters filled with a minced pork mixture Sliced leek baked in phyllo pastry leaves Primi – Asparagus risotto Spring vegetable lasagne Secondo – Baked stuffed rabbit Roasted lamb shanks Vitello tonnato</p>
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Bottom Line

Until something better comes along, I stick with Safari as my default browser, but keep Firefox ready in my dock.

Notes and Bibliography

macCompanion is a family oriented Mac'ng around site, so I'm not supposed to be my, at times, profane self. %#@* & \$ seem so... Doc.

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Views from the Ivory Tower

By Ted Bade

Greetings friends and Macintosh users.

This past month has been a doozy. The fake financial engine that credit has created is slowly falling apart around us. I cannot say I am totally surprised by this, nor am I overly concerned. IMHO for too long many Americans (and probably people in other parts of the civilized world), have been convinced that it is okay to live outside their means. Personally, I have never trusted this concept. I have always done my best to live within my means. (Which ultimately means I am not surrounded by a pile of unused electronic do-dads that are no longer of interest.)

We are entering a very serious adjustment period. People need to start thinking about what they are buying. Consider longer term ownership, rather than replacing items frequently. This is an area where the Macintosh excels! I have known people who have held onto their Apples for many years beyond what is considered out of date. But that is an extreme.

I do believe the average home computer user replace their hardware too often. Don't take me wrong, I like to see Apple sell a lot of computers, it makes their stock prices go up and I am an investor. But, truthfully, few people I know really need to upgrade as often as they do (except for my "sister-in-law"). The upgrade was forced when the certificates on her Mac OS 8 web browsers would no longer renew from the Ivory Towerwork and none of the newer browsers supported Mac OS 8!).

The rest of you should get three to four years of life from a computer. Perhaps even more. The average person uses email and browses the web, and perhaps uses some home office program. Frankly, none of that really requires a lot of computer horsepower. Most people would do very well with a Mac Mini or a low-end iMac. Unless there is some hardware problem, these computers should function for over a decade without any problems! Gamers and people who work with lots of video files might need a bit more horsepower.

While you might pay a bit more for a typical Mac, if you keep the machine for a while, the quality of the components in the Mac will make it worth it. Buy the cheaper-priced PC and you will have to replace it long before there would be any real need with a Macintosh. This is not to say that there aren't well made PCs out there or that there are no lemon Macs. Almost every Apple I have owned has had two or more owners! Every Mac portable I have owned has had at least two owners and some had four.

The bottom line here is this. As we learn to adjust to this new economy model, make sure you buy a Macintosh and get your friends to as well. Choose wisely and the machine you buy will serve you well for quite a while.

Apple introduces a new shape for their Laptops - You probably heard that Apple updated their MacBooks and MacBook Pros in October. One of the more interesting things about the update was the use of single molded pieces of aluminum for each half of the machine, rather than a conglomerate of many little pieces. (This leads to a sturdier construction for a thinner laptop).

They also added some of the sleeker design features of the MacBook Air to the standard MacBook design. This includes having very little edge around the display, a thinner profile, a more sophisticated trackpad and more. Take a moment to visit the Apple site and learn about the new MacBook and MacBook Pros.

The other major important thing about these new Macs is the Green factor. Apple has been doing what it can to reduce the use of environmentally toxic materials in its computers. The latest round of MacBooks and MacBook Pros are considerably “greener” than previous versions. For those of us who care, Apple’s list of environmental changes includes:

1. Arsenic-free glass
2. Brominated flame retardant-free
3. Mercury-free
4. PVC-free
5. 37% smaller packaging
6. Highly recyclable aluminum and glass enclosure

Who knows, someday we might have edible Macs. This way, rather than throwing them into the waste stream, when they are obsolete, you could just make a stew out of one and serve it for dinner :->.

Alternative to MS Office - There is good news for people who are looking for an alternative to MS Office. OpenOffice.Org has recently released version three of their office application suite. If you haven’t given this alternative a try yet, you should. It is robust, offers a lot of features and plays very well with a variety of file types. Probably the most important fact is that it is free. Some readers might feel that the most important fact is that it wasn’t produced by Microsoft ☺ .

In any case, this new version is drawing a lot of attention and a lot of people have been downloading it. So much so that the OpenOffice.org servers couldn’t keep up with the demand. There is a pretty nice article about OpenOffice.org server crash that contains some information about the applications as well on the MacNewsWorld site. You can view their contents by clicking here.

If you are already sold on OpenOffice and would like to visit their site, learn more and even download the latest version, you can go directly to the OpenOffice.org web site.

A valuable change to this version of OpenOffice (for Mac users), is the fact that this version doesn’t not require the installation of X11. In previous versions, Mac users needed to install X11, a UNIX utility, to run OpenOffice. Essentially, when you ran the older version of OpenOffice you were really working in a UNIX environment on your Mac. This new version removes the need for X11. This means it is that much easier to use it. I think a lot more people will give it a try without the X11 requirement. However, if you really want to download it, you might want to wait a while, since the servers are having issues!

Apple Q4 financial information - At the end of October apple release it’s fourth quarter financial statement. As expected, they did well. (Which doesn’t explain why their stock price fell almost \$7/share by the end of that day). To read the results yourself, visit this location on the Apple site.

As expected, they sold a lot of Macs and did better this quarter than the same quarter last year. Sales of Macs was 2,611,000 (a 21% growth) and for iPods it was 11,052,000, representing only about 8% growth. (I am sure most of those sales were to customers that already have iPods! iPhone sales were 6,892,000 (compared to 1,119,000 in the year-ago-quarter.) All this adds up to a 35% revenue growth for Apple. Not bad considering the terrible economic crisis the USA is currently facing. (I wonder if all those Apple engineers and business people got to go to the spa, like those financial people our government just bailed out??? Probably not. I hope at least they got an iPod to take home for the kids....)

Until next month - keep on using your Mac!

Books

Googling Security: How much does Google know about you?

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

PEARSON

Greg Conti

<http://www.gregconti.com>

Addison-Wesley Professional

<http://www.pearsonhighered.com/educator/academic/product/0,3110,0321518667,00.html>

Released: October 10, 2008

Pages: 360

ISBN-13: 9780321518668

\$50 USD



Strengths: Unveils the man behind the curtain.

Weaknesses: None found.

When you use Google's "free" services, you pay, big time—with personal information about yourself. Google is making a fortune on what it knows about you...and you may be shocked by just how much Google does know. *Googling Security* is the first book to reveal how Google's vast information stockpiles could be used against you or your business – and what you can do to protect yourself.

Unlike other books on Google hacking, this book covers information you disclose when using all of Google's top applications, not just what savvy users can retrieve via Google's search results. West Point computer science professor Greg Conti reveals the privacy implications of Gmail, Google Maps, Google Talk, Google Groups, Google Alerts, Google's new mobile applications, and more. Drawing on his own advanced security research, Conti shows how Google's databases can be used by others with bad intent, even if Google succeeds in its pledge of "don't be evil."

- Uncover the trail of informational "bread crumbs" you leave when you use Google search
- How Gmail could be used to track your personal network of friends, family, and acquaintances

- How Google's map and location tools could disclose the locations of your home, employer, family and friends, travel plans, and intentions
- How the information stockpiles of Google and other online companies may be spilled, lost, taken, shared, or subpoenaed and later used for identity theft or even blackmail
- How the Google AdSense and DoubleClick advertising services could track you around the Web
- How to systematically reduce the personal information you expose or give away

This book is a wake-up call and a "how-to" self-defense manual: an indispensable resource for everyone, from private citizens to security professionals, who relies on Google.

What I Learned

I've said what Greg Conti revealed here for years, but maybe folks will listen now that he put it into print.

I've probably been guilty of all the ways and means necessary to reveal much about me. I've been online since the inception of the Internet, so there probably is a pretty thick dossier on me by now. I have had my identity stolen. I have had my credit rating besmirched by bad-nasties and I'm pretty sure, due to my writings, publications, blogs, Social Networking, User Groups, Resumes and Curriculum Vitae, Way Back sites, online purchases and banking activities online that I'm probably pretty "transparent" by now. GoogleMaps has my address and location – and without GPS tracking or RFID chipping. My profiling "breadcrumbs" probably fills two or three bushel baskets. I am constantly amazed at how many others of me (first and last name) there are out there. I am no longer "unique".

But you do not have to be "found out". You may still be able to keep you anonymity. Maybe. Or you can blindly trust that Google and others will keep the data carefully, quietly and constantly being built up over time on you, will stay private. But you need to be paranoid. What you say, what you do and what you write can and will be used against you. And not necessarily in a court of law. I know it to be a fact.

Ask any political candidates (for instance, Sarah Palin's Email) or for job seekers that perhaps loaded compromising pictures and other information online about themselves. That information does not go away. It cannot be "repented of", as long as there is disc and tape storage on this planet and electricity to access it.

The New Yorker cartoon showing two dogs at a screen, with one saying; "On the Internet, Nobody Know You're a Dog" is no longer true. *



And no, your life should not be an open book. The angels keep records of all you do, but why should certain organizations who are open to stockholders, blackmail, intelligence organizations, etc., also be privy to such information? Answer – they should not.

I still remember the Robert Redford movie, "Sneakers", about the dude who has a device that collects all information about everything and says that everything is little bits of ones and zeros and the person who controls that, controls everything.



"The world isn't run by weapons anymore, or energy or money. It's run by ones and zeroes, little bits of data. It's all just electrons.

There's a war out there, old friend, a world war.

And it's not about who's got the most bullets.

It's about who controls the information:

...what we see and hear, how we work, what we think.

It's all about the information." The NSA had developed the box for domestic surveillance.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Setec_astronomy

The book does have a few links to some tools for web page monitoring.

And yes, I did google to get the information for this review. Wouldn't you?

Conclusion

If you get that little itchy feeling that someone is watching you, you are right. Learn all you can about how it is done and then look at the few things (very few) that you can do to possibly protect yourself from exploitation.

*The above cartoon by Peter Steiner has been reproduced from page 61 of July 5, 1993 issue of [The New Yorker](#), (Vol. 69 (LXIX) no. 20) only for academic discussion, evaluation, research and complies with the copyright law of the United States as defined and stipulated under Title 17 U. S. Code. <http://www.unc.edu/depts/jomc/academics/dri/idog.html>

The LEGO MINDSTORMS NXT Zoo!

Reviewed by Michael Potter



Author: Fay Rhodes

Publisher: No Starch Press

<http://nostarch.com/zoo.htm>

Released: February 2008

Pages: 336

\$24.95 USD, \$27.95 CDN

ISBN-10: 1-59327-170-0

ISBN-13: 978-1-59327-170-1

Audience: For ages 10 and up.



Strengths: clear, easy to follow illustrations, plenty of tips for building without getting overly technical, lay-flat binding.



Weaknesses: would like a bit more space devoted to troubleshooting and programming.

Introduction

Back in January, I took a look at one of the other LEGO MINDSTORMS books from No Starch Press titled, *The LEGO MINDSTORMS NXT Idea Book* ([link](#)). While that book was very much intended for the advanced LEGO hobbyist, one of its co-authors, Fay Rhodes, felt there was little out there to interest children and their parents in building LEGO robots – and to have fun while doing so.

With that notion in mind, she set out to create this book as a way for parents or teachers to introduce a young audience to the high-tech world we live in, while avoiding the stereotypical clanking machines usually built by “adult techno-geeks.” Creating robots that mimic the movements of animals in nature is a fantastic way to build interest in a younger audience, and the variety of creatures found in the book is enough to please boys and girls alike – as well as their parents who may still be big kids at heart too.

In this book...

As with *The LEGO MINDSTORMS NXT Idea Book*, it's a good idea to familiarize yourself with the first couple of chapters before diving straight into the projects themselves, and perhaps the most important of these introductory chapters is the first one where Rhodes explains for us, briefly, the bare minimum list of LEGO bricks needed to get started building these robots.

Considering the target audience of this book is children, their parents, and teachers, it's not surprising that many of the projects rely upon the LEGO MINDSTORMS NXT Education Base Set, though, it's explained, the retail set will suffice as well if that's what you already own or can obtain more easily.

From there, the book details additional parts needed for many of the robots and where you can look to find those parts. As an example, for three of the robots, all that's needed is one of the base sets plus the Education Resource Set. For the remaining robots, however, there are many specialty parts called “hassenpins” or “3x5 L Shape with Quarter Ellipse Beams” required, which, the book explains, can be found within several inexpensive add-on kits

I found the recommendation of a third-party resource for locating parts refreshing, although I felt the site mentioned, Peeron.com, was a bit difficult to navigate and seemed best for hard to find or no longer manufactured LEGO pieces. Because LEGO blocks are very much like Macs in that prices vary little from retailer to retailer, my recommendation would be to skip the middleman and begin your shopping trip at LEGO's online store at <http://www.lego.com> or LEGO's education store at <http://www.legoeducation.com>. Still, I appreciate the mention of Peeron.com for when you need only a single brick or help locating a hard to find or out of stock part.

Chapter two is a short collection of terms commonly misunderstood by beginning robot builders where topics such as direction, coast vs. brake, the correct type of pin to use when constructing your robot, and the concept of “my blocks” are all briefly touched upon. Because the illustrations found throughout the book are in black and white, some of the passages can be confusing like the one that refers to the “orange” part of a motor. I presume we'd have the parts in front of us and the illustrations are meant to serve as simple guides, but, still, a bit of clarification is in order considering this book is aimed at children.

Chapters 3 – 10 are the core of the book. It's here we are presented with clear instructions for building one of 9 robotic beasts ranging from a hopping frog up to a strutting peacock. As I mentioned earlier, there are plenty of creatures to choose from to please all kids including the camel, a spider, a dinosaur, and an elephant.

As with the earlier book, each robot is given it's own chapter which is broken down into the construction of the robot itself, and the programming needed to make it go. The parts list for each is clearly laid out and, as construction progresses, Rhodes adds notes to key sections to ensure the assembly goes smoothly. I especially appreciated the “Part Substitution Suggestion” sections for when the kits you own might not have the exact part called for to complete a project or are looking for ideas to “plus” your robotic creation.

While this book doesn't delve too far into the logic behind programming the NXT brick, it still includes enough helpful information to make the process of constructing your robot an educational one. Challenges encountered while creating the robots are often discussed and, many times, Rhodes describes where she had the most difficulty – like tips for designing a proper elephant trunk or when she found that a liquid would not be ideal to emulate the skunk's spray.

The final section of the book is divided into three appendices. The first, Enrichment Ideas for Teachers, is aimed at educators and discusses how to apply the concepts learned in the book to the classroom. As the author suggests, it's hardly comprehensive, but ideas for experiments using ultrasound, mathematical concepts, and multiple exercises designed to help the student practice the scientific method can all be found, as well as suggestions for merging your robotic projects with the arts. Appendix B discusses several simple troubleshooting tips and the final appendix offers helpful links to several LEGO and LEGO MINDSTORMS NXT related web sites.

Conclusion

The LEGO MINDSTORMS NXT Zoo! doesn't plumb the depths of building LEGO robots as the Idea Book did, but it does accomplish its primary goal: to provide a straight forward, easy to understand, introduction to the MINDSTORMS NXT kits for young minds. After building these 'bots, most children will have built up enough confidence to invent their own creations or move on to more advanced topics in LEGO robotics.

Recommendation

As a parent who participates in educating our daughter, I would have no qualms about adding this title to her course of study as we introduce more advanced technical topics to the classroom. The author's attention to detail as she recreates the naturalistic movements of animals, plus her obvious love and enthusiasm for LEGO MINDSTORMS NXT building sets, shine through in the pages of this book. Though specifically geared for children, *The LEGO MINDSTORMS NXT Zoo!* is an ideal companion to No Starch Press' other LEGO titles in the libraries of young and old alike.

Mac OS X Leopard Portable Genius

Reviewed by Dr. Eric Flescher



Author: Dwight Spivey

Publisher: Wiley

10475 Crosspoint Blvd

Indianapolis, IN 46256

<http://www.wiley.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-0470290501.html>

Released: Sept. 2008

\$30 USD, \$33 CDN

Pages: 368

ISBN: 978-0-470-29050-7

Strengths: Colorful, easy to read and covers a broad range of topics concerning the Leopard Operating system. Additional helpful information is provided in the way out short tutorial sections entitled notes, genius, Caution. The tutorials and information are well done and provide much assistance for anyone who is beginning with Leopard or who is trying to making your operating system a more efficient one to use. The information is extensive and is integrated with the screenshots, tables, visuals and more.

Weaknesses: None.

Introduction

These new series of Apple guidebooks are entitled “Portable Genius”. Each of these useful books is colorful, informative and provides helpful tips and easy to read shortcuts that will help you learn more efficiently.

The author has published Mac books previously and has specialized in the use of the Mac operating system. The author has provided a broad range of basics as well as an authoritatively set of wide array of information that focuses upon easily using Leopard Operating and becoming more efficient with it and your computer.



An introduction ushers the 365-page book, which includes 12 chapters. What is nice about the book is that the information is easily well laid out. Light blue bars at the top of the pages have the titles of the chapters, which makes access of the chapters a little easier. This colorful, easily readable screenshots also have informational/ titles that are targeted with lines the and zone in exactly where the specific information is so that you don't have to "fish around to find them". What is nice this makes easy reading with less words that focuses upon the visuals on your screen/desktops. Additional tables, desktop screenshots highlight more information that are straightforward and crisp in terms of understanding, knowing and searching for helpful information that is targeted by the text (which is kept to the minimum). The different coloration of the text and boldface fonts serve to offer better reading though out the book.

This book particularly focuses on Mac OSX Leopard operating system. The chapters cover the basics, applications, mastering the web with Safari and using iTunes. Two new feature/ applications are Snapshots and Photobooth. There is more about working with PDF files, printing with Leopard, customizing Leopard the way you want and configuring your accounts. Within the book you also learn how to share files, automating your Mac, working with the UNIX terminal commands and installing Windows. Troubleshooting is also covered with good hints c concerning isolating software troubles, updating your operation system, permission problems and additional information. The index is extensive and highlights where to find specific ideas and information within the text/ chapters.

Having just started with Leopard, I found this book most helpful. I found out more about UNIX terminal commands which I might try someday but I am more likely to utilize the new Snapshots and Photobooth which I can see has immediate uses to tie into all the photographs I have.

Conclusion

The best thing are the visuals, the integration with the tutorials and detailed information. Colorful, bright and authoritative, this book as well as the series has a lot of good information for beginners but also those who want to find out more about using their operating system and computer a more efficient one. This book is a winner and so is the series. I would suggest looking it over to see if you would like to add it to your collection. While the book is not cheap, it may save you time and make you a more efficient learner of your operation system, computer and much more.

Mac's Portable Genius

Reviewed by Dr. Eric Flescher



Author: Paul MacFedries

Publisher: Wiley

10475 Crosspoint Blvd

Indianapolis, IN 46256

<http://www.wiley.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-0470290528.html>

Released: Oct. 2008

\$25 USD, \$28 CND

Pages: 368

ISBN: 978-0-470-29052-1

Strengths: The information is extensive and is integrated with the screenshots, tables, visuals and more. Provides good information on upgrading various Mac computers. Colorful, easy to read and covers a broad range of topics concerning the Leopard Operating system.

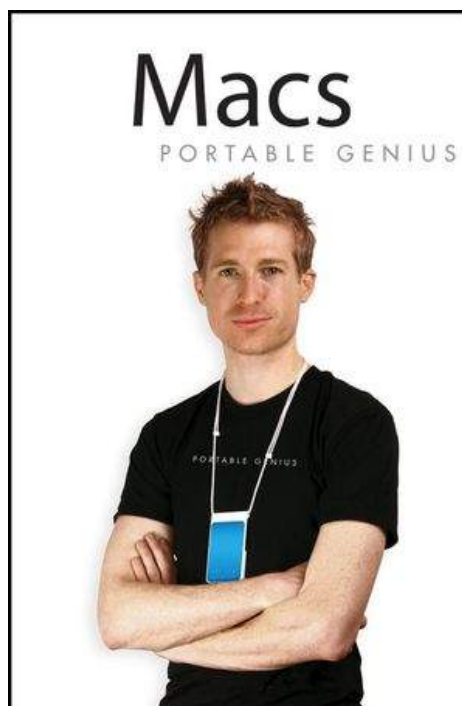
Additional helpful information is provided in the way to short tutorial sections entitled notes, genius, Caution. The tutorials and information are well done and provide much assistance for those Mac users who want to become familiar and gain and understanding of their system. Good for those who are starting with Macs or want to become more efficient with the use of their Mac computer.

Weaknesses: Remarkably this titled book does not say anything about the different types of Mac computers to start off with.

Introduction

These new series of Apple guidebooks are entitled "Portable Genius". Each of these useful books is colorful, informative and provides helpful tips and easy to read shortcuts that will help you learn more efficiently. This one focuses on the use of hardware Macintosh systems.

The author has written four dozen technical and computer related books and is a Macintosh expert. Possibly that is why the emphasis is more on the "parts" versus the Mac Computer themselves. Possibly that was the intent but I still find it strange that a book named Macs does not begin with a full run down on different types of Macintosh computers.



The book includes 12 chapters within its 345 pages. The information is well laid out. Light blue bars at the top of the pages have the titles of the chapters which makes access of the chapters a little easier. This colorful, easily readable screenshots also have informational/ titles that are targeted with lines the and zone in exactly where the specific information is so that you don't have to "fish around to find them". This makes for easy reading with less words that focuses upon the visuals on your screen/desktops. Additional tables, desktop screenshots highlight more information that are straightforward and crisp in terms of understanding, knowing and searching for helpful information that is targeted by the text (which is kept to the minimum). The different coloration of the text and boldface fonts serve to offer better reading though out the book.

This book starts off with connecting and configuring devices. This book focuses more on desktops then laptop type Macintosh which is emphasized with the fact that in the index has Mac laptop information that primarily emphasizes upgrading these units. There is a wide variety of information in this chapter concerning working with fax machines, printers, external displays and more. The photos of the cables, adapters and devices are well done. Anyone seeing these photos will know what needs to be used as promoted by the tutorials and information. Further chapters focus on specifics such as using Bluetooth devices, synchronizing the Mac and other devices, becoming a more efficient internet user, organizing life online, communicating while using your Mac. Running and keeping your Macintosh health and running smoothly, upgrading your Mac are well done sections. Upgrading your Macintosh is a very good section with much good advice, helpful information and many good ideas and suggestions that can take advantage of depending on your type of system and configuration. Troubleshooting is also covered with a good chapter that keys on solving Mac software, hardware, solving hardware problems, and running Windows on your system. I think it is kind of ironic that this chapter comes after troubleshooting your Mac (in other words is this a mixed message about using Windows on your computer?).

The Appendix includes Mac online resources, Mac shortcut keys, a glossary. The index is extensive and highlights parts, hardware and many specific tools and additional information. This index helps you find more of what you need to know that is in or around your Mac.

Conclusions

You first need to discover more about your particular desktop Mac by reading the manuals and other books that have specific information about desktop Macs. The best thing are the visuals, the integration with the tutorials and detailed information. Colorful, bright and authoritative, this book as well as the series has a lot of good information for beginners but also those who want to find out more about using their operating system and computer a more efficient one. This book will save you time if you are using a desktop Mac. You can probably use this book if you have a laptop as well. This book can help save you time and make you a more efficient learner of your desktop computer. If you need to upgrade your system in the future or now then this book will be most helpful.

Global Cooling

" Coldest Year of the 21st Century" (so far)

Researched by Robert Pritchett

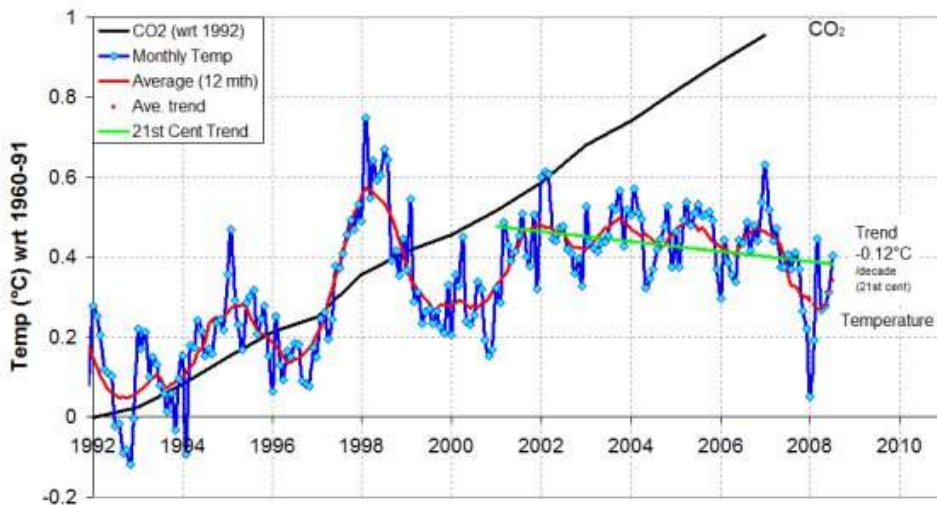


Burning Earth

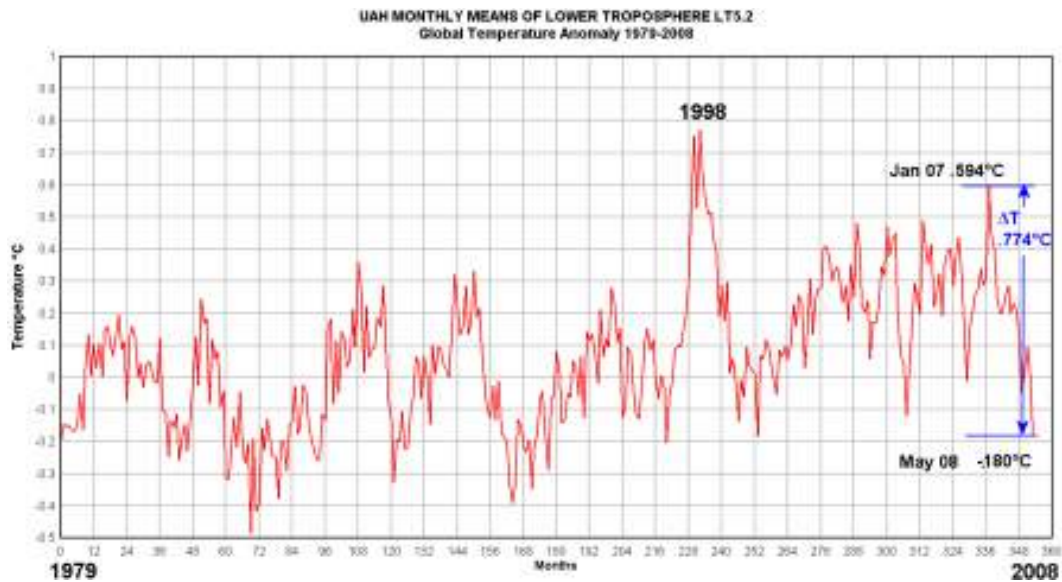


Freezing Earth

Global Temperatures & CO2 Since 1991



Graph from "The Global Warming Scam" - <http://www.lenzie.org.uk/scam.php> Stop. Read the article in the link and then come back. You will begin to get mad. Did you read it?



http://wattsupwiththat.files.wordpress.com/2008/06/uah_may_08.png

It is illogical, Spock:

"Cooling is caused by global warming. Ask any liberal. They will tell you." Orthoclase

"Man-made global warming is not based on fact. It is an ideology that is rooted in destroying the 'western' way of life. It seeks to place us as the cause of all the problems in the world."

<http://conservemus.com/2008/06/05/br-r-this-global-warming-is-freezing-my-skin/>

"2000, and December was colder still. 'Global warming has stopped,' said David Whitehouse, former science editor for the BBC. 'It's not a viewpoint or a skeptic's inaccuracy. It's an observational fact.' -

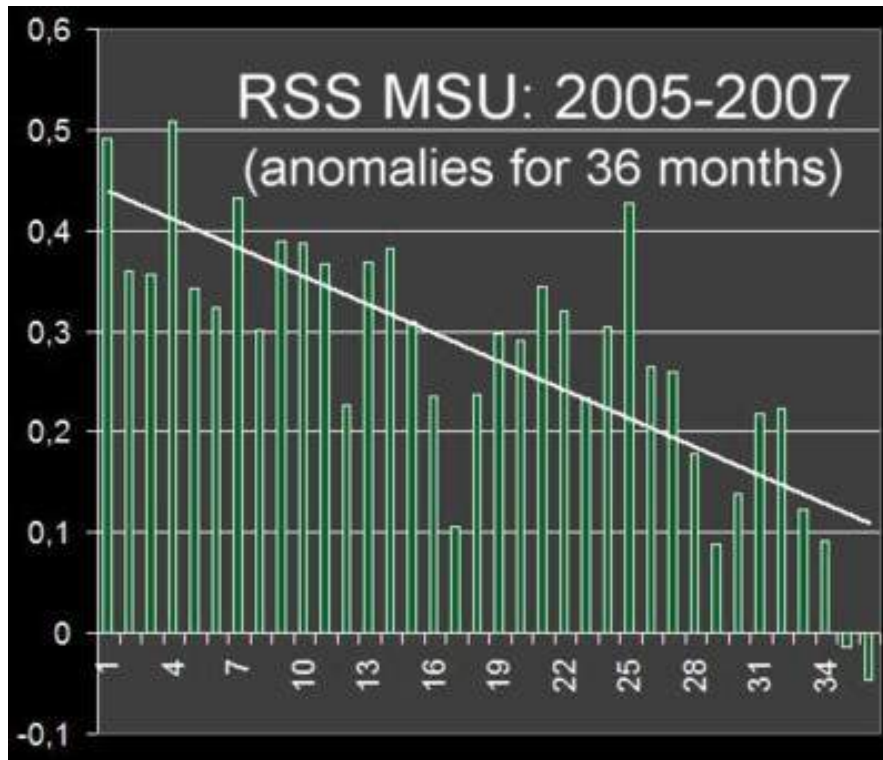
http://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2008/01/temperatures_trending_cooler.html

"Coldest Year of the Century" - 2006 had that honor – 2006: the coldest year in the last five years -

<http://motls.blogspot.com/2006/12/2006-probably-coldest-year-in-last.html>

"Coldest Year of the Century" - 2007 had that honor – 2007 warmest year on record? Coldest in this century -

<http://motls.blogspot.com/2008/01/2007-warmest-year-on-record-coldest-in.html>

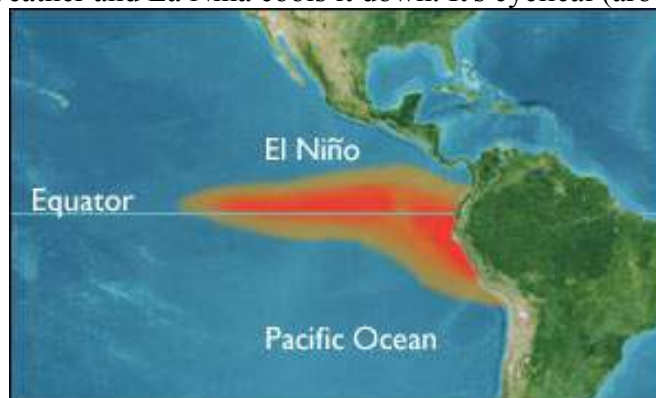


Pacific Decadal Oscillation (PDO)

"The Pacific Decadal Oscillation (PDO) is a pattern of Pacific climate variability that shifts phases on at least inter-decadal time scale, usually about 20 to 30 years. The PDO is detected as warm or cool surface waters in the Pacific Ocean, north of 20° N. During a "warm", or "positive", phase, the west Pacific becomes cool and part of the eastern ocean warms; during a "cool" or "negative" phase, the opposite pattern occurs."

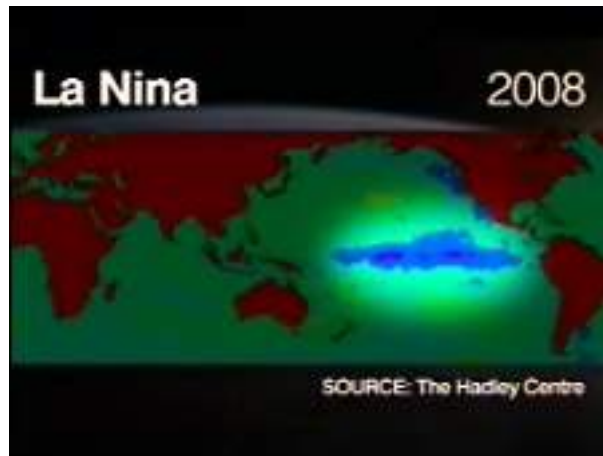
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pacific_decadal_oscillation

El Niño heats up the weather and La Niña cools it down. It's cyclical (around every 4 years).



We experienced El Niño not too long ago. El Niño events, the trades slacken or reverse direction. The pool of surface water warmer than 28°C, normally located over the western tropical Pacific,

is forced eastwards. It evaporates, resulting in drenching rains over South America (east Pacific). Meanwhile, Indonesia in the west Pacific, experiences drought conditions.



La Nina cools waters in the eastern Pacific Ocean, but its effects are felt around the globe. It typically lasts for up to 12 months and generally less damaging event than the stronger El Nino. When La Niña occurs, the southeast trades strengthen and water even warmer than usual is piled up in the west Pacific. This leads to excess rains in the west and dry conditions in the east Pacific.

http://www.bbc.co.uk/weather/features/el_nino_events.shtml

That's the Pacific side of the planet.

Atlantic Multidecadal Oscillation

On the Atlantic side, we have the Atlantic Multidecadal Oscillation (AMO).

The Atlantic Multidecadal Oscillation (AMO) is a cyclic variation in the large-scale atmospheric flow and ocean currents in the North Atlantic Ocean that combine to alternately increase and decrease Atlantic sea surface temperatures (SSTs) -

<http://www.wunderground.com/blog/JeffMasters/comment.html?entrynum=265&tstamp=200512>

As more fresh water enters into the Atlantic (North pole melting activities), the North Atlantic gets colder, causing the Gulf Stream to cool and make Europe get colder. Cause and effect, baby! Cause and Effect!

Next decade 'may see no warming'

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/science/nature/7376301.stm>

World heading towards cooler 2008

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/science/nature/7574603.stm>

Global temperatures 'to decrease'

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/science/nature/7329799.stm>

2nd coldest January for the planet in 15 years

<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2008/02/04/rss-satellite-data-for-jan08-2nd-coldest-january-for-the-planet-in-15-years/>

China battles "coldest winter in 100 years"

http://uk.reuters.com/article/homepageCrisis/idUKPEK161570.CH_242020080204

Global Cooling: Amazing pictures of countries joining Britain in the big freeze

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-516969/Global-Cooling-Amazing-pictures-countries-joining-Britain-big-freeze.html> (Mail Online; Feb. 21, 2008)

NOAA: Coolest Winter Since 2001 for U.S., Globe

http://www.noaaneews.noaa.gov/stories2008/20080313_coolest.html

Br-r-r! Where did global warming go?

http://www.boston.com/bostonglobe/editorial_opinion/oped/articles/2008/01/06/br_r_r_where_did_global_warming_go/

It was the coldest Easter for more than 40 years - and we may not see spring weather until April

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-544088/It-coldest-Easter-40-years--spring-weather-April.html>

Brisbane wakes to year's coldest morning - again

<http://www.brisbanetimes.com.au/news/queensland/brisbane-wakes-to-years-coldest-morning--again/2008/07/31/1217097374187.html>

Ireland has 30-year cold event, plus coldest September in 14 years

<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2008/10/02/uk-has-30-year-cold-event-plus-coldest-september-in-30-years/>

Santa Saved. The North Pole Doesn't Melt

<http://theamericansentinel.com/2008/09/24/santa-saved-the-north-pole-doesnt-melt/?nucrss=1>
Now we've reached the end of the melt season. There were an extra 150,000 square miles of ice over last summer's totals when the ice started to expand again. I suspect that we'll have another cooler winter and a continuation of ice buildup at the pole, but I doubt you'll ever hear about it, much like you didn't hear about 2007 having an unusually small hole in the ozone layer. ("American Sentinel"; Sept. 24, 2008)

An open letter from The Viscount Monckton of Brenchley to Senator John McCain about Climate Science and Policy

http://www.americanthinker.com/2008/10/an_open_letter_from_the_viscou_1.html

"From 1700-1998, temperature rose at a near-uniform rate of about 1 °F per century [Akasofu, 2008]. In 1998, "global warming" stopped, and it has not resumed since: indeed, in the past seven years, temperature has been falling at a rate equivalent to as much as 0.7 °F per decade [Hadley Center for Forecasting, 2008; US National Climatic Data Center, 2008]." ("An American Thinker"; Oct. 20, 2008)

Southern Hemisphere Sea Ice Reaches "Unprecedented" Levels

<http://www.climateaudit.org/?p=3066>

On a global basis, world sea ice in April 2008 reached levels that were "unprecedented" for the month of April in over 25 years. Levels are the third highest (for April) since the commencement of records in 1979, exceeded only by levels in 1979 and 1982. This continues a pattern established earlier in 2008, as global sea ice in March 2008 was also the third highest March on record, while January 2008 sea ice was the second highest January on record. It was also the second highest single month in the past 20 years (second only to Sept 1996).

Anecdotal cold weather news from around the world: There continues to be a number of reports of colder than normal weather and seasons from around the globe. Here are a few;
<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2008/08/16/anecdotal-cold-weather-news-from-around-the-world/>

NOAA: U.S. breaks or ties 115 cold and sets 63 new snowfall records
<http://wattsupwiththat.com/2008/10/30/chill-in-the-air-part-2-us-breaks-or-ties-115-of-cold-and-sets-63-new-snowfall-records/>

Of course many of you that live in this weather already know this, but there is an early start to winter this year, not only in the USA, but also in London, England, where it snowed in October for the **first time in over 70 years**. (Oct. 30, 2008)

Global Cooling is Here! Evidence for Predicting Global Cooling for the Next Three Decades
<http://icecap.us/index.php/go/joes-blog>

In 2008, NASA satellite imagery confirmed that the Pacific Ocean had switched from the warm mode it had been in since 1977 to its cool mode, similar to that of the 1945-1977 global cooling period. The shift strongly suggests that the next several decades will be cooler, not warmer as predicted by the IPCC.

IceCap has a lot of other interesting information as well - <http://www.icecap.us/>

I could keep going. 2008 is colder than 2007 which is colder than 2006, etc. If I hear another: "but it's caused by Global Warming", I'm going to get very, very mad and my temperature will rise and cause Global Warming.

But we keep getting this malarkey –

Man is to blame for Antarctic temperature rise

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/earth/main.jhtml?xml=/earth/2008/10/30/eapolar130.xml>

Read the comments on this laughable, hysterical and totally disproven article.

The climate computer models are wrong – pure and simple. Those programmers need to get outside more often instead of always being stuck in some basement like they are growing mushrooms in manure. Or they are mired in the manure.

Now read these Notes From Bob Tisdale on Climate Change and Global Warming -
<http://bobtisdale.blogspot.com/2008/07/polar-amplification-and-arctic-warming.html>

He wrote; " If the Antarctic is getting warmer, as claimed, then why has the ice cover there increased by far more than that 'lost' at the arctic? If the arctic is losing ice at an 'increasing rate' then why has this year seen record early ice formation and record extent?

If the earth is getting warmer then why have records low temperatures and record early snowfalls been occurring across the Northern hemisphere this year (and temperatures becoming lower for the last 5 years)? The main consequence of these new Cold record

events seems to be the 'global warming' industry trying to cover its tracks with a record number of factually incorrect bulletins in denial of the steady reduction in global temperatures.

How long before the Global Warming gang do an about face and blame 'global cooling' on man? The temperature changes of the last 20 years - or even the last 100 or 200 years are small and insignificant compared with the historic changes of even the last 2,500 years. This self-serving 'science' of climate change being man-made has as much proof and proven science behind it as did the *assumptions of the middle ages that illness was passed from one person to another by looking at them.*"

Media Hype on 'Melting' Antarctic Ignores Record Ice Growth

http://www.epw.senate.gov/public/index.cfm?FuseAction=Minority.Blogs&ContentRecord_id=F1F2F75F-802A-23AD-4701-A92B4EBBCCBF

Contrary to media hype, the vast majority of Antarctica has cooled over the past 50 years and ice coverage has grown to record levels since satellite monitoring began in the 1979, according to peer-reviewed studies and scientists who study the area. (US Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works"; March 27, 2008) Check out the extensive supporting documentation on that link.

This video is still fun to watch "Doomsday Called Off" -

http://video.google.co.uk/videoplay?docid=-3309910462407994295&ei=YgcKSaeMH4aQ2AL3n_SZCg&q=global+warming&hl=en

Enough of the rhetoric on Global Warming and Climate Change already! The Global Warming Emperor has no clothes. Empirical evidence from real scientific study wins over the "Agenda of the Left"TM. Fact trumps fiction. It took long enough.

Hardware

Pinnacle TV for Mac HD mini stick

Reviewed By Ted Bade



Pinnacle Systems

<http://www.pinnaclesys.com>

\$130 USD

Requirements: Macintosh computer with a Dual PowerPC G5 or an Intel Core Duo processor, Mac OS X v10.4 or later, Free USB 2.0 port, 512 MB RAM, Hard drive with minimum 1 GB free space (20 GB recommended for TV recording), CD or DVD drive.



Total package



HD
Stick



Strengths: Great video, able to view local over the air stations using a tiny antenna.

Weaknesses: Included software package is very poor, hard to use, have very few features, cannot perform automatic recordings. To really use this stick you need to purchase the \$50 upgrade to the full EyeTV software.

The Pinnacle TV for Mac HD mini stick is a small device that picks up digital (only) video from either an antenna or a cable and displays it on your Mac. The video is clean and looked spectacular, especially the HD signals. This is a pretty neat little toy! The bad news is the included software severely shackles this device by limiting what you can use it for.

Using a Digital video recorder is a way of life for many people, this is definitely true in my household. There are a variety of dedicated digital video recording machines like the Tivo or a box from your local cable company that take advantage of large sized hard drives to record video. They work great and the Tivo provides a means of transferring video shows to your Mac. (I have both in my house). But what if you don't have one? If you have a Macintosh sitting around, with a larger hard drive, with this stick you now have a way to bring video signals onto your Mac. With the right recording software, you can capture and enjoy the TV shows as you desire.

The TV for Mac HD mini stick looks like a USB pen drive. It has a USB connector on one side and a small cable connector on the other side, the middle contains the electronics. The stick package comes with two cables to bring video signals to it.

First there is a longer cable that connects to the included included mono ear antenna. The other shorter cable ends in a standard cable company connector which can be connected to your home cable or to a larger antenna. One thing to keep in mind about this TV stick, it doesn't receive analog signals only digital ones. So if you don't pay for digital cable, you will only be able to use it to watch digital over the air broadcasts.

The package also includes a infrared remote (that can be used to control the stick), and the lite version of the EyeTV software. While the TV stick works very well, Mac users who buy this package are stuck with the lite version of EyeTV, unless they want to shell out an additional \$50 for the full version. I found working with the lite version frustrating and confusing. I should note here that the TV stick package also works on Windows machines and includes software to control it on this platform. I did not take the time to try the Windows version of the included software.

I had no major problem with the Pinnacle TV for Mac HD mini stick. The connectors work well. I just plugged it into my Macintosh and the EyeTV lite software started and I watched TV. In a fashion similar to some pen drives, this body of this device slides over the USB connector, acting to protect it. On the sample I received, the slide action was hard to do and the outer cover of the device soon fell off. I was able to snap it back together, but decided it was easier to leave the protective jacket permanently slid back rather than reassembling it each time it fell apart. None of this affected the operation of the TV Stick.

To relate my experience with the TV Stick, I need to talk a lot about EyeTV lite. I have a number of issues with this software. There is an upgrade path to the full version of EyeTV, but I did not take that path and chose to review the package as it comes out of the box. Please keep this in mind as you read my description of how it worked. No doubt the full version of EyeTV or a different software package would make using this device much more fun.

To use the Pinnacle TV for Mac HD mini stick, you need first to install the EyeTV software. This process was a bit hindered by a typo in the quick start guide. It told me to use the activation key printed on the sleeve of the installation disk. There was no such key on the included Mac disk jacket, but there was on the Windows disk. Using this key didn't work. However, there is a "Serial Number" printed on the Mac Disk, which is what was needed to activate the software.

Getting the software to work takes a few steps. After installing the serial number, you are first asked to set up an account on TitanTV if you don't already have one. This is an online TV information service that provides programming information which can be used to schedule recordings. The set up was relatively easy, you provide information about where you are and what video source you use (what level of cable or over the air). The only problem I had with setting things up on this site was that this particular TV stick wasn't listed on the choices of TV devices it recognizes. (There were a lot of others, but not this one). I just selected another Pinnacle HD stick that was close to it, and I think the results were okay, at least they were what I expected.

The next step you tell the EyeTV lite what type of signals it should search for. You can select over the air or cable. The over the air search is relatively quick, since there are only so many broadcast stations.

The cable search takes a long time, as there are several hundred possible digital channels to search for. If you decide to have this device search your cable for free signals, plan a coffee break. ☺ Also, doing it a second or third time at a new location or just to see how things work is tedious, to say the least.

In my local area there were a handful of digital over the air broadcast TV stations. I was surprised and quite pleased at the quality of the signals I was able to receive with the included antenna. I was in my kitchen watching a SD news broadcast on TV connected to my cable and the same broadcast, over the air, in HD on my laptop using the Pinnacle stick.

Control of the TV stick is via an infrared remote or through a remote looking device on the Mac's desktop. Controls are easy and simple anyone familiar with a TV remote should have no problem using it. One neat feature of using a system like this (or a Tivo) is that live TV is fed into a buffer, so as you watch, you can do instant replays or scan back to something you missed. The nicest feature is the pause button. Ned to get that cup of java? Press pause, then play when you come back, the program stores the live broadcast and you pick up where you left off!



(The Remote)

(All these channels, but what are they?)

For those of you not experienced with digital signals, there is an interesting difference when dealing with weak signals. As an analog signal gets weaker and weaker, the video you see begins to introduce video noise which old timers call “snow”, since it looks like random patches of light and dark areas. As digital signal weakens you first see pixilation, that is some data is missing so your see rectangles of color that don't really fit in. If the signal gets even more weaker, you loose motion, so you might see one frame for a while then another and so on. The image generally looks nice, except for the splotches of pixilation!

It appears that some over the air video includes a data carrier, which provides information about what channel you are connected to, the program you are watching and some other data. So when

you watch you can ask for information and get channel, program name, and so forth. This is a very nice feature of digital broadcast TV. On the cable side, after you complete the exhaustive search for cable channels, the EyeTV lite attempts to log onto some internet location and acquire channel information for your cable carrier. I don't know if this works, for the three times I let this process go, twice the application crashed and once I gave up waiting when after several tens of minutes, nothing happened. So now I am stuck with 72 channels listed and with no idea what they are.



(TV on my Mac!)

When the device and software scanned for cable digital channels, it found a lot of encrypted channels, but still listed them as usable channels. It seems to me that the software should have at least the intelligence to not display stations that are encrypted. I know it knows that they are encrypted, since that is what shows on the display screen.

Apparently, there is a way to manually attach a station ID to the general number that the EyeTV software provides. I had asked if there was an option to do this from customer support and the Pinnacle customer support people passed my question along to the EyeTV people (Elgato), who suggested an upgrade to the full version of EyeTV. (They did also explain a way to do this.) Which leads me to another complaint about the lite version, anytime you try to do anything not included in the lite version, you get a suggestion to upgrade. I was quite surprised, when I clicked on the "Preferences" menu choice in the application menu for EyeTV lite, all I got was a commercial to upgrade EyeTV. Very, very annoying.

Basic recording with the EyeTV software (record the channel you are currently viewing) is relatively easy. Push record and the software starts recording what you are currently watching. When you are done recording, push stop. Nothing is automatic. With the lite version I could find no way to schedule a recording. The information provided on how to use EyeTV lite software is so sparse, that it is pretty useless.



(Oops and encrypted channel - I wonder what is behind the blue screen?)

One use I could see for this TV stick was to take it along with my laptop, then tune into the local broadcast stations to watch TV where ever I go. I tried this in three locations in Connecticut where I live. Here again, the EyeTV lite software is a real pain. In order to locate channels in the new area I am in, I had to select the EyeTV lite setup assistant, which ran me through the set up process in almost its entirety! The only thing I didn't have to do was to give it the serial number again! This is not a very efficient way to do this. Luckily, since I was searching for over the air broadcasts, it only took a few minutes to show the stations it could receive. (Except for the time I visited a friend and we searched his cable, good thing he likes coffee as much as I do ☺)

Conclusion

Overall the Pinnacle TV for Mac HD mini stick performs very well. The video is clean and crisp and it is able to receive a fair number of channels using a very tiny antenna. However, this product is totally fettered by the extremely poor EyeTV lite software that is provided for Macintosh users. This software is clunky, hard to use, and provides so few features that it is useless for anything much more then changing channels. It does come with Pinnacle software for Windows, I have no idea if this product is any better, but I would be surprised if it isn't.

For the \$130 price of this stick, I would expect Pinnacle to include software that could do more then change channels. The upgrade to EyeTV full version is \$50, so to do some basic recoding and have other useful features, the cost of this package for Macintosh users is at least \$180 USD. If you are looking for a TV tuner for your Mac, you might want to look around or wait until Pinnacle provides some software that functions nicely on the Macintosh.

Upgrade to Eye IV

Turn EyeTV Lite into an EyeTV heavyweight.

Export. Edit. Burn. And much more.

Later Upgrade Now!

No preferences in the Lite version....

Software

Browseback 1.5 — Graphically browse & search your visited web pages

Reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad © 2008



SmileOnMyMac, LLC

<http://www.smileonmymac.com/BrowseBack/index.html>

For a demo of this product:

http://www.smileonmymac.com/BrowseBack/download_thanks.html?url=http://www.browseback.com/downloads/browseback%25201.5.dmg



\$30 USD (List), Calculated \$38.17 CND, £18.80 UK, €23.81

Released: 25, October 2008

System Requirements: Mac OS X 10.4. or later; Universal binary Broadband Internet connection recommended..

Users: All Skill Levels

Strengths: It works exact as advertised.

Weaknesses: It is a memory hog, a controllable one, but not for those whose hard drive is almost fully filled.

Copyright Notice: Product and company names and logos in this review may be registered trademarks of their respective companies.

The software was tested on a Reviews were carried out on my iMac 2.8 GHz Intel Core 2 Duo with 2 GB 667 MHz DDR2 SDRAM running Mac OS X Leopard version 10.5.5. I use both Safari and Firefox as browsers, both in their most recent versions.

Caveat Emptor — For this review, I used more than my usual amount of polisher's material. But I hate rewriting material when the original is both clear and *makes my point*.

Introduction and Publishers Description

Doc was curious. Why when all modern web browser have a browse back (history) feature, would a company as astute as SmileOnMyMac, LLC publish such a product; not even as shareware but as a commercial software product?

The Publishers Claims — With browseback, you'll never lose a web page again!

- Want to find a web page you know you saw but didn't bookmark? — Browseback intuitive visual interface lets you scan through thumbnails, they're more like readable miniatures, of every page you've visited!
- Need to find all the web pages you've visited on a specific topic? — With browseback, you can search the content of your web history by keyword! "The software lets you go back at any time and find those things that you lost. It's like Time Machine for browsing." - Victor Cajiao –Typical MacUser Site
- Found a web page that you want to share? — Emailing a PDF of a page is quick and easy with browseback!
- Looking for an old news story that's been taken off the publisher's site? — browseback stores a PDF of every page you visit, at the time that it was visited. And the contents are searchable too!

When deciding to test this product, I had three major concerns:

1. How much hard disk space did the product need for its data files?
2. Although Safari is my default browser, how did the product deal with the fact that I sometimes used Firefox to do searches and wanted to access them?
3. I periodically purge my history list and other cache files, to retrieve disk space and enhance performance. How would this affect browseback's routine performance?

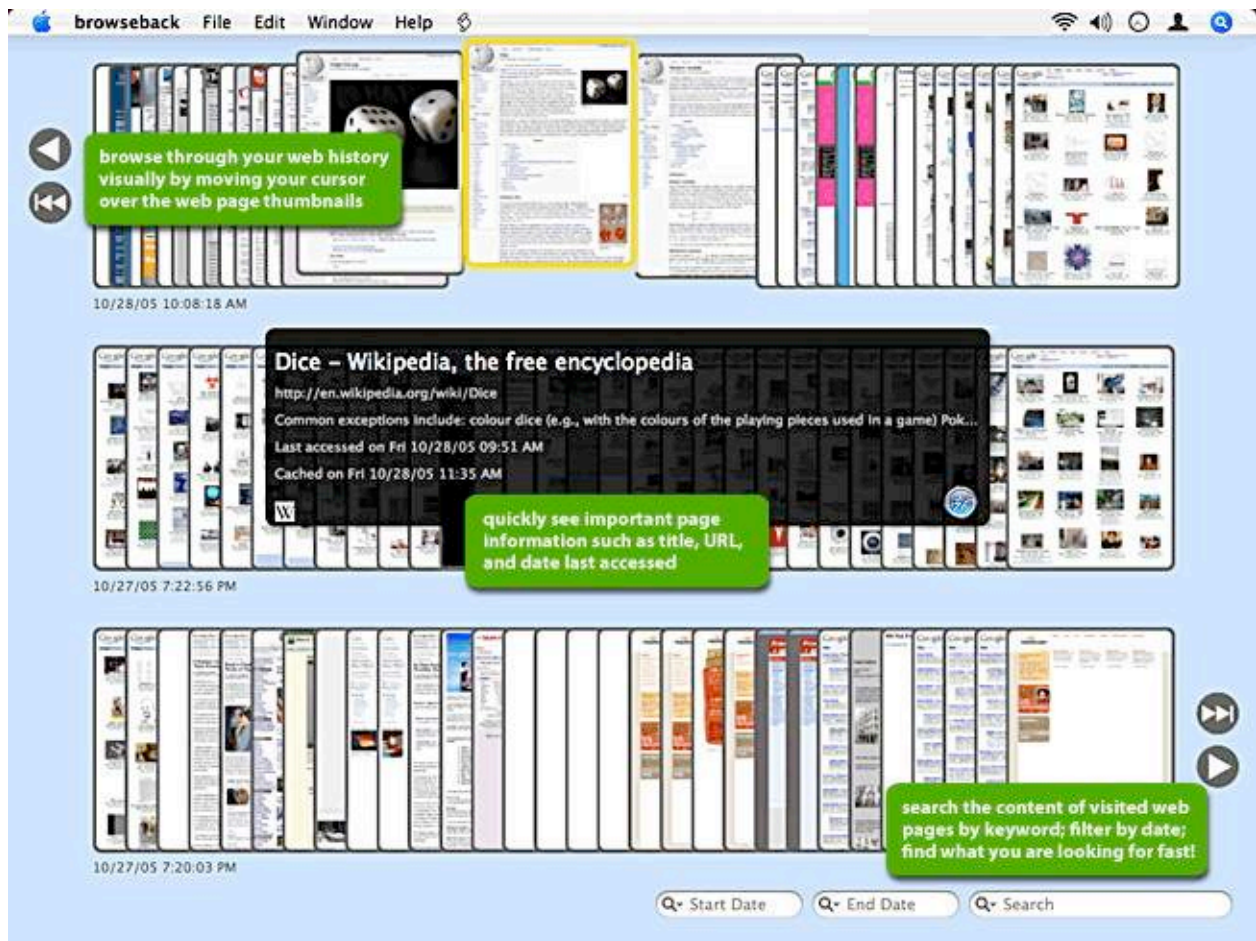
Getting Started

Installation was easy, as was registration of the product. The readme file, not a help file, provided me with enough information for installation as well as how to delete the product, should I choose to. It even located the browseback data files. <Harry's Leopard > Users > Harry > Documents > browseback folder

When browseback is first launched it creates a database of web pages retrieved from your browser history (histories, if you use more than one web browser). Your normal browser history is often short, possibly only a week. This is where browseback comes into play. Browseback runs as a background application, and stores your history for as long a time as you specify. It not only stores the locations of places you visit, but it stores the actual page content also. Why? You might ask. Well, remember that article you saw on the front of the Times three weeks ago? The front of the Times changes, the article is no longer there. With browseback it still is.

Activate browseback with the key press *command-F12*, by choosing browseback from your dock, or by pressing *command-tab*, and selecting the browseback application icon from among your applications. You can adjust browseback's activation key from the General Preferences.

Check out the rest of preference pane selections, and set them to your liking. I set the memory limit for the database folder for 25 GB of the 383 GB I have currently available. I also, for now, want to keep the data for a mere 180 days. The later is likely too long, but settings can be easily changed.



When is use-active, the translucent application window overlays your whole screen, 24 inches in my case. Generally when working with the software, you find what you want, leave, and return to browseback when you want to search again. How you ask? Just click your cursor on any part of the browseback window that does not contain web page thumbnails.

Using the Software

You can rapidly scan through thumbnails of your web pages by moving the mouse over them. The page immediately under the mouse is considered selected, and appears highlighted around the edge. That page is also automatically summarized by showing its title, URL, text summary, and date information.

You can scroll further back through your history by clicking the single scroll button on the bottom right of the screen. It scrolls back a row of pages at a time. You can scroll back as far as is contained in browseback's database by clicking the double-right arrow, just above. Scroll forward to present day by clicking the arrow on the top left of the screen. The double-left arrow, just beneath it, will scroll to the start of your history.

Double-click the selected thumbnail to open that web page in your browser. Note that the browser will show the current version of that web page as it is live on the web, not the version stored within browseback's database.

Features:

- Surf thumbnails of your browser history
- Search your history with keywords and Spotlight
- Export web pages as PDFs to save or to share via email
- Quickly retrieve what you found weeks ago
- Export pages to PDF and E-mail for sharing with others
- intuitive visual interface
- Supports major Mac web browsers (Safari, Firefox, Internet Explorer, etc.)
- Flexible Printing features
- Available in English, Japanese, German, French & Italian

Note: all these actions, except open in web browser, work on the stored version of the web page, as it was when you originally viewed it, not the version of that page currently on the web. This allows you to see web pages that no longer exist on the Internet!

Hold down the *control* key and click on a thumbnail to display its contextual menu. The contextual menu actions are the same as the web page actions above, but also there are two additional ones:

Kudos — Boolean Search Capability

You can search for web pages that match a word, or more complex search criteria. To do this, enter your query into the search field at the lower right of browseback's web page display. Press return after entering your query, and browseback filters its web page display to show only pages that match your query. The help guide provides enough examples to keep you comfortable with doing complex searches.

Note: AND, OR, and NOT *are case sensitive*. Therefore *purple and iguana* contains no Boolean operators, whereas *purple AND iguana* does, and the results will differ.

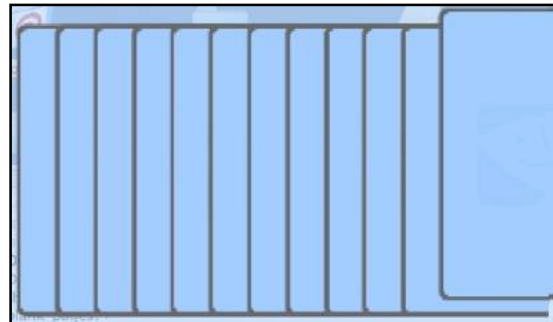
Clearing Your Search — Click the symbol, at the end of the search field, to clear your query entirely. All of your web pages will then be shown.

Search Operators	
Operator	Meaning
AND	Boolean AND
&	Boolean AND
<space>	Boolean AND by default when no other operator is

	present
OR	Boolean inclusive OR
	Boolean inclusive OR
NOT	Boolean NOT
!	Boolean NOT
*	Wildcard for prefix or suffix; surround term with wildcard characters for substring search. Ignored in phrase searching.
(Begin logical grouping
)	End logical grouping
"	delimiter for phrase searching e.g., <i>"purple iguana"</i>

Discomforts

Deletion of Blank Thumbnail Pages — I picked an arbitrary date to start keeping a history of the sites/pages I visited. As a result, I ended up with a "Bar mostly filled with blank pages. I fixed this by moving the "stat date fore indexing and all was well. But, delete blank pages would work even better.



If Wishes Were Horses... (Features for next desired major upgrade)

Alas, this tool though excellent is not magic. What I'd love to have is software that tracks material taken off a publisher's site, so I don't have to write each publisher about each archive document I need for reference. But that has nothing to do with the product SmileOnMyMac has developed.

Conclusions

General — Browseback is easy to use, stable, and works exactly as described by its developer. In using it in both browse and search modes, I was able to find all of the sites I remember reading, except {naturally} for the ones whose history I had deleted. With a single click you can save a web page as a pdf, print it, attach it to an email, or take you back to the site. The later is a bit dicey, the site, particularly of a newspaper or magazine may have, will likely have, and changed. For my needs this is a perfect application done well although, and fairly priced.

I also like the way the product doesn't get in my way when I'm working on an article. The browseback interface is hidden until you activate it. It overlays your screen when active. When you click through to a web page or switch to another application, the interface is hidden again.

When deciding to test this product, I had three concerns. Here are my findings.

- How much hard disk space did the product need for its data files
—> Lots and lots — a two month supply of search information, I do tens, usually; if not hundreds of searches a day when I'm research articles. I tested the software after cleaning out most the cache files in safari on October 13th. The present data file folder for browseback is 253 MB, that since Mid October.
- Although Safari is my default browser, how did the product deal with the fact that I sometimes used Firefox to do searches.
—> Easily, the preferences pane allows you to pick whatever browser you want to index.
- I periodically purge my history list and other cache files. How would this affect browseback?
—> once captured by the software your history remains intact.
- A freebee — Miraculously, or great programming, the software works with the now unsupported Eudora 6.2.4 email client.

Recommendation — What I suggest a friend or colleague consider before spending their hard-earned cash. Certainly, but SmileOnMyMac has provided you with insurance. The download is a fully operational trial version of the product. It is identical to the purchased version, except that the SmileOnMyMac logo will appear at the top of your browser window when you visit a web page via browseback. Once the product is purchased and registered, the logo will not appear. All in all, despite being a hard disk hog, it well worth 4.5 macC's. That's the sort of reason why I buy computer with 500 GB drives — space for my goodies, tools and the work I do!

PS

A major irritation or perhaps a pet peeve — folks who post one-line reviews damning a product, without providing at a minimum the specifications of their operating systems for the developer to use are doing our community a disservice.

What's the relevance to this review? Simple, after I complete a review, I check for reviews Googling the product. This check is a sanity test, to make sure I haven't gone overboard in favor or against the product. Indeed when I disagree with a posted review, I add that information in a PS to my article.

CrossOver Mac Pro 7.0 by CodeWeavers -- It Just Works

Reviewed by Dan Robinson



Codeweavers, Inc.

info@codeweavers.com

<http://codeweavers.com/>

\$70 US (Download)

Released: June 2008

Requirements: MacTel

Audience: Mac users who need certain Windows Apps

Strengths: Price. Allows some PC applications to run on an Intel Mac without buying Windows or virtual machine software

Weaknesses: Not a very intuitive installation. A short list of supported applications.

Last Reviewed:

<http://www.macompanion.com/macc/archives/April2007/Software/CrossoverMac.html>

Introduction

I'm spoiled. I admit it freely. I've been using Macs since the day they hit my local Apple retailer in 1984.

They just work.

So you can imagine my lack of patience when it comes to Windows. As far as I'm concerned, there isn't a single thing I need to do that requires Windows.

Oh, occasionally, I need to transfer a switcher's data from a PC to a Mac, so I have to get into Windows once a week or so. But that's them . . . not me.

All this is to set up my own little story. Today, (October 27, 2008) a company called



Installation



Once installed



CodeWeavers (<http://codeweavers.com/>) offered their \$70 CrossOver application for free.

Crossover uses "Wine" [[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wine_\(software\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wine_(software))] to run PC software on the Mac.

I figured 'For free? Why not?' So last night, after midnight, I went through the process, which took an inordinate amount of time. Their webserver was already overloaded. This morning, it was down altogether, but in my email this morning there was a serial number. So after a few gyrations and modifying the URLs, I was able to download CrossOver. It was not a simple, straightforward installation. But the installer told me it was actually doing stuff, so I let it proceed, eventually coming out the other end with CrossOver telling me it had installed itself.

Then you choose from a list of "bottles," (bottles of wine . . . get it?) select the Windows installation package or CD, and once again, let it do its thing. I chose Internet Explorer. Once more, it took several tries to get it right, but finally it reported it had successfully installed.



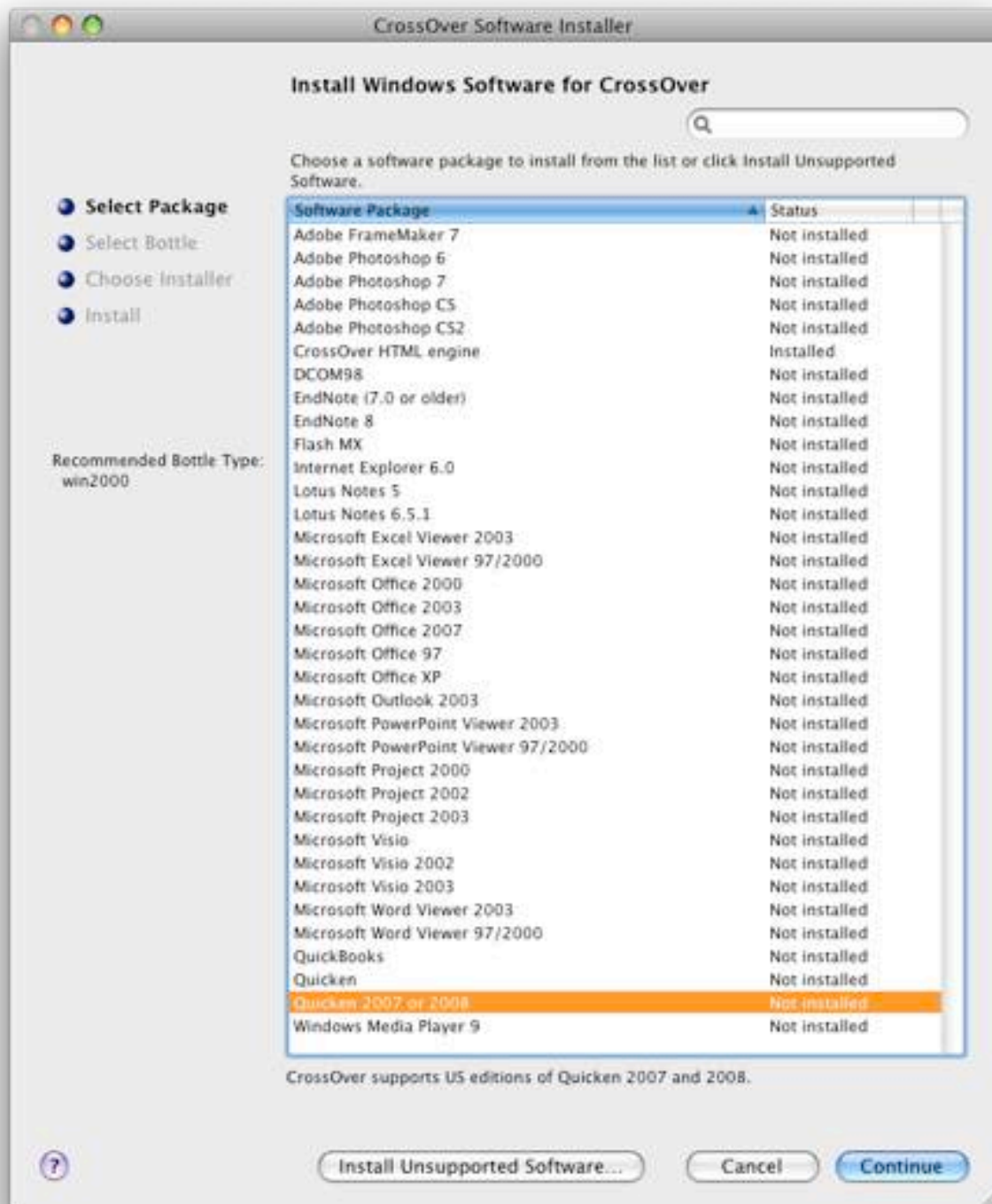
Double-Click!

Internet Explorer comes up in X11! It's jerky, web sites are scrolling up and down randomly. After a few moments of this, the whole computer is frozen and I have to restart.

Double-Click.

Humpf! This time it opens in CrossOver and actually works as it should. It's relatively quick and acts like you expect a browser to work. What did I do differently? Beats the heck out of me!

I spent a dozen minutes rapidly surfing. Everything "Just Worked" . . . this time.



Conclusion

In spite of the hassle of installation, CrossOver performed as advertised. It would be a better

choice than Boot Camp or buying Parallels and a retail version of Windows Vista! Many switchers are faced with exactly that. In one week I had three clients who switched, but had to install Windows on their Macs because their Quicken files could not be transferred to Quicken for Mac. (That's a whole 'nother rant.) Now clients with Windows Quicken have even more reason to switch. Look on the list above for other apps that don't have an equivalent version for the Mac.

So would I recommend it? Sure.

Editorial Note: Be aware, many apps have Mac versions, i.e., Adobe CS4, MS Office (see the "review" from the October 2008 issue of *macCompanion*). PAF 5 on the other hand, is what my mother (Carole Pritchett) uses for genealogy work and though there is a beta version for Mac OS X, it has not been released or developed enough yet, so CrossOver comes to the rescue!

Get Backup

Reviewed by Daniel MacKenzie



BeLight Software
sales.usa@belightsoft.com



6609 Courtney Drive
Oak Forset, IL 60452
USA

<http://www.belightsoft.com/>

Requirements: Apple Macintosh G3 or higher. Mac OS X v10.3.9 or later. 4 MB of free space for application.

Available in: English, German

Pricing: \$39.95 USD \$50.19 CDN 24.80 GBP 31.16 Euros

Strengths: Simple, easy to add files, sleek interface.

Weaknesses: I can't see any.

Introduction

I have a confession to make. This is my first backup program. Everyone says to backup your files and I know it's a good idea but I had never actually done it. This program definitely makes it easier. This very simple but effective program that does one thing and does it well, backing up your files.

Startup

To get the backup started, you must first create a backup project. This feature allows you to set up multiple backup projects at once. Simply click the "New Backup Project" icon to get started. Your current backup projects appear in a box on the left-hand side of the window. You can select each project to start a backup, add a file or change a setting.

The next step is adding the files and folders that you would like to backup. There is no limit on the number of files you choose. Using the browser window, add the files and folders to the list. The only restriction that you can set to the number of files would be the size limit. If you would like to use compression to backup you files, you cannot change this setting. There are five main setting: Unlimited, 650MB CD, 700MB CD, 2.3GB DVD, and 4.7GB DVD The final option is "Custom" where you can enter any value you wish.

After you have selected the files, click “Backup Now”. It will then prompt you to select a destination for the backup file. This can be anything from a USB stick, and external hard drive, a disc or just another folder on your computer. Then the backup begins. The time it takes to backup the files varies depending on the size of the files that you are backing up. When it finishes, voila! Now put the backup in a safe place in case you need it. That’s the quick and dirty way of using this program. It’s fast and easy to set up. But there are ways to customize it.

You can set backup filters for each project. These filters are for invisible files, Finder data files (.DS_Store), applications and aliases. When selecting these filters you can exclude them from your backup. The invisible files and Finder data files are automatically selected when you create the project. Sometimes you don’t want to backup the applications with the files in the folder or you want to have your apps somewhere else.

Just be looking at it and using it I can’t see any flaws. To me, this program is geared for people who don’t know much about computers or people who have never backed up before. The simplicity gave me this impression. But please don’t let this deter you from getting this program. Download it and give it a try. It is a great program but some others may provide more advanced features for more advanced users.

Conclusion

Overall, this is an excellent program. I didn’t know it could be this easy but Get Backup makes it easy. Anyone looking for a backup program should take a look at Get Backup. Great job, BeLight Software!

MacSpeech Dictate 1.2

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett



MacSpeech, Inc.

Released: Oct. 20, 2008

\$200 USD <http://www.macspeech.com/pages.php?pID=51>

Includes: Software and Headset.

Requirements: MacIntel computer, Mac OS X 10.4.11 or later, 2GB hard drive space, Internet connection, MacSpeech approved noise-canceling mic - <http://www.macspeech.com/index.php?cPath=21>



Voice models for North American, US Teens, UK, Australian, Southeast Asian, and Indian English.

Other Reviews: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5p1uibZ196A> MacMost

Last Reviewed: <http://www.macompanion.com/macc/archives/July2006/Software/iListen.htm>

Tutorials:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PaITammiprM>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SOU2NlibJPs>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5mFWRkae9Ds>

Strengths: Works with most all "text input" apps. Less than 5 minutes of training of the app to become productive. Phrase training, letter-by-letter Spelling and Move modes. Correction is dramatically improved. And there is a PDF manual. Accuracy is really good now. In a word, "Magical". This version is "Ready for Prime Time".

Weaknesses: It does a great job finding bad RAM. Some apps are not "Dictate-friendly" yet. Requires a MacSpeech approved mic. It really is a dictation app and not a control app. "Note Pad" is still a little buggy. The app is processor-intensive. And yes, sometimes switching between voice and key board can get the processor a little confused at times.

The more RAM you have, the better this app operates.

Reviewed with MacBook Pro, Mac OS X 10.5.5 and using a VCI Parrot mic system. The older Avanti stereo headset (came with iListen) works fine as well.

Introduction

MacSpeech Dictate lets people perform basic navigation of their Mac and control it with their voice to launch applications, open new windows, execute menu commands, etc.

MacSpeech Dictate is a new speech recognition product for the Macintosh, with underlying speech recognition powered by the dictation technology used in Dragon® NaturallySpeaking® from Nuance Communications, Inc.

"MacSpeech Dictate 1.2 makes amazing accuracy get even better as you use it," explained Andrew Taylor, founder and CEO of MacSpeech, Inc. "We're thrilled with the huge leap forward this update provides our customers, who can now dictate precise spellings, move their cursor using their voice and improve their recognition accuracy toward the holy grail of 99%."

We can dictate any specific word, no matter how obscure, by spelling it letter-by-letter with the new Spelling mode, making it easier to spell-out acronyms, names and unusual words.

Phrase Training is also a part of this latest release, which helps increase accuracy even more as one uses MacSpeech Dictate. What speech recognition applications on other platforms refer to as "Correction," to improve speech recognition accuracy over time. The new Phrase Training capabilities empower people to act immediately, when they notice text has been recognized differently than intended, and promptly trains the application to recognize the word or phrase. Recognition accuracy increases as a person uses MacSpeech Dictate, notices misrecognitions and trains the application right away. The applicable profile stores the Phrase Training data for future reference.

This is also a maintenance release that fixes reported issues and introduces a new "Move" command for easier verbal editing of a document. The new Move command allows people to use their voice to relocate the cursor within a document for easier vocal editing.

This version also includes significant interface enhancements for a more efficient, intuitive experience.

What I Learned

Years ago, I used IBM's ViaVoice, but they eventually got folded into Nuance. Now MacSpeech has also followed down that path with Dictate.

First off I have to say that we are an affiliate of MacSpeech and 2nd, I am a beta tester and have been for years of iListen. And yes, it frustrated me.

We've been working with the challenges of the integration of the things learned from Dragon NaturallySpeaking and platform changes from PPC to Intel. And the effort has been, shall we say, rather interesting. For a while there, we were getting new software builds almost daily and it was difficult to keep up with the incremental changes between builds.

These guys were fast-tracking the development and version 1.2 is the latest rendition. They saw, they heard, they listened. They have already started the next beta cycle. So expect more good things to come from this monumental effort to take advantage of what the best of Mac OS X has to offer combined with voice recognition technology. We are so, so close to StarTrek-like capabilities with these Macs (no keyboards?). And it is just a blast to be a part of the development process as a beta-tester. I see improvements, however, I see that this version *is* "Ready for Prime Time".

The creators of this app essentially started over from iListen to make Dictate. I was completely taken aback when they switched platforms and joined Nuance, but obviously they needed the financial clout that Nuance had so they could continue R&D for the Mac and apparently use of the Dragon speech engine was a prerequisite for the merge.

I went back and forth about the mic issue with them. There is no "fail-safe" mode for using the built-in mic of the machine. The best performance "dictates" that a MacSpeech approved mic be used. They will not back off this stance in allowing the computer to use its own mic, if an external mic is not readily available. At least with this release.

I used iListen. I have now used Dictate. Dictate plays nicer. Note Pad tends to be a bit funky. And that is probably why the next round of beta-testing is getting going after a short breather. Look, those programmers needed a rest. I wonder how well it will perform, once the next version of Mac OS X is released.

We even got to critic the new User Guide and they actually followed up on the feedback before they released the PDF manual.

Bad Raps

Some users (look at the date and then look at the version) http://www.macfixitforums.com/ubbthreads.php/ubb/showflat/Number/853106/site_id/1#import have indicated they have been experiencing crashes with their systems when they use this program. Then there are the 8 pages of Amazon.com reviews that hammered MacSpeech on earlier versions. Those were warranted. However, I have not had the current version upchuck on me. I'm guessing they might have RAM issues or they are using an older version of Mac OS X? Those bad distribution disks on Dictate version 1 were a black eye. I'm glad it didn't happen to me.

It would appear that folks who started on Dragon NaturallySpeaking have been the ones who give this app a bad rap, as they have migrated to Macs. It is really telling that those who reported on their experiences before version 1.2 trashed it with 1 star and afterwards those who installed version 1.2 gave it 5 stars on Amazon.com. The best reviews are coming from folks who have physical challenges. They really, actually use it.

On the other hand, going back and forth between keyboard and voice can confuse the app somewhat. Watch MacMost's YouTube video above by Gary Rosenzweig. I hope you watch it, warts and all. It was pre – version 1.2.

Good Vibes

The strength of this program is that it takes 5 minutes to train it in your natural voice at your pace. It recognizes that. No "train the person" kind of dictation, but "train the computer to learn my voice" instruction instead. That makes it magical.

Conclusion

Dictate 1.2 has become a productivity app. You do not need to wait for version 2.0. You do need to speak "punctuation-eze", but that is why it is "Dictate". It beats shorthand (does anybody do that "lost art" anymore?) or taking up valuable time using a secretary to record your letter.

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Besides our website and consulting efforts, we also create *macCompanion* as a freely available PDF-based monthly. It averages about 100 pages per month. July 2006 was the 4th-year anniversary of this labor of love. The *macCompanion* staff is an all-volunteer team of writers and reviewers from many parts of the globe, and they also have a great wealth of knowledge and experience in their backgrounds. That base of talent also continues to keep growing as the Macintosh Professional Network expands.

Statistical Analysis

We are very excited about our site statistics! The multilingual-capable [macCompanion](#) website is close to 2 million page views a month and readership continues to increase rapidly through our "whisper campaign".

We continue to get greater visibility every day. Many of the various 35 computer operating systems (with many moving towards the Mac® OS X™ environment), 115 online search engines, 269 countries and domains and 319 online robots have discovered us – and continue to do so. So far, over 201 other websites have also linked to us. Many of our readers have made our site one of their favorites. While nearly 70% of our readership stops by for a quick visit via RSS feeds, over 23% spend between 1/2 to 1 hours at a time going through over 250 different pages on our site (mostly archives). Many of those who quickly drop by, come to get the monthly PDF issue of *macCompanion*. Over 35GB of bandwidth was used in December 2005 alone for download purposes. Previous months have averaged around 20GB. Trend analysis indicates that will continue to increase as folks decide to "Move to the Mac".

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Well that's it for this issue. Please come back again next month!
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