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MACWORLD.COM'S TOP 5

The top 5 stories on Macworld.com are:

1 **What Will Be in Apple's Next Laptops?**
Rik Myslewski looks at the many options available to Apple for its upcoming hardware updates (macworld.com/3841).

2 **Another iPhone Application Slashed from App Store**
Dan Moren finds that another program—Slasher—has vanished from the App Store (macworld.com/3842).

3 **Creative Notes: Resolving Preamp Problems**
Thanks to reader suggestions, Jim Dalrymple was able to get his album-recording project back on track (macworld.com/3843).

4 **Jobs Confirms iPhone Application 'Kill Switch'**
In an interview, Steve Jobs says that Apple would use such a mechanism to combat malicious programs (macworld.com/3844).

5 **A September Surprise from Apple?**
Analyst expects Apple to hold a special event that will focus attention on new iPod and MacBook models (macworld.com/3845).

(Ranking valid as of August 22, 2008.)

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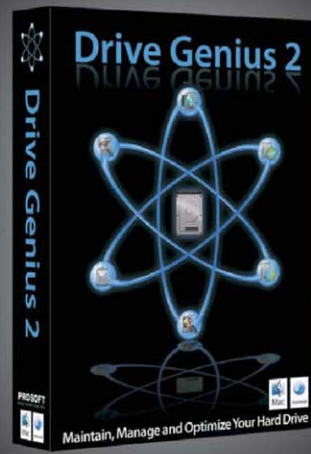

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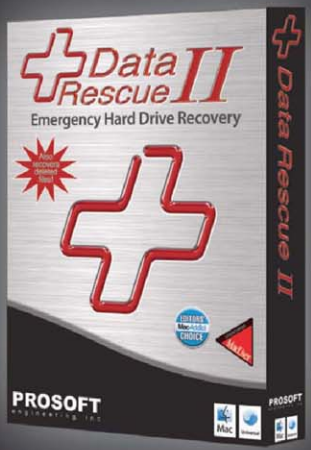

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by Richard Thalheimer

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 By Jason Snell

The Expectations Game

Apple's new products can't always be earth-shattering—nor should they be

You've got to hand it to Apple: the company has convinced us that at any product-launch event, it's entirely possible the world will have changed irrevocably by the time Steve Jobs strides off the stage to tumultuous applause.

It's true that every so often Apple announces a product so groundbreaking and dramatic that it changes the industry around it. That certainly happened in the fall of 2001, when Jobs unveiled the first iPod, and possibly in January 2007, when Apple announced the iPhone.

But most of the company's announcements are more mundane. They're about moving its product lines forward and improving its bottom line. That's the kind of announcement we got September 9, when Apple rolled out its latest line of iPods (see our story on page 22).

Meat and Potatoes

If you were expecting a groundbreaking new product from Apple this year, you were undoubtedly disappointed. But even the most innocuous fall introduction of new iPods serves a vital purpose: it ushers in the most important three months of Apple's financial year.

Apple consistently sees its strongest earnings in the final quarter of each calendar year. It's no coincidence that the company sells twice as many iPods in those three months as it does in any other quarter. Rolling out a new slew of iPods whips up consumer enthusiasm, which then leads to millions of iPods gift-wrapped in colorful paper come December.

At this year's event, Steve Jobs ceded the stage to Apple marketing chief Phil Schiller for several minutes, so that Schiller could demo a bunch of games on the iPod touch. The not-so-subtle message: it's a music player, video player, *and* gaming console, all in one! Or more succinctly: the iPod touch will make an awesome stocking stuffer. You could almost hear the *ka-ching* of cash registers in the background.

Most of the company's announcements are about moving its product lines forward and improving its bottom line.

Slowing Growth

Still, it will be interesting to see how well these new iPods sell this holiday season, because at this point in the product's life cycle, I wonder if there's anyone left who doesn't already own one. That's another reason Apple has to keep updating its products: regularly unveiling shiny new iPods every year stokes the all-important upgrade market.

The fact is, the age of explosive iPod sales is over. Holiday iPod sales grew less than 5 percent last year, after years of runaway growth. And in a roundabout way, Apple admits as much. In his presentations, Steve Jobs no longer boasts about the impressive growth of the iPod market. Instead, he touts the iPod's nearly 75 percent market share of the music player market.

The maturing of the iPod is visible in another way: the gradual decline of the iPod classic. Previously available with 80GB and 160GB of storage, it's now down to just one 120GB model. I can't really imagine the classic surviving more than a year. Thus passes the iPod's first generation.

Three Slices of Apple

The Mac is resurgent in sales and respectability. The iPod is maturing and still dominant. The iPhone may be experiencing an iPod-like period of massive growth. In some ways, Apple is operating like three separate but related companies.

Understanding that fact can temper the disappointment you might feel when Steve Jobs appears on a stage and *doesn't* announce a stunning new twist on your personal all-time favorite Apple product. For example, Apple doesn't usually announce new laptops at a music-themed event. Still, I heard from dozens of people who were disappointed that Apple didn't announce new MacBook Pros along with the iPods.

High expectations mean that Apple is doing something right. But it's important to bear in mind that Steve Jobs won't shake the world every time he takes to the stage at an Apple event—and that's OK. A clutch of new iPods might not rock your world, but they will certainly fill Christmas stockings. And that bodes very well for Apple's future.

Did Apple's September 9 announcement disappoint you? Let me know in the Macworld forums (forums.macworld.com) or via e-mail at jason_snell@macworld.com.

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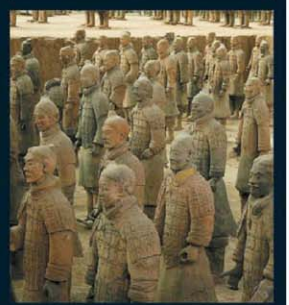

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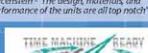

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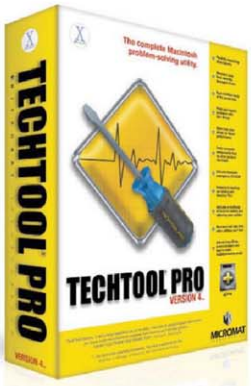

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New Products, New Woes

Apple's new MobileMe service gets off to a rocky start

Immobile Me

I am among the 1 percent of MobileMe users who have been without e-mail for over a week. The lack of customer service from Apple has been incredibly distressing. I have convinced many people to switch to Apple because of the Mac's ease of use and the high quality of Apple's customer care. However, this past week Apple has shown a markedly different tone in how it treats customers.

Rebecca Melrose

I've been a .Mac user for years and was completely satisfied with the old service. I relied on my .Mac account to connect with friends and family from Internet cafés while traveling all over the world. Now just finding the log-in link on the new MobileMe page, let alone jumping through the browser warnings and setup steps from whatever café I'm in, is a pain. Is simple, hassle-free e-mail access from any port of call too much to ask for? I've signed up for a Gmail account.

EJ McClure

I am a fairly recent convert to Macs and haven't looked back since I switched, but the failure of MobileMe is abysmal, to say the least.

Gene Johnson

Never have I seen a company that is so slow to get the big picture as Apple. Case in point: MobileMe. Apple ships an empty box instead of sending an activation code via e-mail. FedEx sends thousands of trucks thousands of miles to burn up thousands of gallons of gas to deliver what is for all intents an empty box. Then Apple's server goes down, so that after activation you can't log in. A day later, you get the necessary iTunes update, and three days later you get the necessary System Preferences update. This is the kind of hubris Apple is famous for: send out an incomplete product to a loyal customer base, and eventually they'll forgive us.

Rick Camp

Is Apple Green?

On the subject of whether Apple is a green company ("Apple Dinged on the Environment Again," *Mac User*, August 2008), the environmental organization's raters are oblivious to the fact that the Apple TV and its almost waste-free, paperless, and practically footprint-free delivery of movies provides an extraordinary level of greenness. Consider the wasted paper and vehicle emissions involved in mail delivery to NetFlix subscribers. Then there's the exhaust from the cars of people who drive to stores to rent their DVDs.

Jeff Theisen

Apple TV Wish List

John Siracusa hit the mark with his assessment of the Apple TV's shortcomings (*Spotlight*, August 2008)—namely, its lack of DVR functionality. I thought if anyone could give the TiVo a run for its money, it would be Apple. If Apple had built that feature into the Apple TV, I'd have one plugged into the plasma right now.

Dimitri Holman

PHOTOGRAPHY PETER BELANGER

OVERHEARD ON THE FORUMS

Hands-free dialing *is* safer than hand-dialing, but not talking on the phone while driving is safer than both. Not reading, applying makeup, shaving, eating, or talking to passengers is also safer. It's all a matter of degree.

W_Loring
macworld.com/3851

I wouldn't mind having a simple exercise bike attached to a battery that I could use to store power for any device. Why not popularize something that so many Americans need to do anyway? Exercise—and use a natural resource.

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Siracusa is spot-on in saying that the Apple TV has the potential to be the killer living-room appliance, but he's misidentified the area it should focus on. If Apple decides to put more effort behind the Apple TV, the resulting product will not *record* cable TV—it will *replace* it. If it can be standardized and popularized, subscribing to shows through the Internet would make episodic video entertainment content driven, not advertising driven. Instead of paying for a lot of bad shows, consumers could put all of their hard-earned dollars into the few shows that are really worth having around.

Gerrit Dalman

Siracusa implies that the Apple TV can somehow get us free content—it cannot, nor should it. All media costs somebody something to produce, and the constant attempts to get high-quality content for free are pointless. That leaves us with two real possibilities: we let paying advertisers cover the costs or we pay the producers or distributors directly. Personally, I'm enjoying paying for each program or song I get through iTunes in lieu of being railroaded with advertising.

Ralph Sanchez

Underwater Photos

A wide-angle lens is almost necessary for underwater photography ("Extreme Vacation Shots," *Digital Photo*, August 2008). You usually need to get close to your subject as silt in the water degrades a photo quickly, especially when you use a flash. Also, a flash that is off-axis from the lens is best. The flash restores the color balance you start to lose below 20 feet, but particles in the water reflect back when the flash is at the same angle relative to your subject as the lens.

Jon Rosen

Derrick Story recommends using silica gel to lubricate the O-ring seal of an underwater camera's housing. Silica gel is a desiccant, not a lubricant. I have been an underwater photographer since the 1970s and have used heat-stable silicone greases such as Zip-Slip by Zip Aerosol Products. Most camera housing manufacturers provide their own silicone grease.

John R. Lawrence Jr.

John, you are correct. The article should have said silicone, not silica.—Derrick Story

GUI FYI

The author of "OS X's Other GUI" (*Geek Factor*, August 2008) missed a main difference about the different ways X11 handles copy and paste. X11 uses two copy buffers: a selection buffer, in which anything you highlight is automatically copied; and an application copy

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buffer, in which after highlighting you can use an application-specific copy command.

Jascha Lee

Printer Math

Your printer comparison included a table that showed the cost to replace ink or toner cartridges ("Jack of all Trades," August 2008). This information doesn't help in estimating the cost per page. Several years ago *Macworld* had a very useful comparison of the cost per page for various printers, both ink-jet and laser. The cost of ink-jet ink quickly exceeds the cost of the ink-jet printer itself; and for most high-volume monochrome printing, a laser printer makes a lot of economic sense. I realize there are many variables, but surely it is possible to set up a standardized page format that compares the cost per page between various printers.

Ken Workman

Estimating cost per page is difficult when dealing with printers that use more than one ink cartridge and people who use more of, say, black ink than other colors. In the past we've included cost-per-print data for single-cartridge printers or monochrome printers. In that instance, such an estimate makes sense since we can divide a single cartridge's estimated yield by the cost for that cartridge.—Brian Chen

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Keep It Simple

Macworld should be pushing Apple for tighter code and a more frugal use of disc capacity rather than more glitz. I have seen Apple add many front-end features and increase software speed, but at the cost of an exponential skyrocketing in application size and disc requirements.

Henry B. Ledyard

Google Docs Praise

Like many small businesses ("The Portable Office," August 2008), we rely on teams located in different places because we're not big enough to warrant an office or bringing everyone on-site. Most standard collaboration tools assume that a team is all on the same network, or within the same company. Google seems to "get" the more disconnected, nature of business today. And the free price is important for small businesses, too.

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MacUser

iPOD

Apple Updates iPod Line

Redesigned Nano and tweaked Touch models highlight changes

Apple likes to overhaul its iPod lineup to jump-start the holiday shopping season. So it wasn't a big surprise when Steve Jobs took the stage in early September to introduce colorful new iPod nanos, an updated iPod touch, and a less-expensive iPod classic (see *Top Products*, on page 50, for more info and links to our up-to-the-minute reviews). At the same time, Jobs unveiled the latest version of Apple's iTunes software (see "New Genius in iTunes 8").

What's New in Nanos

The new nanos ditch the supercompact form factor introduced with last year's third-generation model, while retaining that version's ability to play video as well as music and photo slide shows. While these are the skinniest iPods ever created (just 0.24 inch thick, compared to the previous model's 0.26 inch), they're also taller (3.6 inches versus 2.75 inches).

They're also the most colorful nanos ever, available in purple, blue, green, yellow, orange, red, pink, black, and silver. That color array isn't just about cosmetic effect, says Ross Rubin, director of analysis at market research firm NPD Group: multiple colors can be a key selling point, because if holiday shoppers can personalize a gift with color, it increases the chances of sales.

The 2-inch display remains, but you can now view content in both portrait and landscape modes. That's thanks to the nano's new accelerometer, which—like the iPhone's and iPod touch's—senses the device's orientation as you hold it. Rotate the nano horizontally when listening to music, and the device automatically switches to the Cover Flow view. Shake the nano, and it automatically switches into shuffle mode.

Apple touted the new nano's environmental friendliness, noting that it's built of arsenic-free glass; it contains no brominated flame retardants, mercury, or PVC; and it's more recyclable. "There's more we're going to do in the future, but these are the cleanest, toxic-free iPods we've ever built," Jobs said at the event.

The nano also incorporates Genius, the automatic playlist-generating feature added to iTunes 8. Nano users can tap into Genius to create playlists on-the-go.

Apple says the new nano's battery life offers up to 24 hours of music playback (the same amount as the previous model) and four hours of video playback (the third-generation nano offered five).

The new nanos offer twice the capacity for the same price as before: 8GB and 16GB for $149 and $199, respectively.

Changes in the Touch

When Apple first released the iPod touch in 2007, it was—with its Wi-Fi capabilities and touch-screen interface—much more than an iPod. But, lacking several applications and eschewing external volume controls and a built-in speaker, it was also much

PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY OF APPLE

You can now view content in both portrait and landscape modes, thanks to the Nano's new accelerometer.

less than an iPhone. The new, second-generation iPod touch narrows that gap.

Much of Jobs's demo of the new touch focused on applications—games in particular—available through Apple's App Store. The emphasis on gaming suggests that Apple is positioning the revamped touch as an all-around mobile entertainment device.

The new iPod touch includes the 2.1 software update. In addition to implementing Genius playlist creation, the update fixes some annoyances in the original 2.0 software and provides faster installation of third-party applications. In our initial testing, a new touch with the latest software updated Iconfactory's Twitterific over a Wi-Fi network in 20 seconds; the last-generation iPod touch took more than five minutes.

The hardware's been revamped, too. Apple has added two features—external volume controls and an internal speaker ("for casual listening," Jobs said)—that were missing from the last version. Press on the top of the rocker switch, and the volume goes up; press on the bottom, and the volume goes down. The case is also slimmer, with rounded edges (similar to the iPhone 3G's case).

Apple has slimmed down the price as well. The 8GB, 16GB, and 32GB iPod touches cost $229, $299, and $399, respectively—down from $299, $399, and $499.

The Rest of the Lineup

While the nano and the touch grabbed most of the attention at Jobs's presentation, the hard-drive–based iPod classic wasn't completely left out of the picture. Instead of $249 80GB and $349 160GB classic models, there's now just one: a 120GB iPod that costs $249.

Apple also made a modest change to the flash-based iPod shuffle: it now comes in more-vibrant shades of the silver, blue, green, red, and purple colors previously available. It continues to ship in 1GB and 2GB capacities for $49 and $69, respectively.

The Bottom Line

It'll be several months before we see if this latest iPod lineup will do as well with holiday shoppers as last year's, but analysts were initially optimistic.

"This was a strong event for Apple," said Van Baker, research vice president of retail and manufacturing for IT analysis firm Gartner. "The iPod offerings are very robust. It makes it tough for other companies to compete."

While Apple didn't unveil anything radical, those analysts said it would be a mistake to dismiss the releases as no big deal.

"These are evolutionary products with revolutionary features," said Michael Gartenberg, vice president of market research firm Jupitermedia. "Apple has done it again." ⊠

Executive Editor **Philip Michaels**, Senior Editors **Christopher Breen** and **Rob Griffiths**, and Editor at Large **Jim Dalrymple** contributed to this report.

New Genius in iTunes 8

The latest version of Apple's jukebox application adds several new features that make it even better for enjoying your media (read our late-breaking review at macworld.com/3886).

One key feature is called Genius, which, based on any of your songs, automatically creates playlists of related songs and artists while suggesting iTunes purchases of a similar stripe.

iTunes 8 also adds improved television support. Apple announced that NBC is returning to the iTunes family and that many TV shows will now be available from the iTunes Store in 720p HD format. For $2.99 per episode, you can watch high definition TV shows directly on your Mac (you also get a standard definition version with each HD episode purchase).

iTunes offers a new way to view your media. It replaces the List With Artwork view mode with a new Grid view, which shows an iPhoto-like overview of your library or playlist—image tiles represent collections of songs, sorted by album, artist, genre, or composer. Hover the cursor over one of these image tiles, and you can click on it to play everything in it. Or you can drag the cursor to see a preview of the covers within that tile.

iTunes 8 also gives you more control over podcast settings, includes new stunning visualizers, and makes changes to how and where you set preferences (some of which have been removed from this version).—**ROB GRIFFITHS**

HARDWARE

The iMac Turns Ten

In 1998, the first iMacs began shipping into customers' hands. In his introduction (macworld.com/3880), Steve Jobs bragged about the iMac's 32MB of memory, IrDA port, and "great, great keyboard and mouse." A lot has happened in the past decade: the iMac is now powerful enough to rival the Mac Pro for many users.

The iMac ushered in the end of the floppy-drive era, the birth of USB, and an entirely new era of industrial design, courtesy of Jonathan Ive. Back then, I remember reading the issue of *Macworld* that first showed the new iMac. I can't claim that I knew this was the beginning of something huge for Apple, but I definitely felt that the company was not nearly as dead as the critics would have had us believe.—**DAN MOREN**

STORAGE

Intel Does Laptop Drives a Solid

Solid-state drives (SSDs) made a splash on the Mac scene when Apple included one as an option in the MacBook Air. The promise of SSDs is that they are faster, use less energy, and last longer since they have no moving parts (they are made of the same stuff that you find in USB flash drives and the like).

But anyone who has configured a MacBook Air knows two things about SSDs. They are pricey (currently adding $599 to the cost of the MacBook Air), though the prices have been dropping. And their capacity is limited (Apple offers only a 64GB option).

These drawbacks have left SSDs in the realm of bleeding-edge computer users, but Intel is hoping that its larger-capacity SSDs will lure more consumers. The company's X-18M and X-25M Mainstream SATA Solid-State Drives are designed for use in laptops and will be available soon in two sizes: 80GB and 160GB. Intel will also be offering a more "enterprisey" version of the drives with lower capacity but a longer estimated life.

Intel is reportedly aiming for an $8-per-gigabyte price, meaning that a 160GB SSD will set you back many pretty pennies ($1,280). Of course, as with all technology, prices will drop, and I wouldn't be shocked if Apple announced a capacity bump for the SSD that's available with the MacBook Air.—**SCOTT MCNULTY**

MUSIC

Pandora to Pull the Plug?

Pandora (www.pandora.com), one of the Web's most popular radio services, may be nearing an untimely end. Despite the fact that it serves nearly 1 million listeners daily, is one of the ten most popular applications for the iPhone, and is rapidly expanding its customer base, the site is struggling to make ends meet, due to—you guessed it—the wrath of the lumbering music industry.

Thanks to said industry, there's now a government-mandated, per-song performance royalty rate that doubles the fees Web radio stations must pay performers and record companies. This exorbitant fee is necessary, naturally, because when an Internet service freely promotes and introduces new music to potential buyers of music, it harms the industry in catastrophic ways. Never mind that traditional radio stations are exempt from such fees.

According to the *Washington Post*, Pandora's fees to the record labels in 2008 will amount to a crippling 70 percent of its projected revenue of $25 million.

"We're losing money as it is," said Pandora founder Tim Westergren. "The moment we think this problem in Washington is not going to get solved, we have to pull the plug, because all we're doing is wasting money."—**DAVID DAHLQUIST**

PRODUCT WATCH

HARDWARE

S-Air Play, from Sony (www.sonystyle.com): Wireless multiroom iPod music system includes a transmitting dock and two speakers ($400).

Epson Perfection V300 Photo, from Epson (www.epson.com): 48-bit color photo scanner features a high-rise lid that lets you scan 3-D objects, as well as negatives and documents ($100).

High-capacity iBook batteries, from Newer Technology (www.newertech.com): Batteries for original and 14-inch G3 iBooks offer greater capacities than the original Apple batteries ($100 each).

SoundDock Series II, from Bose (www.bose.com): New version of iPod and iPhone speaker system includes a wireless remote and comes in black ($299).

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iPod News

Everything you need to know about digital music on-the-go

iPod Nanos Combust—Apple Blames Battery

In response to reports that Japan is investigating incidents of iPod nanos getting hot enough to scorch paper, Apple acknowledged that "in very rare cases," first-generation iPod nanos sold between September 2005 and December 2006 can overheat.

The company said it has received reports about less than 0.001 percent of first-generation models, and has traced the problem to a single battery supplier.

Apple added that there have been no reports of serious injuries or property damage. The company advised iPod nano customers who have experienced an overheating battery or who have concerns to contact AppleCare. iPod nanos with faulty batteries will be replaced for free by Apple.

—ELIZABETH MONTALBANO

Michael Phelps's iPod Packed with Hip-Hop

If you watched the Olympics games from Beijing, you probably noticed the distinctive iPod earbuds planted firmly in both ears of über-swimmer Michael Phelps. So what exactly does a record-smashing Olympian listen to in order to get pumped?

Hip-hop, it seems. And lots of it. He told the *Today Show* he had been listening to Lil Wayne recently. Back in the 2004 Olympics, he was listening to Eminem's "Till I Collapse" to help him focus, and in the 2007 FINA World Championships in Melbourne, he said he had been listening to Young Jeezy.

His hit list on Rhapsody includes songs by a number of big names in hip-hop, including Twista, OutKast, G-Unit, and Usher. Makes you wonder what he listens to while eating his 12,000-calories-a-day meals.—DAVID DAHLQUIST

NANO PHOTOGRAPH BY PETER BELANGER; PHELPS PHOTOGRAPH BY JONATHAN FERREY/GETTY IMAGES

iTUNES DOWNLOAD COMING TO A RADIO NEAR YOU

It's hardly news that iTunes has become a fixture in mainstream music, for better or worse. iTunes Download is the new Premiere Radio Networks show centered around the idea of reviewing iTunes' top 30 downloads.

The host is Alex Luke, iTunes' director of music programming. He'll be running the show out of Los Angeles, where he will interview artists and feature both celebrity playlists and customer iMixes.

Traditional music vendors must really be feeling the heat, given the way that customers are embracing iTunes. Who's going to need them anymore? At any rate, I'm hoping Luke's got the full soundboard of wacky sound effects.—DERIK DELONG

PRODUCT WATCH

SOFTWARE

RapidWeaver 4.1, from Realmac Software (www.realmacsoftware.com): Update to Web site-builder adds the ability to resize images dragged into styled text areas and improves support for publishing to MobileMe ($79; upgrade, free).

Imprint Studio, from Axamblis (www.axamblis.com): Photo software lets you print a poster by splitting up an image into smaller tiles, with print indicators and marks to help you know where to cut and reassemble the printed tiles (€15).

The bulk-free scanner to de-bulk your life.

Meet the world's smallest color duplex scanner designed just for the Mac.

With a footprint that's half the size of a sheet of paper, the Fujitsu ScanSnap S300M will cut your workload—and your desktop clutter—down to size. The ScanSnap S300M has an automatic document feeder that holds up to 10 pages and scans both sides of everything from business cards to legal-size documents at a rate of up to 8 pages per minute. Now you can convert stacks of paperwork from receipts, recipes, even a budding artist's masterpiece, into PDFs with the touch of a button. And the ScanSnap S300M is Leopard compatible, with a choice of AC adapter or portable USB power so you can stay organized no matter where life takes you. Learn more about our Mac-compatible scanners at **http://us.fujitsu.com/scanners/963M or call 1-888-425-8228.**

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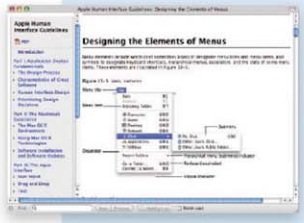

OPERATING SYSTEM

Smashing Magazine Praises OS X

Regular Mac users know that the usability of the Mac's operating system is second to none—but it's always nice to get validation from outside sources. It's especially nice to hear about the greatness of OS X from a former Windows power user, as is the case in *Smashing Magazine*'s recent article called "Top 10 Usability Highs of Mac OS" (macworld.com/3881).

Number one on the list is "consistency," which is credited to Apple's stringent Human Interface Guidelines. The reliance on intuitive drag-and-drop also garners praise, as does the effective use of unambiguous metaphors including Exposé and Cover Flow.

The story also cites OS X's informative error reporting, superior user-input feedback, and adherence to Fitts's Law (which says that users are more productive with a mouse when they have less distance to travel and a larger target to click on) in the design of elements such as application menu bars that appear at the top of the screen instead of at the top of their respective windows.—**DAVID DAHLQUIST**

OPERATING SYSTEM

Apple Releases OS X 10.5.5

The latest update to Leopard addresses stability issues with video playback, processor-core idling, and remote disc sharing for the MacBook Air; improves Back to My Mac reliability; enhances Spotlight indexing performance; updates iCal to handle repeating events more accurately; resolves an issue with SMTP settings for various ISPs; and more.—**JIM DALRYMPLE**

INTERNET

David G, We Hardly Knew You

Apple surprised longtime followers by launching the MobileMe status blog amid that service's rocky introduction. Starting with the second entry, we even got a name attached to the problems: the mysterious David G.

In only the fourth post, Apple gave word that the blog was shutting down. In its place, we now get MobileMe News (macworld.com/3885). I'd really hoped that the blog would be a regular feature. It was one of the few times outside a keynote where Apple interfaced directly with its customer base. It was almost like our existence was actually, well, acknowledged. Here's hoping the new page will continue to keep users in the loop.—**DERIK DELONG**

Activity Monitor

InfoWorld reports that 35 percent of enterprise-class Windows users downgrade their Vista systems to XP
macworld.com/3882

Adam Engst looks at how Apple handles MobileMe problems, compared with how Google and Netflix deal with issues
macworld.com/3883

CNet, on why Apple needs to release a touch-screen Mac
macworld.com/3884

PRODUCT WATCH

SOFTWARE

MacJournal 5.1, from Mariner Software (www.marinersoftware.com): Journal and blogging software adds a three-pane view and more ($40; update, free).

Funtastic Photos, from Ohanaware (www.ohanaware.com): Nondestructive photo-editing utility offers comic book–style captions and more than 40 effects ($35).

AIM Express, from AOL (www.aim.com): Flash-based AOL Instant Messenger application doesn't require a software download, and it works with both Safari and Firefox (free).

VirtualKeyboard 3.5, from Corallo Software (www.corallosoftware.com): Updated on-screen keyboard utility adds compatibility with Leopard's Spaces ($20; upgrade, free).

INTERNET

One Infinite Loop Spotted on Google Street View

Vice President Dick Cheney may have the kind of pull necessary to get his house removed from Google Maps (utter the words *national security* and you can pretty much get away with anything). But as much as Steve Jobs likes to keep every aspect of Apple secret, the realities of the modern world tend to get in the way. Case in point: Google Street View, which recently added photos from one of its camera-equipped cars sent on a photographic mission down Infinite Loop.

There's no word on where that car is now or what happened to the Google employees in it, but the photographs somehow made it back to Google, and you can view Apple's Cupertino campus in all its low definition glory on Google Maps. The upside is that you can now embark on a virtual pilgrimage to Apple HQ without having to worry about travel plans or campus security—not to mention whizzing around Infinite Loop without getting dizzy.—**AAYUSH ARYA**

By the Numbers

60
Days that Apple is extending MobileMe accounts to make up for problems with the service.

8%
Rise in Apple's rating since the American Customer Satisfaction Index's last report.

$10 million
Amount Jerry Seinfeld is being paid to appear in a series of Microsoft commercials.

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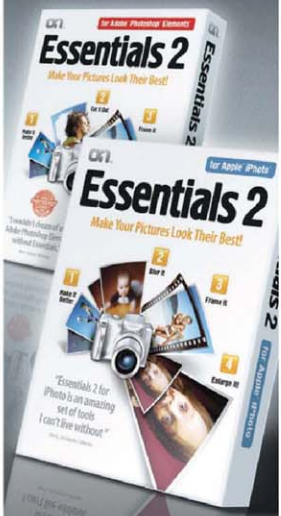

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LEGAL

Open-Source Software Scores a Victory

We're all familiar with software licenses for commercial software. But you may not know that open-source software is also governed by a license. Instead of requiring payment, however, the open-source license imposes terms: for example, the GNU Public License (GPL) mandates that anybody can change the code of GPL software, as long as they make those changes freely available.

Open-source licenses have had very little legal precedent to back them, but they got a significant bolstering recently when the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals reversed a decision that would have undermined the legal footing of open-source licenses. So anyone who doesn't abide by the terms of the license is infringing on copyright.—**DAN MOREN**

IPHONE

Lawsuit: "Twice as Fast" Is False Advertising

Apple's ads suggest that the new iPhone 3G is twice as fast as the original iPhone when it comes to data-transfer speeds. An Alabama woman thinks the company is pulling a fast one and has filed suit against Apple.

Apple introduces the iPhone 3G to television viewers as a device that lets you surf the Web, download e-mail attachments, and access map information twice as quickly as with the first-generation iPhone. Jessica Alena Smith's attorney told ABCNews.com that Apple has "failed to deliver on this promise," and is seeking class-action status for the suit.

This isn't the first time Apple has come under legal scrutiny for aspects of the iPhone. In 2007 the company was sued for locking the iPhone to AT&T's network. And earlier that year, Apple was repeatedly sued over the iPhone's sealed design, which prevents users from changing batteries.—**PETER COHEN**

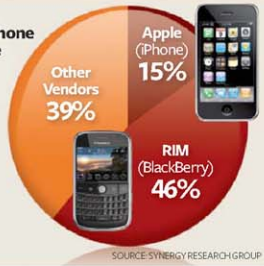
Tech Trends

The Apple-Blackberry Pie

The iPhone's share of the U.S. smartphone market during the first half of 2008 was about one-third that of Research In Motion's BlackBerry. But rocketing to 15 percent market share (before the release of the iPhone 3G) is no small feat.

—MARYANN JONES THOMPSON

U.S. Smart-Phone Market Share
(First Half of 2008)



SOURCE: SYNERGY RESEARCH GROUP

Turn ambitions into actions

- Schedule dentist appointment
- Download LLC application
- Research travel insurance
- [x] See the Grand Canal in Venice
- Book flights
- Order Italian phrase book
- Interview housesitter
- Call Kristin about web project
- Call for lawn care quote
- Buy plug adaptor
- Pick up dry cleaning

Apple Design Award
iPhone Developer Showcase
2008 Winner

OmniFocus for iPhone and Mac

Personal task management at home, work, and on the go. With live, automatic syncing, location-aware custom action lists, and easy on-the-fly task entry with voice notes and image capture, OmniFocus is built to enhance your busy life. Access shopping lists, agenda items for work, tasks for home, or any other lists you need, wherever you are. Stay on top of the small stuff, so you can focus on the things that matter most.

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Hot Stuff

What we're raving about this month

Wii Transfer

If you're one of the lucky people who has actually managed to get your hands on an elusive Nintendo Wii, you might wonder if there's some way to get your console and your Mac to work together. Riverfold Software's $19 Wii Transfer is the solution that you're looking for. Not only does it let you share music, photos, and video, all in a wide variety of popular formats, but you can also browse iTunes playlists and iPhoto albums—all via your home network. The program enables you to access your Safari or Firefox bookmarks on your Wii; and if you load up a memory card with saved games, Wii Transfer even lets you manage them from the comfort of your own Mac. Best of all, you can transfer your cartoon Mii avatars to your Mac as images, so you'll be able to share them with all your friends. Now if only it could make the Wii easier to find at stores (www.riverfold.com).—**DAN MOREN**

iSH2 Waterproof Headset

The local indoor pool is a popular cold-weather refuge for the fitness-minded. Thanks to H2O Audio's $80 iSH2 Waterproof Headset, a waterproof case for the second- and third-generation iPod shuffle, you don't have to leave your workout tunes behind. You just stick your shuffle into the compact case, clip the case onto the included neckband or—even better—the strap for your goggles, and then insert the built-in waterproof earbuds. Your iPod stays dry (to 10 feet underwater), and you still get playback and volume control. The sound quality doesn't do your shuffle justice, but you probably won't mind as the music helps you breeze through your daily laps (h2oaudio.com).—**DAN FRAKES**

[re]drive

Giving your hard drive a bamboo chassis will either make it more eco-friendly or more tempting as panda food—perhaps both. The $159 500GB SimpleTech [re]drive features a chassis made from locally grown bamboo and recycled aluminum, as well as 100 percent recyclable packaging. It also uses an Energy Star power adapter and a special low-power drive to save up to 90 percent in power consumption (www.simpletech.com).—**CHRIS HOLT**

i2i Stream

You're in your usual café, and you see a person across the way wearing an unusual, blinking device jacked into both an iPod and a set of earbuds. The i2i Stream is a short-range transmitter-receiver about the size of a box of Tic Tacs. To listen to that person's music, you need only tune your own Stream to the same channel—the i2i blinks one of seven colors to indicate its transmission frequency. Sold in pairs for $100 and compatible with any audio device (TV, stereo, game consoles, portable media players, and more), the i2i supports an unlimited number of connections to a single transmitter in a range of around 30 feet (www.i2igear.com).—**CHRISTOPHER BREEN**

Nikon D90

In the tech world, advanced features usually trickle their way down to consumers via the professional market. But in the case of digital cameras, the opposite is also true. Witness the Nikon D90, the first digital SLR to support video recording. The 12.5-megapixel camera shoots 720p HD video with audio. This means you can take advantage of your camera's various lenses (such as fish-eye or telephoto) to get interesting effects. In addition to the video features it provides, the D90 also lets you preview images on the LCD, offers face detection, and supports HDMI output. You can buy the D90 body alone for $999 or as part of a lens kit for $1,299 (www.nikonusa.com).—**KELLY TURNER**

The Bose® QuietComfort® 2 Acoustic Noise Cancelling® Headphones.

Think of them as a peaceful getaway from the world around you. Whether it's the engine roar inside an airplane cabin, the bustle of the city or the distractions in the office, Bose QuietComfort 2 headphones help them fade softly into the background with the flick of a switch. You can savor delicate musical nuances without disturbing others. And when you're not listening to music, you can slip into a tranquil haven – where you can relax and enjoy peace and solitude. Clearly, these are no ordinary headphones. It's no exaggeration to say they're one of those things you have to experience to believe.

Use them as a concert hall – or a sanctuary.

"It's as if someone behind your back reached out, found the volume control for the world, and turned it way, way, down," reports *TechnologyReview.com*. Bose QC®2 headphones incorporate patented technology that electronically identifies and dramatically reduces noise, while faithfully preserving the music, movie dialogue or tranquility you desire. We designed these headphones primarily for airplane travelers. But owners soon started telling us how much they enjoy using them in other places to reduce distractions around them. They're excellent for listening to music whether you're on the go, at home or in the office.

"Forget 'concertlike' comparisons; you'll think you're onstage with the band." That's what *Travel + Leisure Golf* said when these headphones were first introduced. You'll relish the sound of a bass guitar. Or a flute. Or the delicate inflections of a singing voice. The audio is so clear you may find yourself discovering new subtleties in even your favorite music.

"The QuietComfort 2 lives up to its name, enveloping you in blissful sound in the utmost comfort. It's easy to forget they are on your head." That's what respected columnist Rich Warren reports. To enjoy peace and tranquility, simply turn them on. To add Bose quality sound, attach the included audio cord and connect them to a laptop computer, portable CD/DVD/MP3 player, in-flight audio system or home stereo. They also offer a fold-flat design for easy storage in the slim carrying case.

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Cutting Edge Sony's HDR-SR11 Handycam and Canon's Vixia HF10 work well with the Mac, but that's not always the case with tapeless HD camcorders.

Tapeless in High Def

Are today's HD camcorders Mac ready? BY BRIAN CHEN AND ROMAN LOYOLA

It happened with audio recordings, and it's now happening with camcorders—tape as a recording medium is becoming passé. The latest high definition camcorders use hard drives, flash memory, recordable DVDs, memory cards, or a combination of these media to record video footage.

Tapeless recording has plenty of benefits. The lack of a tape recording mechanism results in a smaller and lighter camcorder that's easier to handle and carry around. It also means you'll no longer hear that annoying motor sound a tape-based camcorder's built-in microphone often picks up. Reviewing recorded footage on a tapeless camcorder is much easier—gone are the days of rewinding and fast forwarding. You can simply select a recorded clip and press the play button.

When you're ready to edit, you'll discover a drastic difference in how long it takes to transfer your video footage to your Mac. With a tape camcorder, the Mac captures the video in real time; however long the footage is, that's how long the Mac will take to capture it. A tapeless camcorder can transfer files much faster, leaving you more time to edit. You can just drag the video files from the tapeless camcorder to the Mac's hard drive, and they'll copy over in a few minutes. Sounds easy, doesn't it?

If you choose to go with a tapeless HD camcorder, you need to do some investigating to make sure it's truly Mac compatible.

Well, it's supposed to be that easy, but sometimes it's not. Over the past few months, Macworld Lab put a number of tapeless camcorders to the test: Canon's Vixia HF10, JVC's Everio GZ-HD5, Sanyo's Xacti VPC-HD1010, and Sony's HDR-SR11 Handycam. In some cases, the camcorders worked with the Mac seamlessly; in other cases, it wasn't so effortless. What we learned during our testing is that the compatibility of most tapeless camcorders with Apple software, such as Final Cut Pro, iMovie, or QuickTime, is a work in progress.

If you choose to go with a tapeless HD camcorder, you need to do some investigating to make sure it's truly Mac compatible. Apple has a list of iMovie-compatible tapeless camcorders it has tested, and says it will continue to update the list (macworld.com/3846).

But tape isn't completely dead. You could play it safe and go with a proven technology, one that you know will work with your Mac. To that end, we also tested Canon's Vixia HV30, an HD camcorder that uses MiniDV tape as a recording medium. Then again, you'd be investing in a technology that the industry is phasing out.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY PETER BELANGER

The choices may seem confusing, but have no fear; in this buyer's guide we'll take a closer look at the world of tapeless and tape camcorders, and discuss each technology's benefits and drawbacks to help you make an informed decision.

Tapeless File Formats

About a year ago, using a tapeless camcorder meant compromising on image quality. Tapeless technology needed some refinements to produce images that could compete with those you'd get from a MiniDV tape camcorder. Those refinements have occurred over time, and nowadays tapeless technology is up to par with MiniDV in terms of image quality.

To fit a sizable amount of video on the storage medium, the video must be compressed. A large number of camcorders, including Canon's Vixia HF10 and Sony's HDR-SR11 Handycam, record in a format called AVCHD, developed by Panasonic and Sony and based on the MPEG-4/H.264 AVC codec. Some camcorders, such as Sanyo's Xacti VPC-HD1010, use their own version of MPEG-4/H.264 AVC (but not AVCHD). Other camcorders, like JVC's Everio GZ-HD5, use MPEG-2 TS compression.

Mac compatibility with tapeless camcorders is still evolving. You can edit HD video in iMovie '08 and Final Cut Pro 6.0.1, but you need some serious processing power—at minimum an Intel Core Duo processor. And even if your Mac meets those requirements, you still won't be getting the best image quality if you use iMovie '08, because the software converts each movie clip to a smaller, more manageable size. To get the highest quality, you'll need to be running Final Cut Pro on a Mac Pro with at least 2GB of RAM.

File Transfers

The greatest benefit a tapeless camcorder offers professionals is its fast file transfers to the Mac. You can drag and drop the files from the camcorder to the Mac's hard drive. If you're using Final Cut Pro on a Mac Pro, importing video takes a little bit of time—depending on the length of the clips and your Mac's processor speed—but it's nothing compared to capturing video from a tape in real time. Video importing into iMovie '08 can actually take longer with a tapeless camcorder than with a MiniDV tape camcorder, however, because iMovie has to process the video.

Sticking with Tape

The continuing evolution of tapeless camcorders makes it clear that the days of MiniDV tape are numbered. Tapeless camcorders have issues, but they will soon become the superior format.

Still, age often brings sophistication—and for the time being, most professional video makers still prefer MiniDV because of its tried-and-true, premium quality. And consumer HD MiniDV camcorders such as Canon's Vixia HV30 produce stellar HD images.

One big plus for the MiniDV HD camcorder is that it has user friendliness down to an art. You can easily import your footage via FireWire using iMovie or Final Cut Pro (though the capture happens in real time, so if you have 30 minutes of video, it will take 30 minutes for your Mac to capture it). This was the case with the Vixia HV30; it worked with our Mac without a hitch.

MiniDV camcorders are also friendly with older Macs. A model as old as a G4 can support and handle MiniDV video—although, of course, the faster your system, the better your editing software will handle the footage. You'll also need at least 1GB of RAM.

MiniDV tapes are ideal for archiving. After you transfer your video from tape to your Mac, you can stash the tape as a backup of your footage. If you happen to drop a tapeless camcorder, you can break the hard drive, making it nearly impossible to extract your video. Drop a MiniDV camcorder, and chances are that your tape will remain intact even if you break the tape deck.

Canon Vixia HV30

★★★★

PROS: Shoots stellar HD video with vividly accurate colors and smooth motion; includes microphone jack and accessory shoe; user-friendly.

CONS: An awkward design makes for clumsy handling; still images are slightly noisy.

PRICE: $800 (estimated)

COMPANY: Canon, www.canon.com

FULL REVIEW: macworld.com/3708

Macworld's Buying Advice

If you decide to go with tape, you're playing it safe—and there's nothing wrong with that. MiniDV will work on your Mac without any problems, unlike many tapeless HD camcorders, which have compatibility issues. And Canon's Vixia HV30 is a great MiniDV choice. Just keep in mind that you're investing in technology that will be obsolete in the market sooner rather than later.—BRIAN CHEN

Compromised Compatibility The highest video resolution on Sanyo's Xacti VPC-HD1010 isn't Mac compatible. And JVC's Everio GZ-HD5 relies on an inelegant workaround to make its footage work in iMovie '08 or Final Cut Pro.

Another benefit of a tapeless camcorder is that selecting and reviewing footage is much easier because the device neatly splits up each of your recordings into clips, which you can then select from rather than having to haphazardly rewind and fast-forward.

In an ideal situation, transferring files from a tapeless camcorder should be simple, requiring just a connection between a Mac and the camcorder, and a few mouse clicks. Canon's Vixia HF10 follows this scenario; all we had to do was connect the device via USB, launch iMovie '08 or Final Cut Pro, choose the clips to import, and then wait a few minutes for the files to transfer over. Sony's HDR-SR11 Handycam connected in a similar fashion, although it took a little longer for iMovie and Final Cut to recognize the HDR-SR11.

Not all tapeless camcorders make it that easy for you, though. For example, JVC's Everio GZ-HD5 requires you to create a playlist of the clips you want to transfer; you then play the playlist as iMovie captures the video in real time. Sanyo's Xacti VPC-HD1010 presents a different problem: the camera's top image quality, 1,920 by 1,080 resolution at 60 fields per second (14 Mbps), is currently incompatible with Mac OS X; you must use the next-highest setting, 1,920 by 1,080 at 30 frames per second (12 Mbps), to capture compatible HD footage.

The upshot? Do your homework before you buy a tapeless camcorder (www.camcorderinfo.com and www.retrevo.com are good sources of information). It's not enough to see a claim of Mac compatibility in the specifications. Some camcorders

Canon Vixia HF10

3½

PROS: Shoots stellar high-definition video; works smoothly with the Mac; includes microphone jack and accessory shoe.

CONS: Feels a bit clumsy to handle; still-image colors look eerie; battery life is unimpressive.

PRICE: $800 (estimated)

COMPANY: Canon, www.canon.com

FULL REVIEW: macworld.com/3771

JVC Everio GZ-HD5

2½

PROS: 60GB hard drive; SD slot for additional storage capacity.

CONS: Difficult to transfer video to Mac; highest-resolution video must be converted before using it in iMovie or Final Cut Pro; short battery life.

PRICE: $800 (estimated)

COMPANY: JVC, www.jvc.com

FULL REVIEW: macworld.com/3794

Sanyo Xacti VPC-HD1010

4

PROS: Smaller than most camcorders; easy-to-use interface; wide variety of shooting modes; great video clarity; excellent still photos.

CONS: Highest video resolution isn't currently Mac compatible; some streaking with motion video.

PRICE: $700 (estimated)

COMPANY: Sanyo, www.sanyo.com

FULL REVIEW: macworld.com/3795

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work well with the Mac. Others have limitations and workarounds. Technology marches on, and eventually these problems may be fixed—but if you're not willing to put up with such inconveniences, ask questions and find out the full Mac story.

Storage Medium

After the camcorder compresses the video you've just shot, it saves that video to an internal storage device. Some camcorders, such as JVC's Everio GZ-HD5 and Sony's HDR-SR11, use a hard drive, while others—Canon's Vixia HF10, for example—use built-in flash memory. If you choose a camcorder that relies solely on a memory card, such as Sanyo's Xacti VPC-HD1010, you need to get one with a capacity of at least 2GB; that will hold about 20 minutes of HD video.

Camcorders with built-in storage sometimes have a memory-card slot for recording more footage or for transferring files via a card reader (usually SD) on your Mac.

Video Resolution

When checking the HD resolution of a camcorder, you'll usually see numbers like 720 or 1,080. These numbers refer to the vertical resolution of an HD picture. The magic number to shoot for is 1,080. Many cameras claim *full HD* capability, which means the camera can record at a horizontal resolution of 1,920 by a vertical resolution of 1,080 (also called 1,920 by 1,080). By comparison, standard TV resolution (often called *standard definition*) is either 704 by 480 or 640 by 480.

Some camcorders also support shooting at a lower (although still HD) resolution of 1,440 by 1,080. A camcorder can also have the option of shooting at 1,280 by 720, which is the lowest resolution that can still be considered HD. These lower resolutions are handy to have, because they take up less storage space than 1,920 by 1,080 does; you can switch to a lower resolution if you plan to shoot a lot of footage.

All the tapeless camcorders we reviewed support 1,080 resolution. All support 1,920 by 1,080, but in the case of JVC's Everio GZ-HD5, you can't use its 1,920-by-1,080 footage on the Mac unless you convert the files in QuickTime first, using a JVC plug-in.

Sony HDR-SR11 Handycam

●●●●

PROS: Shoots vivid, high-quality video; works smoothly with the Mac; touch-screen menu is intuitive; conveniently placed, sturdy plastic doors protect connection ports from dust.

CONS: Still images appear too dark.

PRICE: $1,200

COMPANY: Sony, www.sonystyle.com

FULL REVIEW: macworld.com/3731

Pocket-Size Camcorder

You don't have to capture every event in high definition—for those everyday, spontaneous moments you want to record for posterity, a pocket-size camcorder will do the job. You can use a device like the $180 Flip Mino, a flash-based camcorder that records up to one hour of 640-by-480 video in .avx format.

The Flip Mino couldn't be easier to operate. Point it at whatever you want to capture, and press the record button; press it again to stop recording. You can immediately review your capture by pressing the camera's play/pause button.

The software that comes with the Flip cameras is nothing spectacular. It lets you do basic things such as rename your video, trim its beginning and end, combine multiple movies, and share movies via Web sites such as AOL Video, YouTube, and MySpaceTV.

When you connect a Mino to your Mac, iPhoto automatically launches and offers to download the Mino's movies into its library. And just as with photos from a digital camera, you can use iPhoto to delete movies from the Mino after you've imported them.

The Mino produces video that looks fine within the confines of a movie frame on your Mac—fine, not great—when you've captured the scene without the digital zoom. Employ that zoom, though, and quality goes downhill in a hurry, particularly in low-light settings where the graininess becomes more evident.

Flip Mino

●●●½

PROS: Extremely convenient; dead-simple operation; built-in USB connector; easy-to-use though limited software; direct import of movies into iPhoto '08.

CONS: Video quality isn't great.

PRICE: $180

COMPANY: Pure Digital, theflip.com

FULL REVIEW: macworld.com/3796

Macworld's Buying Advice

The Flip Mino's video quality won't dazzle you, but this affordable and useful camera—with its go-anywhere convenience and simple operation—could turn out to be one of your favorite gadgets.—CHRISTOPHER BREEN

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Aspect Ratio

Aspect ratio refers to the width and height of a video frame. HD camcorders use a 16:9 aspect ratio; 16:9 is the international standard for HDTVs. For the best image quality, look for an HD camcorder with a true 16:9 image sensor. Some older camcorders use a 4:3 sensor, and chop the top and bottom off the image to achieve the 16:9 aspect ratio.

Zoom

Zoom is helpful for those times when you want to get up close, but can't really move the camera closer to the subject. Camcorder manufacturers state two types of zoom: optical and digital. Optical zoom, the amount of zoom the camera's lens can produce, is the specification you want to look at. The camcorders we reviewed have an optical zoom between 10x and 12x, which should be enough for you to get a close-up of, say, a player at a soccer game if you're standing on the sidelines.

Digital zoom uses *interpolation* (a mathematical method of creating new data based on the surrounding data) to enlarge the center of an image. The results are grainy and blocky, so don't be easily swayed by 100x or 200x digital zoom numbers. Use this feature only when you really need it; in fact, some camcorders give you the option of turning off digital zoom altogether. That's not a bad idea.

Image Stabilization

When you're holding a camcorder, it's difficult to keep still. Image stabilization, which offsets subtle camera shake, comes in either optical or electronic form. Optical stabilization moves the camcorder's lens, while electronic stabilization shifts the image after it has been shot. Optical stabilization is more effective and produces better image quality than electronic stabilization, but it's more expensive to implement, which raises the price of the camcorder.

Sanyo's Xacti VPC-HD1010 is the only camcorder we tested that uses electronic stabilization; the rest use optical stabilization. Of the group, the Xacti VPC-HD1010 seemed to show the most motion blur—the difference was subtle, but noticeable to the discerning eye.

Connectivity

Most HD camcorders connect to your Mac via USB, and most come with a USB cable, but you should confirm that your choice includes one; otherwise you'll need to buy a cable at the point of purchase. All HD camcorders have an HDMI connection, so you can connect the device directly to your HDTV to view your footage. Other connectivity options to look for include a hot shoe for a light or microphone, a microphone jack for an external mic, and a headphone jack for listening to the audio you're recording. You might also want to look for other video-out options, such as S-Video or Component Video, depending on the available ports on your HDTV and other home entertainment components.

Macworld's Buying Advice

Of the tapeless camcorders we tested, our pick is Sony's HDR-SR11 Handycam. It combines great image quality and seamless Mac compatibility in a device that's sturdy and a pleasure to use. Canon's Vixia HF10 produces great videos, but we found it a bit awkward in our hands, and the battery life disappointed us. If portability is your top priority, Sanyo's Xacti VPC-HD1010 is an exciting little gadget that you should seriously consider.

Brian Chen is a former *Macworld* associate editor. **Roman Loyola** is a senior editor for *Macworld*.

HD Camcorders Compared

	Canon Vixia HF10	Canon Vixia HV30	JVC Everio GZ-HD5	Sanyo Xacti VPC-HD1010	Sony HDR-SR11 Handycam OUR PICK
RATING	●●●○	●●●●	●●○	●●●●	●●●●
PRICE	$800 (estimated)	$800 (estimated)	$800 (estimated)	$700 (estimated)	$1,200
IMAGE QUALITY[A]					
VIDEO QUALITY	Very Good	Very Good	Fair	Very Good	Very Good
STILL-IMAGE QUALITY	Good	Good	Fair	Very Good	Good
BATTERY LIFE (IN HOURS: MINUTES)	1:21	1:52	1:06	2:00	2:00
SPECIFICATIONS					
RECORDING MEDIA	16GB flash drive, SD card slot	MiniDV tape	60GB hard drive, SD card slot	SD card	60GB hard drive, Memory Stick slot
VIDEO FORMAT	AVCHD	HDV	MPEG-2 TS	MPEG-4/H.264 AVC	AVCHD
MAXIMUM VIDEO RESOLUTION	1,920 x 1,080	1,920 x 1,080	1,920 x 1,080[B]	1,920 x 1,080[C]	1,920 x 1,080
OPTICAL ZOOM	12x	10x	10x	10x	12x
LCD SIZE (IN INCHES)	2.7	2.7	2.8	2.7	3.2
DIMENSIONS (WIDTH x HEIGHT x DEPTH, IN INCHES)	2.9 x 2.5 x 5.1	3.5 x 3.2 x 5.4	3.1 x 2.9 x 5.1	3.5 x 4.4 x 2.1	3.8 x 3.0 x 5.5
WEIGHT (IN OUNCES)	13.4	19.2	21.0	11.0	16.0

[A] Scale is Superior, Very Good, Good, Fair, and Poor. [B] Videos at this resolution must be converted using the JVC QuickTime plug-in before they can be used in iMovie or Final Cut Pro. [C] At 30 frames per second (12 Mbps).

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TECHWORKS by BUFFALO

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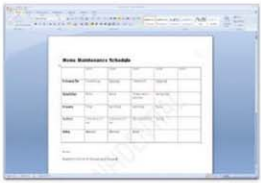
What we're reviewing online this month



SOFTWARE

CrossOver Mac Professional 7 △

RATING: ♦♦♦ **PRICE:** $70 **COMPANY:** CodeWeavers **URL:** www.codeweavers.com

Virtualization software such as Parallels Desktop and VMware Fusion lets you run the Windows operating system and Windows-only programs on a Mac, but the installation process is complex and time-consuming, and the programs can slow down even a speedy Mac. As an alternative, CodeWeavers CrossOver Mac Professional 7.0.2 uses just the Windows Application Programming Interface (API) to run Windows programs on your Mac, without the Windows OS. At $70, CrossOver Mac Professional costs $10 less than either Parallels or Fusion, and it's easier to use and install. Plus, you don't need to have a copy of Windows XP or any other Windows software. Unfortunately, its performance didn't match our expectations. The release version we tested didn't work with Office 2007 very well, and doesn't fully support the latest Adobe products or the coolest Windows games (macworld.com/3870).

Find It Online

For expanded reviews, type the blue URL at the end of each summary into your browser's address bar.

Firefox 3.0 ▷

RATING: ♦♦♦♦½ **PRICE:** free **COMPANY:** Mozilla Foundation **URL:** www.mozilla.org

As powerful as ever and considerably more polished, Firefox 3.0 is an improvement over its useful but somewhat clunky predecessor in nearly every respect. However, users may not get all of the dramatic speed boosts its programmers promise. Everything that was good about Firefox 2 is present in the new version. Its top-notch Gecko rendering engine displays even the trickiest pages almost flawlessly, and this version passes the Acid2 test for Web standards compliance with flying colors. Firefox 3 also adds a host of welcome improvements. It sports the program's most Mac-like look-and-feel yet, with a sleek silver design and buttons. The new location bar, dubbed the "awesome bar," builds on Web browsers' common autocomplete functions by guessing at your destination based on your bookmarks and user history. The awesome bar also examines any tags users may have added to their bookmarks. Based on speed alone, Safari is still the king. However, users more concerned with a polished interface, handy features, unmatched extensibility, and sterling standards compliance will find Firefox a worthy alternative (macworld.com/3806).

QuarkXPress 8

RATING: ♦♦♦½ **PRICE:** $799 **COMPANY:** Quark **URL:** www.quark.com

QuarkXPress 8 heralds a major change to the user interface of the venerable page-layout and design program for the Mac. The familiar interface that QuarkXPress has held to for 21 years is now more similar in style to that of Adobe's design programs. At the same time, version 8 offers very little in the way of new features. Much of what is "new" in XPress 8 comes from a free XTension to QuarkXPress 7 and the previously separate Quark Interactive Designer. If you've installed the free Quark XPert Tools Pro XTension, you already have several of version 8's new print- and Web-oriented features, such as item styles and find-and-change functions. And if you have already purchased the $49 Quark Interactive Designer, you have the new Flash-creation features as well. Obviously, if you never updated from XPress 6.5 to 7, these features will all be new to you with version 8. But without significant new functionality to go with the new interface, it's hard to imagine why users who already live in both the XPress and Creative Suite worlds would pay for this upgrade. XPress 8 should have been a significant leap forward in functionality and user interface design, but Quark unfortunately decided to do just half the job, though it is certainly a half-job well done (macworld.com/3879).

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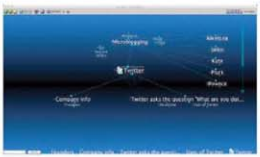
netTrekker

RATING: ♦♦♦♦½ **PRICE:** per month, $5; per year, $50 **COMPANY:** Thinkronize **URL:** www.nettrekker.com

Wouldn't it be great if someone took the time to vet the informational Web sites children are likely to use? Thinkronize has, and the result is netTrekker, an educational search engine. It doesn't block inappropriate content—rather, netTrekker is a portal for educator-recommended Web sites aimed at elementary-, middle-, or high-school–age children. Though you or your child could eventually track down netTrekker's sites on your own, in the process you'd likely waste a lot of time and take several wrong (and possibly inappropriate) turns. If your child spends many hours on the Internet researching his or her homework, a yearly subscription to netTrekker will prove to be an affordable, efficient, and trustworthy aid (macworld.com/3871).



PersonalBrain Pro 4.5 △

RATING: ♦♦♦♦½ **PRICE:** $250 **COMPANY:** TheBrain Technologies **URL:** www.thebrain.com

Mirroring the way a human thinks is a tough job for software, but PersonalBrain 4.5, a powerful brainstorming and knowledge-management tool, falls just shy of artificial intelligence. PersonalBrain expresses individual topics as nodes in a *mind map*, a 3-D representation of the relationships between topics. This mind map is referred to as a Brain. While there are plenty of outlining, Getting Things Done, and project-management tools for the Mac, PersonalBrain gives you a powerful and innovative nonlinear capability. Being able to associate any thought with another in a free-form fashion, and zoom in on exactly the information you're looking for, will help you uncover heretofore hidden gems of knowledge in your mountain of information (macworld.com/3872).

Photoshop Lightroom 2.0

RATING: ♦♦♦♦½ **PRICE:** $299 **COMPANY:** Adobe **URL:** www.adobe.com

Photoshop Lightroom, Adobe's first attempt at a photo-management and -editing tool specifically for photographers, was a solid application when it was first released in 2007. Lightroom 2.0 comes with a large list of new and enhanced features. Many are small ones focusing on usability and productivity, but they add up to a serious improvement that makes it easier to manage

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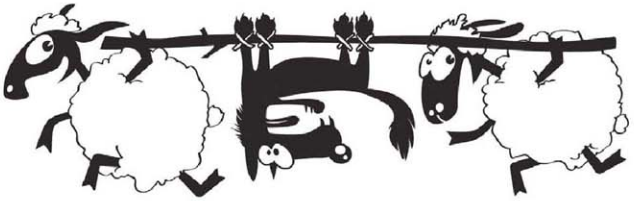

Printfolio

software for designing business cards, CD/DVD covers, flyers, labels and envelopes

photos. Adobe has also expanded Lightroom's editing functionality significantly, so you'll be less likely to need an external photo-editing program such as Adobe Photoshop or Photoshop Elements to work on your images. What's most impressive about the update is how smoothly it works in helping you to organize and edit your photos; by focusing on improving the little things, Adobe has made an already good program even more usable. It's not perfect—it's rare that a version 2.0 of any product is—but Lightroom is well on its way (macworld.com/3873).

HARDWARE

ArmorSkin for iPhone

RATING: ❚❚❚❚ **PRICE:** $30 **COMPANY:** Speck
URL: www.speckproducts.com

If your friends have nicknamed you Drops McGee, you're probably on the lookout for an iPhone case designed to minimize the damage caused by your clumsiness. Speck's ArmorSkin for iPhone may not be the be-all and end-all of klutz protection, but it certainly is an attractive option for avoiding simple shocks, bumps, and bruises. The ArmorSkin is a two-piece set: the main case hugs the iPhone snugly, and a belt-clip holder wraps around the case and secures it to your waist. One unfortunate annoyance is that the case covers the iPhone's Home button and volume controls. You can identify their locations by etched indentations in the rubbery skin, but having a layer over the buttons makes it difficult to figure out whether you have actually pressed them—you get very little tactile response (macworld.com/3874).

C170 Wireless Desktop Set

RATING: ❚❚❚❚ **PRICE:** $80 **COMPANY:** Kensington
URL: www.kensington.com

There are two main reasons to buy a new mouse-and-keyboard set: either you're dissatisfied with the Apple Keyboard and Mighty Mouse that shipped with your iMac or Mac Pro, or you want to pop your laptop up onto an ergonomically efficient stand and type on a full-size external keyboard. If either of those scenarios

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fits you, Kensington's Ci70 Wireless Desktop Set is a good choice. Ignore the Ci70's superfluous sliding panel and photo pocket, and focus instead on its fine feel and convenient function keys. And if style matters to you, you can get the Ci70 in black to match your high-end MacBook or in titanium to match your MacBook Pro (macworld.com/3875).

TubeStick hybrid

RATING: ❚❚❚½ **PRICE:** $129 **COMPANY:** Equinux **URL:** www.equinux.com

If you want to watch TV on your Mac, the TubeStick hybrid, Equinux's USB TV Tuner, coupled with the Tube 2.7 TV-viewing software, may just be the ticket. The hardware has two built-in receivers that let you view digital TV and over-the-air HDTV and SDTV digital TV signals, as well as analog TV (including over-the-air analog, analog cable, and single-source analog from a camcorder or game console). The TubeStick hybrid is easy to use and reasonably priced, and it delivers a surprising number of high-quality standard and high definition channels. While it's not particularly flexible about letting you do two things at once—you can't record one thing and watch another—and the time-shifting feature can be a little confusing and hard to manage, generally this device lets you watch a lot of TV on your Mac while offering a host of considerate extras. However, some distracting performance issues diminish those great features a bit (macworld.com/3876).

VerticalMouse 3 Wireless ▷

RATING: ❚❚❚❚ **PRICE:** $120 **COMPANY:** Evoluent **URL:** www.evoluent.com

If you're going to spend $120 for a mouse, it had better be a mighty fine one—but after spending a few weeks getting comfortable with a new breed of ergo-rodent, we're confident in saying that the Evoluent VerticalMouse 3 Wireless is worth every penny. Even if you're not already experiencing pain from the unnatural forearm rotation that traditional mice require, the VerticalMouse 3 Wireless will provide comfort and control you never anticipated. But be aware that this new breed of mouse takes some getting used to (macworld.com/3877).

LaCie Portable DVD±RW with LightScribe, Design by Sam Hecht △

RATING: ❚❚❚❚ **PRICE:** $99 **COMPANY:** LaCie **URL:** www.lacie.com

LaCie's Portable DVD±RW with LightScribe, Design by Sam Hecht, is one product in which style and light weight trump speed and, to a certain extent, sturdiness. Even so, it's the portable DVD burner of choice for MacBook Air owners. Just don't drop it. Although the drive's chocolate color clashes a bit with the silver MacBook Air, the Portable DVD±RW with LightScribe is the no-brainer alternative to Apple's MacBook Air SuperDrive: unlike that device, the LaCie drive can operate via a USB hub. If you're looking for a mobile DVD burner and you're not expecting a speed demon, the LaCie Portable fits the bill. The drive also comes in a FireWire 400 version for $149 (macworld.com/3878).

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App Store Selections

iPhone and iPod touch software that's caught our eye

GAMES

MotionX Poker 1.12

RATING: ●●●●½ **PRICE:** $5 **COMPANY:** Fullpower Technologies **URL:** macworld.com/3820

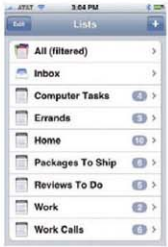
Mix Yahtzee and poker, and you get MotionX Poker, a beguilingly addictive dice poker game in which you match skills with a computer-controlled opponent. The game uses the accelerometer in the iPhone or iPod touch: flick your wrist to get your dice rolling. As your winnings increase, you'll get to unlock high rollers' tables, where the stakes are much higher—and the rewards greater (macworld.com/3821).—**PETER COHEN**

PRODUCTIVITY

Todo 1.2

RATING: ●●●●½ **PRICE:** $10 **COMPANY:** Appigo **URL:** macworld.com/3827

Plenty of simple to-do apps have emerged for the iPhone (see our roundup at macworld.com/3826). If you're looking for something with a lot of functionality that doesn't require a Ph.D. in the Getting Things Done (GTD) approach to task management, Todo is one of the better choices. The application shines at creating and organizing tasks, offering many options and features such as schedules, priorities, notes, and contact linking (macworld.com/3828).—**DAN FRAKES**



NETWORKING

Jaadu VNC 1.2

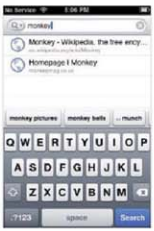
RATING: ●●●● **PRICE:** $25 **COMPANY:** Jugaari **URL:** macworld.com/3830

Like Mocha VNC (●●●½; macworld.com/3829), Jaadu VNC—formerly Teleport—allows you to see and control Macs and PCs on your network. But Jaadu stands out with a number of nice features—it saves connections for future use, shows displays at their full resolution, and offers a full suite of finger gestures allowing you to easily scroll, drag, and control-click (macworldcom/3831).—**ROB GRIFFITHS**

PRODUCTIVITY

Google Mobile App

RATING: ●●●● **PRICE:** free **COMPANY:** Google **URL:** macworld.com/3822



Searching is Google's bread and butter, and its Google Mobile App simultaneously searches your contacts and Web sites, as well as businesses near your current location via the iPhone's location-detection feature. Other Google services in the app leave plenty to be desired, however (macworld.com/3823).—**BEN BOYCHUK**

SOCIAL NETWORKING

Facebook 1.1

RATING: ●●●● **PRICE:** free **COMPANY:** Facebook **URL:** macworld.com/3824

The mobile version of Facebook allows you to track the status of your friends on the social networking site, as well as update your own status with text or photos (either taken from within the application or selected from your iPhone photo library). But you can't search for or invite new friends, nor can you accept invitations from others (macworld.com/3825).—**JONATHAN SEFF**

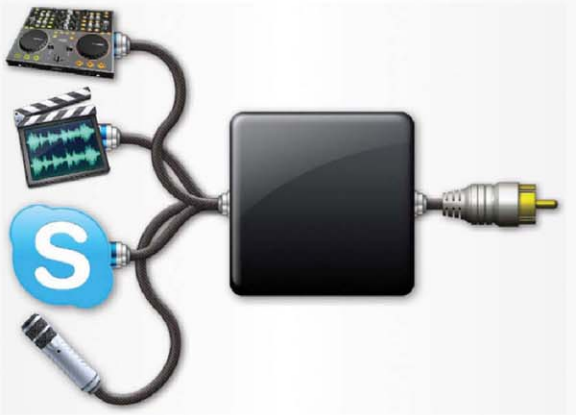
More Reviews

See more iPhone and iPod touch apps we've tested at iPhone Central (macworld.com/3850)

APPLICATION	DESCRIPTION	PRICE	RATING	FIND CODE*
Labyrinth 1.3.1	game	$7	●●●●	3833
Meal Splitter v2	tip calculator	$1	●●●½	3834
TeeShot 1.5	golf scorekeeper	$20	●●●●	3835
WeatherBug	weather tracker	free	●●½	3836
Zenbe Lists 1.2	to-do list manager	free	●●●●	3832

*Typing in find codes after macworld.com/ directs you to a product's review or overview. For example, macworld.com/3833 takes you to our review of Labyrinth 1.2.

WireTap ANYWHERE



WireTap Anywhere turns all of your applications into audio sources that can be discretely recorded from.

You can add any combination of application and hardware audio sources to create a virtual audio input device that any audio processing software can record from.

Tap it Anywhere

Download your free trial now: http://www.AmbrosiaSW.com/mw

AMBROSIA SOFTWARE INC

WireTap Anywhere requires a Mac with an Intel, PowerPC G5, or PowerPC G4 (1GHz or faster) processor and Mac OS X 10.4.11 or later. WireTap Anywhere, Ambrosia Software, Inc., and the Ambrosia Software logo are registered trademarks of Ambrosia Software, Inc. All other brand, product, service, and feature names or trademarks are the property of their respective owners.

Top Products

Your guide to the best hardware we've tested. See more at macworld.com/reviews.

PRINTERS

LASER PRINTER

C6100dn

RATING: ★★★★½
PRICE: $990
COMPANY: Oki Data
URL: www.okidata.com

The C6100dn, from Oki Data, produces great-looking prints and includes built-in duplexing. It also offers easy network connectivity and quick printing speeds (macworld.com/1670).

INK-JET PHOTO PRINTER

Stylus Photo 1400

RATING: ★★★★
PRICE: $269
COMPANY: Epson
URL: www.epson.com

Epson's Stylus Photo 1400 prints photos that are rich in both color and detail. Capable of outputting images as large as 13 by 19 inches, this printer is surprisingly well priced, without compromising on quality (macworld.com/2924).

COMPACT PHOTO PRINTER

PictureMate Zoom PM 290

RATING: ★★★★½ **PRICE:** $200 **COMPANY:** Epson
URL: www.epson.com

Affordable, problem-free, and enjoyable to use, the PictureMate Zoom is the speediest and best overall portable photo printer on the market (macworld.com/3102).

MULTIFUNCTION INK-JET

Pixma MX850

RATING: ★★★½ **PRICE:** $170 **COMPANY:** Canon
URL: www.canon.com

The MX850 prints crisp, legible text that's comparable in quality to laser output. Add to that speedy performance, solid print results, and extra perks, and you have a superb multifunction printer (macworld.com/3593).

MACS

PRODUCT	PROCESSOR	RATING	PRICE[1]	DISPLAY	SPEEDMARK 5 SCORE[2]	FIND CODE[3]
DESKTOP						
iMac	Intel Core 2 Duo/2.4GHz	★★★★	$1,135	20 inches	230	3597
	Intel Core 2 Duo/2.66GHz	★★★★	$1,419	20 inches	254	3598
	Intel Core 2 Duo/2.8GHz	★★★★½	$1,704	24 inches	268	3599
Mac mini	Intel Core 2 Duo/1.83GHz	★★★★	$575	not included	159	3030
	Intel Core 2 Duo/2GHz	★★★★	$760	not included	172	3031
Mac Pro	Intel Xeon/ two quad-core 2.8GHz	★★★★½	$2,489	not included	314	3363
PORTABLE						
MacBook	Intel Core 2 Duo/2.1GHz	★★★★	$1,020	13 inches	180	3464
	Intel Core 2 Duo/2.4GHz	★★★★½	$1,225	13 inches	193	3465
	Intel Core 2 Duo/ 2.4GHz (black)	★★★★½	$1,395	13 inches	196	3466
MacBook Air	Intel Core 2 Duo/1.6GHz	★★★½	$1,625	13 inches	124	3364
MacBook Pro	Intel Core 2 Duo/2.4GHz	★★★★½	$1,750	15 inches	204	3467
	Intel Core 2 Duo/2.5GHz	★★★★½	$2,200	15 inches	222	3468
	Intel Core 2 Duo/2.5GHz	★★★★½	$2,250	17 inches	219	3469

[1]From a PriceGrabber survey of retailers as of September 19, 2008. [2]Speedmark 5 is Macworld Lab's standard test tool for benchmarking systems running Mac OS X 10.5 (Leopard). For information on Speedmark testing, go to www.macworld.com/speedmark. [3]Typing in find codes after macworld.com/ directs you to a product's review or overview. For example, macworld.com/3364 contains an overview of the 1.66GHz MacBook Air.

MULTIFUNCTION LASER

MFC-9840CDW

RATING: ★★★★
PRICE: $554
COMPANY: Brother
URL: www.brother-usa.com

The MFC-9840CDW is not only a terrific all-in-one color laser printer, scanner, copier, and fax machine, but also an outstanding value with bonus features such as a duplexer and wireless connectivity (macworld.com/3566).

FLATBED SCANNER

Perfection V700 Photo

RATING: ★★★★
PRICE: $495
COMPANY: Epson
URL: www.epson.com

The Epson Perfection V700 Photo is an excellent, speedy midrange scanner with two lenses for people who need to scan reflective media and transparencies, especially at high resolutions (macworld.com/1519).

Top Products are those we've recently reviewed in a comparison of like products. As new products become available, we'll update this list. For longer reviews of these products and for other product recommendations, go to macworld.com/reviews. All prices are the best current prices taken from a PriceGrabber survey of retailers as of September 10, 2008.

DIGITAL CAMERAS

DIGITAL SLR

D40

RATING: ♦♦♦♦ **PRICE:** $425
COMPANY: Nikon
URL: www.nikonusa.com

The Nikon D40 is a great value. This 6.1-megapixel camera comes with every feature you'd desire in a DSLR, such as adjustable ISO, Raw mode, and a variety of image-processing features (macworld.com/2498).

COMPACT DIGITAL CAMERA

NV11

RATING: ♦♦♦½
PRICE: $239
COMPANY: Samsung
URL: www.samsung.com

An excellent point-and-shoot digital camera, the 10.1-megapixel Samsung NV11 produces detailed and well-exposed images. Its versatile feature set accommodates beginners and advanced shutterbugs alike (macworld.com/2984).

MINIDV CAMCORDER

Vixia HV30

RATING: ♦♦♦♦
PRICE: $649
COMPANY: Canon
URL: www.canon.com

Canon's Vixia HV30 is a fine choice for die-hard MiniDV users, offering superb video quality and a bunch of nifty features. MiniDV is gradually becoming a technology of the past, but the HV30 proves that age can also offer sophistication (macworld.com/3708).

LCD MONITORS

LARGE DISPLAY

324 LCD Monitor

RATING: ♦♦♦½
PRICE: $940
COMPANY: LaCie
URL: www.lacie.com

NEW This 24-inch display targets creative pros, but with two HDMI inputs, the monitor is both a multimedia display and an art director's tool. After calibration, the 324 looked great, with accurate colors, good shadow detail, rich blacks, and neutral grays. The 324 has the right features for both work and pleasure (macworld.com/3584).

MEDIUM DISPLAY

MultiSync 2190UXi

RATING: ♦♦♦♦½ **PRICE:** $890 **COMPANY:** NEC
URL: www.necdisplay.com

The NEC MultiSync 2190UXi monitor is designed—and priced—for professional users. This 21-inch display doesn't come cheap, but it offers vivid, accurate colors; a wide viewing angle; and a convenient height-adjustable stand (macworld.com/1445).

FIREWIRE HARD DRIVES

DESKTOP DRIVE

My Book Studio Edition

RATING: ♦♦♦♦½ **PRICE:** $215
COMPANY: Western Digital
URL: www.westerndigital.com

The My Book Studio Edition's affordability, versatile connection options, compact design, and good performance add up to a superb 1TB drive (macworld.com/3295).

PORTABLE DRIVE

Rocbit 2B

RATING: ♦♦♦♦♦
PRICE: $143
COMPANY: Rocsecure **URL:** www.rocsecure.com

The portable Rocbit 2B is priced a bit higher than similar portable drives that lack encryption, but it's well worth its cost if security is a concern. In our tests, the Rocbit 2B was 6 to 31 percent faster than three comparable drives from other vendors (macworld.com/1443).

iPODS

PRODUCT	CAPACITY	RATING	PRICE*	DISPLAY	BATTERY LIFE	MEDIA SUPPORTED	FIND CODE*
iPod classic	120GB	not yet rated	$249	2.5-inch color	36 hours of music playback; 6 hours of video playback	music, photos, album art, video, games	3863
iPod touch	8GB	not yet rated	$229	3.5-inch color	36 hours of music playback; 6 hours of video playback	music, photos, album art, video, games, apps	3864
	16GB	not yet rated	$299	3.5-inch color	36 hours of music playback; 6 hours of video playback	music, photos, album art, video, games, apps	3865
	32GB	not yet rated	$399	3.5-inch color	36 hours of music playback; 6 hours of video playback	music, photos, album art, video, games, apps	3866
iPod nano	8GB	not yet rated	$149	2-inch color	24 hours of music playback; 4 hours of video playback	music, photos, album art, video, games	3867
	16GB	not yet rated	$199	2-inch color	24 hours of music playback; 4 hours of video playback	music, photos, album art, video, games	3868
iPod shuffle	1GB	♦♦♦♦	$46	none	12 hours of music playback	music	2238
	2GB	♦♦♦♦	$68	none	12 hours of music playback	music	3470

*iPod shuffle prices are from a PriceGrabber survey of retailers as of September 10, 2008. All other iPod prices are based on direct purchase from the Apple Store. *Typing in find codes after macworld.com/ directs you to a product's review or overview. For example, macworld.com/3864 contains an overview of the 8GB iPod touch.

Mac Gems

Get more and expanded reviews at macworld.com/macgems **BY DAN FRAKES**

Easy Timelines Timeline's wizardlike approach makes creating attractive timelines simple.

PRODUCTIVITY

Timeline 2.1.3

RATING: ▮▮▮½ **PRICE:** $40; 3-D version, $65 **COMPANY:** Bee Documents **URL:** www.beedocuments.com

If you ever need to make a visual timeline—say, for a presentation or as a teaching aid—check out Bee Documents' Timeline, which makes doing so a snap. You pick from among seven templates and choose the data source for your timeline's events; a click on Create Timeline lets you specify import options for your data source. Timeline then creates your timeline with a "best fit" layout.

Data sources include birthdays from Address Book, events from iCal, photos from iPhoto or Aperture, date-played information from iTunes, and RSS articles. You can also create a timeline that shows when you installed each Apple software update, or add your own events to a blank timeline. (The iPhoto option sometimes didn't find any photos in the selected date range for me.)

Once you've created a timeline, you can customize its appearance and easily add and delete events. Each event can have a title, date and time (or date range), notes, a link to a Web page or a local file, and an image. A built-in photo browser makes it easy to add photos from your iPhoto library, or you can simply drag an image into an event.

A nifty Rows feature lets you display multiple timelines at once. Unfortunately, you have to add events to additional rows manually; you can't use the automatic import feature. (You can, however, drag and drop events between rows.)

A Bulk Edit mode lets you view and edit events in a textual list view; a Presentation feature lets you show and navigate your timeline in full-screen mode; and you can export your timelines to PDF to share them with other people. Unfortunately, if you don't like Timeline's automatically generated layout, you can't manually reposition events or timeline elements, nor can you compress or expand the timeline. You also can't change the theme once you've created a timeline. I also wish you could import a textual list of events and include the days of the week in a timeline's date format. Still, for ease of use and attractive output, Timeline's tough to beat.

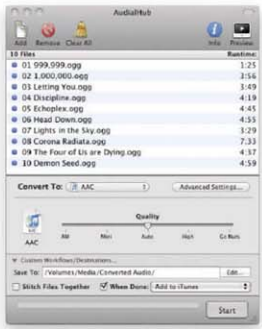
AUDIO

AudialHub 1.07

RATING: ▮▮▮▮ **PRICE:** $19; owners of VisualHub, $14 **COMPANY:** Techspansion **URL:** www.techspansion.com

You can use iTunes to convert audio files from one format to another, but iTunes' supported formats—for both input files and output—are limited. Luckily, the folks who brought us the excellent VisualHub (▮▮▮▮½; macworld.com/2390) video-conversion software have applied their talents to the field of audio in the form of AudialHub.

To convert audio files, you just drag them into the program's window, choose the output format, and click on Start. AudialHub supports over 20 input formats, and output formats include AAC, AIFF, Apple Lossless, FLAC, MP3, Ogg Vorbis, WAV, WMA, and 3G (mobile phone). For lossy output formats, you can



Audio Converter AudialHub lets you convert virtually any audio file to many popular formats.

Instant Address Access TapDex gives you quick access to your Address Book contacts.

well with other OS X programs. However, for many people, relatively few Address Book interactions involve editing contact data—you're usually just trying to view or copy an address or phone number.

For these sorts of tasks, TapDex is a useful alternative to opening Address Book. Whenever you want to quickly grab contact information, you just press a keyboard shortcut and then type a few letters of the person's or business's name. As you're typing, TapDex displays the number of contacts that match what you've typed. If you've typed enough to narrow it down to a single contact, TapDex displays that contact's information in its window. If there are still multiple possibilities, press return, and TapDex's window will display a list of matches; you can then select the desired contact to view its Address Book information.

Any information you've entered in Address Book for the chosen contact appears here (although only the first line of a note shows up). Right-click on any field to copy that information to the Clipboard; address fields also let you view the address in Google Maps or grab its Google Maps URL; phone-number fields let you view the number in large type for easier dialing. Click on an e-mail address to initiate a message to the contact.

The Pro version of TapDex removes a subtle text ad from the bottom of the window and adds the ability to dial a phone number using Vonage. TapDex doesn't quite match BuddyPop in terms of features (♦♦♦♦½; €10; macworld.com/3860), but it's tough to beat for the price. ⊠

Senior Editor **Dan Frakes** is always looking for great, low-cost products. Send your thoughts on this column, or on things you'd like to see in future columns, to macgems@macworld.com.

choose the audio quality of the resulting file; a useful Preview palette lets you hear, in real time, how your settings affect the resulting audio quality. The conversion process is surprisingly fast, and if you've got a multicore Mac, AudialHub can process multiple files simultaneously. AudialHub can even extract and convert the audio track(s) of many video files.

AudialHub can perform various postconversion actions. For example, you can choose to stitch the resulting audio files into a single file; add the files to iTunes as audio tracks, audiobooks, or ring tones; shut down your Mac or put it to sleep; or run a script.

Like VisualHub, AudialHub also includes an Advanced Settings palette that lets you customize your conversion settings; you can choose the bit rate, channels, maximum file size, decoder, and more. You can even automatically trim each file and modify metadata tags. AudialHub lets you save and load groups of advanced settings, a useful feature if you frequently process similar files.

PRODUCTIVITY

TapDex 3.3.2

RATING: ♦♦♦½ **PRICE:** basic version, free; Pro version, $5 **COMPANY:** Yellow Mug Software
URL: www.yellowmug.com

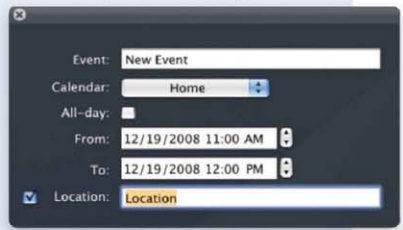
Apple's Address Book utility is a handy place to store information about your contacts, especially since it integrates so

Promising Prospects

Many Mac users take advantage of OS X's iCal program to track their calendars and to-do lists, but a common request I hear is for a way to add new events and tasks without having to actually launch iCal. One solution is Flexgames' free FlexCal (www.flexgames.com/flexcal). Once you've installed this preference pane, simply press your chosen keyboard shortcut to bring up a small floating window for entering a new task; press the shortcut again to switch to a new-event window.

The tab key moves you between fields, and pressing return creates the new task or event, allowing you to use FlexCal without lifting your hands from the keyboard.

As convenient as FlexCal is, this initial version isn't quite there yet. For example, I occasionally had to click in FlexCal's window before I could start typing, and certain features that are available in iCal—alarms, for example—aren't available in FlexCal's event window. Still, I find myself opening iCal much less often than I used to.



Fast Tasks and Events FlexCal lets you create new events and tasks without having to launch iCal.

FEED
OCTOBER
DICTIONARY
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WORK SMARTER

39 TIME-SAVING TIPS FOR OFFICE, iWORK, iLIFE, AND MORE

ILLUSTRATIONS BY JOHN UELAND

Tick. Tick. Tick.

If you're caught up in creating a complicated spreadsheet or trying to perfect a presentation for tomorrow's looming board meeting, time can seem like a far too precious commodity. And for most of us, the struggle to get stuff done doesn't stop at the office. When we get home, it's time to upload photos from a recent vacation or update a blog.

Although we can't give you more hours in the day, we can help you make the most of the time you have—by showing you how to speed through redundant tasks and unlock hidden shortcuts in the software you use most often. When you have programs like Word and iMovie working harder for you, you can focus your time and attention on more important tasks—like talking to your boss about that overdue promotion.

CONQUER THE OFFICE

Working for a living doesn't have to mean living at work. Whether you're balancing a budget in Excel or crafting a high-powered presentation in Keynote, there are plenty of ways to save time and still impress your boss.

Re-create WordPerfect Keyboard Shortcuts

If you're a WordPerfect user who recently converted to the Mac, you may be frustrated with the lack of keyboard shortcuts in Word and Pages for often-used commands. For example, in WordPerfect, control-F7 inserts a new footnote; in Word and Pages, you have to open the Format menu to insert a footnote.

Fortunately, you can smarten up both programs with a utility like Stairways Software's $36 Keyboard Maestro (www.keyboardmaestro.com). It lets you record a macro for any menu item in any application, then assign a keyboard shortcut to it. So in a few simple steps, you can make all your favorite WordPerfect keyboard shortcuts perform the same commands in Pages and Word.—JEFFERY BATTERSBY

Make Background Images Clickable

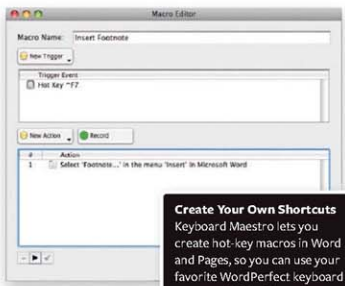
If you often add images to Pages word-processing documents—for example, to place a digital copy of your signature in a letter—you may find it annoying that Pages makes it so difficult to move such images to another location in a document. When you're working in word-processing mode, images are treated as background objects; they can't be selected after they've been placed and deselected. (This isn't the case in page-layout documents.) To regain control of background objects, choose Arrange: Make Background Objects Selectable. Unfortunately, you can't save a document template with this feature already enabled.—JB

Remove Misspelled Words from Custom Dictionaries

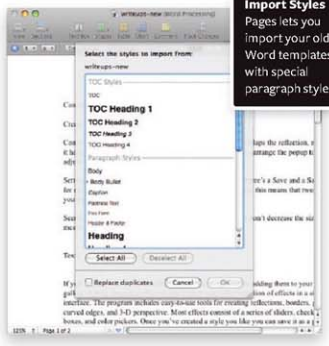
It's easy to accidentally add misspelled words to a custom dictionary. That can lead to those misspellings being overlooked in important documents. But it's easy to fix those errant entries.

In Word, select Preferences from the Word menu and click on Spelling And Grammar. In the Spelling section, click on the Dictionaries button. In the window that appears, select Custom Dictionary and then click on the Edit button. A new Word document containing all the words in your custom dictionary will open. Correct the misspelled words; then save and close.

To correct Pages' dictionary, you'll need Two AM Software's free Dictionary Cleaner (www.twoamsoftware.com). Once you've installed it, open System



Create Your Own Shortcuts Keyboard Maestro lets you create hot-key macros in Word and Pages, so you can use your favorite WordPerfect keyboard commands in both programs.



Import Styles Pages lets you import your old Word templates with special paragraph styles.

Preferences and click on Dictionary Cleaner. A new preference pane will open, in which you can delete or add words. You may need to log out of and back in to your user account in order for the changes to take effect.—JB

Import Word Styles into Pages

If you're moving from Word to Pages '08, there's no reason your custom Word templates and their custom paragraph styles can't make the move with you. To make that transition, use Pages to open a Word document or template that contains the styles you want to use, then save that document as a Pages document. Select Import Styles from the Format menu. In the window that appears, click on the Pages document you just saved. A new dialog box will list the styles in the document. If you want to import all the styles, click on Select All. Otherwise, hold down the ⌘ key while you select the styles you want to import. Once you've made your selections, place a check mark next to the Replace Duplicates option and then click on OK. All the selected styles will be imported. To save the document as a template, choose Save As Template from the File menu, and then name and save the document. The next time you want to create a document using those styles, select the template from the My Templates section of the Template Chooser.—JB

Start with the Right Number of Sheets

If you regularly build workbooks with the same number of worksheets, you can save time by having Excel automatically insert that many worksheets into every new workbook it creates. Simply navigate to Excel: Preferences: General and enter the desired number in the Sheets In New Workbook field.
—RIK MYSLEWSKI

See Many Sheets at Once

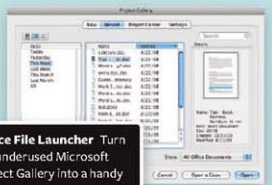
Tired of switching back and forth between multiple worksheets in Excel? To see all your worksheets at once, go to Window: New Window and open one window for each worksheet you want to view. In each window, click on one of the desired worksheet's tabs. Finally, select Window: Arrange, choose Tiled, and then click on OK. When you want to focus in on just one sheet, click on the green plus-sign (+) button at the top left of the window; that worksheet will fill your display, covering all the other open windows. Clicking on the button a second time will return the worksheet to its tiled position.—RM

Add Line Breaks Quickly

Unlike Excel, with its unintuitive ⌘-option-return key combo, Numbers makes it easy to add a new line in a cell: simply press option-return. You can even set this as the return key's default behavior. Open the Table Inspector, find the Table Options section, and deselect the Return Key Moves To Next Cell option. Now, to move down a cell, you just press the down arrow.—RM

GET QUICK ACCESS TO OFFICE FILES

Annoyed that the Microsoft Project Gallery pops up every time you launch a Microsoft Office program? You can easily banish it (go to *programname*: Preferences: General and deselect the Open Project Gallery When Application Opens option). But before you do, take a closer look at its powers. It not only contains a collection of useful templates, but also provides access to all your recently opened Office documents. If you live in Word, Excel, and PowerPoint, the gallery can serve as a handy file launcher. Drag the Microsoft Project Gallery icon (or the Project Gallery Launcher in Office 2004) from the Applications/Microsoft Office 2008/Office folder into the Dock (if it's not already there). Simply launch it, select the Recent tab, and choose All Office Documents from the Show drop-down menu—it'll launch that way from now on unless you change those settings. To see only your most recent files, filter the file list by choosing a date range in the Dates pane.—RM



Office File Launcher Turn the underused Microsoft Project Gallery into a handy file launcher for your recent Office documents.

Insert Multiple Rows at Once

If you want to insert multiple new rows in a Numbers table, you might think you have to do so one row at a time. Not so. There's an easier—though undocumented—way. First,

TIP **JUMP BACK** If you scroll so far in Excel that the active cell is no longer visible, you can jump back to it by pressing control-delete.—RM

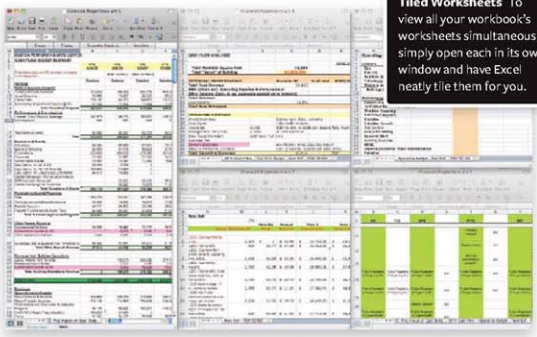
USE AIM BLAST GROUPS WITH iCHAT

If you regularly host group conversations with the same people in iChat, you can save time by setting up an AIM Blast group. This recent addition to AOL Instant Messenger lets you set up permanent chat groups that work somewhat like mailing lists. When you send a message to an AIM Blast group, all the members receive it, and anyone in the group can reply, sending an answer to everyone as well.

To set it up, you first need to create an AIM Blast group. Go to the AIM Blast page (blast.aim.com), where you log in with your iChat handle and password. (This may be your Apple ID or an AIM user name.) Create a name for your group, add a description if you want, and then choose who can add members and send messages to the group (all members or only administrators). When you click on Create Group, you'll see a list of the contacts in your iChat Buddy List: select the ones you want to add to the group, and either click on Send Invitations to invite them now, or click on Invite Later to do so at a later date. The people you invite will get an iChat message and will have to reply to be added to the group.

When you've finished, the group you've set up will appear in your iChat Buddy List as a new group. Here's the tricky part: to send messages to your Blast group, choose File: New Chat (or press ⌘-N), choose Text Chat, and then type in your group's name preceded by a left bracket ([). As you type, iChat will autocomplete the name, since the group is in your Buddy List. You can then send messages to the group. You can deactivate or disable groups by returning to the AIM Blast home page. A deleted group may not disappear from your Buddy List immediately; if that happens, try sending a message to the group; iChat will then delete it.—KIRK MCELHEARN

Blast Your Message To send an iChat message to an AIM Blast group, place a left bracket in front of its name.



Tiled Worksheets To view all your workbook's worksheets simultaneously, simply open each in its own window and have Excel neatly tile them for you.

select a group of as many rows as you want to add (the rows can either be empty or contain data). Next, hover your cursor over the reference tab until the arrow appears, then control-click on that arrow. From the resulting drop-down menu, choose Add Rows Above or Add Rows Below. The selected number of new empty rows will be inserted.—RM

Name Your Cells

In Excel, it's easier to refer to a specific range of cells by name (2008.Sales) than by address (Sheet!$D$2:$BB$56). Likewise, if your state changes its sales tax, it's simpler to update a single constant named Sales.Tax.Rate than it is to hunt for every instance of the old rate in your workbook.

To name a cell or a range of cells, select it, enter the name you want in the Formula bar's Name field (usually, this field shows the active cell's address), and then press return. Names can't contain spaces; use periods or underscores to separate words, as in `vacation.supplies` or `vacation_supplies`. Once you've named your most important cells, you can quickly navigate to them by entering the name in the Name field and pressing return (or pressing control-G and selecting the appropriate name from the list that appears).

To name a constant, select Insert: Name: Define and type a name for the constant in the Names In Workbook field. In the Refers To field, type an equal sign (=) followed by the value you want to assign to the constant. Click on OK. Now you can use that constant by name in your formulas. When you want to change its value, return to the Define dialog box; every instance of it in your workbook will automatically update.—RM

Sort Smartly

Need to quickly sort the cells in a column? Unlike Excel, Numbers doesn't require that you first select the range of cells you want to sort. Instead, just hover the cursor over a column's reference tab until the arrow appears, click on the arrow, and select either Sort

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⌘-2	Switch to Week view.
⌘-3	Switch to Month view.
⌘-right arrow	Jump to next day, week, or month, depending on which view you are in.
⌘-left arrow	Jump to previous day, week, or month, depending on which view you are in.
⌘-option-*numberkey*	Display multiple days at once. Simply replace *numberkey* with the number of days you want to display (1 to 7).

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TIP

DON'T FORGET YOUR FONTS If you're going to play a Keynote presentation on an unfamiliar computer, bring along copies of all the fonts used in the presentation. A Keynote file includes all the photos, music, and QuickTime files, but not your presentation's fonts.—RM

Ascending or Sort Descending from the contextual drop-down menu. The entire table will sort according to the contents of the selected column.

To perform a multilevel sort or to filter the records, choose Show Sort & Filter Panel from the same drop-down menu. In the panel that appears, you can make your sorting and filtering decisions as complex as you want.—RM

Create a Cheat Sheet

Sometimes, during or after presentations, you need to jump to a specific slide. Instead of searching through your presentation slide by slide, keep a list of your slides and their slide numbers handy; you can then check your list, find the desired slide's number, and navigate directly to it. To print a slide list in Keynote, first make sure that your page orientation is set to Portrait (File: Page Setup). Then go to File: Print, open the Printer drop-down menu, and select the Outline option in the Print section. Then click on Print.—RM

Make SmartArt Graphics Even Smarter

PowerPoint 2008's SmartArt graphics let you quickly add complex formatting to your slides. You simply click on the SmartArt Graphics tab in the Elements Gallery, select the category and graphic style you want, and add your own text and shapes.

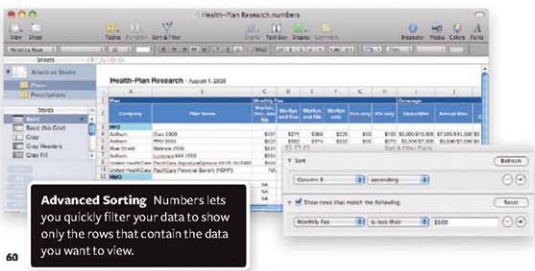
But there's an easier option: rather than customizing a default graphic after the fact, make it fit your data from the start. First, enter your text with bullets on a new slide. Click anywhere in your text, and then click on a SmartArt icon. PowerPoint will lay out your text according to the hierarchy on your bulleted slide. If you don't like the design, click on a different icon, and your text will immediately adopt the new style. This way, you can try out different SmartArt graphics to see which fits best. Of course, you're still free to customize the graphics as needed. If you don't like the way something looks, just press ⌘-Z to undo your choices until you get back to your bulleted text.—KIRK MCELHEARN

Sync iCal with Google Calendar

If you subscribe to Apple's MobileMe service, you can share iCal calendars with other subscribers. But what if you need to sync schedules with people who don't use MobileMe? If they use Google Calendar (www.google.com/calendar), you're in luck. Google recently added support for CalDAV, a calendar-sharing protocol, to its Web-based calendar, so you can easily share data between iCal 3 and Google—no MobileMe required. Although setting this up isn't complicated, it's a bit more work than publishing a calendar from iCal. Fortunately, Google has complete instructions (macworld.com/3869) on its Web site.—KM

Extract One Page from a PDF

Need someone's feedback on just one or two pages of a 24-page PDF document? Rather than wasting time—and network bandwidth—by sending the whole thing, simply send the pages you need. First, open the PDF file in Preview 4. If the sidebar isn't visible, click on the Sidebar button in the toolbar (or press ⌘-shift-D). Select the thumbnail of the page you want, and press ⌘-C to copy it. In Preview's File menu, choose New From Clipboard, or simply press ⌘-N. You'll get a new Preview document with just the selected page. If you want to add other pages, just drag their thumbnails from the full document's sidebar into the new document's sidebar. Press ⌘-S to save the document, and you're all set.—KM



Advanced Sorting Numbers lets you quickly filter your data to show only the rows that contain the data you want to view.

GET A BETTER MOUSE

If you regularly give presentations on the road, get yourself Kensington's $80 SlimBlade Presenter Media Mouse (us.kensington.com). This laser-tracking, wireless unit is four tools in one. First, it's an accurate scroll-ball mouse. Second, when switched to Presentation mode, it becomes a handheld controller with a 30-foot range—its right and left buttons become forward and back controls for slide shows. Third, on its underside is a full-fledged media controller with volume, next/previous, and play/pause buttons. Finally, it has a built-in laser pointer.

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GET CREATIVE

You may enjoy working with photos and editing video, but that doesn't mean you want to spend all your free time in front of the computer. Even creative pursuits can entail tedious tasks. Master these simple iLife tricks to speed through the dull parts and get back to what you love.

Name Photos Fast

Get in the habit of giving titles to your best shots: *Sophie at the Beach* is a lot more descriptive than *DSC9384.JPG*. By investing a little up-front effort, you can save time later; iPhoto '08 can use your titles as a search tool or include them in projects, such as books and Web galleries. Here's a handy shortcut for quickly adding titles to a group of photos without having to reach for the mouse. First, make sure titles are displayed beneath each photo thumbnail (choose View: Titles). Edit the first photo's existing title and then press ⌘–right bracket (]) to jump to the next photo. The title bar will already be selected, so you can start typing right away.—JIM HEID

Combine Book Themes

Frustrated that iPhoto makes you commit to just one design theme when you're creating a book? If you use Leopard, you can mix and match themes as you wish.

Let's say you want to use the Line Border theme for a book commemorating a family reunion, but you'd like to open with a couple of pages based on the retro-looking Family Album theme.

First, create a new book, and choose the theme you want to use on only a few pages. (For my example, I'd choose the Family Album theme.) Create the pages you need, and then choose File: Print. In the Print dialog box, choose Save PDF To iPhoto from the PDF pop-up menu, and then click on Print. iPhoto creates a PDF of each of the book's pages, converts them to JPEG images, and adds them to your iPhoto library.

Next, create a book based on the primary theme that you want to use (in my example, the Line Border theme). Now drag the pages you made earlier into your new book (look under the Last Import item in the Library pane). To have one of the images fill the page, choose One from the Layout pop-up menu, and choose the topmost option from the submenu.—JH

Crop Slide-Show Photo Only

Want to crop a photo that appears in a slide show, but don't want it to be cropped elsewhere in iPhoto? Look to the Ken Burns feature. With the photo selected in the slide-show editor, select the Ken Burns option, and move the toggle to Start. Use the zoom slider to position the photo as you want it to appear; then option-click on the End button. The option-click tells iPhoto to copy the zoom setting of the Start position to the End position. You can also use this trick to pan across an image without zooming in.—JH

Mix and Match Leopard's PDF shortcuts make it possible to combine multiple themes into one book.

Try a New Template
The Mailroom template by 11Mystics lets you add fun elements to your iWeb site.

Start a Group Photo Project

The next time you're hosting an event where lots of people will be taking photos—such as a wedding reception or a holiday gathering—make it easy for everyone to share their snapshots. If you have a $99 MobileMe account, you can create your own photo-sharing site that other people can contribute to—even if they're not MobileMe users. In iPhoto '08, select an album or a group of photos and then choose Share: MobileMe (or just click on the MobileMe button in the toolbar). In the dialog box that appears, turn on the Adding Of Photos Via Email and Email Address For Uploading Photos options. Now visitors to your gallery can add their own photos by e-mailing them to an address that MobileMe provides (you'll find it in the top right corner of iPhoto's MobileMe Gallery page). The result is a collaborative gallery containing shots you may have missed. If you set up the gallery in advance of an event, you can even include the upload e-mail address in printed or electronic invitations.—JH

Expand Your iWeb Horizons

Want to go beyond the design templates that are built into iWeb? For an abundance of creative options, head over to 11Mystics (11mystics.com), where you'll find nearly a dozen beautiful iWeb templates that range in price from $11 to $15. The Zones template, for example, sports an uncluttered, fast-loading design; its muted look makes it ideal for photo-intensive sites. At the opposite end of the clutter spectrum, the Mailroom template offers dozens of floating design elements—oversize letters, faux sticky notes, thumbtacks, and more—that you can use and abuse.—JH

Get Feedback on Your Photos

One reason photo-sharing sites like Flickr are so popular is that visitors can comment on photos and interact with the photographer. With a $99 MobileMe account, you can do the same with iWeb '08 photo galleries.

Open iPhoto and select the photos that you want to use in your photo page. Choose Share: Send To iWeb: Photo Page. iWeb creates a new Photo page with your images and then presents a window where you can select from a number of template styles. Once you have your page set up the way you want it, open the Photos Inspector (⌘-option-I) and, in the Photos tab, select the Allow Comments option.—JH

ADD A WEB FORM TO YOUR SITE

Looking for a way to get feedback from your site visitors? Or maybe you've created a site for your family reunion and you need a way for attendees to specify menu and lodging choices. Web forms are ideal for jobs like these. With Response-o-matic (www.response-o-matic.com), you can add a form to your site in a few minutes.

Start by signing up. The basic service is free. When someone completes your form, you will receive an e-mail containing the information that he or she supplied, or for a $9 monthly fee, you can have the form results saved as a downloadable Excel spreadsheet. The site offers a straightforward wizard for creating your form. When you're finished, choose HTML Snippet from the Web Widgets pop-up menu. Then paste the resulting HTML into iWeb's HTML Snippet box (Edit: Paste), resize it as desired, and click on the Apply button.—JH

Web Form
Add a Web form to your iWeb site so your visitors can provide feedback.

Add Metadata to Videos

When you export a movie from iMovie or QuickTime Player, the video file contains very little metadata. Using iMovie's Sharing menu to export directly to iTunes adds the title, but that's it. (Select a movie file in iTunes, choose File: Get Info, then click on the Info tab to check.) To add more metadata, you can edit the movie in

TIP **CUSTOMIZE BUTTONS** If you create a lot of slide shows, save a few clicks by adding a Slideshow button to iPhoto's toolbar. Choose View: Show In Toolbar: Slideshow.—JH

SPEED UP H.264 ENCODING

One way to speed up video encoding is to throw hardware at the problem, and that usually means upgrading to the most powerful computer you can afford. Instead of spending thousands of dollars, however, you could turn to Elgato's Turbo.264 (www.elgato.com), which gives you a dedicated video processor for $100. The Turbo.264 is a hardware dongle that plugs into a USB port and takes over video encoding, freeing up your Mac's processor for other tasks. You can use the included Turbo.264 software to do the encoding (which includes presets for common devices such as the iPhone, the iPod, the Apple TV, and even Sony's PlayStation Portable), or you can specify settings in QuickTime Player and many other applications that export video using QuickTime. Since the encoding hardware is included in the dongle, the Turbo.264 also turns an old Mac—which otherwise wouldn't be up to the task—into an effective encoding station. The latest version of the software can also upload videos to YouTube.—JC

Speed It Up Elgato's application takes advantage of the Turbo.264 hardware dongle to encode video using the H.264 (MPEG-4) format.

iTunes, but a better option is to fire up Lowell Stewart's Lostify (payment requested; lostify.com). In addition to adding basic tags such as Name and Artist, Lostify can embed copyright information, rating, cast and crew listings, and more.—JEFF CARLSON

Add Color Effects to Movies

iMovie HD 6 and earlier iMovie versions included effects that could convert footage to black and white or to sepia tone. iMovie '08 did away with these effects, but you can still easily change the appearance of your video. To make your movie black and white, select a clip and click on the Adjust Video button in iMovie's toolbar (or press the V key). This brings up the Video Adjustments palette. Now drag the Saturation slider to 0 percent.

If you're looking for a pale sepia appearance, first open iMovie's preferences (⌘-comma [,]) and turn on the Show **Advanced Tools** option, which adds more controls to the Video Adjustments palette and other areas of the program. Select the clip you want to alter and press the V key. Set Saturation to 0 percent, and then drag the Red Gain slider to 143 percent, the Green Gain slider to 90 percent, and the Blue Gain slider to 53 percent (feel free to tweak these settings to customize the results). Click on Done when you're finished. Note that the clip thumbnail still appears in color, as the video was shot, but the preview reflects your changes.—JC

Photo Comments Turn on MobileMe's commenting feature in iWeb to let your viewers share their thoughts.

Rotate and Crop Video

A lot of video is captured with digital still cameras nowadays. And people often turn their cameras 90 degrees to get tall objects into the frame. However, video is always horizontal, so that footage ends up rotated when you bring it into iMovie. In the past, you had to use QuickTime Player or another utility to reorient the footage, but now iMovie '08 can handle that job.

Select the clip and click on the iMovie toolbar's Crop button (or press C). Click on one of the rotate buttons at the top of the preview window to rotate the image 90 degrees clockwise or counterclockwise. iMovie automatically crops the image; you can drag the edges of the crop area to redefine its size or drag within the area to reposition it.—JC

Import Problematic MPEG Video

Some digital still cameras and video cameras that record to an internal hard disk or solid-state memory save footage in the MPEG format. But iMovie has a hard time working with these files, resulting in video files with no sound or files that won't open at all. The free MPEG Streamclip from Squared 5 (www.squared5.com) can help. It converts a multitude of video formats (including AVI and VOB) to iMovie-readable formats.—JC

Do Smart Deletes in Map View

The Map view, which displays the hierarchy of your project's menus and files, is one of the most useful areas of iDVD '08. For example, you can use it to quickly drag movies and slide shows between submenus. But if you delete a submenu, you'll also eliminate everything it contains, including video files and other submenus. If you want to remove only the submenu, but not its contents, control-click on it and choose Smart Delete instead. The submenu will disappear, but its movies, slide shows, and submenus will remain. That way, you can reorganize your DVD without dragging everything to new locations.—JC

Needs NoteBook. Has NoteBook.

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TIP

BURN WITHOUT MOTION To burn an iDVD '08 project that has no motion, open the Menu Info window (click on the *i* icon) and set the Loop Duration slider to zero (00:00).—JC

Share iTunes Between Users

Your music is stored on your computer's hard drive, but if you use Fast User Switching to work within multiple user accounts, your library may as well be locked in a vault. To solve this problem, open iTunes' preferences in the account where the library resides, click on the Sharing icon, and enable the Share My Library On The Local Network option. In other user accounts, go to the same area of the preferences and enable Look For Shared Libraries. As long as iTunes is running in one account and sharing is turned on, you can connect from another user account as if you were sharing a separate machine on your network. Look for the shared library under the Sharing category in the sidebar.—JC

Jam into Reverse

Want to produce your own *Revolution 9* with reverse guitar and vocal tracks? Record your soon-to-be-backward track in GarageBand, mute all other tracks, and use the Share: Export Song To Disk command to export the track as an AIFF file. Then use an audio editor such as the free Audacity (audacity.sourceforge.net) to reverse the file you exported from GarageBand (in Audacity, choose Effect: Reverse), and save the results as an AIFF or WAV file. Import this backward file into GarageBand, and the sound will transport you back to the '60s.—CHRISTOPHER BREEN

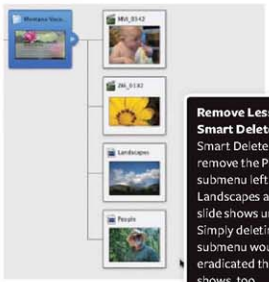
Turn It Around The rotate and crop features in iMovie '08 can correct video that's been turned on its head.

Change Instruments

When you pull up the Loop Browser in GarageBand and drag a software-instrument track into the timeline, bear in mind that you can use any sound you like for that track. For example, just because a loop is called Dreamy Guitar Pattern doesn't mean you have to use a guitar sound for it. After dragging the loop to the timeline, double-click on it and choose a different software-instrument sound. The notes or beats will be played by the new instrument. This is useful when you want a more aggressive drum sound than the one Apple supplies.—CB

Add More Sounds

GarageBand '08 supports E-mu Systems' SoundFont sampled-sound file format. This means that you can add more sounds to GarageBand for free (or for a very small fee). Type `soundfont` into Google to find one of the many sites that offer free SoundFonts; HammerSound (www.hammersound.com) is a good place to start. Once you've downloaded a few, place them in the /Library/Audio/Sounds/Banks directory. In GarageBand, create a new software-instrument track, click on the Details triangle, select DLSMusicDevice from the Instrument Generator pop-up menu, and click on the Edit button next to that selection. In the window that appears, choose your SoundFont from the Sound Bank pop-up menu. Note that not all SoundFonts are compatible with the Mac.—CB



Remove Less with Smart Delete Using Smart Delete to remove the Photos submenu left the Landscapes and People slide shows untouched. Simply deleting the submenu would have eradicated the slide shows, too.

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The Kid-Safe MAC

A parent's guide to setting up OS X

By Christopher Breen

Like puppies, children can be adorable even as they create chaos—splashing about in mud puddles or shrieking on the playground. But, also like their canine companions, kids at play can be unintentionally destructive and heedless of the dangers around them. This is especially true when it comes to the family computer. In their early years kids can unwittingly put your data at risk or even physically damage machines. And as your children grow up and feel more at home with the computer, they become vulnerable to the Internet's unsavory elements.

Luckily, when it comes to childproofing your Mac, you don't have to look far. Leopard, Apple's latest operating system, comes with a Parental Controls feature that's packed with settings to help you protect your Mac's data, simplify its interface, and keep the bad stuff at bay. And if Leopard doesn't do a thorough enough job, you can turn to third-party utilities.

In the following pages, I'll offer advice on how to configure your Mac for both younger and older children. Even if you don't have kids, these tools can still be useful—for example, if you run a school computer lab or an Internet café, or if you have a Mac that's open to the public. At the end of the day, the important thing is to keep both your machine—and innocent users—out of harm's way.

PHOTOGRAPH BY PETER BELANGER

Leopard's Parental Controls

Parental Controls enable you to constrain what kids can do on the Mac. How severely you limit access depends on what you believe they can handle, in terms of both complexity and content.

Create a New Account

Whether you're setting Parental Controls for a young kid or a boisterous teen, start by creating a special user account for that child. (If such an account already exists, you can skip the next two paragraphs.)

Log in as an administrator, launch System Preferences, and go to the Accounts preference pane. Click on the lock icon and enter your administrator password. Choose Login Options and turn on the Enable Fast User Switching option. Now add another user by clicking on the plus-sign (+) button below the list of accounts. Choose Managed With Parental Controls from the New Account pop-up menu, select a user name (and a short name if you like), and enter a password that your kid will be able to remember. Click on Create Account.

Select the new account from the list on the left, then call your kid over to pick an icon. Got an iSight? Put your child in front of the camera, click on the current icon, select Edit Picture, and click on the Take A Video Snapshot button (funny faces encouraged). You can tweak the resulting picture by moving the size slider or by clicking on the image and dragging to reposition it. Select Set when you're done.

The Enable Parental Controls setting should now be selected. Do not turn on the Allow User To Administer This Computer option (if you try, your Mac will issue a warning). Now click on the Open Parental Controls button to start configuring them. (To modify settings in the future, go directly to the Parental Controls preference pane.)

In the next screen, you have the option to enable the Manage Parental Controls From Another Computer feature. This lets you configure Parental Controls and check log files from another Mac on your network (provided it's running Leopard)—convenient if your kid's computer is in her room and you don't want to be caught "snooping." To do this, turn on the feature, then launch the Parental Controls preference pane from another computer on the network—you'll see the name of your child's Mac under Other Computers. Click on the lock icon at the bottom of the screen and enter your administrator's password. Select the name of the Mac you're managing and enter the administrator name and password for that machine. Your kid's account should now appear below the name of her computer. Click on that account to access all of the Parental Controls settings as if you were on the actual machine.

Regardless of whether you're managing an account remotely or from the computer you're sitting in front of, when you select your child's account you'll see five tabs—System, Content, Mail & iChat, Time Limits, and Logs. The settings you choose in each will vary depending on the child's age.

Shield Young Kids

With young children (eight and under), you have two goals: to simplify the interface (while protecting your data) and keep them away from inappropriate content. With Leopard's Parental Controls settings, you can go a long way toward accomplishing both objectives. Some of these controls may also come in handy if you have older kids.

Simplify the System If you're worried about overwhelming your tot with icons, menus, and other doodads, you can declutter the interface by selecting Use Simple Finder (under the System tab). Once this is enabled, your kid sees just four Finder menus: Apple, Finder, File, and Help. The Dock contains icons of active programs; the My Applications, Documents, and Shared folders; and the Trash. That's it. Gone are the desktop hard-drive icon, Finder-window sidebars, and contextual menus on the desktop. Items inside the My Applications, Documents, and Shared folders appear in icon view; your kid can launch them with a single click, but she can't move anything around. The Apple menu offers Sleep and Log Out commands, but there's no option for restarting or shutting down.

If your child craves a sense of independence, you can let her customize her desktop. Using the Fast User Switching menu (which appears in the

The Personal Touch Make your kids feel more at home by letting them choose their own account graphic.

Keep It Simple The Simple Finder sets up a friendly, uncomplicated interface that young children can navigate easily.

right corner of the menu bar), log into the new account. Control-click on the Dock and choose Dock Preferences; select Show All to expose all the preferences, then click on Desktop & Screen Saver (there's no System Preferences entry under the Apple menu in this mode). Show her all the desktop patterns, and have her pick the one she likes best. You can switch to the Screen Saver tab and let her choose one of those, too. Don't worry if your kid figures out how to open System Preferences on her own: she won't be able to tinker with anything important—Network, Parental Controls, and Sharing settings, for example—without an administrator's name and password.

Safari. Click on the triangle next to Other to reveal all of the programs in the Applications folder. By default, only Apple's stock programs are enabled. Uncheck any that you want to remove from your kid's Applications folder.

Finally, note the four options at the bottom of the window: Can Administer Printers, Can Burn CDs And DVDs, Can Change Password, and Can Modify The Dock (this last one is grayed out if you've enabled the Simple Finder). For young children, you should disable all of these options.

Configure Content If you don't want to completely cut off your kids from the Internet, you'll probably want to control what they can access. Parental Controls' Content tab can help you determine which sites your children can visit.

At the top of the Content pane, the Hide Profanity In Dictionary check box does what it says. It won't eliminate scientific terms for the body's intimate parts, nor will it hide literate euphemisms for sexual congress, but it does omit coarse four-letter words.

With young children, you have two goals: to simplify the interface and keep them away from inappropriate content.

Log out of your kid's account and return to the Parental Controls window in the administrator account. Below the Use Simple Finder check box, you'll see the Only Allow Selected Applications option. Enabling this feature lets you turn off single applications as well as groups of programs. For example, if you uncheck the Internet box, your child won't be able to use iChat, Mail, or

The Website Restrictions area allows three levels of control. Allow Unrestricted Access To Websites grants your kid access to *everything*. Try To Limit Access To Adult Websites Automatically attempts to eliminate sites containing adult content by previewing pages before they're displayed and looking for keywords that indicate the site may be inappropriate for children. If you decide

PHOTOGRAPHY BY PETER BELANGER

Kid-Friendly Add-Ons

A Mac can do wonders for kids. With the following additions, you can enhance the experience even more.

Scribble Pads Wacom's $99 Bamboo Fun small tablet (★★★★½; macworld.com/3887) includes an easy-to-grip stylus and copies of Adobe Photoshop Elements (★★★★½; macworld.com/3505) and Corel Painter Essentials (★★★★½; macworld.com/3171). If those are too advanced, try Software MacKiev's $40 KidPix Deluxe 3X (★★★★½; macworld.com/0413), Ambient Design's $25 ArtRage (★★★★½; Starter Edition, free; macworld.com/3238), or plasq's $25 Doozla (★★★★; macworld.com/3888).

Easy Snapper Fisher-Price's $50 Kid-Tough Digital Camera (www.fisher-price.com) has a built-in flash, stores up to 60 640-by-480-pixel images (it also has an SD memory card slot), and is packed in a case sturdy enough to withstand playground drops; it's a great gateway into photography for kids three and up.

Protective Armor Children under the age of nine have a supernatural knack for getting jam and crumbs into every nook and cranny. Get a screen-cleaning system, such as RadTech's $7 to $15 OmniCleanz (www.radtech.com) or Meridrew Enterprises' $25 iKlear Apple Polish Cleaning Kit (www.klearscreen.com). To protect your keyboard, consider a plastic overlay from iSkin (www.iskin.com) or zCover (www.zcover.com).

Old Educational Software Most educational software doesn't require a fast Intel processor or Leopard. Also, there's still a lot of kids' software floating around that works only in the Classic environment. (You can find links to such software at Kaboose.com (www.kidsdomain.com). (Remember: Leopard can't run OS 9 programs.)

Healthy Computing for Kids

Children are spending more time on their Macs than ever before. And like adults, kids are vulnerable to repetitive stress and other overuse injuries. That's why it's essential to set up their workstation properly—and to teach them to use computers safely.

Adult computer setups may accommodate bigger kids, but they usually aren't right for smaller children. You can do a lot to fix that without spending a fortune.

Choose a Proper Chair If you have an ergonomic office chair, try fitting it to your kid. The back should fully support her when she's sitting with her knees and torso bent slightly more than 90 degrees. If the seat is too deep, fill the gap behind her back with a cushion. Likewise, use a phone book to keep her feet from dangling. If the seat's still too large, try a smaller, non-adjustable chair. It should be sturdy enough to provide support without wobbling, and it shouldn't put too much pressure on the backs of her thighs.

Set the Desktop Height Now have your child take a seat. Ask her to hold her upper arms comfortably by her side, elbows bent slightly more than 90 degrees, wrists and hands outstretched. The desktop should be a bit lower than her hands so she can reach the keyboard and mouse without bending her wrists. In some cases, you can compensate for a desk that's too tall or too short by using a movable keyboard tray. If that doesn't do the trick, you may need to find a smaller or adjustable desk.

Position the Monitor The top of the display should be at or slightly below eye level so that she won't have to tilt her head up or down to read the screen. Choose a monitor that lets you adjust its vertical position.

Fit the Mouse and Keyboard If your child has to stretch her hands to type key combinations, you may want to purchase a child-friendly keyboard like Datadesk Technologies' LittleFingers (www.datadesktech.com). Companies such as Chester Creek Technologies (www.chestercreektech.com) and KidzMouse (www.kidzmouse.com) sell inexpensive mice and trackballs that are designed for kids. Also, make sure your kid takes a break every ten minutes or so—just putting down her hands and closing her eyes for a few seconds should be sufficient.—FRANKLIN TESSLER

on this method, you can also choose to always block or always allow specific Web sites by clicking on the Customize button and adding URLs.

For complete control over your child's online activities, use the Allow Access To Only These Websites option, which lets you create a *whitelist* of Web sites—a collection of URLs you've approved for your kid. Apple gives you a head start by populating this list with nine child-appropriate sites, including Discovery Kids, National Geographic Kids, and Smithsonian Institution. You can add other sites by clicking on the plus-sign button, choosing Add Bookmark from the menu that appears, and entering a title and address. If your child clicks on a link from an approved site that leads to a location outside the host domain, a page appears informing her that the destination site can't be accessed.

If you let your kid use Google to search the Web, you'll also want to restrict the kinds of sites that show up in search results. Log into your child's account, head to Google's home page, and select the Preferences link. Sign in to bring up Google's Preferences page, then enable the Use Strict Filtering option in the SafeSearch Filtering area. This helps prevent sexually explicit Web sites from appearing during searches.

Monitor Older Kids

Once your children hit the double digits, they'll feel more than ready to spread their wings and take on the responsibilities of seasoned computer users. You, however, might not be ready to give them this kind of freedom, particularly when they may not fully understand the problems that can result from talking to strangers, sharing files across the Internet, and spending too much time on the computer. Parental Controls can curb some of these activities as well.

Control Lines of Communication By the time a child turns ten, he may be ready to have his own e-mail account and spend time chatting with friends. But even if you decide to grant him the privilege, you will probably want to place some limits on his communiqués.

OS X lets you rein in your kid's Mail and iChat activities by defining whom he can correspond with. Go to Parental

ILLUSTRATIONS BY STEVE STANKEWICZ

Controlling Content You can use Leopard's Parental Controls to limit Web browsing to specific sites.

Controls' Mail & iChat tab, enable the Limit Mail or Limit iChat option (or both), then click on the plus-sign button to start adding approved contacts. (Use the drop-down menu to add AIM or Jabber identities rather than e-mail addresses.) As you enter contacts, you have the option to add them to your Address Book. The contacts end up in *your* database, not your kid's (as the administrator, you're the keeper of contacts for this user). Instead of entering addresses manually, you can click on the downward triangle to select contacts from your Address Book.

Parental Controls can also notify you when your child attempts to send e-mails to unapproved recipients. At the bottom of the Mail & iChat window, enable the Send Permission Requests To option and enter your e-mail address. Whenever your youngster attempts to contact someone who isn't on the list, a notice appears telling him that he doesn't have permission to send a message to that recipient. If he clicks on the Ask Permission button, Mail forwards you a message asking if it's OK to send the e-mail, along with an Always Allow button for approving the request (saying yes adds the address to the list of approved contacts). You can receive messages on any Mac, though it must be running Leopard's version of Mail. Other e-mail clients do not support this remote-approval feature—you'll get a copy of the message, but you won't be able to grant permission.

If you use Parental Controls to manage iChat, only approved contacts end up in your child's buddy list (he won't be able to add anyone). He'll also receive warnings that the computer's administrator can monitor his iChat conversations. (I'll explain how shortly.)

Set Limits You know how easy it is to get addicted to your Mac and sit in front of it for hours on end—but you don't necessarily want your kids to do the same. Using Parental Controls' Time Limits feature, you can manage the number of minutes or hours they spend on the Mac.

Under the Time Limits tab, you'll see three ways to configure your Mac: Weekday Time Limits, Weekend Time Limits, and Bedtime. To set weekday or weekend hours, check the appropriate box and use the slider to set the amount of time your kid can be logged in—anything from 30 minutes to eight hours a day in half-hour increments. When there's 15 minutes left, a warning will appear on screen indicating that it's time to wrap things up. There's an option to add more time (ranging from 15 minutes to the rest of the day), but doing so requires an administrator's name and password. When time runs out, the account switches to the Mac's log-in screen and can't be accessed again until midnight, except by the administrator.

Prepping Kids for the Internet

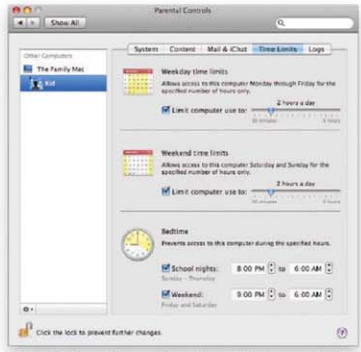
Though letting your children use the Internet, e-mail, and instant messaging could have many advantages, it can also have its drawbacks. Not only can these tools provide your child with too much unmonitored access, but they can also be a real time sink, taking attention away from homework, family and friends, or the great outdoors. Here are some tips to mitigate those problems:

1. Without being alarmist, tell younger children that some electronic activities are just reserved for grown-ups, and that a parent or guardian must approve anything they do on the computer and on the Internet.
2. Make it clear that personal information is just that—*personal*. Kids should never share their name, address, phone number, city, school, e-mail address, or instant-messaging handle with strangers, nor should they post this information on the Web.
3. Young Mac users should not be left alone at the machine. Locate the computer in a communal area, such as a family room, where you can monitor its use.

The Bedtime option lets you specify when your child *can't* use the computer. There are separate settings for school nights (Sunday through Thursday) and weekends (Friday and Saturday). Enable either or both options, and enter the start and stop times for denying access.

Keep Tabs You want to trust your children, but it's nice to know your trust is merited. Parental Controls' Logs feature can help. Under the Logs tab, you'll see a window that includes Websites Visited, Websites Blocked, Applications, and iChat. Highlight Websites Visited, for example, and you'll see those pages he's either accessed directly in Safari, or loaded as part of a visited Web site (an advertisement, say). You can double-click on any site to view the page yourself. You can also check logs from another Mac on the network if you've enabled the option to manage a computer remotely.

The Applications entry tells you which programs your kid opened and for how long. If you find a program that you'd like to forbid, select it and click on the Restrict button. The iChat entry lists the people he has chatted with. Click on the triangle next to a name to view a list of chat sessions. Double-click on one of these files, and you can read what both sides said.



Time's Up Parental Controls' Time Limits tab lets you restrict the hours your children can use the computer.

Beyond Parental Controls

Configured correctly, Parental Controls are remarkably effective. But you may want to do more. Your next steps depend on how strict you want to be and how much you trust your children. Beyond talking to them, there are several ways to allow them access to the online world while retaining some control.

Keep an Eye Out

Even if you trust your children, you might feel better if you can track their activities (and, even better, if you tell them you're doing so). Parental Controls' logs provide some monitoring options, but you can take this even further.

If you and your child have separate Macs, you can watch his screen via Leopard's Screen Sharing feature. First log on to his Mac as an administrator and switch on Screen Sharing in the Sharing preference pane. In Allow Access For, select Only These Users, click on the plus-sign button, and choose Administrators.

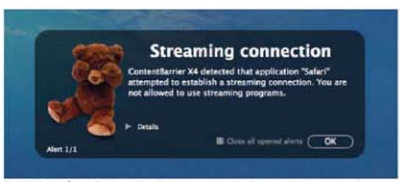
To observe, go back to your Mac and, from the Finder, choose Go: Network. Locate the name of your kid's Mac, launch it, and click on Share Screen. You can now see what he's doing on his machine—and even control it. Your child can try to cut you off (by choosing Disconnect, and then your Mac's IP address, from the Screen Sharing menu in the menu bar), but you'll still remain connected.

If your family shares a single Mac, SpectorSoft's $150 Spector for Mac OS (www.spectorsoft.com) takes frequent snapshots of the screen and can log keystrokes without your children's knowledge. When you want to see what your kids were doing while using the computer, launch the program, play back the snapshots as a movie, or look at the keystroke log.

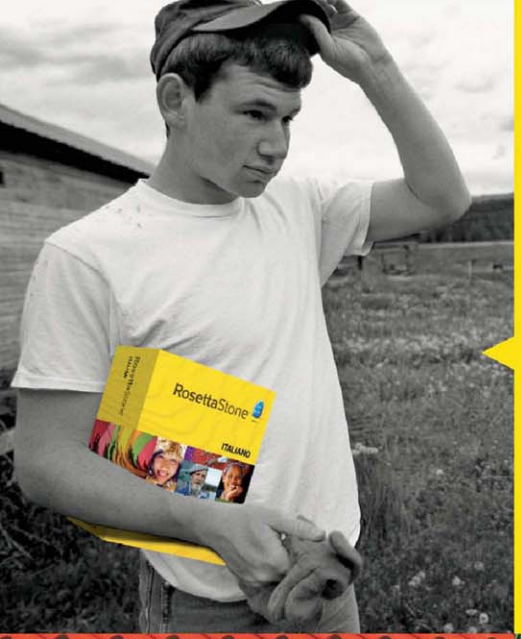
Stop File Sharing

For kids, it may be hard to resist the appeal of downloading free music and videos (and just as hard to understand the legal issues). But if you'd rather not have the recording industry's lawyers banging on your door, you'll want to put an end to any peer-to-peer file-sharing. Leopard's firewall can help.

Open the Security preference pane, click on the Firewall tab, and select the Allow Only Essential Services option. This will also disable screen sharing,



No Streaming ContentBarrier X4 can block all streaming content in your kids' Web browser.



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file sharing, and other such services. If that's too limiting, choose Set Access For Specific Services And Applications instead, which keeps all enabled sharing services running. If you're concerned that your kids are doing illegal swapping, tell the firewall to block incoming connections from any file-sharing programs on the Mac (click on the plus sign to add the program, and from the pull-down menu to the right, select Block Incoming Connections). Better yet, remove those programs altogether.

Some BitTorrent clients use port forwarding to work around the firewall, which means you can't stop downloads, no matter which firewall setting you choose. To see whether your kids have been downloading files using a BitTorrent client, click on the Advanced button at the bottom of the Security window and check the Enable Firewall Logging option. Select the Open Log button to view a list of activities. If you see entries for BitTorrent clients (such as Transmission, Azureus, or BitTorrent), you can uninstall them.

number of activities for each account on your Mac (including those already restricted by Parental Controls).

For instance, you can forbid access to questionable Web sites, block streaming content, filter e-mail and chats for inappropriate language, and block peer-to-peer file sharing and newsgroup access (see "No Streaming"). ContentBarrier can also keep a log of your kids' activities and e-mail it to you as often as once an hour. The program is great if you haven't upgraded to Leopard, or if you find that Leopard's Parental Controls don't provide enough control over certain activities.

Web Filters Are you primarily concerned about your kids' Web surfing habits? Several services can shield children from objectionable content. Blue Coat's free K9 Web Protection service (www.k9webprotection.com) creates an Internet proxy on your Mac to filter and block inappropriate Web sites (as of press time, only a beta version for Mac OS X was available). The service sorts sites by category, such as pornography, illegal drugs, social networking, and gaming. You can instruct the filter to block certain categories while ignoring others. You can still allow or bar specific sites.

Google is a terrific resource, but even if you turn on its filtering features, it's easy to get lost in all the search results—and distinguishing bad information from good is difficult even for adults. For $5 a month or $50 a year, Thinkronize's netTrekker home (★★★★½; macworld.com/3871) acts as a search portal, directing kids to teacher-approved Web sites that contain the knowledge they need to complete their schoolwork.

The Foibles of Filtering

Parental Controls and some third-party utilities and filters promise to protect kids from unseemly content. How effective are they? To find out, I put propriety aside and went spelunking in the darker corners of the Web.

Parental Controls I started by searching for every naughty word I could think of. Combined with Google's filtering powers, OS X's Parental Controls' Web-site filtering option largely thwarted my Web searches. The scientific names for body parts and sexual acts turned up appropriately clinical results without sleaze. Coarser words produced an "Oops! You Can't See Pages on This Website" message. And Parental Controls' logs enumerated my every search. I was, however, able to sneak past Parental Controls when I plugged in some innocent-sounding adult Web sites.

Outside Software I had mixed results with third-party programs and services that filter content. The best was Blue Coat's K9 Web Protection service. It blocked any adult sites I attempted to visit. Intego's ContentBarrier X4 startled me more than once with its loud buzzing alarm when I attempted to access verboten URLs. Like Parental Controls, though, it didn't block innocent-sounding test Web sites. I was, however, able to add these sites to the program's block list.

As your kids get older, you can provide more details about online dangers.

Users who are savvy about security may find it frustrating that Leopard's firewall doesn't provide an easy way to open or close specific ports. Hanynet's free NoobProof (www.hanynet.com/noobproof) offers a simple interface for opening and closing ports within Leopard's firewall.

Limit Content

Leopard's Internet controls for parents are a vast improvement over earlier offerings, but they still may not fully meet your needs. With the help of robust filtering utilities and Web services, you can gain more control.

All-in-One If you're looking for comprehensive control over your kids' Mac activities, check out Intego's $50 ContentBarrier X4 (★★★★; macworld.com/3889), which can halt or filter a

Augmenting the Age of Innocence

The Mac is a wonderful resource for children: not only is it an expansive educational resource, but it's also an art and movie studio, a killer jukebox, and a sophisticated communications device. Sure, all that power can become a problem if left in inexperienced, unguided hands. But with these tips and the proper parental oversight, you can control the Mac's power so that it enhances your children's growth and development.

Christopher Breen may be a *Macworld* senior editor to some, but he's "Mr. Dada" to his seven-year-old daughter.

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A Database for the Rest of Us

If your data has outgrown your spreadsheet, try Bento **BY JEFFERY BATTERSBY**

Are you a list fiend? If so, your hard drive is probably littered with tables and spreadsheets—from Little League rosters and wedding guest lists, to information about your personal assets. Sure, lists lend themselves to the linear and cellular format of a spreadsheet. But if they grow to more than a few dozen records, or if you're constantly entering the same information again and again, spreadsheets can quickly become unwieldy.

Although databases are ideal for managing large lists, many people find them intimidating. But, thanks to FileMaker's $49 Bento (♦♦♦♦; macworld.com/3446), they no longer have reason to fear. Bento is about as easy to use as a database program can get. To show you how easy it can be, I'll demonstrate how you can employ it to manage information that a spreadsheet just couldn't handle.

Make the Switch

Take Celsius7, a musician who has spent years collecting information about the people who attend his concerts, buy his CDs, and purchase other band paraphernalia. He uses this information to send out letters and e-mail messages, figure out which products are selling the most, and evaluate where he should be performing. Initially a spreadsheet seemed like the perfect solution for collecting this information, but now that it contains more than 1,000 records, managing this data has become much more difficult.

Celsius7's fan list contains contact information (name, address, phone number, and e-mail address), and details on items that each person has purchased, such as CDs, hoodies, and T-shirts. Here I'll divide the data in Celsius7's spreadsheet into two new Bento *libraries*—that's Bento-speak for databases. One library is for his fan list; the other is for merchandise. I'll then explain how to link the two together to make the data easier to access and manage.

Import Information

Celsius7 created his spreadsheet in Microsoft Excel 2008 (♦♦♦; $400 as part of Office 2008; macworld.com/3347). You can also import data from Apple's Numbers (♦♦♦½; $79 as part of iWork '08; macworld.com/3042). Either way, you'll have to do some prep work before bringing the data into Bento. Start by making sure that the first row in the spreadsheet corresponds to the fields you want in your database. In this case that includes: First Name, Last Name, Age, Address, City, State, Zip, Phone, and Email. The spreadsheet also includes columns for each item Celsius7 sells; he has placed an *X* under any product that a fan has purchased (see "Raw Data").

Save the spreadsheet as a comma-delimited text file. If you're using Excel, go to File: Save As, and select Comma Separated Values (.csv) from the Format pop-up menu; in Numbers, go to File: Export, click on the CSV button, set Text Encoding to Western (Mac OS Roman), and click on Next. Assign the file a name, choose a location where you want to save the file, and click on Export.

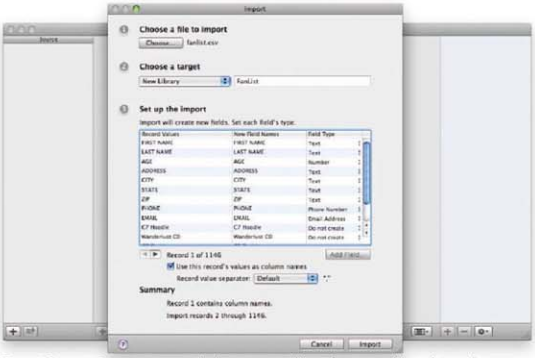
Launch Bento. Unless you have changed Bento's default preferences, you should see the Home pane—click on Start Using Bento. The program's main window consists of three areas. On the left is the Source drawer, which contains all of your Bento libraries. On the right is the Fields drawer, which

ILLUSTRATION BY KELLY KENNEDY

shows all of the fields in the currently selected library. The middle window displays records from your selected library. If you don't see all three windows, go to the View menu and select Show: All.

Now you're ready to import the spreadsheet (File: Import). In section 1 of Bento's Import dialog box, click on the Choose button and locate your CSV file. Section 2 gives you the option to import the data into a new library or an existing one. Make sure New Library is selected in the pop-up menu, and name it something like `FanList`. Section 3 lets you set data formatting by selecting a field type (text, number, date, phone number, and so on). For example, instructing Bento to import a field as an e-mail address (change the EMAIL Field Type to Email Address) later allows you to send a message to that person from within the database (see "Export, Import").

You can also choose to not import specific fields. In this instance, you don't want to include any of the merchandise information. So for all the merchandise-related fields, set the field type to Do Not Create. When you're ready, click on the Import button to create a FanList library containing all of your records.



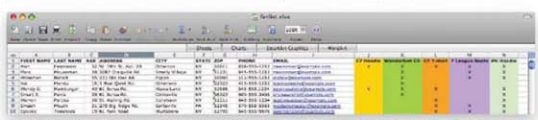
Export, Import Bento can automatically create a new library from spreadsheet data you've exported as a comma-delimited text file.

Customize Forms

After importing your data, you probably want to do some tweaking. For one thing, Bento defaults to its standard form when you import data. In addition, you may end up with duplicate fields; for instance, Bento creates both a Phone Number List and a separate Phone field (the same is true for e-mail). The List fields are useful if you have more than one e-mail address or phone number, such as work and personal, but in this case having both is unnecessary.

To modify the form, click on the Customize Form button (the hammer and wrench) that appears at the top right corner of the window. From here you can drag and drop fields to rearrange the layout; resize fields (by dragging the box's edge); and adjust the fields' alignment, shading, text size, and other attributes (see "Formulating Your Forms"). You can also alter the theme to something more rockin'.

If a field is missing from the form, drag it from the Fields drawer to the location where you want it to appear in your records. To delete either the Phone Number List or the Email Address List that Bento created, click on that field and press delete. You can also drag the Phone and Email fields over to the left so that everything appears in a single column (leaving the second column open for the merchandise information you'll be adding later).



Raw Data The original spreadsheet includes fans' contact information as well as data on merchandise they've purchased.

Create a Library

Although importing the fan list is simple, you can't then import the merchandise data and automatically link it to the contact information. Instead you'll have to create a merchandise library from scratch, then go back and link each fan's purchases to the items in that database.

To create the merchandise database, click on the large plus-sign (+) button at the bottom of the Source drawer (the other button creates a collection, which is a subset of records from a library). In the New Library window that appears, select the Blank template, change the name to `Merchandise`, and click on the Choose button. Your new Merchandise library appears in the Source drawer, the Records window displays a blank form, and two fields pop up in the Fields drawer—Date Created and Date Modified.

Now it's time to start adding fields. Click on the large plus-sign button at the bottom of the Fields drawer to bring up the Create A Field window. The first field should be your product number—select Number as the field type from the box in section 1 and name the field `Product ID` in section 2. (Section 3 lets you set certain parameters for that field type, such as the number of

decimal places.) Click on Create And Continue to add two additional fields: Product Name (field type Text) and Price (field type Currency). When you're done, the Fields drawer should contain these new fields.

You could use the default form view to enter merchandise information, but since there are only a few items, it's easier to work in table view. To do so, click on the Table button at the top of the Records window; check boxes will appear next to all of the fields in the Fields drawer. Select the three fields you created, and then click on the plus-sign button at the bottom of the Records window to generate a new blank record. Type the product name, ID, and price for your first piece of merchandise, then repeat the process for the remaining items.

Formulating Your Forms You can easily customize Bento forms by dragging fields from one location to another.

Link Your Libraries

The final step is to reconnect the fans' records to the items they've purchased. You'll have to do this manually—it's straightforward but time-consuming.

First you must link the two databases together. Select the FanList library, enter Customize Form mode, and drag the Merchandise library from the Source drawer to the top of the second column on the FanList form (or wherever you would like it to appear)—this adds a blank merchandise table.

Find the first record in the FanList Library. At the bottom of the merchandise table, click on the teeny Add Related Records From A List button (labeled with a small plus sign next to several lines). You will see a list of items from your Merchandise library—select all of the products that person purchased (press the command key to highlight multiple items), and then click on the Add To List button (see "The Finished Product"). You can drag items from the list to your merchandise table; when you're done, close the list window and repeat this process for each fan in the database.

The Finished Product The completed FanList includes all related records from the Merchandise library; the FanList Fields drawer to the right tells you which fields can still be added to your form.

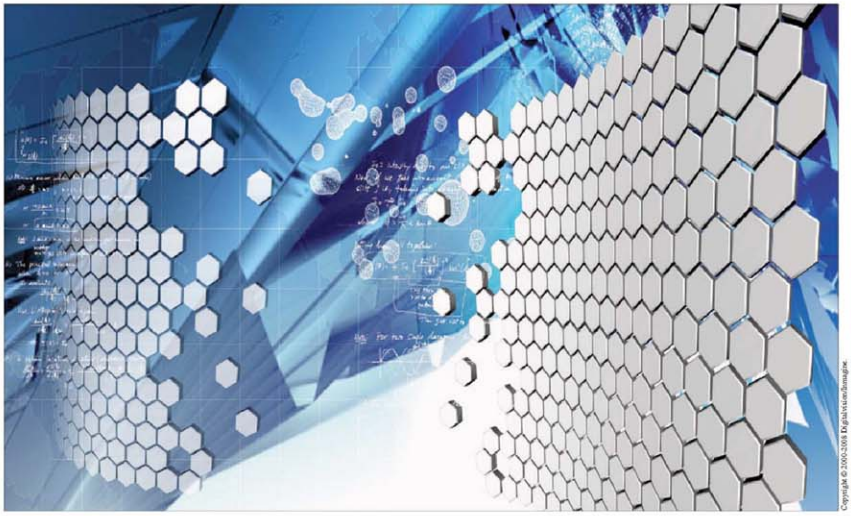
Put It to Use

So now that you've set up your database, what next? In Celsius7's case, he can now more easily track CD and merchandise sales, or send out concert mailers and e-mail messages to fans based on where they live.

Say that Celsius7 is planning a concert in Chicago. With his database in place, he can easily create a collection that only includes people who live in and around that city. Go to File: New Smart Collection. At the top of the Collection window, enter the search criteria. To look for Chicago-based fans, choose City Contains from the first two drop-down menus, and then enter `Chicago` in the blank field. Click on the plus-sign button to tack on another city, such as Evanston, Illinois (you can also search by state or basically by any field in your database). Click on Find. Every time you add a record that fits these criteria, Bento will automatically update that collection.

Bento allows you to create a list that's much more convenient to manage and customize than a spreadsheet—and that makes it much easier to find and use the information you've collected.

Jeffery Battersby is an IT manager and freelance writer based in New York. Check out his blog, Building the Perfect Beast (www.reyespoint.com).



Chaos Made Clear

It has been called the third great revolution of 20th-century physics, after relativity and quantum theory. But how can something called chaos theory help you understand an *orderly* world? What practical things might it be good for? What, in fact, is chaos theory? **Chaos** takes you to the heart of chaos theory as it is understood today. Your guide is Cornell University Professor Steven Strogatz, author of *Nonlinear Dynamics and Chaos,* the most widely used chaos theory textbook in America. In 24 thought-provoking lectures, he introduces you to a fascinating discipline that has more to do with your everyday life than you may realize.

Chaos theory—the science of systems whose behavior is sensitive to small changes in their initial conditions—affects nearly every field of human endeavor, from astronomy to business. Professor Strogatz shows you the importance of this field and how it has helped us solve life's mysteries. You learn how chaos theory was discovered and investigate ideas such as the butterfly effect, iterated maps, and fractals. You also discover practical applications of chaos in areas like encryption, medicine, and space mission design.

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Chaos

Taught by Professor Steven Strogatz, Cornell University

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3. From Clockwork to Chaos
4. Chaos Found and Lost Again
5. The Return of Chaos
6. Chaos as Disorder—The Butterfly Effect
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8. Animating Chaos as Order—Iterated Maps
9. How Systems Turn Chaotic
10. Displaying How Systems Turn Chaotic
11. Universal Features of the Route to Chaos
12. Experimental Tests of the New Theory
13. Fractals—The Geometry of Chaos
14. The Properties of Fractals
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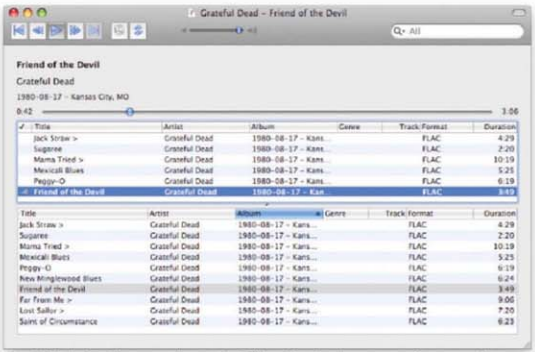
Play Almost Any Audio File

Listen to music formats that iTunes doesn't support **BY KIRK MCELHEARN**

iTunes is a powerful audio player that supports a variety of formats, including the space-saving MP3 and AAC, the uncompressed AIFF and WAV, and the proprietary Apple Lossless. But as you explore the Internet, you'll come across other file formats with names such as FLAC, SHN, Monkey's Audio, Ogg Vorbis, and so on (for a list of common formats and their file extensions, see "A Plethora of Formats").

While you can't play these files with iTunes (at least not out of the box), other programs will let you play them. Or you can convert them to iTunes-friendly formats; after doing so, you can add the files to your iTunes library, then listen to them on your iPod or iPhone. Here's how to work with other audio formats you may come across.



Play With the free Play, you can listen to FLAC files without having to convert them to another format first.

All about Formats

Because MP3 and AAC get most of the press, a lot of iTunes and iPod users have never heard of the many audio formats out there. Lossless formats—those that compress music without removing any information, just like a zip file—such as FLAC (Free Lossless Audio Codec) and SHN (Shorten) are widely enjoyed by music fans who want the highest fidelity. You can find them on the Web sites of artists including the Grateful Dead and Nine Inch Nails; on sites such as Nugs.net, which sells live concerts as well as albums by dozens of bands (including Buddy Guy, George Clinton and the P-Funk All Stars, Metallica, the Black Crowes, and David Grisman); on live music Web sites such as Etree BitTorrent (bt.etree.org) and Archive.org's Live Music Archive (macworld.com/3706), where trade-friendly bands allow free downloads of their live recordings; and from classical music labels such as Pristine Classical (www.pristineclassical.com), an online dealer of historic classical recordings. (Most sites offer MP3 or AAC files as well.)

As previously mentioned, lossless compression doesn't toss away any musical information (as compressed MP3 or AAC files do). When you play lossless files, they sound exactly like the original uncompressed files from which they were made. But that quality has a price: lossless files are much larger than AAC or MP3 files, usually about five times the size of their compressed cousins. For example, a 128-Kbps AAC or MP3 file of a four-minute song takes up about 3.7MB of space, whereas a FLAC file of the same length weighs in at 15MB to 25MB, depending on the density of the music.

You may also come across formats called WavPack and Monkey's Audio. And Ogg Vorbis is a popular open-source lossy compression format.

Play Audio Files

Since iTunes can't natively play FLAC, SHN, and Ogg Vorbis files, you'll need some tools to listen to them. If you want to hear FLAC files, Cubic Fruit Design's free Fluke (cubicfruit.com/fluke) is an AppleScript that uses three pieces of software to let you import and listen to FLAC files in iTunes (though you still won't be able to add the FLACs to your iPod). Just open the files with Fluke, then let the program go to work; it adds the files to your iTunes library in a few seconds. Unfortunately, Fluke is pretty buggy, but it's good when it works.

If you don't want to add FLAC files to your iTunes library or if you want to play other file formats, several programs can help. Stephen Booth's free Play 0.3

If You Purchased a Replacement Power Adapter for Certain Apple PowerBook or iBook Computers, You Could Be Entitled to Benefits From a Class Action Settlement.

A settlement of a class action lawsuit affects you if you purchased an Apple PowerBook or iBook computer for which the replacement power adapter was the Apple Portable Power Adapter — 65W ("Subject Computer") and subsequently purchased a Replacement Adapter for the Subject Computer due to failure of the Adapter included with or sold for the Subject Computer. A list of the Subject Computers (Exhibit 1) is available on the Internet at www.rosenthalco.com/gordonvapple or by calling 1-888-539-5706 to request the full notice package. The settlement will provide a cash payment to United States residents who purchased a Subject Computer and paid for a Replacement Adapter covered by the settlement within the first three years following the initial retail purchase of the Subject Computer. If you qualify, you may send in a claim form to ask for payment, or you can exclude yourself from the settlement, or object. The United States District Court for the Northern District of California authorized this notice. The Court will have a hearing to consider whether to approve the settlement, so that the benefits may be paid.

WHY IS THIS NOTICE BEING PUBLISHED AGAIN?
If you previously received or reviewed a notice relating to replacement power adapters for certain Apple PowerBook and iBook computers, please do not disregard this notice. Additional computers covered by the settlement have been added since the previous notice. Consult the list of Subject Computers (Exhibit 1) available on the Internet at www.rosenthalco.com/gordonvapple or by calling 1-888-539-5706 to request the full notice package, to see whether your computer is now included in the settlement.

If you have already submitted a claim, request for exclusion or objection in response to the prior notice, you do NOT need to do so again.

WHO'S AFFECTED?
Purchasers of an Apple PowerBook or iBook computer listed on Exhibit 1. Exhibit 1 is available on the Internet at www.rosenthalco.com/gordonvapple or by calling 1-888-539-5706 to request the full notice package. You're a "Class Member" if you are a United States resident who purchased in the United States an Apple PowerBook or iBook computer listed on Exhibit 1 for your own use and not for resale.

WHAT'S THIS ABOUT?
The lawsuit claimed that the Adapter included with or sold for the Subject Computers is defective in that it allegedly "dangerously frays, sparks and prematurely fails to work." Apple denies all allegations and has asserted many defenses. Apple is entering into this settlement to avoid burdensome and costly litigation. The settlement is not an admission of wrong-doing.

WHAT CAN YOU GET FROM THE SETTLEMENT?
Apple has agreed to provide a cash payment to Class Members who purchased a Replacement Adapter due to the failure of the Adapter included with or sold for a Subject Computer covered by the settlement and who send in a valid claim form. For failures within the first year following the initial retail purchase of the Subject Computer, the settlement requires that you attempted to have the failed Adapter replaced or repaired under warranty by Apple and such request was denied by Apple for a reason other than user abuse.

The settlement provides for different cash payments depending on when the Adapter included with or sold for your Subject Computer failed.

The settlement only applies to a Replacement Adapter purchased during the first three years following the initial retail purchase of the Subject Computer, and before May 31, 2009. Cash payment amounts are as follows:

YEAR OF FAILURE OF ADAPTER	CASH PAYMENT AMOUNT
YEAR 1	THE ACTUAL AMOUNT PAID FOR THE REPLACEMENT ADAPTER (EXCLUDING TAX & SHIPPING) UP TO $79
YEAR 2	$40
YEAR 3	$25

There is a limit of one cash payment per Subject Computer.

HOW DO YOU GET A PAYMENT?
A detailed notice and claim form package contains everything you need. Just call 1-888-539-5706 or go to www.rosenthalco.com/gordonvapple to get one.

IMPORTANT DEADLINES
If you purchased a Replacement Adapter as described herein on or before October 14, 2008, you must mail the claim form postmarked on or before **February 11, 2009.** If you purchased a Replacement Adapter as described herein after October 14, 2008, you must mail the claim form postmarked on or before the ***earlier*** of **120 days after the date the Adapter failure occurred, or by May 31, 2009.**

NOTE: If you have already submitted a claim in response to the prior notice related to replacement adapters for certain Apple PowerBook and iBook computers, you do NOT need to re-submit the claim.

WHAT ARE YOUR OPTIONS?
If you don't want a payment and you don't want to be legally bound by the settlement, you must postmark your request to exclude yourself by December 1, 2008, or you won't be able to sue, or continue to sue, Apple about the legal claims in this case. If you exclude yourself, you can't get a payment from this settlement.

If you stay in the Class, you may object to the settlement. Objections must be received by December 1, 2008.

NOTE: If you have already submitted an exclusion request or objection in response to the prior notice related to replacement adapters for certain Apple PowerBook and iBook computers, you do NOT need to do so again.

The detailed notice describes how to exclude yourself or object. The Court will hold a hearing in this case (*Gordon v. Apple Computer, Inc., Case No. 5:06-cv-05358*) on December 15, 2008, at 9 a.m. to consider whether to approve (1) the settlement and (2) attorneys' fees and expenses of $849,500 and a service payment to Plaintiff of $500. You may appear at the hearing, but you don't have to. To obtain a full notice and claim form, go to www.rosenthalco.com/gordonvapple or call toll free 1-888-539-5706. For more details, go to www.rosenthalco.com/gordonvapple or write to Helen Zeldes, Esq., 249 S. Highway 101, #370, Solana Beach, CA 92075.

(sbooth.org) and Vincent Spader's free Cog 0.07 (cogx.org) are excellent choices. They support playback of FLAC, Ogg Vorbis, WavPack, Monkey's Audio, and many formats supported by OS X's Core Audio (AAC, MP3, Apple Lossless, and so on). Both support gapless playback for concerts, and Play adds the ability to create a library with playlists and smart playlists.

One unexpected music player is Roxio's $100 Toast 9 Titanium (www.roxio.com). This disc-burning program can also play, convert, and burn both FLAC and Ogg Vorbis files. Although it's not ideal as a player—it offers no library or playlists—it's great for listening to a quick set of music files—for example, when you're deciding whether to burn a concert you downloaded to CD.

Scott Brown's X Audio Compression Toolkit 1.64 (macworld.com/3838), aka xACT, can convert SHN, FLAC, Monkey's Audio, and other files into WAV or AIFF files—after which you must convert them to another format (unless you plan to use the uncompressed files). To convert them further, add the files to your iTunes library, select them, and choose Advanced: Convert Selection to *fileformat*. xACT can also encode FLAC, SHN, Monkey's Audio, and WavPack files from your CDs. It can even encode MP3 files using the open-source LAME MP3 encoder.

Stephen Booth's free Max 0.8.1 (Max 0.7.1, ★★★★½; macworld.com/3839) goes a bit further, converting files directly into any QuickTime-supported file format

Lossless audio formats, such as FLAC and SHN, are widely enjoyed by music fans who want the highest fidelity.

Convert Files to iTunes-Readable Formats

Players are useful if you're in front of your Mac, but you'll probably want to add audio files to your iTunes library so you can transfer them to your iPod or iPhone. The iPod and iPhone currently support only AAC, MP3, WAV, AIFF, and—on all models except the shuffle—Apple Lossless, so if you have FLAC, SHN, or Ogg Vorbis files, you must convert them. Fortunately, some good, free tools are available.

(AAC, MP3, or Apple Lossless, for example) and saving you the extra step. It can convert to and from many formats, letting you deal with almost any audio files you encounter. You can also use it to rip CDs, tag files, and more.

Another free tool, TMKK's XLD, or X Lossless Decoder (macworld.com/3840), offers a cornucopia of audio tools. While it handles fewer file formats than Max does, it has one big feature that other such programs lack: it can exploit *cue sheets*—text files that record information about the beginnings and endings of tracks for albums ripped as a single file. Cue sheets are used to avoid the gaps inherent in MP3 files (iTunes and the iPod now support gapless playback, but not all hardware and software does). Pristine Classical, for example, sells its MP3s as single files, because the small gap at the start and end of MP3s can result in highly irritating breaks in continuous music. To split a file with a cue sheet, open the .cue file in XLD, select the appropriate music file, then click on Decode; XLD will split or decode the file according to the preferences you have set for its output format.

Finally, if you own the aforementioned Toast 9, you can use it to convert the FLAC or Ogg Vorbis files it supports. Launch Toast and click on the Convert button in the toolbar (the last of the five buttons). Then click on the Audio Files option underneath the Convert heading and drag the files you want to convert into the main window. Click on the big red button at the bottom of the window, then select a file format in the dialog box that appears. Click on Options to select bit rate and other settings; then select a folder where you want to save the files, and click on Choose (Toast will save these preferences for next time).

xACT As a graphical user interface for several Unix applications, xACT makes it easy to convert audio between many different formats.

A Plethora of Formats

FILE FORMAT	EXTENSION
AAC	.m4a
Apple Lossless	.m4a
MP3	.mp3
AIFF	.aiff
WAV	.wav
FLAC	.flac
Shorten	.shn
Monkey's Audio	.ape
WavPack	.wv
Ogg Vorbis	.ogg
True Audio	.tta
Speex	.spx

Kirk McElhearn writes about Macs, iPods, books, music, and more on his blog, Kirkville (www.mcelhearn.com).

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Essential Audio Plug-ins

Perfect your sound with the right signal-processing software **BY JIM DALRYMPLE**

Writing music and lyrics for a song is a huge step for musicians, but that's not the end of the process when you're creating music. There's another important stage that influences the final songs we hear on iTunes or CDs, and makes them sound the way they do.

The process of mixing and mastering a song shapes the recorded music into the vision the musicians and audio engineer have for that particular song. The process is as much an art as actually writing and performing the song itself.

Most engineers today incorporate digital effects into their workflow during this stage. In recording my new album, I've come across a few incredibly useful plug-ins that can help you get the finished sound you're looking for.

One of the most useful plug-ins is a *compressor*. A compressor essentially controls the level of audio, but it does more than that. When used properly, a compressor reduces the level of loud sounds in your mix, allowing the softer parts of the music to come through so you end up with a full sound.

PuigChild 670 Part of the Jack Joseph Puig Collection, the PuigChild 670 re-creates a vintage Fairchild 670 compressor.

Waves has spent the past three years modeling Jack Joseph Puig's vintage gear.

A compressor also functions as a *limiter*, meaning it limits the signal output to a user-specified peak. Basically, a limiter is a compressor with a higher ratio.

Waves' Jack Joseph Puig Collection

Jack Joseph Puig is one of the most sought-after audio engineers in the world, not only because he's great at his job, but also because of his legendary collection of vintage analog gear.

Over the years, Puig has collected some of the best gear that's ever been used to mix and master music. The Fairchild 660 and 670 compressors and the Pultec EQ are part of his prized collection, and now you can have them too—at least in digital form.

Waves has spent the past three years modeling Puig's vintage gear and making a new set of plug-ins that gives users the look-and-feel—and, more important, the sound—of Puig's analog counterparts. The result is the $800 (Native) or $1,600 (TDM) Jack Joseph Puig Collection (www.waves.com).

Many plug-ins out there are so packed with options that it becomes difficult to grasp exactly what they're doing. Their interfaces are often poorly thought out, leading to confusion or at least making it hard to get the most out of a particular plug-in. Not so with these.

Taking a cue from their analog counterparts, the PuigChild plug-ins are simple to understand and use. It's like having the Fairchild interface on your computer screen. Knowing what knob you are turning and how that will affect your music is exactly what you are looking for.

The results are spectacular. I've tried several compression plug-ins and pitted them against the Puig collection, and there is just no comparison—the Waves bundle is far superior in sound quality.

Experienced users can dive right in and start adjusting the knobs and dials to get the sound they're looking for. However, Waves provides new users with some handy presets to get started.

You can pick a preset for Rock Snare, British Snare, West Coast Piano, Vocal Attack, Rock Guitar, Smooth Strings, and many more. The presets also give you a great starting point—you can load a

It's time to face the music.

"... if sound quality is high up on your list, you'll find a way to squeeze these bad boys onto your desktop."
"8 out of 10."

c|net CNET.com 3/27/08

Macworld Editors' Choice ★★★★★

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preset and adjust and save the settings as a new preset for use on another song.

FabFilter Pro-C Compressor

FabFilter Software Instruments is known for bringing a digital look to its plug-ins without cluttering the interface with unnecessary information, buttons, or knobs. For that reason—and because it sounds great—the company's $229 Pro-C compressor (www.fabfilter.com) has become one of my favorite plug-ins.

The Pro-C uses a modern interface with sliding windows that unveil more advanced features and a side chain (which lets you trigger the compressor using the signal from another audio channel). While the Pro-C is a pleasure to look at and interact with, what matters most is its excellent sound quality.

The compressor has three different styles—Clean, Classic, and Opto—giving you a variety of options when deciding what kind of sound you're going for.

The Pro-C reacts as you would expect when you move a knob or dial on the interface. It also comes with an abundance of presets to help you get the sound you want—whether you're recording drums or mixing the completed song.

The plug-in also includes contextual help—hovering the cursor over a function brings up a bubble that explains what that function does.

ML4000 The ML4000 is just one of the 12 plug-ins that comes in McDSP's Emerald Pack.

McDSP Emerald Pack

For Pro Tools users, one of the best plug-in options comes from McDowell Signal Processing via its $1,495 (Native) or $2,795 (TDM) Emerald Pack (www.mcdsp.com).

More than just a compressor or limiter, the Emerald Pack is a complete bundle of 12 plug-ins that gives you everything you need to shape your sound—from tweaking individual instruments all the way to mastering the finished sound on the output channel.

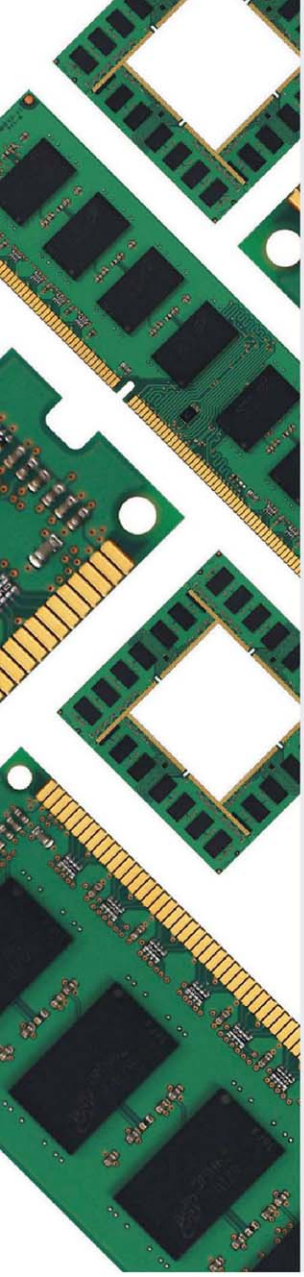
Take the ML4000—it's a mastering plug-in that includes a limiter, a gate, a compressor, and an expander. That means you get everything you need in one place. You can turn any of the components on or off to mix and match as you see fit. You also have control over all of the individual settings for ratio, release, and attack.

If you prefer to work on your effects separately, McDSP has you covered there too. In addition to the all-in-one solution, it provides separate plug-ins such as the CompressorBank, a collection of four compressor plug-ins, each of which does different things.

McDSP also includes a lot of presets, organized by instrument and purpose, so finding the precise preset you are looking for is fast and easy. You can also adjust the settings and save the changes for use later on.

Pro-C FabFilter's Pro-C has a clean interface, yet offers all the controls you need.

Editor at Large **Jim Dalrymple** is recording his first album on a Mac. Visit our Creative Notes blog (macworld.com/3623) to follow his progress.



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Slim Down Your PDFs

Compress large files without compromising on image quality **BY ADAM C. ENGST**

You can never be too rich or too thin, the old saying goes, but when it comes to Adobe's Portable Document Format (PDF), adding richness in the form of images and fonts causes otherwise svelte PDFs to start pining for elastic waistbands. Balancing quality and file size in PDFs can be tricky, but in my five years of publishing PDF books I've learned—through much trial and error—numerous tricks that can help you keep your PDFs small, eliminating problems with bounced e-mail attachments, unnecessarily long downloads, and higher-than-necessary bandwidth bills.

Compressing Images You'll realize the majority of space savings in compressing your images, but be careful not to degrade image quality too much. The compressed version here (right) has lost some detail and sharpness, especially in the boy's face.

Slimming Strategies

PDFs balloon to tens of megabytes for three main reasons: images, fonts, and the PDF format itself. Images cause the most trouble, since many programs (Keynote, for example) embed them at much higher resolutions than you'd ever actually display. By reducing those images' size and compressing them, you can reclaim a lot of space. And if your PDF uses the same image repeatedly, Mac OS X's built-in PDF engine stores each instance separately, instead of reusing a single version of the image.

Fonts can add bulk, too, but if you've used standard fonts, there's little need to embed them in the file (as Mac OS X does by default). If you're using nonstandard fonts, you can embed only the characters you use, rather than the entire font.

And if you do a lot of editing and page replacement in Preview or Adobe Acrobat Pro, the size of your file will grow every time you save, requiring the use of Acrobat Pro's Save As command to reclaim the wasted space.

How you go about slimming down your PDFs depends largely on how much you want to spend on tools, and how much control you want to exert over the process. If dealing with PDFs is only an occasional experience for you, Leopard's Preview utility may offer all the compression capabilities you need. For more control, a utility like Apago's $35 PDF Shrink (www.apagoinc.com) provides additional capabilities without breaking the bank. And if creating reasonably sized PDF files for public distribution is core to your business, as it is to mine, you need Adobe's $449 Acrobat Pro (www.adobe.com), likely along with a tool like PDF Shrink's big brother, the $199 PDF Enhancer (also from Apago).

Preview and ColorSync

Though few people realize this, you can reduce the size of PDF files using the Leopard version of Preview. To shrink a PDF file, open it in Preview, choose Save As from the File menu, and, in the Save dialog box, choose Reduce File Size from the Quartz Filter pop-up menu. If when you compare the compressed PDF with your original, the images are too fuzzy for your needs (the default settings are pretty severe), you can make your own Quartz filter with different settings.

To do this, launch ColorSync Utility (in Applications/Utilities), choose New Utility Window from the File menu if none is showing, and click on Filters in the toolbar. Click on the arrow to the right of Reduce File Size, choose Duplicate Filter from the drop-down

menu, and name your new filter. Enter different values for Image Sampling and Image Compression, switch back to your original PDF in Preview, and save a PDF with your new filter in place of Reduce File Size. With some trial and error, you should be able to arrive at a compromise that satisfies you.

PDF Shrink

PDF Shrink provides additional controls and a simpler interface than Preview. But where PDF Shrink really sets itself apart is in how it lets you create different sets of PDF compression options (one for e-mail distribution, another for printing, and so on) and in the ways you can access it. You can drop PDF files on PDF Shrink's Finder or Dock icon (which uses the default configuration), on the appropriate PDF configuration set in PDF Shrink's main Document Manager window, or on an AppleScript-based droplet application associated with a particular PDF configuration set. PDF Shrink can also create PDF services that let you access specific configuration sets via the PDF drop-down menu in Mac OS X's Print dialog box.

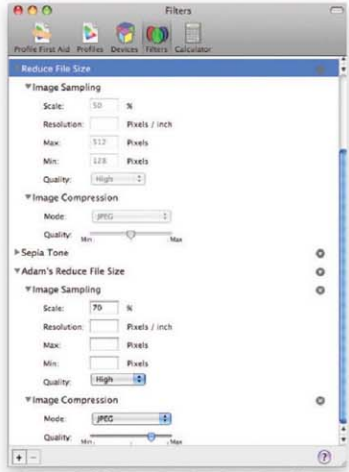
Acrobat's PDF Optimizer

If you're serious about working with PDFs, you need Acrobat Pro, which offers highly technical options for reducing PDF file size. From the Advanced menu, choose PDF Optimizer, which offers six different sets of options: compressing images, unembedding fonts, transparency, discarding objects, discarding user data, and cleaning up the file. Although they're all useful, pay particular attention to the image compression options, since that's where you can usually save the most space. Also in the PDF Optimizer dialog box is an Audit Space Usage button, which displays another dialog box showing you what percentage of your file different PDF components occupy.

Work carefully with Acrobat Pro's PDF Optimizer. Many of the techniques it uses will degrade image quality and remove useful PDF features such as links and bookmarks. Also, when you click on OK in the PDF Optimizer dialog box, Acrobat Pro prompts you for a new file name and makes your changes, leaving the modified file open when you're done. If you're testing different settings, make sure to close that modified file and return to your original before testing new compression settings. Otherwise, your file could end up doubly compressed, confusing your test results and rendering the images unreadable.

When you think you've arrived at your ideal settings in the PDF Optimizer dialog box, save them as a custom set in Acrobat Pro, apply them to your original file, and then choose Save As from the File menu. Despite all the work you've been doing in the PDF Optimizer, a simple Save As can sometimes save even more space, and better yet, all of its space savings are lossless when you use the Reduce File Size filter.

If you want the control offered by Acrobat Pro but need more automation options, Apago's PDF Enhancer provides nearly all of Acrobat's optimization controls along with additional PDF manipulation prowess, such as the ability to change page size, set view options, apply layouts such as booklets, stamp files with graphics, and set metadata. For my e-books, I always do a Save As in Acrobat Pro, after which I drop the e-book file on a customized configuration in PDF Enhancer for the remaining compression work.



ColorSync Shrinking Duplicate the Reduce File Size filter to create a custom one with different image sampling and compression settings.

Wrapped Up Tightly

Despite the ever-increasing availability of high-bandwidth Internet connections, file size still matters when you're sending e-mail attachments or when you have recipients downloading your files over slow connections. If you're distributing PDF files via the Internet, it takes only a few minutes to compress the file via Preview, a utility like PDF Shrink or PDF Enhancer, or Adobe's full-fledged Acrobat Pro. Take the time to compress your files up front, and you'll reap the rewards of fewer bounced e-mail attachments, faster downloads, and lower bandwidth bills.

Adam Engst is the publisher of TidBits (www.tidbits.com) and the Take Control series of PDF books (takecontrolbooks.com). The need to reduce the file size of his e-books has forced him to learn more about PDF compression than he ever wanted to know.

Autoshrink It

TIP If you want to compress several files at once, create an Automator workflow that copies the original files (Copy Finder Items) and applies your filter to them (Apply Quartz Filter To PDF Documents).

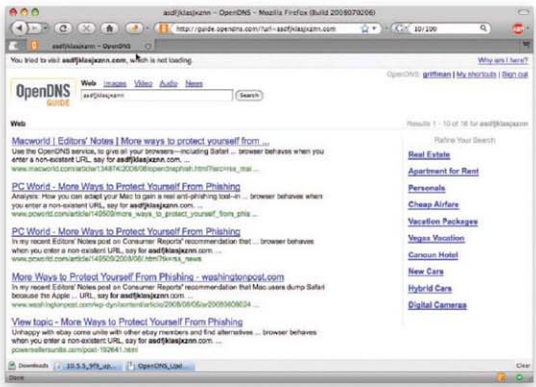
Surf Safer with OpenDNS

Worried about phishing scams? Tweak your network settings. **BY ROB GRIFFITHS**

Consumer Reports recently advised Mac users to dump Safari in favor of Firefox or another Web browser. The main reason: Safari doesn't have the built-in protection against phishing scams that Firefox, Opera, and some other browsers do.

Phishing is when nefarious programmers set up fake Web sites, then attempt to dupe you into divulging personal information. They can then sell that information or use it for identity theft.

We've told you before what you can do about phishing. (For a summary of that advice, see "Commonsense Precautions.") But there's another tool you can use in your defense, a free service that will give any browser on your Mac—including Safari—a full set of antiphishing tools (plus other security features). That service is called OpenDNS, and it's a free replacement for your ISP's domain name servers, which you're probably using now.



OpenDNS Ads The OpenDNS service can offer its services for free because it shows you an ad when you type in a nonexistent URL.

How It Works

A domain name server looks up addresses in the Domain Name System (DNS). It translates domain names (www.macworld.com, for example) into numerical Internet Protocol (IP) addresses (70.42.185.230, in the case of Macworld.com). When your browser loads a Web site, it uses this IP address to find the site's server.

By default, you probably use the DNS servers that your ISP provides. (You can see which DNS servers you're using in System Preferences: Network.) These servers are typically specified automatically when you set up your Internet connection. But just as there are numerous phone directories available, there are many different DNS servers you can use—you aren't required to stick with the ones your ISP offers. OpenDNS is one such alternative.

It's also one that comes with features your ISP's DNS servers probably lack. One of those features is phishing protection. Once you've set your Mac to use OpenDNS's DNS servers, the service will check any URLs you're trying to reach against a list of sites suspected of operating phishing schemes (OpenDNS's own PhishTank project maintains the list). If a site you're trying to reach is on the list, OpenDNS will block access to it. And you get that protection not only in your browser, but in any application that uses DNS, such as an RSS reader.

OpenDNS can provide this service for free because it changes the way your browser behaves when you enter a nonexistent URL. If you enter, say, asdfjklasjxznn.com in your browser, you'll normally get a "page not found" error message. But if you load it using OpenDNS, you'll get an ad. If that bothers you, you can pass on the service. To my mind, it's a small price to pay.

Setting It Up

The details of using OpenDNS instead of your ISP's DNS servers vary depending on your version of OS X, your Internet connection, and your current DNS configuration. I can't spell out specific steps for every permutation of OS X and network setup. But I can provide some generic advice, a specific example, and a pointer to OpenDNS's own user-friendly installation instructions.

First, here is the generic advice: To replace your ISP's DNS servers with OpenDNS's, reread the installation instructions that your ISP provided. When you get to the step about setting up the DNS servers, replace whatever DNS server IP addresses your ISP has given you with OpenDNS's addresses: **208.67.222.222** and **208.67.220.220**. Save your changes, and you're done.

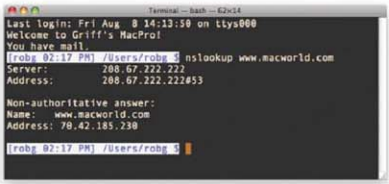
To give one example, say you're using the following setup: you're running OS X 10.5 on a machine that connects to the Internet via AirPort, and the DNS server is defined on that Mac, rather than assigned remotely by another machine on the network.

Launch System Preferences and open the Network pane. Select AirPort in the leftmost column and click on Advanced. In the new sheet that drops down, click on the DNS tab, and then click on the plus sign (+) at the bottom left of the DNS Servers window. The cursor will move to a blank line in that window; there, type the first OpenDNS DNS server address, **208.67.222.222**. Click on the plus sign again, and then enter the second OpenDNS address, **208.67.220.220**.

If you see any other addresses listed above these new entries, click on each one and then click on the minus sign (–) to remove them. (If you see grayed-out entries, that means another machine—your AirPort Base Station or another router, for instance—is providing the DNS server information. If that's the case, you'll need to change that machine's DNS server information to point to the OpenDNS servers.) When only the OpenDNS servers' addresses are visible, click on OK. In the AirPort screen, click on Apply.

The OpenDNS Web site has a number of how-to guides for OS X and other operating systems, as well as for 14 different brands of home routers, including the AirPort Base Station.

The changes you've made should take effect in about a minute or less. To confirm that your system is using the new DNS, open up Terminal (in Applications: Utilities), and type **nslookup www.macworld.com**. That should return the IP address of Macworld.com, as well as the address of the DNS server that did the lookup; in this case, the latter should be 208.67.222.222 or 208.67.220.220.



Testing OpenDNS To see if OpenDNS is working, type **nslookup www.macworld.com** from Terminal's command line.

The Final Word

Changing DNS servers isn't difficult, and OpenDNS can offer a good line of defense against phishing scams. But no antiphishing tool is 100 percent accurate, so you should still practice "safe clicking." Also, OpenDNS doesn't work for everyone. If that's the case for you, the advice in "Commonsense Precautions" could still help you avoid the phisher's hook.

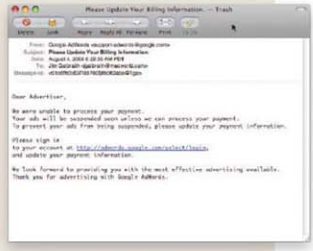
Rob Griffiths is a senior editor at *Macworld*.

Commonsense Precautions

Despite the technical tools that are available, such as OpenDNS, common sense is your best defense against phishing scams. Here are two basic rules for keeping yourself safe.

Be Careful What You Click On I recently received an e-mail purporting to be from Google's AdWords program. The text of the e-mail asked me to go to http://adwords.google.com/select/login and update my payment information—in other words, my credit card number.

Trouble is, the URL shown in text wasn't the URL that the link actually pointed to. In Safari and other browsers, if you have the Status bar showing (in Safari, View: Show Status Bar), you can hover the cursor over a link and see what URL it really points to; if you hover your cursor over links in iChat and Mail, the real URL will appear in a little pop-up window.



I won't tell you the URL the fake link really pointed to (just in case you might be tempted to go there). Let's say that it was http://www.adwords.google.com.xxyyzz.cn/select/Login.

While the first part of the URL looks legitimate, the end—xxyyzz.cn—doesn't. It's a good idea to read URLs from right to left. If the end of the domain isn't what you'd expect, don't go there.

Even if the URLs agree, it could still be a phishing attempt. If you get an e-mail purporting to be from your bank that asks you to follow a link and provide some account information, instead type your bank's URL in your browser directly, then log in to your account. If the message is legit, you should see a copy there.

Be Careful What You Say If you do click on a Web link or an e-mail link, use good judgment about providing information.

Simple common sense should tell you to be wary of any Web site that asks for any confidential information, such as your Social Security number, credit card number, bank account, or bank routing number. Triple-check the site URL before providing such data.

Beyond Front Row

If Apple's own media center isn't enough for you, try Plex **BY GINA TRAPANI**

OS X's Front Row interface is a fine choice for watching movies or TV episodes you've purchased at the iTunes Store. But if you want to play media from sources other than the iTunes Store, Front Row isn't much use. There's an alternative solution: a free, open-source media center application called Plex (www.plexapp.com). Though still in beta as of this writing (and suffering from some prerelease instability), Plex is extremely flexible and customizable—a media player for geeks.

Plex Home Screen Plex's home screen offers a main menu for navigation, the date and time, rotating images, a scrolling Apple news ticker, and weather or system information.

Plex versus Front Row

There are plenty of reasons to consider using Plex instead of Front Row. Among the more compelling:

> Plex can play back a wider range of video and audio file formats than Front Row, including AVI, MPEG files you've downloaded via BitTorrent, FLV Flash files you've downloaded from YouTube, and Ogg Vorbis audio files.

> Plex can play media streamed from shared network drives. That means you could host your video collection on an old Mac or Windows PC stashed somewhere out of the way, and still watch it on the Mac in your living room, office, or bedroom.

> Plex can play large video files that are split up and packed into archives—such as RAR or ZIP files you might download from Usenet—without requiring that you extract them first.

> Plex works with universal-remote controls, such as Logitech's Harmony controllers (www.logitech.com), as well as the Apple Remote.

> Plex has some handy informational widgets—a news ticker, a weather forecast, and system information—built in.

> Plex is more customizable than Front Row: you can add plug-in scripts to get features like YouTube integration, and install a custom skin to update its look-and-feel.

All that said, Plex isn't perfect. It can't play purchases from the iTunes Store. Its handling of photos from iPhoto is less than smooth. And the Apple TV can't play videos from your Plex libraries.

Those caveats aside, if you want to play videos you didn't get from the iTunes Store, Plex works great.

What You'll Need

To run Plex, you'll need an Intel-based Mac running Leopard. (The software does not run on PowerPC models or on Tiger.) You can use Plex either at your desk with a mouse and keyboard, or on a Mac-connected TV.

Plex can stream media from any other Mac (or Windows PC) on your home network, so the video files themselves can reside on any shared drive in the house. But the Mac running the Plex software itself still needs to be connected to the TV. (A Mac mini or a MacBook is best; you won't want an iMac or Mac Pro next to your TV.) And if you want to control Plex remotely from the couch, that Mac will have to be in the line of sight from your seat; next to the television is the best spot.

Finally, you'll need to download the latest release of Plex. Mount the Plex disk image, and then drag and drop Plex into your Applications folder.

Navigating Plex

When you first launch Plex, you'll come to its home screen, which includes the main menu; from there, you can select from Videos, Music, Pictures, Weather, and Scripts. You can use the mouse or your keyboard's up- and down-arrow keys to select any menu item.

To get started, you need to tell Plex where to find your media files. The

program maintains a list of Videos, Pictures, and Music sources—paths to folders located on an internal or external hard drive or on the local network. You can set up multiple sources in Plex—one for Jack's Movies, one for Jill's TV Shows, and one for the kids' cartoons. Each computer on your home network can have its own shared video folder where anyone can drop downloaded clips or save ripped DVDs.

To start watching a clip in your video collection, double-click on Videos, then click on Add Source to browse to the folder where it's stored. Once your video collection folder appears under Plex's Videos source list, simply double-click on it to browse the folder's contents and start watching any file.

You can use the mouse to drive Plex, but some actions (like going into full-screen mode for video playback) require a keyboard (see "Plex Keystrokes"). If you have a remote control, you'll need to use these keyboard shortcuts only during Plex's initial setup. After that, the buttons on your remote will offer a much more intuitive interface.

By default, videos show up in Plex as boring, generic icons—until you add DVD covers and album art. Plex can automatically download album art for music, DVD covers for movies, and even promo images for TV episodes from IMDb or any other source you choose.

To get DVD covers for your movie files, for example, browse to your Videos source list. Select the source folder and press **C** to invoke Plex's contextual menu. There, choose Set Content and, next to This Directory Contains, select Movies. In the art source list, choose where you want Plex to pull DVD art from. (I've had great success with IMDb.) Depending on how you've stored your video collection, you may want to select Use Folder Names For Lookups (if you've given folders movie or show titles) or Scan Recursively (if you've got subfolders of video clips). Click on OK. Depending on how big your collection is, you may have time to go get yourself a beverage.

Plex will now scan the folder for video files and, based on their file names, add cover art as well as cast and plot-summary information. (To see the director, plot summary, cast details, and trailer, select the video file, press **C** to invoke the contextual menu, and choose More Information.)

If you have TV episodes in your collection, follow the same process—except set This Directory Contains to TV Shows. In your music collection, select the source folder, press **C** to invoke the contextual menu, and choose Scan To Library. To get song information for any individual file, select it and press **I**.

Plex Cover Art Once Plex has downloaded DVD cover art and associated it with your video files, you can browse your collection of videos inside Plex as if it were a shelf of DVDs.

Plex Keystrokes

KEY	FUNCTION
arrow keys	Navigate menus
page up and page down	Scroll up and down
esc	Return to previous menu
backspace	Go back (or up) a directory
spacebar	Pause
tab	Minimize video
.	Move forward one track or chapter
,	Move back one track or chapter
\	Full-screen toggle
-	Volume down
+	Volume up
P	Play
F	Fast-forward
C	Contextual menu
R	Rewind
X	Stop
M	Player controls
S	Shut-down menu
I	Get info
Q	Queue item to current playlist
Z	Change aspect ratio

Do More with Plex

Plex's open architecture and the long history of XBMC, from which Plex was derived, mean that there are lots of useful scripts out there that can enhance the application. To view and install them, choose Scripts from Plex's home screen.

By default, Plex comes with Tetris and a YouTube script that browses and streams clips from the popular video-sharing site. To browse and install other plug-ins available for Plex, run the XBMCscripts script.

If you find Plex intriguing, keep an eye out for another Mac XBMC port called Boxee (boxee.tv), which adds social-networking features, such as the ability to share files and recommendations with your friends. Boxee is currently in private alpha testing.

Gina Trapani is the lead editor of Lifehacker (www.lifehacker.com) and the author of *Upgrade Your Life: The Lifehacker Guide to Working Smarter, Faster, Better* (Wiley, 2008).

Help Desk

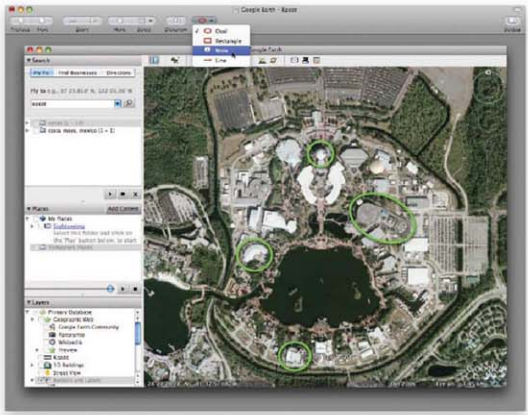
Mac OS X Hints

The insider tips you won't get from Apple **BY ROB GRIFFITHS**

Annotate Images in Preview

Leopard's version of Preview has some nice improvements, including more annotation capabilities for PDFs. But you can also annotate JPEGs, TIFFs, and other non-PDF images—useful for adding call-outs to a screenshot or pointing out locations on a map, for example. Unfortunately, Apple doesn't make this obvious: if you open an image in Preview and then navigate to Tools: Annotate, you'll find that all of the options are grayed out.

However, if you access this same feature via the toolbar, you suddenly become privy to these options. Select View: Customize Toolbar, and drag the Annotate button onto the toolbar. Open a JPEG, TIFF, PNG, or other image file, and then click on and hold that button to see a menu containing four types of annotations: oval, rectangle, note, and line. Select the tool you'd like to use, and then click and drag in the image file to add an annotation (see "Improve Your Image").



Improve Your Image Leopard's Preview lets you add annotations to images, such as these call-outs showing interesting places to visit at Walt Disney World's Epcot.

Have a Hint to Share?

Go to MacOSXHints.com to submit it. This column was based on tips from Martin Girschick, Andrey Kazak, Rault Kehlor and anonymous contributors. Each month, the author of our favorite tip receives the *Help Desk* mug.

If you're using one of the shape annotations, press the minus-sign (–) and equal-sign (=) keys to change the line thickness. Bring up the color picker (Tools: Show Colors) to alter the hue of a shape's outline. If you're working with the Note tool, the color picker changes the shade of the note's text. You can alter a note's text size using the minus- and equal-sign keys, or choose from the Fonts panel (Tools: Show Fonts).

Text-Selection Tricks

Every Mac user knows how to select text—just click, hold, and drag to highlight the desired characters. But did you know you can also select text by words or paragraphs?

To select text on a word-by-word basis, double-click and hold, and then start dragging (this works in nearly any program that involves text). As you move the mouse, you'll see entire words being added to your selection as soon as the cursor touches the first character in that word. If you've *really* got a lot of text to cover, try triple-clicking, holding, and dragging—this highlights entire paragraphs of text as you move the mouse.

MUG PHOTOGRAPHY BY PETER BELANGER; ICON BY PAUL HOWALT

POWER TIP OF THE MONTH

Quickly Access Log Files

Console (Applications: Utilities) shows you log files generated by OS X as well as by programs that run on it. As such, it can be one of the Mac's most useful troubleshooting tools, letting you find log entries generated for system activity (both routine and unforeseen).

Console not only displays the systemwide system.log file, but also shows logs from the top-level Library/Logs folder, your user account's Logs folder, and the hidden /var/log folder. Because these folders can contain a lot of log files, it can be hard to find the one you want. But if you're running Mac OS X 10.5, there's an easy way to find and browse specific log files.

Launch Console. If the list of logs is not visible in the left column, click on the Show Log List button in the toolbar. Next, find the log file you want to monitor, and drag it to the Finder. This creates an alias to that log file, which you can open directly by double-clicking on it. Creating aliases can be handy for quickly scanning certain logs, such as system.log, install.log (which tracks Software Update reports and the results of permission repairs), and mail.log (for debugging issues with Mail). For even quicker access, place aliases in the Dock, the sidebar, or the toolbar, or use Quick Look (see "Quick Look Log Files").

This trick generally works if the file name ends in *.log*. With other files, you can still drag them onto the desktop to create aliases, but you can't launch them directly from the Finder or view them in Quick Look. For instance, double-clicking on the CUPS access_log file alias from the Finder opens it in TextEdit, not in Console.

Quick Look Log Files In OS X 10.5, you can drag log files from the Console's sidebar to create aliases and then use Quick Look to easily check their contents.

Another way to highlight huge blocks of text is to click the mouse once where you want the selection to begin, hold down the shift key, and then click at the end of your selection. To capture a single word or paragraph in a document, double-click to highlight a word or triple-click to grab a whole paragraph.

Personalize the Media Browser Add your own folders, such as the Pictures folder, to the Media Browser.

Move Safari Bookmarks Bar Items

If you need to rearrange entries on your Safari bookmarks bar, you probably do so by simply dragging and dropping them. However, if you'd like to move an item *into* a folder on your bookmarks bar, you likely find yourself going to the Bookmarks pane (Bookmarks: Show All Bookmarks) and arranging things there.

There's an easier way: To move a bookmark or folder of bookmarks into another folder on the bar, hold down ⌘; click on the entry you'd like to move; and then drag it *vertically*, not horizontally. This pulls the selected item off the bookmarks bar. If you release the mouse button now, the item will disappear in a puff of smoke. But if you drag and drop it onto a folder in the bookmarks bar, the item should end up inside that folder—so much easier than dealing with the Bookmarks window.

Customize the Media Browser

One of the features of Apple's Pages ({♦♦♦}; macworld.com/3041), Numbers ({♦♦♦}; macworld.com/3042), and Keynote ({♦♦♦♦}; macworld.com/3043)—members of the $79 iWork suite—is an integrated Media Browser that appears when you click on the Media button in the toolbar (or choose View: Show Media Browser). The browser also appears in certain media-aware OS X 10.5 programs, such as Safari or TextEdit (select File: Open, and look for it in the Media section of the sidebar).

What the Media Browser displays depends on which program you're using and its media capabilities. In the iWork programs, the Media Browser has three tabs—Audio, Photos, and Movies—each one containing a file browser area at the top and a preview area at the bottom. In Safari, the Media section of the sidebar shows only Photos, while TextEdit's browser displays all three types (instead of Audio, it lists Music). However, you're

not stuck with the default locations that the Media Browser lists—you can add your own folders.

For the most part, appending folders to the Media Browser is as easy as dragging and dropping. In Safari or TextEdit, select File: Open and then click on one of the supported media types in the sidebar to display the Media Browser. Switch to the Finder, navigate to the folder *containing* the folder you'd like to add, and then drag and drop the target folder onto the top part of the Media Browser window.

The process is basically the same for iWork programs, except for one glitch: the Media Browser is a floating palette, and it vanishes when you switch to the Finder. But there is a workaround. Say you're using Keynote. Select the Media Browser tab that you want to modify and then switch to the Finder. Locate the folder you'd like to add, start dragging it, and press ⌘-tab to switch to Keynote. Once Keynote becomes active, your floating palettes will appear, and you can drop the folder onto the Media Browser. (You can use Exposé instead of ⌘-tab, if you prefer.)

To locate your new addition, scroll to the bottom of the Media Browser file list and look for an entry called Folders. Click on the triangle to the left to reveal the folder you just added (see "Personalize the Media Browser"). To delete that folder, control-click on it in the Media Browser and select Remove Folder from the contextual menu. To get rid of *everything* you've added, control-click on the Folders folder and select Remove Folders.

WHAT'S ONLINE

Create Multiple Zip Files Want to compress a bunch of files into separate zip archives? A simple Automator workflow lets you do just that (macworld.com/3853).

View 64-Bit Programs Use a Terminal command to see which programs on your Mac are already compiled for 64-bit CPUs (macworld.com/3854).

Quick Menu Access Learn how to activate items within certain drop-down menus using only the keyboard (macworld.com/3855).

OS X 101

Navigate System Preferences

Mac OS X's System Preferences is the heart of the operating system. That's where you'll find controls for everything from how your desktop appears to which users can log in to your machine. It's a program most of us use all the time, so it helps to know a few time-saving tricks to move quickly through it.

The groupings of the System Preferences panes can seem illogical. For instance, why is QuickTime in the Internet & Network section, and Spotlight in Personal? You can eliminate the categories completely by going to View: Organize Alphabetically. This lumps all of your preference panes together in alphabetical order. (To bring back the categories, select View: Organize By Categories.)

You can open a specific preference pane through the Dock. With System Preferences running, click and hold on its Dock icon, then select the pane you want.

My preferred method of opening preference panes quickly is via the keyboard. Launch System Preferences and then start typing the pane's name (for instance, *dis* for Displays or *sta* for Startup Disk). Once the one you want is highlighted, press the spacebar to open it. If you accidentally open the wrong one, you can quickly return to the main view by pressing ⌘-L, the shortcut for View: Show All Preferences.

If you can't remember which pane contains the setting you want to tweak, press ⌘-F and then enter what you'd like to find—for instance, *users* or *desktop*. The system will display matching commands as you type and highlight the panes where you can find those settings (see "Finding Panes"). Once you input a few letters, use the mouse or arrow key to select the entry you want from the drop-down menu.

Finding Panes Use the Spotlight search box to display panes related to the topic you're trying to find.

Review Trashed Files in Leopard

Even if you've trashed a file, there are times when you want to glance at it before emptying the Trash—just to confirm that yes, this is in fact the file you meant to throw away. Generally this involves dragging that file out of the Trash before you can view it, because the Mac OS doesn't let you double-click on a deleted document to open it.

Mac OS X 10.5 offers a simpler solution: Quick Look. Whenever you want to peek at a dumped file, open up the Trash, select the file, and then press the spacebar to check out its contents (assuming that the document is from a program that supports Quick Look previews). Now you can confirm that this is really the file you want to delete. If the document doesn't have a Quick Look preview, you'll have to resort to dragging it out of the Trash or use one of the methods described in "Open Files from the Trash" (macworld.com/3861).

Senior Editor **Rob Griffiths** runs the MacOSXHints.com Web site.

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Mac 911

Solutions to your most vexing Mac problems **BY CHRISTOPHER BREEN**

Sync iCal with MobileMe

Q: I've been trying to sync iCal with MobileMe, but the two calendars never agree—iCal shows three calendars, and MobileMe shows a dozen. How can I make them show the same information?

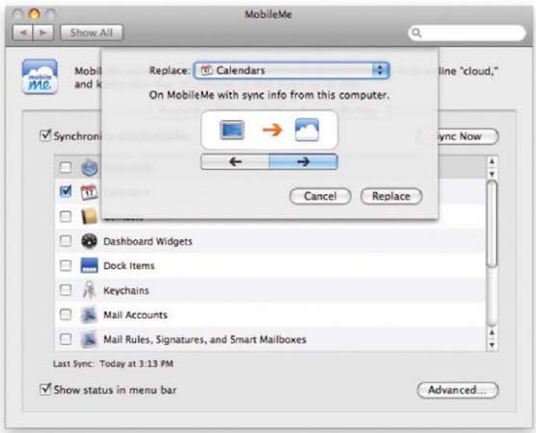
Dale Henderson

A: I had similar issues, and I believe it was because I'd used a variety of PIMs that also had access to my calendar information. Figuring that my Mac and MobileMe were confused about which data to use, I decided to start with a clean slate. Try what I did.

Export all the iCal calendars you want to sync with MobileMe by selecting each in turn and choosing File: Export In iCal. Ideally you'd copy these calendars to another computer, one that is untouched by other utilities that access event data, and import the calendars into iCal.

Open MobileMe's preference pane on the other Mac. Click on the Advanced button, click on Reset Sync Data in the sheet that appears, choose Calendars from the pop-up menu that appears in the Sync Direction sheet, click on the right arrow—which indicates that any data on MobileMe should be replaced by the data on this computer—and click on Replace (see "Reset MobileMe Data").

After the sync has concluded, travel to your MobileMe page and click on the Calendar entry. With luck, iCal and MobileMe will be in sync. Now return to the original Mac and open its MobileMe preference pane. Reset the sync data for that Mac, and set the preferences to replace the calendar data on it with the contents of MobileMe.



Reset MobileMe Data Resetting your sync data and then replacing the data on MobileMe can help clear up calendar confusion.

Have a problem?
Go to the Mac 911 forum (macworld.com/2467) for help with your misbehaving Mac or applications.

Tracking Changes after the Fact

Q: I spent half an hour working on a Word document, and I forgot to switch on Track Changes. Is there a way to track changes after I've begun work?

Claire Hamilton

A: With the document you've edited active, choose Tools: Track Changes: Compare Documents. In the Choose A File dialog box that appears, navigate to the original unedited document and click on Open. A new document will appear with every change made between the two documents highlighted or, in Print Layout view, commented. All you have to do now is work on that new document and choose Tools: Track Changes: Highlight Changes. Make sure the Track Changes While Editing option is enabled so that any new changes are also tracked.

Delete Massive iDisk Files

Q: My Mac mini alerted me that my hard drive was almost full, and I couldn't figure out how I had accumulated anything close to 55GB of junk. I found a folder named Mirrors in my user library

folder. Nested inside was a disk image file (.dmg) that was more than 15GB in size. Its name matched my .Mac user name, and the file appeared to have been modified recently. Any thoughts on its origin, and do you think it's safe to delete the file to free up hard-drive space?

Richard Graham

A: Your suspicions are correct. That file is an artifact of the way the .Mac iDisk Sync feature used to work. When you switched iDisk Sync on, it created a local copy of your iDisk on your hard drive in the location you mention, *yourusername*/Library/Mirrors. Currently, under Leopard and MobileMe, the disk image is no longer stored in the Mirrors folder. Instead, when you turn off iDisk Sync, you'll see a disk image on your desktop named Previous Local iDisk For *yourusername*.sparsebundle. Double-click on this image to mount a copy of the iDisk that iDisk Sync created before you last turned it off.

If you're using Leopard, the size of that copy should be close to the amount of space taken up on your iDisk in the cloud. If this copy was created under OS X 10.4 or 10.3, however, it will be the size of your entire iDisk and a bit more—so if your iDisk was 10GB, its size on your Mac will be around 12GB.

As for deletion, feel free to switch iDisk Sync off and then toss the disk image. If you see a warning that the file is busy when you try to empty the Trash, log out and back in again, and then empty the Trash.

Troubleshoot Microsoft AutoUpdate

Q: The Microsoft AutoUpdate application appeared this morning and told me that the Office 2008 12.1.1 Update was available. I told AutoUpdate to retrieve it, and after it did, it tried to install the update. But it locked up during the installation, and I had to force-quit the installer. I'd like to try installing again, but I can't find the update or the Microsoft AutoUpdate application. Can you tell me where they might be?

Tim Phelps

A: Microsoft has tucked the Microsoft AutoUpdate out of the view of Spotlight, which is likely why you haven't been able to find it. You can find it by following this path: *yourstartupdrive*/Library/Application Support/Microsoft/MAU2.0. Inside the MAU2.0 folder, you'll find Microsoft AutoUpdate. After you download the update, you'll find it by following this path: *youruserfolder*/Library/Caches/TemporaryItems/16807Office 2008 12.1.1 Update.

The "Temporary" in TemporaryItems should give you a clue as to what happened. In all likelihood, when you bailed from the Installer application, the update package vanished because it was intended for temporary use only. The next time you run AutoUpdate (now that you know where it is), it's possible that it will download that update again.

You don't need to dig for the application. Instead, from any open Office application, choose Check For Updates from the Help menu. This launches AutoUpdate. Note that if an update is available, you'll have to then quit any running Office applications because the installer won't quit them for you before performing the installation.

Give the update more time to install than your typical Apple update takes. I updated both my Mac Pro and MacBook Pro with this thing, and it was really

Bugs & Fixes BY TED LANDAU

MobileMe-to-iPhone Sync Problems If, after you set up MobileMe, none of your calendar changes on the MobileMe Web site are being pushed to your iPhone, try this fix: delete and reinstate your MobileMe account on the iPhone (go to Settings: Mail, Contacts And Calendars). If you previously set up a .Mac account on your iPhone that was converted to MobileMe, be sure to start with this step rather than trying an assortment of other potential fixes first. It costs little in time and hassle, and it's a cure-all for a variety of MobileMe-to-iPhone symptoms.

Frozen iChat A few iSight users may experience issues with their iChat freezing suddenly. To find out what's causing the problem, launch Console and see if there's a message reporting a missing item named iSightAudio.plugin, usually located in the /Library/Audio/Plug-Ins/HAL. If so, the easy fix is to simply unplug your iSight camera. A more permanent solution is to locate the missing file and reinstall it. If you have access to another Mac, check to see if it has the iSight file and copy it onto the problem Mac (preferably, both Macs should have the same version of OS X). If you use Time Machine or another backup utility, you can also see if the file is stored in your backup. Or you can reinstall it from your original Leopard Install DVD using an extractor program such as the $20 Pacifist (www.charlessoft.com). To use Pacifist, make invisible files temporarily visible in the Finder (using a program such as TinkerTool), then go to the System/Installation/Packages folder on the DVD, and open the Essentials.pkg file in Pacifist. Finally, locate the iSightAudio.plugin listing, and click on the Install button in the Pacifist toolbar.

Not-So-Smart Drives When you insert a U3 Smart flash drive into a Windows machine, it temporarily takes over the PC, allowing you to open documents you've stored on the drive using the included Windows-only software. Unfortunately, this feature doesn't work on Macs. But you can still use the device as a regular flash drive, although you may want to first reformat it using a Mac partition. To do this, launch Disk Utility, click on the drive's Partition button, and repartition the drive using the Mac OS Extended (Journaled) format and the Apple Partition Map option. A small partition will remain read-only. If you need to free up the whole drive, follow the instructions at macworld.com/3859.

Senior Contributor **Ted Landau** is the founder of MacFixIt (www.macfixit.com). Share your problems at bugs@macworld.com or on Macworld.com's Mac 911 forum.

ICONS BY PAUL HOWALT

poky. I had a good dose of the spinning beach ball after I selected my startup drive. It eventually went away, and I was allowed to continue with the installation.

If AutoUpdate isn't doing the job and you continue losing the package file that it downloads, go to macworld.com/3862 and download the update directly. Alternatively, you can pull a copy from the TemporaryItems folder before that update gets vaporized.

MacBook Pro and the Dead Battery

Q: Recently my MacBook Pro has been behaving strangely. I charge the battery overnight, yet the battery menu constantly flickers between estimating a fully charged state and telling me the battery isn't charging. When my laptop is running from battery power, the readout shows that it's about half full and then the computer shuts off abruptly. Any idea what's going on?

Bill Grant

A: It's quite likely that you have a bad battery. From the Apple menu, choose About This Mac and then click on the More Info button in the resulting window. When System Profiler appears, select the Power entry and eyeball the Health Information entry (see "Health Department"). If next to Condition it says "Check Battery," then your battery is probably on the fritz. (Note that the Condition entry is only in the Leopard version of System Profiler.)

Fortunately these batteries are under an extended replacement program, because they're defective. Apple has a page (macworld.com/3858) that outlines the symptoms a defective battery might exhibit and offers a link to a software update that can fix some battery issues. If the software fix doesn't work, you should follow the document's advice and contact Apple about having the battery replaced.

Health Information:	
Cycle count:	6
Condition:	Good
Battery Installed:	Yes
Amperage (mA):	0
Voltage (mV):	12421

Health Department Using Leopard's System Profiler, you can learn about the condition of your laptop's battery.

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Keep the Kids Busy and Happy

Parents with young children understand that there comes a point when you'll do anything—*anything*—to occupy a child's time while you tackle a task that you can't possibly accomplish with a four-year-old clinging to your calf. Here are some technological tools that can help.

Photo Booth You've likely matured to the point where making silly faces into a camera that gives a fun-house-mirror perspective isn't a big thrill, but your kids haven't. An iSight-equipped Mac with a copy of Photo Booth will keep many kids occupied for hours.

Your Old iPhone When you traded up from your original iPhone to an iPhone 3G, Apple handed back what is mostly an iPod touch. Your old iPhone has a built-in speaker, making it the perfect compact entertainment device for tossing a favorite movie or TV episode at your child. And since it's deactivated, your kid can't dial out.

iPod with Speaker If you don't have an old iPhone, you can still provide some portable video pleasure to your child with an iPod add-on speaker system such as Digifocus's $60 Pocket Hi-Fi for iPod (digifocusgroup.com) and iFrogz's $15 Nano Audiowrapz for the 3G iPod nano (ifrogz.com; see "Audiowrapz 3G nano Case"). The former is a small speaker system that connects to a video iPod's Dock connector. The latter is a case for the 3G iPod nano that includes a built-in speaker system.

Audiowrapz 3G Nano Case A 3G iPod nano equipped with the speaker-bearing Audiowrapz case can help keep a child out of trouble.

Print from Quick Look

Q: I love Leopard's Quick Look feature. Is there any way to use Quick Look to peek at a file, without opening it, and print it from the Finder?

Brian Gall

A: You can sort of do this, but there's a bump along the way. You can select an item in the Finder, press the spacebar, and get your quick look—but pressing ⌘-P does nothing. If you mouse over to the Finder's File menu, however, you'll find that you can invoke the Print command for printable files.

The bump is that when you do this, the file's host application launches and the file then prints from your Mac's default printer. So technically, you are opening it. But you're doing so and printing it without a nagging Print dialog box getting in the way. We'll count that as a time-saver and therefore put it in the win column.

You can do the same kind of thing by creating a desktop printer. Just open the Print & Fax preference pane, select a printer you'd like to print from, and drag it to the desktop. This is Leopard's scheme for creating a desktop printer. When you want to print a file quickly in the Finder, just drop it on top of the printer icon. For most documents, as with the previous technique, the host application opens and the file prints. The exception is PDF files; click on one of these, and only the print window opens, not the host application (Preview or Acrobat).

Senior Editor **Christopher Breen** is the author of *The iPod and iTunes Pocket Guide*, third edition, and *The iPhone Pocket Guide*, third edition (Peachpit Press, 2008).

ICON BY PAUL HOWALT

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320GB	7200RPM	16MB	$149.99	$147.99	$119.99
500GB	7200RPM	16MB	$165.99	$162.99	$135.99
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500GB	7200RPM	16MB	$149.99	$169.99
750GB	7200RPM	32MB	$199.99	$219.99
1.0TB	7200RPM	32MB	$239.99	$259.99
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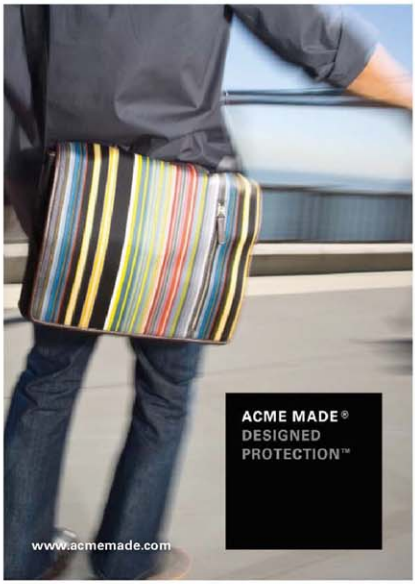

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The Evolution of the Family Mac

Apple hasn't made a big deal of it, but suddenly the Mac really is family-friendly

Back in the 1990s, in one of its many vain attempts to try to explain what made the Mac such an approachable computer, Apple presented a series of ads featuring the fictional Reardon family.

The ads showed Mom paying the family bills with the aid of a spreadsheet. The two kids did their schoolwork. Lovable old Grandpa operated a graphics application and printer. Then there was the dim sitcom Dad, who was never allowed anywhere near the family Performa. Apparently, placing him within 40 feet of the thing would have reinforced the stereotype that computers were for men only.

I was thinking about those ads while working on this month's feature story about how to make your Mac child-safe ("The Kid-Safe Mac," page 68). It occurred to me just how far Apple has come since those old ads ran. Sure, you could do household accounts and homework, draw pictures, and play a few games on the Mac back then. But separate user accounts, parental controls, simple networking, and other features that make the Mac truly family-friendly? They simply weren't there yet.

The Mac Family

To take just one example, here's how my family uses our home Macs today:

Mom My wife is a crackerjack technology editor who has no personal interest in technology for its own sake. That said, she's the curator of the family history. As such, she takes it upon herself to grab the family cameras on a weekly basis, jack them into her iMac, suck the images into iPhoto, tweak the images she wants to keep or distribute, and upload the print-worthy results to Snapfish.

She's also the one who, while waiting to pick up our daughter at school, grabs e-mail on her iPhone and calls up directions for the day's play date in Maps. She keeps the family calendar, published in iCal and subscribed to by yours truly. When it's pizza-and-TV night, she's the one who suggests I check the Apple TV and see if the iTunes Store has any new kids' movies.

Daughter When it comes to raising our daughter, we tend to be old-fashioned—friends, books, and outdoors, good; activities centered on staring endlessly at a glowing screen, bad. Which is not to say we completely ban her from using the Mac; we're just judicious about it.

For example, when there's a word she doesn't know or a subject we're discussing that interests her, we head for the Mac, not the bookshelf. "Google" has been part of her vocabulary from the age of two and a half.

Because of the TiVo and Apple TV, when she saw her first television commercial at age four, she demanded—as haughtily as one can at the age of four—"What's *that*!?" Now, at age seven, she can easily navigate the Apple TV's interface, pick out her shows, and move to the Apple Store to look for appropriate rentals and previews.

Without fanfare or hype, our Macs, iPhones, iPods, and Apple TV have become members of the family.

When she wants something more participatory, she grabs the Wacom tablet and unleashes her inner Mary Cassatt with Kid Pix Deluxe 3X and ArtRage 2. On long car trips, *The Wizard of Oz*, *Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory*, *Curse of the Were-Rabbit*, and my iPhone are her steadfast companions.

Grandma My mother came to computing late in life, and while she's great at e-mail, word processing, and surfing the Web, her troubleshooting skills extend only as far as speed-dialing my number. It's for this reason that I've installed Leopard on her iMac and set her up with an AIM account. Since I've done this, all she needs to do is call me, accept my offer to share her screen, and step away from the computer while I fix whatever's wrong. "This," she says, "is amazing. You should write about it."

Dad OK, that would be me. Because of the work I do, I've got Macs scattered throughout the house. One of the most important is the old PowerBook G4 planted on the kitchen counter. That's the computer I use to look up recipes, check movie times, browse the menus of local eateries, and stream dinnertime background music from the Rhapsody music service to the living room speakers.

Unlike the Reardons', our family's Macs aren't miracle-working hunks of technology sitting on pedestals in the den or kitchen. Without fanfare, without hype, without a sitcom family to sit before them in awe, our Macs—and our iPhones, iPods, and Apple TV—have become members of the family.

Christopher Breen is a senior editor for *Macworld*.

PHOTOGRAPHY BY PETER BELANGER

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