

printout

Keystone MacCentral Macintosh Users Group ♦ <http://www.keystonemac.com>



iDVD Training

You spoke and we listened. After viewing part of the training video on iWeb in February, members were asked if they wanted to continue with the balance of that video or watch the video on iDVD. The consensus of members was to learn iDVD. That portion of the training video can be completed in one session. If you want to learn the basics as well as some advanced features of iDVD, please come to the March meeting of Keystone MacCentral. 🍎

Meet us at

Gannett Fleming

Gannett West Building
209 Senate Ave ♦ Camp Hill

Tuesday, March 20, 2007, 6:30 p.m.

Attendance is free and open to all interested persons.

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Keystone MacCentral is a not-for-profit group of Macintosh enthusiasts who generally meet the third Tuesday of every month to exchange information, participate in question-and-answer sessions, view product demonstrations, and obtain resource materials that will help them get the most out of their computer systems. Meetings are free and open to the public. The *Keystone MacCentral Printout* is the official newsletter of Keystone MacCentral and an independent publication not affiliated or otherwise associated with or sponsored or sanctioned by any for-profit organization, including Apple Computer, Inc. Copyright © 2007, Keystone MacCentral, 305 Somerset Drive, Shiresmanstown, PA 17011.

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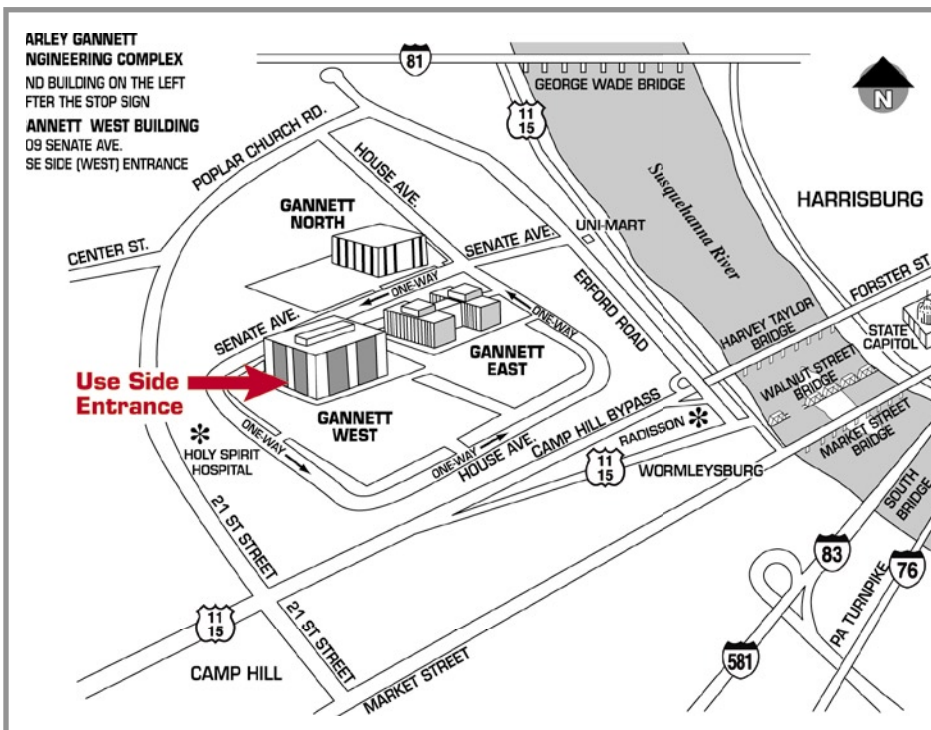
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Keystone MacCentral Essentials

Meeting Place

Gannett West
209 Senate Avenue
Camp Hill

Web Site

<http://www.keystonemac.com>

Mailing Address

305 Somerset Drive
Shiresmanstown, PA 17011

President's Corner

Whether you are a home user who wants to start your own blog or web-cast or a teacher like me who wants to get students involved in podcasting and blogging, the book *Podcasting and Blogging with GarageBand and iWeb* by Robin Williams and John Tollett is a good way to get started. Published by Peachpit Press in 2007, *Podcasting ...* offers clear instructions that will enable anyone to succeed with podcasting or blogging projects.

You may now be saying, "What are podcasting and blogging and why would I want to get involved with them?" If so, read Chapter 1 of Williams' book and you will not only learn what they are but also what you will need to get started creating your own. If you wish to learn more before joining the online publishing parade, you will also discover where to find others' blogs and podcasts. Here, you can learn about subjects as diverse as community pages for senior citizens' centers to Macintosh computers to online marketing etc.

In fact, if you have a hobby or interest, there is bound to be a podcast or blog about it, and Chapter 1 will show you how to find other enthusiasts' podcasts and subscribe to them. These podcasts can be strictly for fun, helpful information about a vacation destination, or primarily educational. For example, a math teacher at Red Land has her lessons available in podcast form so her students can preview the work before the actual class or review it afterwards if they were absent or need more help. As an English oriented person, being able to watch the teacher go through and explain hard math problems again and again until

I understood the operations would certainly have come in handy!



Our February program at KeyMac was iWeb, but if you missed it, Chapter 2 of *Podcasting...* will teach you how to build your website using iWeb and then post it online with or without a password so it is restricted only to those with whom you wish to share it, such as a site for family photos, or a site that is available to everyone. And, if you created a site while learning how to use iWeb and now want to eliminate your beginning efforts so you can start over with your new, more professional skills, you will learn how easy it is to do just that.

Chapter 3 covers blogging in detail, with easy to follow steps so you can create your own web log aka blog (think of it as an online journal) with ease.

Chapters 4,5,6, 7, and 8 cover podcasting from the beginning steps of

organizing your photos, songs and iMovies, to recording your podcast, to editing and remixing your podcast to improve its overall quality.

Chapter 7 shows you how to add your podcast to your iWeb site while Chapter 8 teaches you how to publish your podcast to your .Mac account or to another site if you don't have a .Mac account and how to update or refresh the pages as needed. Chapter 8 also offers helpful tips such as adding your podcast to iTunes or removing it if you have changed your mind, subscribing to RSS feeds etc.

Chapter 9 teaches you how to advertise your podcast to the world if you want to do so or how to limit it to your family, your workplace, your club etc.

Once you have learned all you need to know to get started, check out Chapter 10 for advanced tips on recording with multiple microphones, updating your iWeb site from another computer and adding video to GarageBand etc.

At a cost of only \$19.99, minus the user group discount offered by Peachpit Press, *Podcasting and Blogging with GarageBand and iWeb* by Robin Williams and John Tollett is a valuable resource for all interested individuals. By the way, for you teachers out there, *Podcasting....* would be an excellent softcover textbook for introductory media classes because Williams, as always, provides clear step by step instructions for each topic in a flowing, easy to understand style.

I hope this review will inspire you to learn more about using your Mac and that you will join us at our March 20 meeting! 📺

Keystone MacCentral Minutes

February 20, 2007

Business Meeting

President Linda Cober began the business meeting by relaying information from Newsletter Editor Tim Sullivan who was unable to attend. Tim referred us all to the article he had included in the February newsletter on the changes being made to Daylight Savings Time this year. At the time that article was written, Apple had released an update that only worked with Mac OS X 10.4.8. Tim wanted to remind us that any manual changes would have to be made to our Date & Time preference panes on March 11 and April 1, and then again on October 28 and November 4. Apple was expected to have other updates available for other versions of the OS.

Eric Adams reported receiving an e-mail about an item from the last auction regarding a minor problem which he was able to resolve for the buyer. Linda Smith's original widget pick of the month for February was removed from the server, so she announced a substitute pick. That widget is a MacDailyNews widget which can help keep you informed of the latest happenings in the world of the Mac.

Linda Cober related a story of how something once posted on the internet has staying power. Nasty things posted can come back to haunt you, even years later, and could have negative effects on a college application or a job search. That story started us discussing RSS feeds.

Q&A & Comments

We navigated to the Google Alerts section to see how to track a particular story or term. Once an alert is set up, you are required to respond to an e-mail from Google so that the alerts can be sent to your e-mail account on a schedule you select. Eric Adams asked how to prevent a web page from being searched by the major search sites. Linda Smith told him that there is a way to prevent spiders and robots from caching a page. While on that topic, we also visited the archive.org site to view the Wayback Machine. That site caches web pages going back a few years. We looked at the Keystone MacCentral web site of several years ago.

We got a report from one of our members that he had introduced a MacBook Pro into his PC-centric company. He still needs to run some PC programs so he installed Parallels Desktop. He described the process as less than intuitive but he had all of the programs he needed up and running in two weeks. We hope to have a program on Parallels Desktop in April.

A router problem with Embarq DSL service was described. The two wire router was not recognized initially by the iMac on the network. The sign-on routine always requested an admin password, regardless of the user seeking access. Jim Carey said this would have been caused by the router software so those settings should be checked. Eric Adams asked about installing an SATA internal drive in a Mac Pro tower and was told that no special considerations would be

necessary. Gary Brandt asked if there was anything he could do to speed up slow mouse and keyboard response in iTunes. Jim Carey suggested installing more memory. Abigail Schearer had a question about e-mail attachments. Attachments are handled in several different ways, depending on the e-mail program's settings. The safest setting would be to disallow opening images or attachments within an e-mail.

Program Notes

For our February program, we viewed a DVD from the Digital Media Training Series. We watched the Inside iLife '06 section on iWeb. Creating a site and publishing it to your .mac account is the default option for iWeb but other upload options are available. You begin by choosing a template, with the major themes presented on the left side of the template browser and the six individual page types for a chosen theme on the right side. Pages of different themes can be included in one site if you prefer but the purpose of a theme is to unify the look of our site.


Once a page is chosen, it appears in the site organizer window. A toolbar appears at the bottom of the window for basic controls. A media browser, adjustment palettes, and inspector palettes are included in iWeb. The site inspector is used to reorder pages within a site. Pages will appear in red if they have been edited but not saved or published. As pages are added to a site, iWeb creates and updates a navigation bar at the top of each page listing the page names. You can prevent a particular page from appearing

in the navigation menu by using the appropriate check box in the page inspector. Page names can be edited in the inspector or by double clicking on the page name in the site inspector. The narrator Todd offered a tip that it might be best to avoid spaces in site names created with iWeb.

You can work on more than one site at a time in iWeb. They will all be listed in the site inspector. The blog page template has two sections, entries and archives. We did not get a chance to view that far into the video, but the archives section would allow past entries to be removed to another page so the entries page did not get too large. A podcast template page works in the same manner. The template pages have placeholder images and text sections. Standard Mac drag and drop and editing techniques work with these placeholders. When moving objects in iWeb, a blue line appears that acts as a centering guide. In his demonstration, Todd placed a picture on his demo site and demonstrated the reflection setting for pictures. Dragging photos from iWeb's media browser is probably a little easier than dragging them from the Finder.

Text editing works as expected and text wrap around images can be done as Todd showed. He used Option-Space to fix up his text wrap where needed. Option-Space creates an unbreakable space. Objects or text can be set to be hyperlinks, either internal or external.

There are some included options in iWeb. Its Insert menu can add a "Made on a Mac" logo, an "E-mail Me" link, or a hit counter. The e-mail me link works only with a .mac e-mail address. You can make text or an object into a hyperlink to link to a different e-mail account.

We skipped to the publishing section due to time constraints. Although set up to publish to a .mac account, iWeb has other options. Sites can be published to a folder from iWeb. An FTP application would then be used to upload that site to the location you choose. 

By Fred Showker

Will Your Internet Be Taxed?

Not if these representatives have anything to do with it...

While the debate on "Net Neutrality" rages on, there are yet a few legislators concentrating on real issues surrounding the internet and the web.

Permanent Internet Tax Freedom Act

On January 31 Congressional Internet Caucus Co-Chairs Bob Goodlatte (R-VA) and Rick Boucher (D-VA) joined Representative Anna Eshoo (D-CA) in introducing the Permanent Internet Tax Freedom Act. This bipartisan legislation was introduced with over 30 cosponsors.

The Internet Tax Fairness Act of 1998 created a moratorium on state and local Internet access taxes and multiple and discriminatory taxes on e-commerce. As a result of this moratorium, the Internet has remained relatively free from the burdens of new taxes. The moratorium has been extended on numerous occasions. However, without further action by Congress, the moratorium will sunset in November 2007, subjecting the Internet to possible taxation from more than 7,500 taxing jurisdictions.

The Permanent Internet Tax Freedom Act ensures that the Internet remains free from restrictive taxation by making the tax moratorium permanent.

"I have long supported efforts to eliminate Internet access taxes and other discriminatory taxes on electronic commerce. Such taxation would create onerous and unfair burdens on industry, hinder technological development, and slow economic growth," said Goodlatte. "Ultimately this legislation will help facilitate growth and job creation throughout the nation."

"This important measure will preserve consumer choice and the openness which has characterized the Internet to date by permanently eliminating potential Internet access taxes," said Boucher. The moratoriums previously enacted by Congress have contributed greatly to the expansion of Internet access and online innovation, and it is highly appropriate to act now to ensure that future growth is not stifled."

Excessive taxation and regulation will hamper the Internet's tremendous growth and stifle investment in small businesses that utilize this tremendous medium. In addition, the last thing that consumers need is for the puzzling array of state and local taxes on their phone bills to be repeated on their Internet service bills. In addition, taxing Internet access will increase the costs of households going on-line and result in a greater disparity between those households that can afford to go on-line and those that cannot.

The Permanent Internet Tax Freedom Act will encourage continued investment in and utilization of the Internet by permanently banning state and local Internet access taxes. This legislation is forward-looking and will provide the certainty that businesses need to make calculated decisions regarding the ways in which they will utilize and invest in Internet technologies.

The Permanent Internet Tax Freedom Act has been referred to the House Committee on the Judiciary, on which Reps. Goodlatte and Boucher serve. Companion legislation has been introduced in the Senate by Senators Wyden, McCain, Leahy, and Sununu.

From the User Group Network News Service at <http://www.user-groups.net/> 

by Glenn Fleishman
<glenn@tidbits.com>

Apple and Cisco Reach iPhone Agreement


Apple and Cisco have reached an agreement on the use of the iPhone name. Cisco surprised the Mac world when their Linksys division released and rebranded a variety of Internet Protocol (IP) phones under the name iPhone in December 2006. Cisco had acquired the trademark via a company they purchased in 2000, and claimed to own the term in the realm of phones. The iPhone name was widely rumored for years to be attached to a project of Apple's devising.

Then, Apple likewise surprised everyone by announcing an iPhone at Macworld Expo in January 2007.

Almost immediately, Cisco filed a lawsuit, saying that it had been in negotiations over Apple's use of the name and asserting its rights. Apple called the lawsuit "silly."

Both parties entered into settlement talks quickly. The agreement announced on 21-Feb-07 states that both parties recognize trademark rights that have been granted, and both can use the iPhone trademark on their products worldwide. Both Apple and Cisco will dismiss all legal actions against each other, and will work on interoperability, without any specific agreements.

No mention of actual cash money was mentioned, and it's entirely possible none was involved. This is pure speculation, but Cisco may have used the opportunity to force a bit more light into Apple's crevices to achieve better compatibility for its wide array of consumer and corporate gear, which could benefit its customers and bottom line.

What this deal means is that Apple's iPhone gets to be the Apple iPhone, although, due to the vagaries of how trademarks work, we might see it more commonly called - at least by Apple - "the Apple iPhone cell phone, music player, and Internet communicator." 

By Bill Davies

Take Note: Intel Macs Sport New Disk Partitioning Scheme

(Editor's Note: This is an abridged version of an Apple technical note. The full article may be found at <http://developer.apple.com/technotes/tn2006/tn2166.html>)

Apple's previous disk partitioning scheme, known as Apple partition map (APM), was introduced with the Macintosh II in 1987. The scheme was very well designed, and it survived, with very few changes, for almost twenty years.

However, in recent years APM's limitations have been looming on the horizon. Specifically, APM is restricted to 32-bits worth of blocks. With a standard block size of 512 bytes, this translates to a maximum disk size of

2 TB. With the rate that hard disks are growing, it's easy to imagine a typical desktop computer shipping with more than 2 TB of storage in the next few years.

Apple did consider extending APM to support larger disks. However, as such a change would break all existing partitioning tools, it was just as convenient to switch to an entirely new partitioning scheme. After some serious thought, Apple decided to adopt GPT.

The GUID partition table (GPT) partitioning scheme was introduced by Intel as part of an effort to introduce more modern firmware to generic PC

hardware. Traditional PC hardware uses BIOS firmware, which uses a partitioning scheme known as master boot record (MBR). MBR has lots of severe limitations, and is not appropriate for a modern computer. Intel's modern firmware, known as the Extensible Firmware Interface (EFI), includes a new partitioning scheme, GPT. (Note: To date, no other large PC manufacturer has adopted Intel's EFI technology. They continue to use legacy BIOS firmware. Windows Vista supports EFI, although it remains unclear whether the Dells and Lenovos of the world will design new motherboards that support EFI.)

One of the nice features about GPT is that it is defined by a formal standard. Specifically, GPT is defined by the following documents:

- Section 11.2.2 of “Extensible Firmware Interface Specification”, version 1.1, available from Intel
- Chapter 5 “GUID Partition Table (GPT) Format” of the “Unified Extensible Firmware Interface Specification”, version 2.0, available from the Unified EFI Forum

GLOSSARY – COMPONENTS OF GPT

What are the building blocks of this new partitioning scheme?

The protective MBR is an MBR that defines a single partition entry that covers the entire area of the disk used by GPT structures and partitions. It is designed to prevent GPT-unaware programs from accidentally modifying a GPT disk. A GPT-unaware program sees the GPT disk as an MBR disk with a single, unknown partition. In a way, this is like the HFS wrapper around an HFS Plus disk.

The partition table header is a structure that defines various aspects of the disk, including a GUID to uniquely identify the disk, the starting block of the partition entry array, and the size of each partition entry in that array.

The partition entry array is an array of partition entries, each of which defines a partition (or is all zero, indicating that the entry is not in use). The array is stored in a contiguous range of blocks on disk, which is treated as an array of bytes. The first partition entry starts at the first byte of the array, the next partition entry follows immediately after that, and so on. The size of these entries is given by a field in the partition table header.

Each partition entry contains a GUID to uniquely identify the partition itself, a GUID to identify the partition type, the start and end block of the partition, and the partition name.

HOW THIS AFFECTS THE USER

Any Macintosh computer running Mac OS X 10.4 and later can mount GPT-partitioned disks. Intel-based Macintosh computers can boot from GPT. By default, the internal hard disk is formatted as GPT. So if you buy an Intel Mac, you have this partitioning scheme.

Users have to watch out for third-party software that doesn't properly follow Apple's specifications for the partitioning scheme. For example, a product that copies data from one disk to another must be carefully rewritten when doing a block-for-block copy of a GPT disk. The GUID in the partition table header that identifies the disk (and the GUIDs in each partition entry) are meant to be globally unique, and Apple's system software relies on this feature. As stated in Apple's tech note, “Failure to comply with this recommendation may result in the loss of user data.” Thus if the software tries to block copy a disk, the developer should consider whether it's appropriate to set these GUIDs to new values. For example:

- If block copying a disk for the purposes of backup (that is, the copy is stored offline and can only ever be restored on top of the original), the software should not update the GUIDs in the GPT. That way, when the software is used to restore the disk, it is completely identical to the original.
- On the other hand, if the software is asked to duplicate the disk (that is, copying the contents of one disk to another), the software must be properly rewritten to update the GUIDs in the GPT. That way the system will

see the original and the copy as different disks.

If the software developer does not follow this advice, the end user may encounter weird problems. For example, if the user duplicates a disk without updating the GUIDs, the computer might boot from either the original or the copy in an unpredictable fashion (perhaps toggling from boot to boot). So the bottom line here is to get the latest version of whatever disk utility or disk cloning software you're using, and make sure the developer has followed the Apple guidelines by carefully watching how your computer behaves after you run the software. Do some tests before you have a disk problem and see if things look OK. And if their software is buggy, complain, complain, complain after you backup, backup, backup!

SIDEBAR

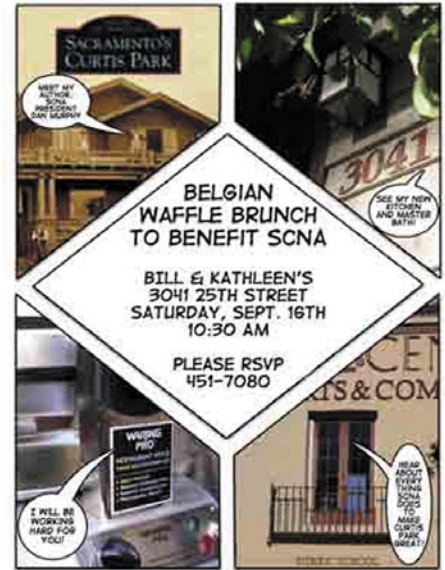
A common question floating around MacNexus these days is whether the preeminent disk utilities such as Disk Warrior will work on the new Intel Macs. The simple answer is that these disk utilities need to be re-written. Do not use them until you obtain a re-written version!!! Alsoft has given no timetable for DiskWarrior although it is a safe bet they will be showing an Intel version at MacWorld Expo in January 2007. Micromat claims support for the new partition scheme in TechTool 4.5.1 as of November 1, 2006. User success with TechTool has been spotty, and some users have scrambled their disk directory so badly that they have lost data. Other users report no problems. Micromat ships TechTool 4.5.2 on a bootable DVD that can boot all the latest Macs. Ideally you should back up your drive before running one of these utilities, although if your disk has disappeared, and your computer won't boot, that isn't always an option. 🗑️

Comic Life Is For More Than Comics

A product bundled with all new consumer Macs in 2006 is a little application called ComicLife. At first I dismissed this product as a gimmick application with little value to me, but then one day I decided to try playing with it.

I'm here to report that ComicLife is addicting. And I'm not using it to make comics. For anyone who needs to make a single-page flyer that contains a lot of graphics, ComicLife is just about the perfect tool. You can

start by choosing a template, which contains panes just like you would see in a comic book. The twist here is that each of those panes on the page can receive a graphic just by dragging a graphic on top of it. So literally you can choose a template with five panes, drag a picture to each of the five panes, the graphic wraps inside of each pane and automatically crops itself. Then you add some text by dragging out a text box, and you're done.



Can you do more professional fliers in InDesign or perhaps Pages? Maybe, but for me, I don't need or want a \$600 program just to make a simple flier. And ComicLife is so completely Mac-like, letting me just drag in my graphics or pull them in from my iPhoto library. (You can also capture from your iSight camera.) I don't have to go to the menu and "insert" a graphic or object. I don't have to crop it first in Photoshop. It all just works so seamlessly. (I should add that ComicLife does do multi-page layouts if you do want to write a comic book, but I'm happy just using it for fliers.)

ComicLife then lets you resize panes (and their associated graphics) just by dragging. Add text by using the text bubble tool. Drag it, rotate it, re-size it. You have your flier.

Is this product suitable for a legal brief or a filing with the Securities & Exchange Commission? No. That's not the point. The point is that if you think this product is just for making comic books, you're sorely mistaken.

I've done two birthday invitations and a flier for a fundraiser, and the results are just so much more interesting than anything I've ever seen done with Appleworks or Microsoft Word. If you thought you never had the talent to design an interesting flier using your own photographs, it is time to try ComicLife. Once your flier is done, you can publish it to .Mac or export it to Quicktime, iPhoto, or to a JPEG or TIFF.

For more information, buy a new Mac, or visit www.plasq.com. The product costs a whopping \$29 if you don't get it free on your Mac. 🗑️



By Tim Sullivan

Rumors and Reality

Need to archive a lot of data?

Got a lot of discretionary income? InPhase Technologies will start shipments of the industry's first holographic disc drive this July in a format able to store 300GB of uncompressed data on a single platter. That capacity will expand to 1.6TB per disc within three years, the company said.

The Tapestry HDS-300R will use a write-once format and is aimed strictly at the archival market for industries such as IT, health sciences, government agencies and professional video recording. InPhase plans to come to market with a re-writable format disc by the end of 2008.

The optical platters are encased in a 5.25-inch square casing that looks like a floppy disk, except that they're 3 millimeters thick. The platter itself is 1.5 millimeters thick and data is written as a holographic image throughout the substrate of the disc. Unlike CDs and DVDs where data is written on the surface, data is written throughout the substrate of the disc, meaning scratches, dust or dirt have little effect on data retrieval.

At \$18,000 for a holographic disk drive, InPhase has priced its product roughly mid-point between a \$30,000 enterprise-class tape drive and mid-range tape drives such as LTO tape drives, which go for around \$4,000. The holographic platters will retail for \$180 each.

This is well beyond what my budget can handle. But knowing the history of computer technology, maybe someday...

Microsoft will soon submit a new photo format to an international standards organization that it says offers higher quality images with better compression.

The format, HD Photo — recently renamed from Windows Media Photo — is taking aim at the JPEG format, a 15-year old technology still widely used in digital cameras and image applications.

Both formats take images and use compression to make the file sizes smaller so more photos can fit on a memory card. During compression,

however, the quality of the photo tends to degrade.

Microsoft said HD Photo's lightweight algorithm causes less damage to photos during compression, with higher-quality images that are half the size of JPEG.

Heart surgeons in London have for many years taken videos of open-heart surgery. The surgeons can then present, share and study this specialised area of health. They began with U-matic tape and moved to VHS and then to today's digital format.

The videos are imported to powerful Macs loaded with Final Cut Studio. "We do all our own editing", explained Professor Elliott, one of the Cardiothoracic surgeons at Great Ormond Street Hospital. "The surgeons enjoy it. Very often they'll do it on their day off". With no formal training, the surgeons have found it extremely easy to get up to speed thanks to Apple's intuitive approach to digital editing..." 🗑️

To Skype... or Not to Skype- That shouldn't be a question!

For all too long now I have listened to my brother, a reluctant PC user, tell me about the wonders of communicating over the Internet using an application called Skype. Last week, while visiting him, I asked for a demo and was very surprised by how simple and effective it is. He has used it for more than a year now for communicating with business associates in Cairo, Egypt, Africa, and beyond. What is amazing is how clear the voices are over the computers sound system -- much better than most phones.

So we began a demo on his PC by typing in my email address for the primary address, then we added my home phone numbers as a secondary contact. Since I hadn't authorized him to use me as a contact, we used my home phone number instead just to see how it worked. One click on the phone logo that is part of the Skype setup, and my home phone answering machine was talking to us!

Filled with enthusiasm as well as considerable doubt as to whether I could actually make this thing work and as soon as I could get to my faithful G4, I went to the Skype web site (using Google) <http://www.skype.com/helloagain.html> and downloaded Skype Version 2.0.0.6 for Mac. WOW! They had just finished testing the Skype software for Macs on October 23, 2006, and had this glowing report:

"Skype for Mac 2.0 goes gold today, which means that we've tested it, you've tested it and we all agree that it does a pretty good job. Download it now and video call your friends, family, colleagues or anyone else you'd like to see face to face. Remember not only does it work with other Mac

users but it also works with Windows users too. That means even more people for you to video call with. We've improved the video quality and made changes so that video calling can now work on older systems allowing more of our Mac community can use it.

Thanks for all your feedback and help to improve the quality of video throughout the beta. A lot of you have sent in your stories on how you're using Mac 2.0 to get face to face with far flung friends and relatives and we're delighted we can help to bring you all closer together. Many of you also told us that you're using video calls with business colleagues across the globe or to see your family back home when you're away with work."


With this reassurance, I followed the very simple install instructions and I was ready to go! NOT YET- the install had left a window that is needed to make all this work. In this window, there was a practice phone icon to click on to dial the system to see if it is going to work. Sadly I followed the practice instructions and quickly found that I needed a Microphone to make it work.

No problem. I went over to CompUSA and got a Logitech microphone especially designed for Skype (about \$33) and plugged it in to a USB port. Instructions included with the microphone direct you to the sound icon in the preferences panel to assure that the sound panel recognized the Logitech item number. It did and all I had to do was put my brothers email address in the "contacts" list and Skype sent him an email to ask if he would authorize the contact.

When he did, I just clicked on his contact icon, the Mac dialed his email address and he answered! Just like picking up the phone receiver at home except clicking icons in the Skype window does it. We talked for nearly an hour discussing how much easier it was to talk AND hear clearly over our computer system speakers - and gave credit to the nifty Logitech microphone. Of course! Both being of Scottish decent, we also marveled that the cost is zero!

The application has all kinds of convenient settings such as how to change your status -- i.e. I'm not available, on line, off-line, do not disturb or invisible. It gives options like start a conference call or chat or organize contacts or block calls.

I have heard that Google either has or wants to buy Skype out, and they have added, as a possible moneymaker, the ability to call landline numbers from your computer. How landline connections would be priced is unknown to me so far, but should be cheap since the voice would be over the net for the most part and only the tail end of the connection would be charged. In summary, Skype works better than I ever thought possible and my brother has found that even overseas calls are very seldom dropped.

Of all the members of MacNexus, I'm probably close to being one of the least technically informed people when it comes to how to set up and use this type of application and I was concerned that I would never be able to make it happen. But it did and I hope this review will encourage all members to take advantage of Skype! 

March Software Review



iShred Express 1.0
<http://home.comcast.net/%7Ejeff.ulicny/software/utills.html>

Requires OS X

The Ghost in the Machine

Almost always, when I want to get rid of a file, I drag it to the Trash and select Finder > Empty Trash. All gone.

But over the years, there have been a few files that just won't go gracefully. Every time I empty the trash I get a message from the ghost. It translates roughly: "Nyaa, nyaa. I won't go and you can't make me."

The first time that happened I erased the whole disk and re-installed everything.

Last month, when a System 7 enhancement came alive on my Intel iMac (Don't ask — I don't have the least clue how that happened), I checked through Versiontracker for applications to delete files. Essentially there were three general purpose programs. The first one didn't deal with my ghost. I have yet to find the second one. The third, iShred Express, worked.

It is a drag and drop program. The only trick is that the file be deleted cannot be dragged from the trash. It must first be dragged back to the partition where it started and from there to iShred Express.

This is one of the programs that I hope you never have to use. But it's a really good program to have tucked away.

Apple Updates

Final Cut Pro 5.1.4

02/22/2007

System Requirements
– Mac OS X 10.4.8

Provides important bug fixes to resolve plugin issues. This update is recommended for all Final Cut Pro 5.1, 5.1.1, 5.1.2 and 5.1.3 customers.

Security Update 2007-002 (Universal)

02/15/2007

System Requirements
– OS X 10.4.8 (Intel)

This update is recommended for all users and improves the security of the CoreServices, iChat, and UserNotificationCenter components.

Security Update 2007-002 (PPC)

02/15/2007

System Requirements
– OS X 10.4.8
– PowerPC based Macintosh

This update is recommended for all users and improves the security of the CoreServices, iChat, and UserNotificationCenter components.

Security Update 2007-002 (Panther)

02/15/2007

System Requirements
– OS X 10.3.9

This update is recommended for all users and improves the security of the iChat and UserNotificationCenter components.

Java for Mac OS X 10.4 Release 5

02/15/2007

System Requirements

– OS X 10.4.8

This update adds support for the latest Daylight Saving Time (DST) and time zone information as of January 8, 2007 and delivers improved reliability and compatibility for Java 2 Platform Standard Edition 5.0 and Java 1.4.

Daylight Saving Time Update (Tiger)

02/15/2007

System Requirements

– OS X 10.4.8

The Daylight Saving Time Update for Mac OS X and Mac OS X Server addresses recent changes in the way Daylight Saving Time will be observed in the U.S. and Canada beginning in March 2007 and includes the latest time zone information for the rest of the world.

Daylight Saving Time Update (Panther)

02/15/2007


System Requirements
– OS X 10.3.9

The Daylight Saving Time Update for Mac OS X and Mac OS X Server addresses recent changes in the way Daylight Saving Time will be observed in the U.S. and Canada beginning in March 2007 and includes the latest time zone information for the rest of the world.

GeForce 7300 GT Firmware Update

02/05/2007

System Requirements
– OS X 10.4.7 or later
– Mac Pro

The GeForce 7300 GT Firmware Update will update the firmware on all of the NVIDIA GeForce 7300 GT graphics cards in the Mac Pro. 

Mac 911

Solutions to your most vexing Mac problems

Manage iWeb pages from anywhere
I used to share my photos via .Mac's HomePage feature. Now that I've upgraded to iLife '06, iWeb is more suitable for my needs. The only problem is that with iWeb, I can manage my site only from my home computer. Is there any way to edit my iWeb site when I'm not at home? — WL Cheung

You can indeed manage an iWeb site from more than one computer, but doing so isn't as easy as managing your .Mac page was.

iWeb stores its resources in your user folder — specifically, here: your user folder/Library/Application Support/iWeb/Domain.sites. When you're away from your home computer, you're usually away from that Domain.sites file and all its goods.

To muck with your iWeb site on another Mac, you must first copy this Domain file from your home Mac to the second Mac, taking care to put the copy in the same folder on it. When you launch iWeb on the second Mac, iWeb should display the site you created and let you edit it as you like. When you return home, you'll need to copy the updated Domain file back to its original location on your home Mac, replacing the now out-of-date file.

Alternatively, if you have enough online storage space, you could copy the Domain file to a protected area of your iDisk and then download the file to any Mac you're using when you're out and about.

Which is better: .Mac or iLife? I have a number of vacation photos I'd like to put

online, with a caption below each. I have a .Mac account. I have iLife '05, but I just bought iLife '06. Should I use HomePage or iWeb? — Alan Serotta

Either can do the job, but iWeb has so many advantages that I couldn't imagine doing things the old-fashioned .Mac HomePage way unless I needed to quickly post some pictures from a computer that wasn't my own (more on that in a bit).

To begin with, iWeb is faster. Because your site is stored locally, you don't have to wait for your Web pages to download before you can work on them. Nor do you have to wait while you upload a bunch of pictures to your iDisk; all the pictures you'll be working with are on your Mac, and you can save the tedious uploading part for when you've completed your page. And iLife's Media Browser lets you easily see what you'll be adding to your iWeb page. It couldn't be much simpler. Just click on the Photos tab in the Media Browser, choose an album, and drag selected pictures (or the entire album) into an iWeb photo page.

Both iWeb and HomePage allow you to change the frame style of your pictures, but iWeb does it faster, with the little Style pop-up menu that appears when you select a photo on a page and choose the Inspector window's Graphic tab. Unlike HomePage, iWeb lets you change the page's background — with a gradient fill or even a semitransparent image. In iWeb, it's easy to set the amount of space you want between your images and their captions. And the Mac's spelling checker is built into iWeb, so

it's easy to track down misspellings in your captions.

So are there no advantages to HomePage? As with many of .Mac's tools, there is one: If you're not at your own computer — if you're using one at an Internet café, a library, or a friend's house, for example — you can still use HomePage to easily create a page full of pictures on-the-fly (provided that either you can upload those images to your iDisk or the images already exist on that iDisk). When traveling abroad this summer, I couldn't jack my PowerBook into my hotel's Internet connection, but I was able to use one of the computers in the hotel's business center. From that computer, I was able to post a few snaps I'd taken to a HomePage photo album. I couldn't have done that with iWeb.

Keeping an eye on kids' computing
If we didn't stop them, our children would play online games such as World of Warcraft endlessly. I've seen a program called Time Boss for Windows that allows parents to set time limits on the use of certain programs. Is there an equivalent program for the Mac? — Kerry Fisher

You bet. Luma Code's Mac Minder (\$30) can provide the service you seek (see "Minor Minder"). It allows you to set time limits for single applications or groups of applications (all games or all browsers, for example). Just choose a user account, pick an application or a group of applications, and create either a simple schedule (one that limits the user to, say, one hour a day for applications in the Games group) or a custom schedule (which lets you specify how much

time your kids can use a given app or group of apps each day: an hour between 4 and 8 p.m., Monday through Friday, for example).

The program requires that the administrator (a parent or teacher, for instance) enter a master password to create or edit schedules. Switching accounts won't crack it — you need to know that master password to work with schedules. Version 2.5 lets you administer Macs remotely. You can also log and graph use by day and user and track user logins and logouts.

Note that if you can wait, Mac OS X 10.5 (Leopard) will have far more extensive parental controls than the current Accounts preference pane provides. We'll just have to wait and see whether these new features will exceed what you get from Mac Minder and similar apps.

Recording conversations on Skype

A friend who lives across the country and I have been trying to put together a podcast, using Skype and recording both sides of the conversation. We've had a ton of problems, including lost connections and bad sound. Is there a way to do it without all the glitches? — Steve Larson

I've participated in a few podcasts using Skype and have to agree with you: free though Skype may be, recording podcasts over it is a pain in the neck. You have to put up with constant disconnections (particularly when recording conferences) and occasionally wonky sound.

One answer is the dual-recording-technique: Before podcast participants get on the line, everyone launches an audio-recording application on his or her computer and records his or her end of the conversation. Ideally, those recordings will be done in the same format.

One member of the podcast should ask that, on the count of three, everyone clap loudly just before the podcast begins (see "Start ... Now!"). This produces an audio spike that's easily

discerned in the resulting recordings' waveforms. When the podcast concludes, all participants save their recordings and ship them off to the person responsible for editing the podcast.

That person then imports each of the individual files into GarageBand (or any multitrack audio editor), switches on waveform viewing (if it's not on by default), and uses the clap spike at the beginning of the recordings to line up the tracks. The resulting sound will be far superior to anything you'll get from Skype.

Editing old home videos I'm trying to use a DVD recorder to transfer my home videos to DVD. Then I'd like to be able to edit the .vob files from the DVD to cut out unnecessary footage. How do I transfer those .vob files from the DVD into an editing program on my Mac, without having to demultiplex them, recompress them, and so on? I've tried DVD Studio Pro without any luck. — Sarah McDonald

First, you'll need a few apps: Squared 5's free MPEG Streamclip, Apple's QuickTime MPEG-2 Playback Component (\$20), and Roxio's Toast (\$80). If you have Final Cut Pro or DVD Studio Pro, that MPEG-2 Playback Component should already be on your Mac — it's included with those programs.

Once you have the apps, drag the .vob file you want to edit from the DVD into MPEG Streamclip. If there are additional .vob files associated with the one you've dragged into the program, you'll be asked if you'd like to import all the parts of your movie. Yes, you would.

In MPEG Streamclip, use the Cut, Paste, and Trim commands to edit your video. Once it's edited to your satisfaction, choose File: Save As, and save your edited file as a new .vob file; that way, your original .vob file won't need any demultiplexing and recompressing. iDVD and DVD Studio Pro won't take the resulting .vob file, but Roxio's Toast will. Create a

DVD-Video project in Toast, and drag the .vob file directly into Toast's main window; then you should be good to go.

If you care to, you can export your video to another format that DVD Studio Pro will accept: MPEG Streamclip can export these files as standard QuickTime, DV, AVI, or MPEG-4 files.

Audio cable conundrum I'm trying to import audio from an old tape deck to my iBook G4. That iBook doesn't have a mic/line-in port, so I'll need to use some sort of USB device. Assuming I can buy an external device — such as Griffin's \$40 iMic — to serve as an interface between my Mac and the tape deck, what kind of cables will I need to connect the tape deck to that external device and from that device to my Mac? — Michael Sung

Every device of this type that I've encountered — including the iMic — comes with the USB cable you need to connect it to your iBook. If whatever device you end up buying doesn't come with one, you'll need to find a standard A-to-B USB cable. The A side, which goes into your computer, has a rectangular male connector; the B connector is squarish and connects to the USB audio interface.

The cable you need for the other leg of the connection depends on your output device and the audio interface. Typical cassette players include RCA output ports — those red and white plugs that populate the typical home stereo. USB audio interfaces sometimes have RCA inputs as well. If so, just get a standard RCA-to-RCA cable and you're in business.

The 1/8-inch minijack is increasingly popular on audio interface hardware. (The iMic, for example, includes minijack in and out.) This is the same kind of connector that your iBook's headphone port uses. If you have a standard cassette player with RCA outputs, you'll need an RCA-to-stereo miniplug Y cable (see "Coping with Cables"). A quick trip to Radio

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Mac 911

Shack should secure one for less than \$10 (assuming you look elsewhere in the store after the clerk directs you to the nicely made, but really expensive, Monster cables).

Amateur digital photographer's toolkit

As enthusiastic as I am about digital photography, I'm hardly a professional. But I'm getting better — largely because I've finally stuffed the right collection of accessories into my camera bag. Maybe the following items will help you, too.

Extra Media Card My camera's pixel count is high enough, and storage prices are low enough, that I'm now shooting uncompressed raw images. I've also learned about the wonders of bracketing to capture images at different exposures. This eats up memory in a big way. Don't be caught with a camera that's too full to capture the perfect image.

Lens Cloth Camera lenses get smudged. Stop by the local spectacles emporium and pick up a cloth for cleaning a dusty or smudgy lens.

Extra Batteries If you run out of space on your media card, you can always make room by dumping images you know you won't want.

But if your battery dies, there's no such easy fix. No power on earth except a freshly charged spare will make your camera work again.

The Manual Because I'm a Mac user, I don't generally read manuals. But my camera is a complex device, and having the manual is useful when I want to know how to make the camera jump through an obscure hoop.

Small Tripod I drink a lot of coffee and therefore don't have the steadiest hands. If you're like me, pick up a small tripod that you can pack in your pocket. When the light is low, you'll be glad you did.

Card Reader When shooting in the field, I sometimes bring a laptop for previewing images. Having a card reader that plugs into my PowerBook's PC Card slot is a godsend. Unlike using a USB cable strung from camera to computer, transferring images through a card doesn't pull power from my camera's battery. No PC Card slot on your laptop? A USB card reader works just as well.

Picture Rescue If your camera's media card becomes confused or corrupted, you'll need a utility to help retrieve your precious images. Prosoft Engineering's Picture Rescue (\$59) is the tool to use.

Tip of the Month


Trim your Mail folder: I was running out of disk space on my PowerBook,

and it occurred to me to look through my old Entourage mail to see if I could clean things up there.

When scrolling through my Sent Items folder, I realized that I had tons of old sent messages with attachments. Presumably, I have copies of all those attached files somewhere else, so I don't really need them in Entourage. I sorted the Sent Items folder by Attachment, selected all the messages that had attachments, and then selected Message: Remove All Attachments.

To further trim Entourage's database, I archived a lot of old mail into a new mailbox, dragged that mailbox to the desktop to create an .mbox file, backed that file up, and trashed the original mailbox in Entourage. Finally, I quit Entourage and relaunched it while holding down the option key. When the Database Utility appeared, I chose the option to compact the database. When the Database Utility finished, my database was a third less bloated than when I started. — Jack Stephens

[Senior Editor Christopher Breen is the author of Secrets of the iPod and iTunes, fifth edition, and The iPod and iTunes Pocket Guide (both Peachpit Press, 2005).

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