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KEYSTONE MacCentral

printout

Keystone MacCentral Macintosh Users Group ❖ http://www.keystonemac.com

New Year, New Mac OS, New Expo

and maybe a new Mac for Christmas.

A new Mac is a wonderful thing, be it a Christmas present or something on your wish list. New Macs come with system software and lots of neat other programs pre-installed. But how to get your old stuff onto the new computer? It's the Tom & Tim Show to the rescue. We'll explain what you will probably want to move, where to find it, and how to move it.

Then, with the MacWorld Expo two days old, we will cover Steve's keynote address. Apple may introduce a new, smaller notebook computer. Only Steve knows for sure.

Join us for a discussion of things new at Apple.

Meet us at

Gannett Fleming

Gannett West Building
209 Senate Ave ❖ Camp Hill

Tuesday, January 15, 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 © 2008, Keystone MacCentral, 305 Somerset Drive, Shiresmanstown, PA 17011.

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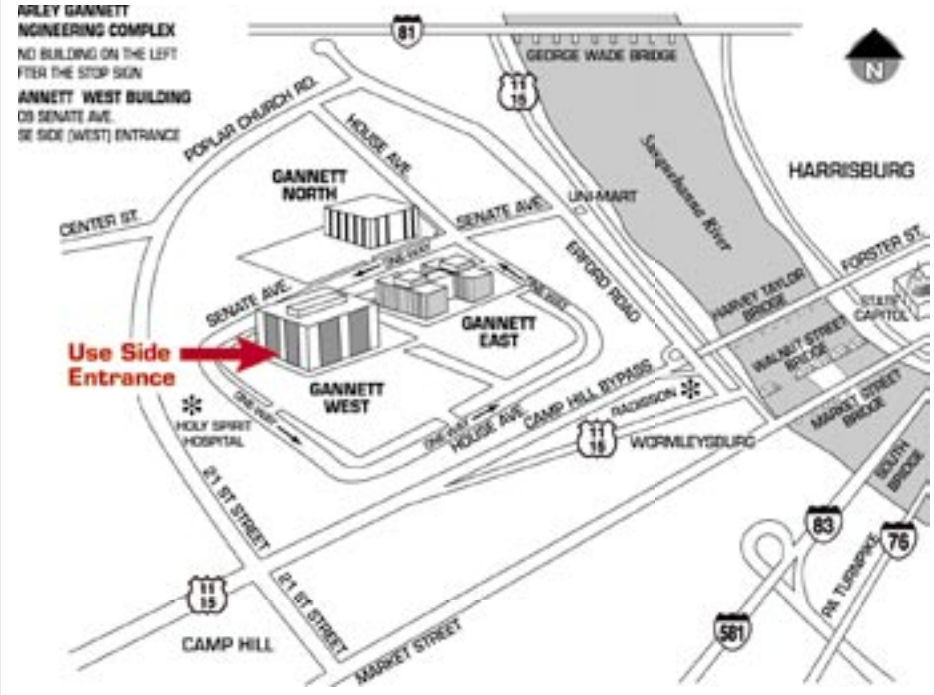


Keystone MacCentral Essentials

Meeting Place
Gannett West
209 Senate Avenue
Camp Hill

Web Site
http://www.keystonemac.com

Mailing Address
305 Somerset Drive
Shiresmanstown, PA 17011

by Linda J. Cober

President's Corner

Christmas vacation is over; the Farm Show is in full swing; can MacWorld 2008 be far behind? By the time we have our January 15 meeting, Steve Jobs will have delivered his Keynote address and we will all be talking about his latest revelations. I am, as always, anticipating his 'Just one more thing' line and wondering what wizardry he will pull out of the Apple's R&D labs this year. If I could expect him to read it, though, I would write him a letter about something he should have sent back for further development rather than foisting it off on loyal Mac users.

I am speaking of the crippled, over-simplified iMovie 08. Apparently, someone at Apple decided to go for the lowest common denominator and instead of providing additional features in iMovie 08, as would be expected in a new version, elected to strip out features such as the ability to change the speed of one's film i.e. to use slow motion or speed up the actions of the actors. Maybe Apple figured to appeal to those individuals who want to dump in the film and make a movie, snip-snap, with little or no effort required. OK, those individuals exist, but they already had that choice in MagicMovie.

It has also been suggested that by over-simplifying iMovie 08, Apple is providing a way to increase the sales of Final Cut Express 4, the next tier up in movie creation. Anyone who does not want to just dump in the film using iMovie can buy FinalCut Express 4 for $199. This may have seemed like a good business decision, but it was the opposite! Yes, iMovie is free when one purchases a Mac, so it does not appear to bring in the revenue that Final Cut Express 4 would at $199 a pop.

However, in making this change, Apple is ignoring the education market, traditionally their strong suit. I have been using iMovie with my English classes right from the start because it gives students a chance to create meaningful, fun projects that show their grasp of the planning/writing process and their chosen story from the curriculum. Those who are more creative and adept with technology can make their projects better in the same time their less experienced classmates can create good but less showy projects. Students thus work at their own pace and create either basic or advanced projects in the allotted time while sharing their skills with classmates who admire the 'wow' factor in the advanced projects. The learning curve for iMovie is not steep, so newbies can easily catch on, but the additional features which iMovie 08 has cut out provide a challenge for those who have mastered the basics. If students enjoy using iMovie, I suggest that they take Bill Spong's Media I class at ACE (we toured his lab a couple of years ago) where they will learn to use Final Cut Pro. The learning curve for either version of Final Cut, Express or Pro, is much higher than that for iMovie, however, which means that even a technologically-adept classroom teacher cannot justify the time needed to teach students how to use it. In addition, there is the cost factor, always a major factor in education. Schools may buy Final Cut for Media students (maybe 30 licenses or a Lab Pack) but are extremely unlikely to buy it for the computers used by the general student body; the cost would be prohibitive. By crippling iMovie 08, Apple is taking away the challenge for the more technologically adept students, meaning that they will finish their projects much faster and then be bored while their slower compatriots work. Bored students with computers often cause trouble for lab administrators. Thus, the decision to cripple (Apple says simplify) iMovie 08 is a very bad one. Individuals who have 'upgraded' from iMovie 06 to iMovie 08 are now clamoring to go back to the fuller-featured 06 version. Apple generally has good ideas, but this was definitely not one of them! I hope that the Powers That Be at Apple will re-think this decision and add features to upgrades, not take them away. Catering to the lowest common denominator is not a recipe for future success in education, a major market for Apple.

BTW, I will once again be taking two students to the Student Showcase at the Pennsylvania Educational Technology Expo and Conference (PETE&C) at the Hershey Lodge and Convention Center on Feb. 12 where we will be showing our newest iMovies (made with iMovie 06) to educators from across PA. Apple will be sure to have a booth there, and I plan to share my thoughts regarding iMovie 08 with their reps. If enough others do the same, maybe we can make a difference.

You too can make a difference in the Mac community by attending KeyMac meetings yourself and sharing information about our club with other Mac users. If possible, bring along a friend

by Gary Brandt, Recorder

Keystone MacCentral Minutes

December 18, 2007

Business Meeting

We began the meeting by getting into the holiday spirit with a holiday video courtesy of a link at < http://badaboo.free.fr/merrryxmas.swf >. President Linda Cober then announced the items for the mini auction to be held later during the meeting. She also mentioned the raffle items, two downloadable tutorial videos from macProVideo.com, which would be presented to two lucky members.

Linda Smith's widget pick of the month was Festive Lights, which we had loaded onto our MacBook Pro. Jim Carey demonstrated some of the settings for the holiday lights which were displayed in Dashboard.

Gary Brandt told members about the board planning meeting scheduled for January where the board will set a tentative schedule of topics for our 2008 meetings. He asked members for any topics they wanted KeyMac to cover in 2008. Several suggestions were offered and noted.

Q&A & Comments

Someone was having a problem with their Epson 900 printer that would no longer power on. Jim Carey had researched that topic earlier and discovered that the 900 had a switch inside that often burned out. We navigated to fixyourownprinter.com and found a group of posts on the Epson 900.

Linda Cober shared a tip for adding images from a web page directly to iPhoto. A Control-click or right-click will show a menu item to enable that.

Program Notes

To allow enough time to try all of the good eats members brought in to the December meeting, we had a limited program. We watched a number of macworld.com vodcasts on Leopard.

In Vodcast 20, Jason Snell expressed his thoughts on the improvements to iChat. Two features he likes are the ability to be logged in to multiple AIM accounts simultaneously and screen sharing from within iChat. Rob Griffiths looked at the updated version of Spotlight. He demonstrated the differences of Spotlight search results under 10.4 and 10.5. In the 10.5 version, Spotlight allows quoted search terms and Boolean searches. Calculations can be done right in the Spotlight search field with about 40 operations supported. Dan Frakes talked about the Finder and the Dock in Leopard. The Finder toolbar has an optional new icon to show the path of a selected file. You can also choose to show the Path Bar on the bottom of each Finder window. Chris Breen looked at Preview. Its adjustment palette in Leopard has been improved. A new Instant Alpha command allows you to rather easily select the background of a photo if you would like to remove it. While reading a PDF in Preview, text can be highlighted. Shapes can be drawn around an item to highlight it and notes can be added to PDF files in Preview.

In Vodcast 21 Chris Breen talked about Photo Booth and its video option. Leopard's Font Book has options in the Print dialog box for Catalog, Repertoire, and Waterfall displays.

Dan Frakes talked about Leopard's interface elements in Vodcast 22. He mentioned some utilities to tweak the interface for those who don't like some of the changes. TigerDock lets you change the appearance of the Dock back to how it looked under Tiger. The DockDoctor widget lets you toggle the Dock's look back and forth. The glowing spheres in Leopard's Dock can be removed with Dock Delight. Dock Color can be used to change the Dock's background color. OpaqueMenuBar adds a white strip to your desktop background picture behind the menubar that might make seeing the menus a little easier. LeoColorBar lets you choose any color strip behind the menubar. Macworld has written an AppleScript to get rid of the alternating blue and white stripes in Finder list views if they prove to be an annoyance to you. You can check the Mac Gems weblog on the macworld.com site for more information on the above options.

In Vodcast 23, Jason Snell introduced some Mac experts who had discovered additional tips and tricks for Leopard. David Pogue showed five tricks, including calculations and word definitions in Spotlight. If you type the first few

letters of an application name in Spotlight, it will be listed at the top of the list. You can start an application from the list without having to wait for the rest of the list to display. In the Finder, clicking on a file name to rename it will now highlight only the portion before the file type extension. Finally, David showed the new Mosaic screen saver which can create a mosaic from a photo folder. Sal Soghoian demonstrated how to create a transparent overlay of text in TextEdit to apply to a photo in Preview.

We watched a small portion of the macProVideo tutorial on iMovie to answer a question that had come up about export options and as a preview before we raffled off the two tickets for free downloads.

Auction & Raffle

We had a mini auction for several training DVDs the club had purchased and viewed at past meetings. Linda Cober, Linda Smith, and Tim Sullivan were the winning bidders for DVDs covering iWork '06, Dreamweaver 8, and Adobe Photoshop CS2, respectively. Gary Brandt was high bidder for the HP Photosmart C4280 printer that the club had received when purchasing the MacBook Pro.

The raffle ticket winners were Wendy Adams and Linda Cober who will be able to choose from the many titles of tutorial videos on the macProVideo.com web site. Thanks again to macProVideo. There will be another winner at January's meeting.

Program Notes

Mikhaila Adams demonstrated a cross platform game she plays on her Mac. The Adams family gets these games from the Frederiksen Library in Camp Hill. In the I Spy game the object is to gather all of the required items in a scene to win another part of a puzzle map.

Now that winter and, at times, hazardous driving conditions are here, it may become necessary to cancel a meeting on short notice. The board of Directors will make a decision and update our Web Site

http://www.keystonemac.com

by 1:00 p.m. on the day of the meeting.

by Adam C. Engst

Making iPhoto Calendars as Holiday Gifts

Put yourself in my shoes for a moment. You spent a bunch of time in June designing and laying out a calendar in iPhoto as an anniversary present, complete with photos on the blank dates for each month and birthdays and anniversaries imported from iCal for everyone in your family. It's gorgeous, your wife loves it, and (if you're my mother-in-law, stop reading right now!) she wants to give copies of it with a few different events to her relatives for holiday presents. That's a great idea, so you head off into iPhoto to make the changes and... that's when your troubles begin.

Although iPhoto makes it fairly easy to create a calendar from scratch, making a near-duplicate of a calendar you've already created comes with some gotchas, ranging from losing photos you placed on dates to reimported event text coming in with incorrect styles. But with the process I outline here, you should be able to create a near-duplicate calendar with relatively little fuss.

(You might wonder why I have you duplicating the calendar below, rather than just modifying it. My experience is that it's always best to work on a copy, just in case something gets messed up, since then you can toss the copy and start again on another copy. It's also useful to keep finished calendars around in case you discover some days later you want to order another copy.)

Duplicate the Calendar — First off, I assume you to want your second calendar to contain different or additional events, and if you made the original calendar with unusual start and end dates (June 2007 to May 2008, in my case), you need to change the date range too. But don't blithely modify the date range on your existing calendar, because when you do that, iPhoto removes all the photos you've placed in date boxes. Curses! So follow these steps to reduce the effort of remembering which photos go where:

• Select your calendar in the Source pane's Projects list, choose File > Print, and in the Print dialog, click Preview. This causes iPhoto to create a PDF and display it in Preview; you'll need this PDF to refer to as you replace photos in Step 4. Obviously, if you have the paper copy of the calendar handy, you could also just refer to it.

• Right-click your calendar in the Source pane, and choose Duplicate from the contextual menu. Rename the new calendar so you can differentiate it from the original.

• Click the Settings button, and in the Calendar view, change the dates as desired. Don't worry about importing new iCal calendars just yet. Click OK.

• Now comes the truly tedious step. Referring back to the PDF or paper copy of your original calendar, drag any photos from the available photos list to the desired date boxes on the calendar. I like to fill up all the blank boxes at the start and end of each month's grid.

Fix Dates — Now is a good time to check your calendar events in iCal and make sure they're correct and up-to-date. For instance, we welcomed new nephews on either side of the family in November, so I had to add their birthdays. Since we want separate iPhoto calendars for our respective sides of the family, we've created two iCal calendars, one for Tonya's family's birthdays and anniversaries, and one for mine. Of course, some events are duplicated.

(Even if you don't normally use iCal as your calendaring software, which I don't, it makes a lot more sense to create these calendars in iCal than to enter events manually in iPhoto. That way you can use the same iCal calendars next year, and take advantage of iCal's smarts for events like Thanksgiving, which takes place on the fourth Thursday of November.)

It's also important to make sure you have the appropriate holidays in iCal, which turns out to be trickier than I had hoped. I was unimpressed with iPhoto's built-in list of U.S. holidays, so I went looking for a more complete list. The best I found was the U.S. Holidays calendar at iCalShare; you can find lots of other calendars at iCalShare as well. Using it as a base, I copied those events I wanted to a new calendar of my own, and then I added a variety of other events from the Year 2008 Holidays Calendar, from Wikipedia's List of Commemorative Days, from Wikipedia's International Observances, and by going through a commercial calendar I had around to see which holidays they chose. How else would you find Towel Day, the Chinese New Year (Year of the Rat!), and Wright Brothers Day?

Reimport Events — It would seem straightforward to reimport your updated iCal calendars, but that wasn't my experience. The problem was that in the Big Dates theme (and possibly others), clicking the Reimport button in the Calendar view of the Settings dialog brought in the events, but at least some of them came in with incorrect styles. This was particularly glaring in the Big Dates theme when the new events and their dates had black text, rather than the red text normally used for special dates. You can manually change the color of text you enter in iPhoto, but not the color of the date numbers.

It's possible that other themes don't suffer from this problem, but here's the workaround I discovered. The downside of

this approach is that changing themes may cause you to lose text entered on the photo pages (though I didn't see that happen in my testing). Perform these steps:

• Click the Themes button and switch to another theme.

• Click the Settings button, and in the Calendar view, select the desired iCal calendars and click Reimport. This ensures that you have the latest events.

• Click the Settings button again, switch to the Styles view, click Restore Defaults, and click OK. This clears any custom formatting you might have done (or that iPhoto may think you've done; I suspect this is the culprit when styles aren't correct upon reimport).

• Click the Themes button again, and switch back to the desired theme.

• Go through every page and visually verify that all the events came in properly and are styled properly. When I did this, one photo that had a description somehow had that description entered as a caption in the calendar, even though I hadn't set that. And on one occasion, all the events in November and December had the wrong styles even still; running through these steps again fixed the problem.

That's it! If, like me, you actually want yet another calendar with different events (I wanted another version to give as Christmas presents for my side of the family), duplicate your new calendar again, select different iCal calendars, and, if necessary, run through the Reimport Events steps again.

by Adam C. Engst

The iPhone and the Googlewhackblatt

As much as I want an iPhone, it's hard to justify the cost when I pay roughly the same per year to Virgin Mobile as the low-end iPhone plan costs per month. In commenting on this fact in a private mailing list posting, I realized that I had no idea what the word for "twelve times" is. Two times is double, three times is triple, four times is quadruple, but what's twelve times?

A bit of research on Wikipedia turned up the entry for "tuple" (a finite sequence of objects) with names for tuples of specific lengths, but alas, it didn't include twelve. So I looked up "twelve" in Wikipedia, and discovered that a group of twelve things is a "duodecad." Jamming the two words together, I came up with "duodecaduple," which looks funny but turns out to be absolutely wonderful to say: duo-deca-duple. Try it a few times. Bonus points to anyone who can work it into a conversation.

Curious to see if I had gotten it right, I did a Google search, and was shocked and amazed to discover that my word appeared only once in the entire Google index, in a comment on a Slashdot story that, interestingly enough, was about some research performed at Cornell University here in Ithaca.

For those who missed it, there's a game to find pairs of words that appear only once in Google, and such a finding is called a "Googlewhack." But Googlewhacks must contain two words, and mine was only a single word. While reading the Wikipedia entry for Googlewhack, I learned that a single-word Googlewhack is called a "Googlewhackblatt."

There's a problem with Googlewhackblatts, as I'm sure you've just realized. Publishing the existence of one destroys it as soon as Google crawls your site, since it then exists in at least two places. I agonized about this, since I wanted to preserve my Googlewhackblatt, but I'll bet that there are Googlewhackblatt vandals out there who delight in ruining Googlewhackblatts, even when they've been protected by writing them backward and viewing through elgooG (a site that mirrors Google not by replicating it, but by reflecting it). Amusingly, if you type "Engst" and press Return to activate the "ykcuL gnileeF m'I" button, elgooG promptly displays the search results for Tsgne .C Mada, my 1997 April Fools issue alter-ego.

In the end, I decided that a Googlewhackblatt has meaning only in disappearing, that it doesn't truly exist until it's shared, even though the act of sharing will almost certainly result in its destruction. Thus, the joy in the Googlewhackblatt is like blowing a dandelion's seeds. Fly free, little duodecaduple!

Of course, as you can see in the screenshot, Google helpfully suggests that perhaps the word I want is actually "dodecatuple," which appears several thousand times in the Google index. Dodecatuple uses the same stem that gives us "dodecagon" (a polygon with twelve sides and twelve angles) and "dodecahedron" (a polyhedron with twelve faces). But some further poking reveals that "duodecagon" and "duodecahedron" are also perfectly reasonable, if older, variants of those words.

So I'm sticking with my version, and if you ask me at Macworld Expo why I still don't have an iPhone, it's because I'd duodecaduple my yearly cell bill.

by Tim Sullivan

Akvis Chameleon

Photo Collage Creation Software

Akvis <http://akvis.com/en/products-photo-editing-software.php> builds creative tools for digital images. I've been exercising Chameleon for the last couple of weeks.

One of the really handy procedures that imaging software can do is to extract a portion of the image. There are two good reasons to isolate a portion of an image: first, it could be combined with another image in a collage, and second, the background can be de-emphasized.

This picture with an awful background was taken under pressure. It is almost impossible to pose these two and get a good picture. They tend to mug on camera.

By extracting them first, we can use a different background or blur the existing background. Believe that extraction is tedious. The extract process in Photoshop requires the user to trace the edge of portion to be saved. We need patience, time, steady nerves (absolutely no coffee), and a good mouse. Done right, we will end up with a pretty good fragment that can be placed on another background.

There are other programs or plug-ins that offer something better. Chameleon does two things that recommend it: it makes extractions almost easy and it blends the foreground and background.

The Process

After installing the Chameleon folder in your image editor's plug-in folder, it will appear as a plug-in or filter. Chameleon approaches the extraction process in two steps.

The first step (Grab Fragment) saves the designated portion of the image. Before selecting the Grab Fragment you can isolate a smaller piece of the graphic with the marquee or lasso, or you can use the whole graphic. When you select Filter > AKVIS > Chameleon - Grab Fragment, Chameleon saves the portion of the graphic.

The second step is where we get down to business. Select the background graphic on which we will place the saved fragment. Go to Filter > AKVIS > Chameleon - Make Collage. This is where we work with the fragment and the background, where we extract the portion of the saved graphic.

Chameleon improves on the extraction process by allowing us to rough in the fragment. Just use the blue pencil to zip around inside of the edge of the portion to be extracted. Then use the red pencil to zip around outside of the edge.

I use the word "zip" advisably because generally this procedure works well. However, the program will look for an edge between the blue line and the red line. It's not nice to make the program guess which edge you have in mind. In the close-up, placement of the blue line inside was accomplished quickly and easily. The red line requires more care if we want to exclude the shadow.

We placed the final result on a plain green background.

Modes

Chameleon shines when it comes to merging two graphics. There are three modes; each handles the merging in a slightly different way.

* **Montage.** In the Montage mode the program combines images to create a seamless photo montage. It transfers selected objects to a new background and makes the irrelevant parts of the pasted fragment fade away. The object does not change its color range or opacity. This mode is good to use for creating photo collages with people (pasting a person into a new background). We used this mode to create the graphic above.

• **Chameleon.** In the Chameleon mode the program adjusts the inserted object to the target image color range and smoothes the object's borders. It looks similar to the way a chameleon adapts to the environment.

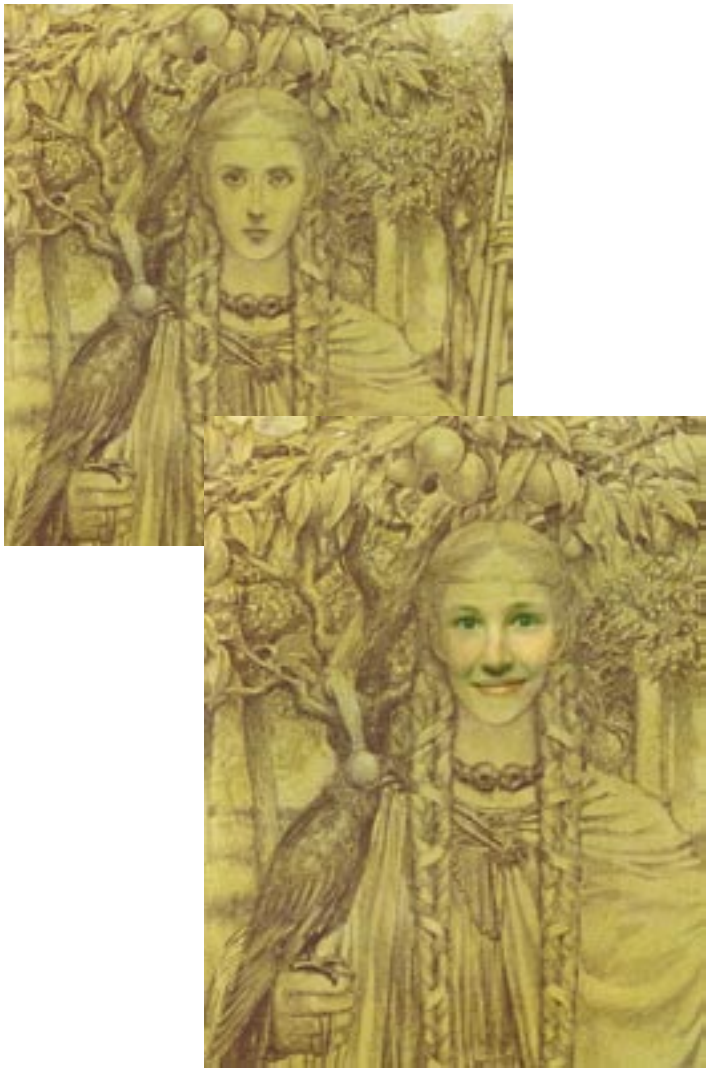
• **Blend Mode.** In the Blend mode the program does not only smoothes the borders of the inserted object and adjusts its color range, but it also makes the object semi-transparent, so that the texture and the relief of the primary image can be seen through. Use this mode if you want to "dissolve" the inserted image in the background.

Montage mode

Chameleon mode

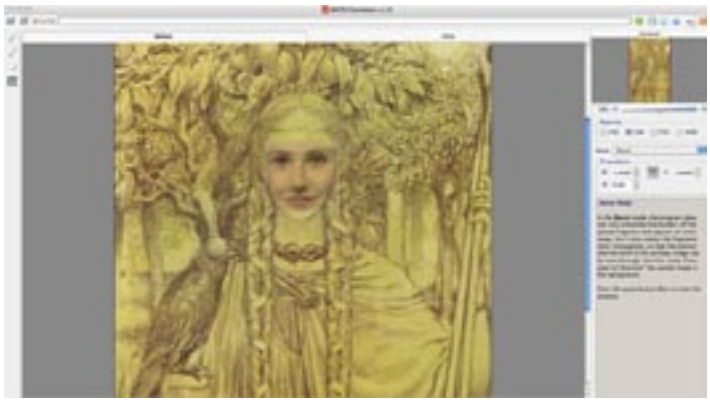
Blend mode

We used Blend mode to convert my granddaughter to a faery princess. Before combining the two picture, I removed the princess' eyes, mouth, and most of her nose. I left a bit to facilitate the placement of the new face.



Tools

On the left side of the window are the two pencils, blue and red, and an eraser. The right side includes a zoom slider, opacity buttons (which allow us to see through the fragment during placement), and a mode selector. We can also re-size or rotate the fragment.



Chameleon sells for $75 — not quite in the shareware range, but very competitive with other like programs. Figure in the easy of use and easy learning curve and this is definitely a winner.

by Charles Maurer

Horsepower & Image Sensors

When people shop for a digital camera, the first thing they ask is how many megapixels it has. Megapixels are to digital cameras what horsepower is to cars, fundamentally important - to marketing, but not to performance on the street. Moreover, manufacturers' specs for resolution are flagrantly misleading. Manufacturers multiply the real number of pixels by four. (For an introduction to image sensors see "Sense & Sensors in Digital Photography," 2004-10-18 and "Digital Photography: Correction & Follow-up," 2004-12-06.)

In fact, megapixels make for a meaningless specification because the eye does not see pixels or dots, it sees lines. As far as the eye is concerned, resolution is not millions of pixels, it is hundreds of line-pairs - and even line-pairs don't mean much because the eye's sensitivity to the thickness of lines follows a curve where equal increments are doublings. Because of this even a quadrupling of pixels is not a big deal. (For examples showing better enlargements with one-fourth the pixels, see "A Feast for the Fridge: Printing Digital Pictures," 2005-12-19.)

Every camera on the market today has enough pixels to make big enlargements, but dynamic range is another matter. Dynamic range varies greatly among cameras and is more important than resolution. Dynamic range is the range of brightness from light to dark that a camera can record before the image turns blank white or dead black. This matters for enlargements because spots of pure white or black in a snapshot enlarge to broader areas noticeably lacking in detail. Also, the bottom of a camera's dynamic range is noisy, so that if the camera has a poor dynamic range, enlarging dark tones will enlarge noise.

Dynamic range is difficult to market because, like the handling of a car, it cannot be measured objectively. Dynamic range is limited by visual noise and the noise generated by two sensors may differ qualitatively. If two noises differ qualitatively, comparing them is like comparing two baskets of fruit. You can take measurements under standardized conditions to a thousand decimal places, but if you are comparing apples to bananas, or red noise to grey, the measurements do not mean a lot. (Some kinds of noise under some circumstances can even create an illusion of increased dynamic range. For an example of this, search for "One final consideration" in "Reality and Digital Pictures," 2005-12-12.)

A New Sensor — Foveon makes uniquely sharp and efficient image sensors with a remarkable dynamic range, but they have had a hard time selling them, largely because the sensors do not sound competitive in resolution. Last spring, however, Foveon announced a new model that they advertise as though it has a V8 under the hood, claiming 14.1 megapixels for it, 40 percent more than its predecessor (and only three times what it actually has). Among Foveon fanciers this generated great excitement but - well, 40 percent more pixels means that the camera can record lines that are 15 percent thinner. The previous sensor already approximated the resolution of the human eye for the kind of information contained in photos. The improvement amounts to being able to read the 20/20 (6/6) line on the doctor's eye chart clearly instead of with difficulty. Under normal circumstances this will not matter because 20/20 lines are so fine that we virtually never notice them. I don't know any ophthalmologist who would recommend replacing a pair of glasses to effect so subtle an improvement.

Foveon announced their new sensor at the same time that Sigma announced a camera employing it, the SD14. I was not impressed by those announcements. After I read them, my reaction was to purchase a second Sigma SD10, the model using the previous sensor. I did that because to fit 40 percent more pixels in the same area, Foveon needed to shrink each light-sensitive cell. If nothing else in a sensor's structure is changed, then shrinking cells will add noise and thus limit the detail that can be seen in shadows. Foveon's propaganda trumpets the increased resolution but provides no useful information about dynamic range.

Well, my cynicism was wrong. When I finally got my hands on an SD14 to test, I discovered that Foveon's marketing obscures a substantial improvement in the structure of the sensor. Despite its higher resolution, the new sensor captures more shadow detail than the old.

Testing Dynamic Range — To test dynamic range, I photograph a scene with a tonal range exceeding the capacity of any sensor, then I pull apart the tones in the highlights and shadows at the expense of the middle tones, to see what hidden detail becomes visible. I convert raw 12-bit files to 16-bit TIFFs without any manipulation, then I run a Photoshop action on each of them, an action that first spreads the image across 16 bits and then uses Photoshop's Curves tool to stretch the highlights and shadows. The photos below show the overall scene without any manipulations plus samples of three regions with the tones pulled apart. I enlarged the SD10's images to the size of the SD14's using simple bicubic interpolations without sharpening. There is no image from the SD10 for ISO 50 because the camera does not offer that speed.

Overall: This is the original image from each camera. The spotlight on the light painting fades rapidly off toward the

side, leaving the painting on the right too dark to for any sensor to capture.

Bright Area: This compares the bright area of images taken at each ISO speed offered by each camera. For every pair of images you can see that the SD14's image shows just a bit more detail than the SD10's image.

Dark Area: The images from the SD14 are noticeably better than those from the SD10.

Comparing the SD10 and SD14 — As cameras go, the SD14 and SD10 are very different. The SD14 has a clearer viewfinder than the SD10 and several more features. At first blush it looks more desirable but most of those features strike me as more important for marketing than photography, and they complicate the camera's controls.

Also, although the SD14's viewfinder is larger and clearer, the SD10's viewfinder functions like a sportsfinder to facilitate framing moving subjects, and - a clear disadvantage - the SD14 lacks the SD10's protective cover for the LCD, which leaves the SD14 more fragile. All in all, ignoring the sensor, I don't see either camera as preferable to the other.

I cannot ignore the sensor, however. It is the sensor that captures images, not gadgetry on the camera, and the SD14's sensor shows less noise than the SD10's and does a better job capturing tonal extremes. I suspect that most people would not notice the difference but I frequently push the limits of the SD10, so I could not resist the improvement. Anybody care to buy a second-hand SD10?

[If you found Charles Maurer's discussion of megapixels, dynamic range, and image sensors helpful, he asks that you make a donation to Doctors Without Borders.]

by Tim Sullivan

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HandBrake 0.9.1
http://handbrake.fr/

Requires Mac OS X 10.4 or higher. Universal Binary. Freeware. Handbrake converts DVDs to MPEG-4s. This is a great tool for backing up those DVD movies you got for Christmas.

HandBrake's main form of input is ripped DVDs that you have stored as VIDEO_TS folders or .iso images on your hard drive. It can also read directly from some DVDs, right from your computer's optical drive.

It also has limited support for some .vob, .ts, .m2t, and .mpg files. These include television broadcasts captured with an EyeTV or HDHomeRun. HandBrake, however, does expect that all MPEG-2 streams are set up like a DVD (with 2048 byte blocks) and are properly formed, so don't expect it to read everything.

The main reason to read from a ripped VIDEO_TS or .iso, stored on your hard drive, is that HandBrake does not even attempt to decipher the latest copy protection schemes. Many DVDs, especially recent, popular films, must be run through dedicated decrypting tools first, like Fairmount or AnyDVD.

Using HandBrake to encode directly from the DVD simplifies the process by removing the extra step of ripping the movie. However, reading the video information from your optical drive is somewhat slower than reading from your hard drive and prevents you from using your optical drive for anything else for the duration of the encode. It is also a little harder on the drive itself.

As a result, if you have the hard drive space required for a full VIDEO_TS folder (up to around 9GB), most people recommend that you rip the DVD to your hard drive first and then use that as the source for HandBrake.

Inputs:

• Any DVD-like source: VIDEO_TS folder, DVD image or real DVD (encrypted or unencrypted, but protection methods other than CSS are not supported and must be handled externally with third-party software), and some .VOB and .TS files

• PAL or NTSC

• AC-3, DTS, LPCM or MPEG audio tracks

Outputs:

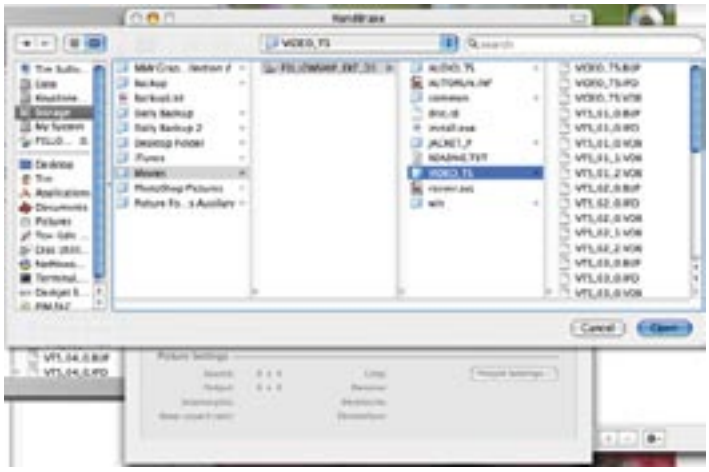
• File format: MP4, MKV, AVI or OGM

• Video: MPEG-4 or H.264 (1 or 2 passes or constant quantizer/rate encoding)

• Audio: AAC, MP3, Vorbis or AC-3 pass-through (supports encoding of several audio tracks)

The Handbrake window is a bit intimidating, There's a lot of choices — decisions to be made. So I ignored all but two: where to find the VIDEO_TS folder and where to write the MPEG-4 output. I dragged the DVD onto my harddisk, selected "Source" in the Handbrake window, navigated to the VIDEO_TS folder, browsed (selected) the destination, and hit the Start button. Thirteen minutes later I had an MPEG-4 version that can be imported to iTunes and then to my iPod.

The HandBrake window
Click on the Start button to navigate to the VIDEO_TS folder. Use the Browse button to navigate to the output location.



Navigating to the VIDEO_TS folder, part of the DVD that was dragged onto the harddisk.

If you want to get your DVD's onto your iPod, this is the way to go.

Other Software of Interest

by Matt Neuburg

Quay Sticks It to Stacks

This is certainly an exciting time for those of us who have found ourselves hampered by Leopard's superficial silliness. Of the Leopard features I complained about in "Six Things I Hate about Leopard" (2007-10-26), three have already been skewered by good old user ingenuity.

• The reflective Dock was killed, early on, by the discovery of a secret preference setting, available through the Terminal.

• The transparent menu bar (see "Menu Bars So Clean, They Seem To Disappear," 2007-10-30) was recently rendered opaque (and gorgeous!) by a rather scary Terminal incantation that hasn't done my computer any apparent harm (see "Transparent Menu Bar, Die Die Die!," 2007-11-16).

• And now, Stacks in the Dock have been replaced by well-behaved folders thanks to Quay, a clever little utility from Rainer Brockerhoff (well known as the author of three other classic utilities on which many of us have long depended: XRay, Nudge, and Zingg!).

Here's how you use Quay (the name, by the way, is evidently a pun on "Dock"). First, drag any folders out of the Dock so that they vanish in a puff of smoke. Those old folders are Stacks, and are just what we're trying to avoid. Next, start up Quay. For each folder you'd like to see in the Dock, instead of dragging it directly into the Dock, drag it onto Quay's window; Quay then produces an icon (which you can customize quite extensively), and you drag that icon from Quay's window into the Dock. When you've populated the Dock with folders, you can quit Quay.

Now, with any of those Dock folders that you created with Quay, if you simply and quickly click the folder's Dock icon, a hierarchical menu of its contents appears. This menu is actually better than the old Dock hierarchical menus were: the menu for each folder can be sorted by name, date, or kind, and the menu's items can have small, large, or no icons - plus the menu can optionally display invisibles and/or package contents. To determine these menu display options, Option-click the folder icon. To open the folder, double-click it. What you should not do is Control-click the folder icon, or hold the mouse down on it for any length of time, because that will display the Dock's own menu for the item instead of Quay's.

That brings me to how Quay works its magic. This is largely guesswork, but I take it that what's going on here is that the things you're putting into the Dock with Quay are actually documents, not folders at all. (That's why they live in the correct location, the right side of the Dock, where both folders and documents go.) The originals of these documents are created behind the scenes by Quay, and are stored in your Application Support folder; they are concealed inside a package so you can't accidentally mess with them. When you single-click on a "folder" icon, since this is really a document, what happens is what always happens when you single-click a document in the Dock - the document is opened by the application that owns it. That application is not Quay itself, but an invisible background process that lives inside Quay's package. The invisible application's response to one of its documents being opened is to produce the hierarchical menu representing the contents of the folder to which that document is tied. (That's why Quay itself does not need to be running in order for you to use the Dock "folders" it produces.) Double-clicking a "folder" is seen as an attempt to open the same document twice in quick succession; the invisible process interprets this as a request to open the associated folder.

Quay is not perfect: For example, you can't Command-click on a "folder" in the Dock to reveal it in the Finder, and sometimes you can't double-click a "folder" in the Dock to open it either, because after the first click the hierarchical menu appears and, if it's large enough, it blocks the Dock so your second click can't get through. And the double-click feature is unreliable in other ways: Sometimes I find that it reveals the folder without opening it, and other times it opens the folder. In general, the double-click feature is unreliable, and it would be better if the hierarchical menu itself included options either to open or to reveal the original folder. Plus, of course, you can't drag an item onto a "folder" in the Dock to copy or move that item into the actual folder, because the thing in the Dock is just a document and no application is even aware of your drag. Finally, the Quay documentation warns that "Quay may get confused if you have several copies of it scattered around;"

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that's a little worrisome, since, with Time Machine making backups of everything, there certainly will be multiple copies of Quay (the documentation goes on to warn you to prevent this).

Nevertheless, the Quay approach is elegant, simple, and fun and easy to use, and of course this version is just 1.0; so I recommend that you give it a try. Quay costs 7 euros (about $10 at the moment); you can download it as a demo, but until you register, the hierarchical pop-up menu will work only on one of your Dock "folders."

Now if only someone would do something about the darned tiny type and icons in the sidebar of Finder windows!

Apple Updates

Security Update 2007-009 1.1 (10.4.11 Universal)
12/21/2007

System Requirements
- OS X 10.4.11 Intel Client and Server
- OS X 10.4.11 Universal Server

Security Update 2007-009 1.1 (10.4.11 PPC)
12/21/2007

System Requirements
- OS X 10.4.11 PPC Client and Server

Security Update 2007-009 1.1 (10.5.1)
12/21/2007

System Requirements
- OS X 10.5.1 Client and Server

Security Update 2007-009 1.1 is recommended for all users and improves security.

MacBook, MacBook Pro Software Update 1.1
12/18/2007

System Requirements
- OS X 10.5.1

This update addresses a responsiveness issue on MacBook and MacBook Pro notebook computers. Some MacBook and MacBook Pro systems may occasionally experience a temporary suspension of keyboard input which can last a minute or longer. The OS X 10.5.1 update is required before installing the MacBook, MacBook Pro Software Update 1.1.

QuickTime 7.3.1 for Panther
12/13/2007

System Requirements
- OS X 10.3.9

QuickTime 7.3.1 for Tiger
12/13/2007

System Requirements
- OS X 10.4.9 or later

QuickTime 7.3.1 for Leopard
12/13/2007

System Requirements
- OS X 10.5 or later

QuickTime 7.3.1 addresses security issues.

GarageBand 4.1.1
12/13/2007

System Requirements
- OS X 10.4.9 or later
- GarageBand 4
- iLife Support 8.1.1

This update improves overall stability and addresses issues with file export to iPhone.

QuickTime Broadcaster 1.5.2
12/13/2007

System Requirements
- OS X 10.4.10 or later

Combining the power of QuickTime with Apple's ease of use, QuickTime Broadcaster allows just about anyone to produce a live broadcast event. From a backyard birthday party to a corporate keynote speech, QuickTime Broadcaster allows anyone with an Internet connection to "virtually" attend.

Updates include:

• H.264 (MPEG-4 Part 10 video) live broadcasting

• 3G streaming support for sending live broadcasts to multimedia enabled cell phones

• Dramatically improved performance for streaming 640x480 30fps video

• Increased standards support including 3GPP and ISMA (Internet Streaming Media Alliance)

Java for Mac OS X 10.4, Release 6
12/13/2007

System Requirements
- OS X 10.4.10 or later

Java for OS X 10.4, Release 6 delivers improved reliability and compatibility for Java 2 Platform Standard Edition 5.0 and Java 1.4 on OS X 10.4.10 and later. This release updates J2SE 5.0 to version 1.5.0_13 and Java 1.4 to version 1.4.2_16.

Recent Updates to our Library

Adobe Reader 8.11.Intel.dmg
http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html
Requires OS 10.4.3 or greater. Free. Displays PDF files. There are two versions: one for Intel and one for PPC computers

Adobe Reader 8.11.PPC.dmg
http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html
Requires OS 10.4.3 or greater. Free. Displays PDF files.

Alarm Clock Pro 8.2.7.dmg
http://www.koingosw.com/products/alarm_clock_pro.shtml
Requires OS 10.4 or later. Universal Binary. $19.95 Three different clocks can be displayed on your desktop. Multiple alarms can be set. A 'Perpetual' option allows the user to set alarms for specific times and dates in the future. A 'Timer' option will beep every umpteen minutes, depending upon your selection. It includes a stopwatch and a calendar.

Audio Hijack Pro 2.8.zip
http://www.rogueamoeba.com/audiohijackpro/
Requires OS X 10.4.0 or greater. Universal Binary. $32/$10 Upgrade. Use Audio Hijack to record any Real/Windows Media/iTunes/Internet stream and listen at your leisure. Snag game sounds or sound bytes off DVD movies. You can even use Audio Hijack to rip Flash audio! And with built-in Timers, you don't even have to be there to record.

Boinx iStopMotion 2.0.2.dmg
http://www.boinx.com/
OS X 10.4 or newer. Universal Binary. QuickTime 6.4 or newer, Graphics Card with OpenGL support. $49. iStopMotion provides for stop motion and time lapse recording. Version 2 is commercial.

BurnAgain DVD 1.2.2.dmg
http://freeridecoding.net/
Requires OS X 10.3 or later. Universal Binary. $24. BurnAgain lets you add files to your CD, CDR, or DVD+RW multiple times easily. BurnItAgainSam performs real incremental updating if you burn a Folder twice, automatically checking what files have been added or changed and only using space for these. If you want, you can decide to start over at any time and hide the contents of previous sessions at the next burn.

Business Card Composer 4.4.1.dmg
http://www.belightsoft.com/products/composer/
Requires Mac OS X 10.3 or later. Universal Binary. $34.95 Business Card Composer is a Mac OS X tool to create and print business cards. Prepared design and image collections lead to simplicity of making own cards. The application allows print out cards on specific paper stock from worldwide manufacturers.

Camino 1.5.4.dmg
http://caminobrowser.org/
Requires OS X 10.3 or later. Universal Binary. Freeware. Camino is a browser for Mac OS X that has a Cocoa user interface, and embeds the Gecko layout engine. It is intended to be a simple, small and fast browser for Mac OS X. Camino is still in the beta stage of its development. It is stable enough to use day-to-day, but you may still encounter bugs.

Carbon Copy Cloner 3.0.1.dmg
http://www.bombich.com/software/ccc.html
Requires OS 10.4 or greater. Universal Binary. Donationware. The purpose of Carbon Copy Cloner is to assist you in moving your entire Mac OS X installation or selected folders from one partition to another as easily as possible. CCC can copy all the system files necessary, maintaining Unix permissions and ownership, to create a bootable backup of your drive.

ChronoSync 3.3.6.dmg
http://www.econtechnologies.com/site/Pages/ChronoSync/chrono_overview.html
Requires Mac OS 10.3 or later. Universal Binary. $30. Automatically synchronize files and folders between your laptop and desktop volumes, or schedule automatic, simple backups of important files.

Default Folder X 4.0.dmg
http://www.stclairsoft.com/Main/products.html
Requires OS X 10.4. Universal Binary. $34.95. Default Folder X improves the Open and Save dialogs in Mac OS X. Its hierarchical menus, multiple sets of favorites, easily accessible lists of recently used folders, integration with the Finder, and system-wide menu for accessing frequently used files and folders save you time and frustration.

DejaMenu 1.2.2.dmg
http://homepage.mac.com/khsu/DejaMenu/DejaMenu.html
Requires OS X 10.4 or higher. Universal Binary. Freeware. DejaMenu will display the current application's main menu as a context menu when a key combination is pressed.

DEVONthink Personal 1.9.12.dmg
http://www.devon-technologies.com/download/commercial.php
Requires OS X 10.3.9 or greater. Universal Binary. DEVONthink is the Mac incarnation of the real paperless office. It's a notepad, outliner, scrapbook manager, information manager, freeform database, archive, bookmark manager and image database. As of version 1.9.10, DEVONthink Personal is commercial

Diet Sleuth 5.1.0.dmg
http://www.blackcatsystems.com/

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Requires OS X. 10.2. $34.99. Diet Sleuth is a nutritional database and personal health logbook. Diet Sleuth allows you to keep track of what foods you eat each day and their nutritional value. For each day, you select the foods you have eaten and the number of servings of each. Diet Sleuth will automatically calculate your caloric intake, fat grams, carbohydrates, fiber, protein, cholesterol, sodium, potassium, and calcium.

Dragster 1.0.5.dmg
www.ambrosiasw.com/utilities/dragster/
Require OS X 10.4 or later. Universal Binary. $19.00. Dragster is an incredibly useful application that takes the drag out of file transfers. Just drag and drop files or folders on Dragster's icon in the Dock, and away they go! Dragster can send files via email, upload them to remote servers, copy them to your iDisk, or copy/move files anywhere on your local drives.

EarthBrowser 2.11.dmg
http://www.lunarsoft.com/
Requires OS X 10.2.8 or higher. Universal Binary. $23.95. Earth Browser is a three dimensional model of the Earth that is constantly monitoring conditions around the globe. It will keep you informed on the latest weather forecasts, earthquakes, volcanoes and webcams from all over the world. It also becomes a beautiful screen saver when your computer is idle.

EasyFind 4.0.1.dmg.zip
http://www.devon-technologies.com/products/freeware/index.html
Requires OS X 10.3.9 or higher. Universal Binary. FreeWare. Choose what to search; the type of search to perform ("and","or"); case-sensitive or insensitive; where to search.

Fetch 5.3.dmg
http://fetchsoftworks.com/?VersionTracker
Requires OS X 10.3.9 or higher. Universal Binary. $25. Fetch is an easy-to-use, full-featured file transfer client for the Apple Macintosh. Fetch supports FTP and SFTP, the two most popular file transfer protocols on the Internet

Firefox 2.0.0.11.dmg
http://www.mozilla.com/firefox/
Requires OS X 10.2 and later. Freeware. Firefox is an award winning preview of next generation browsing technology from mozilla.org. Firefox empowers you to accomplish your online activities faster, more safely and efficiently than any other browser. Built with Tab browsing, popup blocking and a number of other seamless innovations.

Fish 1.5.zip
http://uri.cat/software/Fish/
Requires OS X 10.3 or greater. Donationware. Fish is an aquarium simulator. It allows you to add fish to an underwater environment and customize them.

Google Earth 4.2.205 .dmg
http://earth.google.com/
Requires OS X 10.4.0 or higher and an internet connection, preferably high speed. Freeware. An interactive map of the world with many overlays that provide additional data.

GraphicConverter 6.0.3.dmg
http://www.lemkesoft.com/en/index.htm
Requires OS X 10.4.4 or higher. Universal Binary. $34.95/$19.95 upgrade. Converts graphics to and from a variety of formats.

Gutenprint 5.1.5.tar.bz2
http://sourceforge.net/forum/forum.php?forum_id=596232
Requires OS X 10.2 or greater. Universal Binary. Gutenprint, formerly named Gimp-Print, is a suite of printer drivers that may be used with most common UNIX print spooling systems, including CUPS, lpr, LPRng, or others. These drivers provide high quality printing for UNIX (including Macintosh OS X 10.2, 10.3, and 10.4) and Linux systems that in many cases equal or exceed proprietary vendor-supplied drivers in quality and functionality, and can be used for demanding printing tasks requiring flexibility and high quality.

GyazMail 1.5.7.dmg
http://www.gyazsquare.com/gyazmail/download.php
Requires OS X 10.3 or later. Universal Binary. $18. GyazMail allows you to filter out spam before it downloads to your machine. Its greatest feature is the ability to add "Filters" that allow you to delete e-mail from a regular POP server based on what is in the subject, to, from, or any other e-mail header field.

Hardware Monitor 4.3.dmg
http://www.bresink.de//products.html
Requires OS X 10.3.8 or later. Universal Binary. € 8.33. Hardware Monitor is an application to read out all available hardware sensors in Macintosh computers. The program can display and visualize measured values in a large variety of fashions.

Hazel 2.1.2.dmg
http://www.noodlesoft.com/hazel.php
Requires OS X 10.4 (Tiger) or above; Safari, Camino, Firefox or Flock; Spotlight must be enabled. Universal binary. $21.95. Hazel is your personal housekeeper, organizing and cleaning folders based on rules you define. Hazel can also manage your trash. Organize your files using a familiar rule interface.

iTunes-LAME Encoder 2.0.9.zip
http://www.blacktree.com/
Requires OS X. 10.2 or higher, iTunes 4.x. Freeware. Convert sound to MP3 directly from CDs

iVolume 2.5.3.dmg
http://www.mani.de/en/software/macosx/ivolume/index.html
Requires OS X 10.2 or higher and iTunes 4.0 or higher.

Universal Binary. $15. With iVolume you can set all your iTunes songs to the same volume level.

LimeWire X 4.14.12.dmg
http://www.limewire.com/
Requires OS X 10.4. Freeware. LimeWire is a software package which enables individuals to search for and share computer files with anyone on the internet.

Little Snitch 2.0.1.dmg
http://www.obdev.at/products/
Requires OS X 10.4 or greater. Universal Binary. $24.95 /$12.95 upgrade. When an application tries to establish a network connection, Little Snitch intercepts the attempt and brings up an alert panel, telling you all the connection details including the name of the application which initiated the connection

Macaroni 2.1.dmg
http://www.atomicbird.com/
Requires OS 10.4 or higher. Universal Binary. $9.99. Macaroni is a tool which handles regular maintenance for Mac OS X, including the Mac OS X repair privileges process as well as Unix-style maintenance

Marine Aquarium 2.6.1.dmg
http://www.serenescreen.com/
Requires OS X 10.1.5 or higher. Universal Binary. $14.95 Screen saver: realistic salt water aquarium.

MP3 Alarm Clock 2.3.2.dmg
http://jbenjamin.org/Software/Software.html
Requires OS X 10.4 or greater. Freeware. Flexible and useful alarm for those who need repetitive or multiple alarms. The clock has multiple skins (appearances.)

NeoOffice 2.2.2 Intel.dmg
http://www.planamesa.com/neojava/en/index.php
Requires OS X 10.3 or higher. Donationware. NeoOffice is a fully-featured set of office applications (including word processing, spreadsheet, presentation, and drawing programs) for Mac OS X.

NeoOffice 2.2.2 PPC.dmg
http://www.planamesa.com/neojava/en/index.php
Requires OS X 10.3 or higher. Donationware. NeoOffice is a fully-featured set of office applications (including word processing, spreadsheet, presentation, and drawing programs) for Mac OS X.

OmniDiskSweeper 1.6.dmg
http://www.omnigroup.com/applications/omnidisksweeper/
Requires OS X 10.4 or later. Universal Binary. $14.95. OmniDiskSweeper is a Mac OS X utility for quickly finding and deleting big, useless files and thus making space on your hard disks. OmniDiskSweeper makes this easy by highlighting the biggest files on your disks, and by noting which files are used by the system, so you don't accidentally delete important files.

One Finger Snap 1.4.1.zip
http://old-jewel.com/onefingersnap/index.html
Requires OS X 10.3 or later. Universal Binary. Freeware. One Finger Snap is a Preference Pane that brings up the contextual menu whenever you click and hold down the mouse button. This means that you can do everything with a single button mouse that you can do with a 2-button mouse.

OnyX 1.8.5.dmg
http://www.titanium.free.fr/pgs/english.html
Requires OS X 10.4. or greater. Universal Binary. DonationWare. OnyX is a utility of maintenance, of optimization and personalization for Mac OS X. It also makes it possible to configure certain hidden parameters of Finder, Dock, Safari, to remove a certain number of files and folders that become cumbersome, preview the different logs and CrashReporter, and more... NOTE: There is a different version for OS 10.3, OS 10.4, and OS 10.5

Opal 1.1.dmg
http://a-sharp.com/opal/
Requires Mac OS X 10.4 or later. Universal Binary. $32. Opal lets you organize just about anything — ideas, reports, lists, notes, projects, graphics — in the form of an outline.

Pac the Man X 1.1.zip
http://www.mcsebi.com/
Requires OS X 3. Universal Binary. Free. Pac the Man is a simple Pacman clone for the Mac. It has nice graphics close to the original ones and good music. The gameplay is equal to the original: Escape the ghosts and eat the pellets.

PageSender 4.2.dmg
http://www.smileonmymac.com/pagesender/download.html
Requires OS X 10.4 or higher. Universal Binary. $39.95. Send faxes and E-mails directly from the print dialog.

PopChar X 3.3.2.dmg
http://www.macility.com/products/popcharx/
Requires OS X 10.3.9 or newer. Universal Binary. €29.99. PopChar X makes "typing" of special characters easy without having to remember keyboard combinations. It installs a menu that shows all characters available in the current font. Any character can be inserted in the current document by simply selecting it from the menu.

Postage $aver 8.3.1.dmg
http://savepostage.com/psinfo.html
Requires Classic or OS X. $25. Postage $aver sorts one or more data files according to U.S. postal service (USPS) requirements for third class bulk mail. Postage $aver produces a complete report showing the composition of all mail packages and mail sacks, and the piece counts and postage totals necessary for completing post office bulk mailing statements. Postage $aver can also create an output file containing sort keys by sack and package, along with postal endorsement lines for printing on address labels or envelopes.

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Preferential Treatment 1.1.8.dmg
http://www.jonn8.com/html/pt.html
Requires OS X 10.2+. Freeware. This application will check your preference files (both in your user's preference folder and the system's preference folder) for corruption by using the "plutil" command line tool. If it finds suspect files, it will list the files and allow you to reveal them in the Finder or move them to the trash.

Psst 2.1.1.dmg
http://www.satsumac.com/Psst.php
Requires OS X 10.4 or higher. Universal binary. Donation-Ware. Psst is an application that lets you adjust/mute the volume of your Mac's startup chime.

PTHPasteboard 4.2.4.dmg
http://pth.com/products/pthpasteboard/
Requires OS X 10.4 or later. Universal Binary. Freeware. PTHPasteboard is a simple but powerful automatic multiple pasteboard: basically, every time you choose Copy or Cut in any application, PTHPasteboard remembers the clipboard contents, so that you can later paste that item even though you have subsequently tromped on the system clipboard with another Copy or Cut. With PTHPasteboard, it becomes trivially easy to collect multiple items from one place or many places and paste them separately elsewhere; unless you've experienced it, you may not realize how much easier your entire workflow becomes when suddenly there is no need to plan or hesitate before copying, because all your recently copied items are available to you, everywhere, all the time.

Romi 6.8.zip
http://www.romi.ca/index.html
Requires OS X 10.4 or higher. Universal Binary. $15. Romi lets you play Rummy Tile (RummyCube, Rummikub, Rami) games against the cumputer at 3 different levels. The Rummy game is played with two sets of 52 cards and with two wild cards (two apple card). The purpose of this game is to form groups of 3 or more cards, which contain either consecutive cards of the same suit or cards of the same number value but of differing suits.

Smart Scroll X 2.7.2.dmg
http://www.marcmoini.com/
Requires OS X 10.3.9 or later. Universal Binary. $19. Smart Scroll X brings new scrolling options and enhancements to Mac OS X: a "hand" tool to easily move any window's contents; Scroll Keys - fast and dependable scrolling, without reaching for the mouse; FileMaker Pro and AppleWorks live scrolling, scroll wheel support, and more.

SMARTReporter 2.3.2.dmg
http://www.versiontracker.com/dyn/moreinfo/macosx/23232
Requires OS X 10.3 or higher. Universal Binary. Freeware. SMARTReporter is an application that can warn you of (ATA/IDE) hard-drive failures before they actually happen. It does so by periodically polling the S.M.A.R.T.-status of your hard-drives. S.M.A.R.T. (Self-Monitoring Analysis and Reporting Technology) is a technology built into most modern hard-drives that acts as an "early warning system" for pending drive problems.

Snapz Pro X 2.1.2.dmg
http://www.ambrosiasw.com/utilities/snapzprox/
Requires OS X 10.3.9 or later. Universal Binary. $29. Snapz Pro X is a utility that lets you grab virtually anything you see on your Mac's screen and immediately transform it into a usable picture file or QuickTime movie.

SndSampler 6.0.1.dmg
http://www.sndsampler.com/
Requires OS X 10.1.2. $39.99. SndSampler is a sophisticated recording and editing program.

SOHO Notes 6.5.3.dmg
http://chronos.iserver.net/
Requires OS X 10.4.9 or higher. $39.99. Universal Binary SOHO Notes is a digital note-taking application and the official successor to StickyBrain. Use it to capture, organize, and share all of your personal and workgroup information. It can store rich text, PDF's, images, files, movies, audio, bookmarks, and web archives. Synchronize notes between multiple computers, iPod's, and Palm handhelds.

Sound Studio 3.5.5.dmg
http://www.felttip.com/
Requires OS X 10.4 or later. Universal Binary. $79.95. Record and edit audio digitally on your computer. Digitize tapes and vinyl records, record live performances, create your own mixes with crossfades, tweak the levels and EQ, apply digital effects, and save in all major file formats with Sound Studio 3!

SpamSieve 2.6.5.dmg
http://c-command.com/spamsieve/
Requires OS X 10.3 or greater. Universal Binary. $30. Apple Mail, Emailer, Eudora, Entourage, GyazMail, Mailsmith, Outlook Express, PowerMail, or Thunderbird. Universal binary. $30. SpamSieve brings powerful Bayesian spam filtering to popular e-mail clients.

Springy 1.3.3.dmg
http://www.springyarchiver.com/
Requirements: OS X 10.3 or Macintosh computers with PowerPC processor, OS X 10.4.4 or later computers with Intel Universal binary. $18. Springy is a program for creating, examining, and extracting files from archives.

Synk Standard 6.3.1.zip
http://www.decimus.net/
Requires OS X 10.4 or later. Universal Binary. $35. Synchronize and backup files.

Temperature Monitor 4.3.dmg
http://www.bresink.de//products.html
Requires OS X 10.3.8 or later. Universal Binary. Free. Temperature Monitor is an application to read out all available temperature sensors in Macintosh computers. The program can display and visualize measured values in a large variety of fashions

Tidy Up! 1.3.1.zip
http://www.hyperbolicsoftware.com/TidyUp.html
Requires OS X 10.3.9 and later. Universal Binary. $30. Tidy Up! (Doublet Scan) is a utility for identifying all the duplicate files in your hard disks.

TinkerTool 3.8.dmg
http://www.bresink.de//products.html
Requires OS X 10.3.8 or later. Universal Binary. Freeware. TinkerTool is an additional control panel for the System Preferences application that allows users to access more operating system settings than are usually visible in the standard panels.

TypeIt4Me X 3.2.1.dmg
http://ettoresoftware.com/About%20TypeIt4Me.html
Requires OS X 10.3 or higher. Universal Binary. $27/Upgrade $9.Store frequently used text strings and a short identifier. During word processing, the short identifers will be replaced by the text string.

Uli's Moose 3.5.6.zip
http://www.zathras.de/angelweb/home.htm
Requires OS X 10.3 or higher. Universal Binary. Donation-Ware. Uli's Moose pops up occasionally and utters some inane witticism.

Visage 2.4.2.zip
http://keakaj.com/visage.htm
Requires OS X 10.5. $9.95 Visage allows you to easily and safely customize the appearance of your Mac. You can change the Boot Window, Boot Strings, Desktop Effects, Login Background, Login Panel, and Personal Alerts.

VueScan 8.4.52.dmg
http://www.hamrick.com/vsm.html
Requires OS X 10.3 and higher. Universal Binary. $39.95. VueScan is an inexpensive program that works with most scanners to produce high-quality scans that have excellent color fidelity.

By Christopher Breen

Mac 911

Solutions to your most vexing Mac problems

Hiding iWeb pages

Q: Every time I make a page in iWeb, a link to it appears in the navigation bar at the top of every page. I'd like to make some pages accessible only through links that I put on particular pages in the site. Is this possible? — Amal Chandaria

A: If you know where to look, it's easy to do this in Apple's iWeb '08 (part of the $79 iLife suite) or the original iWeb. Select the page you want to hide in iWeb's Source list, choose View: Show Inspector, click on the Page tab in the resulting Inspector window, and deselect the Include Page In Navigation Menu option (see "Control iWeb Pages"). The link to that page (or set of pages, if you've added a template such as Blog) will disappear completely from the site's navigation bar.

Copying Keychains

Q: I have a lot of passwords stored in my PowerBook's keychain. I want to put an exact copy of the keychain on my iBook, just in case my trusty PowerBook gives up the ghost, but Mac Help is vague about how to do this. — Jason M. Krellenstein

A: The first step to copying your keychain is finding it. Look inside your user folder /Library/Keychains. Login.keychain is the default user keychain file that OS X creates — the one you unlock with your login password. (If you've created a new keychain — Chris's keychain.keychain, for example — you'll find it here as well.)

Copying a keychain from one computer to another, however, can be problematic. If that other computer uses a different user name or password, it'll bombard you with password requests. Even with the same user name and password, you'll run into the occasional request for a password you know is in the keychain. For example, when I copied my keychain to another computer that used the same user name and password, Internet Connect asked me for my virtual private network (VPN) password — despite the fact that it never did that on the original computer.

If you subscribe to Apple's .Mac service ($99 per year), you'll be happy to know you already have a way to avoid

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these problems. The service gives you the option to sync your keychain between your .Mac account and any Macs you sync with it (see "Keychain Syncing").

You'll find the option for syncing keychains — as well as bookmarks; calendars; contacts; Mail accounts; and Mail rules, signatures, and smart mailboxes — in the Sync tab of the .Mac preference pane. Select the Synchronize With .Mac option and then choose from the list.

Easy blind carbon copy option for Mail

Q: I like to use the Addresses window in Apple's Mail to address my messages. But I don't see a button there that will let me put an address in the BCC field instead of the To field. What's the best way to do that? — Marty Grauer

A: The Addresses window (Window: Address Panel) in Apple's Mail for OS X 10.4 (Tiger) doesn't include a BCC option. Try a different approach: create a new e-mail message (1-N), choose View: BCC Address Field (1- option-B), open the Address Panel, and then drag the recipient names you want into the BCC field.

Safari's regrettable memory

Q: Safari does a reasonable job of trying to guess and fill in the Web address I am about to type. After a while, though, its memory becomes cluttered. When I type

g

to go to Google, for example, it guesses that I want to go to a genealogical Web page I visited once. How can I erase all the Web addresses, or at least the undesired ones, from Safari's brain? — Bill Zagotta

A: Apple's Safari 2.0.X doesn't provide one single command for getting rid of these memorized entries. They're concocted from Safari's bookmarks, cache, and history. You can get close by choosing Safari: Reset Safari, but doing this can be problematic. In the first place, it doesn't touch your bookmarks, so some of those entries will still appear. Secondly, it will clear more data than you probably want it to. In addition to deleting the history and emptying the cache, it clears the Downloads window, removes all cookies, and gets rid of any user names and passwords you may have asked it to save. As a result, you might prefer to clear out Safari's memory piecemeal instead. Start by choosing Safari: Empty Cache. Then choose History: Clear History. Then go into the Bookmarks area and clear out bookmarks you don't want.

Alternatively, adopt some new habits. The first would be to type more than just that first letter

g

when you want to hop to Google.com. Try

go

and see if that works. Or bypass the whole autofill thing by clicking on the Address field, pressing the spacebar once, and starting to type. Autofill doesn't work if the first character is a space.

[Senior Editor Christopher Breen is the author of The iPhone Pocket Guide (2nd Edition) and The iPod & iTunes Pocket Guide (3rd Edition).

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