

printout

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



GarageBand Demonstration

As you may recall, we watched a video tutorial on GarageBand '08 at our June meeting. That was intended to show us the basics in preparation for a live demonstration later in the year. The time has come for that demonstration. Our October meeting will include a presentation from Al Schulz, a GarageBand expert.

Al Schulz has played Piano & Keyboard for the Bob Troxell Big, Big Jazz Band & Dixieland Band component for the last 30 years. He composed the "Jazz Mass" which has been widely performed in whole or in part for religious area services over the last 20 years. He was Musical Director for Lancaster Catholic H.S. Alumni's Show "Stars on Juliette Avenue" in 2004. He composed a musical with his college room mate which was performed at Cumberland County Community College in New Jersey last year and will hopefully be performed in the Lancaster area for the benefit of the Lancaster Catholic High School next year.

The meeting is scheduled for October 20th. ☞

Meet us at

Gannett Fleming
Gannett West Building
209 Senate Ave ♦ Camp Hill

Tuesday, October 20, 2009, 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 © 2009, Keystone MacCentral, 305 Somerset Drive, Shiresmanstown, PA 17011.

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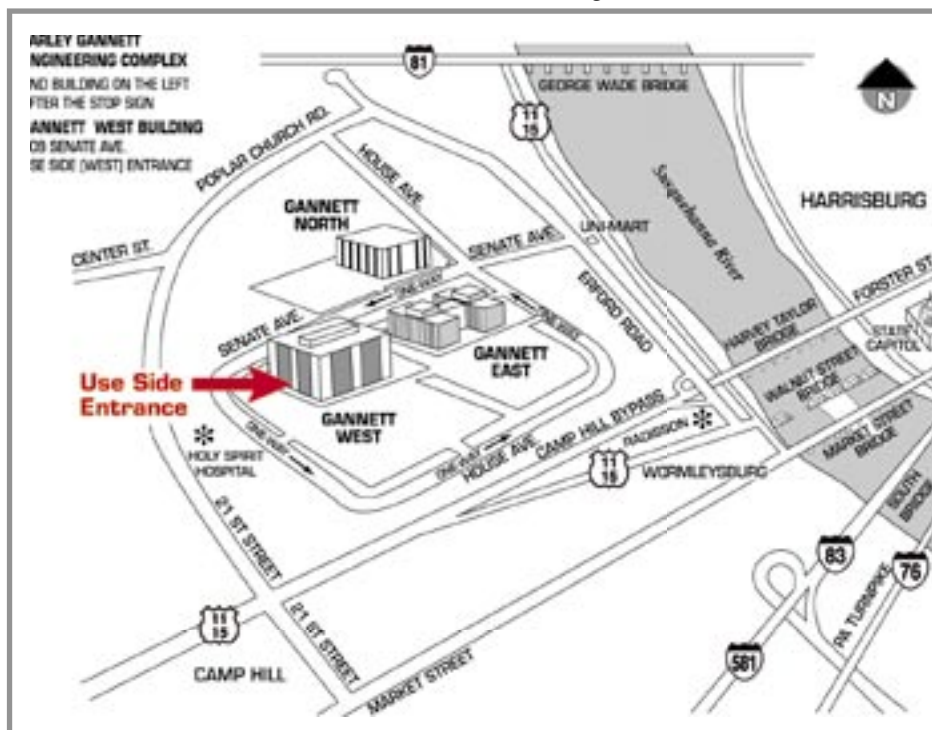
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by Gary Brandt, Recorder

Keystone MacCentral

Minutes

September 15, 2009

Business Meeting

The business meeting included a discussion about holding joint meetings or a possible merger with Hershey Apple Core. Ron Rankin had attended the HAC meeting where the subject was also discussed. He indicated that most HAC members seemed to be OK with the idea. Our members also seemed to recognize the work involved in the two groups putting 20 or so programs together each year.

One possibility that was mentioned was holding joint meetings at each group's current meeting site on an alternating month basis. Some concern about changing meeting days was voiced. Consensus of our members would be to keep meeting on Tuesdays. Ron also mentioned that he had announced our October program on GarageBand at the Hershey Apple Core meeting.

Q&A & Comments

Marc Soto had a question about a non-Apple battery he had bought for an iBook G4. The instructions that came with the battery indicated that it should be cycled down. That can be accomplished by turning off Sleep and letting the Mac run until the battery has cycled down. Tom Owad noted that newer Apple batteries no longer need to go through that process. Tom went online to MacSales.com to a section with information on each Mac's memory slots that would be useful for anyone looking to add memory to their Mac.

Don Fortnum was concerned that his partially completed iMovie 6 projects might not be able to be completed if he upgrades to Snow Leopard. He should watch the forums for advice before upgrading. Tom Bank II asked about using QuickTime Pro 7 in Snow Leopard. He has some plugins that would not work with the new QuickTime X installed with Snow Leopard. Tom Owad reported that QuickTime Pro 7 will work alongside QuickTime X. Someone asked about using FireWire with the new line of Mac-

Books. All new MacBooks except the MacBook Air include a FireWire port.

Tom Owad has updated his MacBook to Snow Leopard. He ordered the \$29 update disk. Although Apple's marketing material does not say this, the disk he received was a full version. Presumably one could update to Snow Leopard without having Leopard installed on their Mac. Tom noted some software conflicts he has encountered. Parallels 3 did not work for him after he had installed Snow Leopard. If you need to run Parallels, you should upgrade to Parallels 4 before installing Mac OS X 10.6. Flip4Mac was not yet updated for Snow Leopard and GPG Mail was not working for Tom. He noted that GPG Mail might not be upgraded. Tom said that in general 10.6 is faster and more stable than 10.5.

Tom also mentioned Mozy, an online backup service that costs \$4.95 a month for unlimited backups. Backups are encrypted with a key that Mozy does not have so they should be secure. He told us that files should not be manually removed from Time Machine backups because they are linked. We also discussed using Carbon Copy Cloner and Super Duper! to make clones of drives for backups.

Program Notes

We watched Macworld Vodcast 123 for a look at some Snow Leopard features. Dan Frakes noted some changes from Leopard. The current date can now be put in the menubar without a hack. QuickTime Player X has basic screen recording capability. Apple has updated Exposé. Windows are placed in a grid where they can be sorted. Another option allows windows to be minimized to Dock icons. You can then click and hold on a application's Dock icon to see previews of all open windows for that application. Tom Owad demonstrated and further explained some of these new features.

Snow Leopard sports an improved Stacks grid display. You can now dig into folders in the Stacks display. Text in documents opened in Preview is now selected one column at a time. Snow Leopard has text substitution built in, although it does not work with all applications. Tom noted that Apple's text substitution might not be robust enough to replace TextExpander or Typelt4Me.

The Services menu has been cleaned up in Snow Leopard. The Services menu is contextual, showing only those services that work with the current application. Individual services can be disabled if you will never use them.

Tom mentioned that MacinTouch has a Snow Leopard compatibility list. Apple applications are now 64 bit. There is better support for multi-processor Macs. Universal Access has been updated and Microsoft Exchange is now able to work with Apple's Mail and iCal calendars. ☑

The Art of iPhone Photography

It's common knowledge: the iPhone's 2-megapixel camera is nothing special. It was unimpressive when it shipped, and every day it suffers more and more in comparison with modern point-and-shoot cameras, or even the latest camera phones. The common feature wish-list among users is long, with many hungering for more megapixels, video capabilities, zoom, and autofocus. While the camera is certainly a much-appreciated convenience, it doesn't lend itself to taking the kind of breathtaking pictures we expect from modern digital cameras. (And yes, the 3-megapixel camera in the iPhone 3G S should be an improvement; we'll know more about that soon.)

But because of its convenience, the iPhone camera, like many mobile phone cameras, is often used merely as a kind of visual text message - the photo might not look great, but it gets the point across. People use it effectively to send images via email or Twitter that say, "Look at this giant burger I'm about to scarf," or even "There's a plane in the Hudson!" And it works pretty well with Evernote for visual reminders.

But, as we'll see, the iPhone camera's technical limitations haven't prevented some artists from making great art with it, much the way artists have long produced amazing images using old or unusual photographic equipment.

iPhone Photo Pioneers — There's a rich history of photographers using crude or basic tools, like pinhole or Holga cameras, to produce beautiful and memorable images. In many respects, those leading the charge of iPhone photo enthusiasm are seizing upon this tradition, though, ironically, their "crude" tool happens to be an expensive and sophisticated piece of technology. Among the leaders of this pack are a professional photographer, a self-described amateur, and a passionate online group of committed hobbyists.

Chase Jarvis is a professional photographer based in Seattle, Washington. In addition to running a photography studio that has garnered a slew of press and recognition,

Jarvis has taken to using his iPhone for making images whose origins you would never suspect.

"The best camera is the one that's with you," Jarvis writes, "As such, I take between 1 and 1000 iPhone images every day..." He goes on to say he uses only native iPhone apps for editing instead of the expected choice, Photoshop. Considering the crisp edges, bold colors, and dynamic compositions in his photos, it's a claim that can be hard to believe.

Greg Schmigel - a self-described amateur living in Maryland - is another well known name in the world of iPhoneography. While Schmigel is humble about his involvement in the medium, his Web site [Just What I See](#) has attracted much attention. Boasting hundreds of iPhone photos, most focusing on people in public places, Schmigel's site is a contemplation on the ephemeral beauty of the everyday.

JUST WHAT I SEE | THE IPHONE PHOTOGRAPHY OF GREG SCHMIGEL

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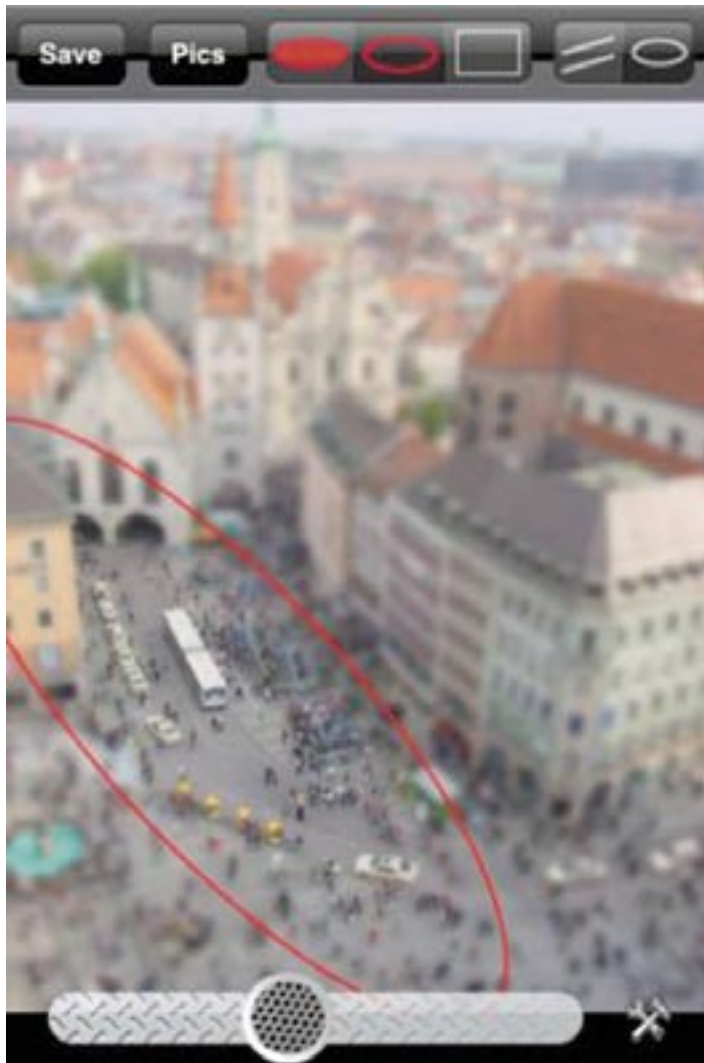


Another pool of iPhone camera talent gathers on Flickr, the [iPhone Photography Group](#). With a collection of nearly 6,000 photos and over 250 active members from around the world, the Flickr group is an excellent spot to expand your conception of what an iPhone photo can look like.

Tools of the Trade — At first glance, I couldn't figure out how many of these photos were made with the iPhone, but reading these sites made it clear that many were edited and enhanced using iPhone photo apps. This, of course, is good news since it means that you too can achieve similar results

without ever leaving your iPhone or purchasing expensive photo manipulation applications for the Mac.

The most popular apps, the ones that were referenced repeatedly in the Flickr group and whose effects became easy to spot, were [CameraBag](#), [ToyCamera](#), [Photonasis](#), [Photo fx](#), and [TiltShift](#). They enable users to apply various filters to alter the appearance of a photo. For example, Camera Bag offers filters that “age” a photo and replicate the appearance of, say, a Polaroid from the 1980s, or a crisp black-and-white shot from the 1960s. Similarly, ToyCamera approximates the warm lo-fi effects attained by, well, cheap toy cameras.



TiltShift offers only one effect, but it’s an intriguing one that replicates the effects of [tilt shift photography](#), which can result in creating pictures that appear to be photographs of miniature versions of the real thing.

These sorts of apps are widely popular for their capability to emulate various camera effects and aesthetics. In fact, at least one app has actually been rejected from the App Store for replicating too well a set of proprietary camera effects. The Poladroid phone app, developed by Paul Ladroid, was

rejected for containing features that “resemble Polaroid photographs.” Given the number of validated apps containing similar features, this one will have to be chalked up to Apple’s sometimes opaque review process (see “[Developers Could Turn Away from iPhone App Store](#)”, 2008-09-25).

One last app worth mentioning is Stepcase’s [Darkroom](#) (previously called Steadycam). Darkroom is interesting in that it helps you to take clearer pictures by using your iPhone’s accelerometer. When you press the shutter button on your iPhone, Darkroom waits till your accelerometer reads as being relatively stable before it snaps the shot - resulting in a clearer photograph, especially in low-light situations. Another app called [Night Camera](#) does exactly the same thing.

For more information on the world of iPhone photography and the apps that populate it, check out the [iPhoneography Blog](#).

Time-Traveling with Cameras – One thing I couldn’t help but notice after looking at hundreds of iPhone photographs is the apparent desire to mimic older photographic forms, techniques, and equipment. As I mentioned, apps like CameraBag enable users to transform their photographs into what appear to be images from another era.

Maybe the explanation for this phenomenon is a simple one: that low-resolution images taken with the iPhone are well suited to impersonate other forms of low-end photography? Yet perhaps the reason lies deeper; in the sudden and magical transformation from a mundane image to one with historical aura. Maybe it’s the wonder of time travel that’s implied - I may not be able to build a time machine, but I can make it look like I was 25 years old in 1970. Or it’s possibly just another face of the collective nostalgia we seem to have for our childhood eras.

Whatever the reason, it is curious that these effects are so ubiquitously utilized by users of what is one of the most innovative and forward-thinking technological devices we’ve seen in recent years.

Of particular curiosity to me is that many of the images I came across replicated the appearance of Polaroid instant film - an apt ancestor of the iPhone photograph given its instantaneous nature. But this relationship is also peculiar given that Polaroid, the company, announced this past year it will [no longer continue making instant film](#). The digital camera undoubtedly killed demand for physical instant film. Yet, people still seem to want exactly the aesthetic that their new tools put to out to pasture. It’s a strange example of new technology destroying the old, only to come to resemble it. It raises a funny question: in 10 years will artists be replicating the blurry pixelated quality of the 2-megapixel iPhone camera from which most people now seek to escape? 🗑️

Exploring Widespread SuperDrive Problems

TidBITS reader Jim Griffiths recently tipped us off to a widespread issue with SuperDrives: the inability of some drives to read or write to discs. In his particular case, a MacBook Pro began having difficulty reading all kinds of optical discs shortly after its warranty expired. This led him to start a [thread describing the problem](#) in the Apple Support Discussion forums.

As of this writing, that thread now contains over 225 messages and has been viewed over 30,000 times. Those are big numbers for the forums — and in fact a [similar thread](#) has garnered more than 19,000 views — and indicate that Jim is far from the only one experiencing this problem.

While combing through the posts reveals an unusually high number of failing SuperDrives, the symptoms, causes, and solutions offered don't add up to a clear picture of the situation.

Symptoms and Variables — These SuperDrive-related problems evince a few common symptoms: at some point, a user's optical drive fails to mount optical discs, usually ejecting a disc after a short period of attempting to read it. However, the systems affected, discs affected, and timing of the symptoms' arrival differ among users.

According to discussion forum posts, affected systems include the MacBook, MacBook Pro (13-, 15-, and 17-inch), MacBook Air, iMac and Mac Mini. The systems range in age from early 2006 to late 2009.

Specific optical disc drives that have been identified on the forums include:

- HL-DT-ST DVDRW GSA-S10N (the most commonly listed)
- HL-DT-ST DVDRW GWA-4080MA
- MATSHITA DVD-R UJ-85J
- MATSHITA DVD-R UJ-846
- MATSHITA DVD-R UJ-857E
- MATSHITA DVD-R UJ-857D
- MATSHITA DVD-R UJ-867
- MATSHITA DVD-R UJ-868
- MATSHITA DVD-R UJ-875

[The type of drive installed on your Mac can be checked by going to Apple > About This Mac. Click on the More Info button. Select the Hardware ATA line.]

Affected disc types vary: some users are able to mount DVDs but not CDs; other users, vice versa. Some are able to mount commercial CDs and DVDs, but not blank CDs and DVDs, and vice versa. Some are able to mount everything but blank CD-Rs, while others are able to mount everything but blank DVD-Rs. Some are unable to mount any

disc of any kind. Some find the issue is intermittent, while others find it constant.

When these problems start happening for users varies as well. Some users noticed problems with their SuperDrives from the start, others say things started going screwy after a couple months, many others complain symptoms didn't appear until just after the 1-year warranty expired, and still others claim problems appeared only after Snow Leopard had been installed.

This breadth of dates, affected drives, and related disc types makes isolating the problem extremely difficult. It's possible — even likely — that the problem is actually a variety of problems. Or it might be a single problem with a variety of triggers, leading to variable symptoms and start dates.

Unfortunately, it's devilishly hard to pin anything down based on anecdotal reports from users, especially in this case. For example, the reported timing of a problem's arrival is dependent on the user's awareness of the problem. For instance, if a user's SuperDrive was dodgy from day one, but wasn't used with a problematic disc type until a year later, the user might report the latter incorrect date as opposed to the correct date as the problem's origin.

Similarly, the great disparity over which discs can or can't be read may point to different problems, one problem with inconsistent symptoms, or inconclusive testing by users. If a user tries only commercial CDs and DVD-Rs, he may report that those discs don't work and make assumptions about other discs or simply not report on them — skewing, or at least complicating, the data.

Causes Offered— Given these symptoms, users have been putting their heads together, talking with Apple Geniuses, and consulting with other knowledgeable techies to arrive at some possible causes. As you might imagine, there are a variety of suggestions.

The basic debate seems to boil down to whether we're looking at a hardware issue or software issue. Some users believe the problem is simply rooted in faulty optical drives, while others are convinced problems were prompted by a recent firmware or security update.

A smaller group of users on the forums believe the installation of Snow Leopard is to blame, though many others are quick to point out that these problems have existed long before Snow Leopard.

Those arguing against faulty hardware as the underlying cause point to the fact that a wide variety of Macs and drives are affected. Supporters of a software-based theory

are also usually convinced that their specific problems began only after a major software update (though there's no consensus regarding which update might have caused the problem). A common argument is that it's possible a faulty update could have lowered the operating system's tolerance to dirt or dust on a disc.

Another user argued in support of a software cause when he found he was unable to mount a disc on his Mac even when using an external optical drive. When he moved the same external drive to a Windows machine, it worked fine.

As both symptoms and the arrival of the symptoms seem to vary, the efforts to pinpoint a single underlying cause haven't gotten far.

Solutions Offered — Despite ongoing debate over the causes of the problems, many solutions have been proposed. Below is a list of fixes suggested by forum users, all of which offer unpredictable degrees of success or failure.

- Purchase and employ a DVD/CD drive cleaning disc. These discs are designed to remove dirt, dust, and static buildup from your optical drive. Alas, most users who tried this solution found that the cleaning disc would be ejected before it could do any good.
- Use a can of compressed air to blow inside your computer's optical disc slot and clear away any built-up dust. While several users found this solution helpful, others claimed it didn't eliminate the problem, and at least one user found it actually made the problem worse — rendering him unable to insert a disc at all.
- One user recommended tapping right above the disc drive as it begins to slow down its reading prior to ejecting the disc. While this one user swore by this solution, others found it had no effect and, frustrated, suggested that tapping with a hammer might relieve more stress.
- Several users found that repairing permissions in Disk Utility and resetting PRAM/NVRAM cleared up their issues, though many others said this produced no positive effect for them.
- One user, whose discs weren't being ejected but instead simply weren't mounting, found success by changing the default system behavior for when a disc is inserted in the CDs & DVDs pane of System Preferences.
- Several users said that opening Disk Utility prior to inserting a disc solved their problem, though again, success with this solution wasn't widespread.
- Most — but not all — users who had their SuperDrives replaced — either under warranty from Apple, by paying out-of-warranty fees to Apple, or by doing it themselves — found their problems went away. Some reported needing multiple replacements or even a logic board replacement before the problem disappeared.
- For users whose machines are out of warranty, buying an external optical drive is a cheaper option than replacing the internal drive. Though, as mentioned above, at least some users found that they were unable to read discs even when using an external drive.

Summary — While the symptoms and solutions for these issues vary widely, they all revolve around the SuperDrive. If you are experiencing issues similar to the ones described

above, consider adding your experiences to the ongoing forum thread linked at the start of this article or contacting Apple (either [online](#), or by working with an Apple Genius at a retail store) to voice your concerns. We'll continue to monitor this issue, and we hope that Apple will take steps to correct it.

Apple to Investigate SuperDrive Issues

Last week I wrote an article summarizing a lengthy thread on the Apple user forums concerning faulty SuperDrives. The drives in question all share the symptom of an inability to read or write to discs, though, as I wrote, "the systems affected, discs affected, and timing of the symptom's arrival differ among users."

The slew of symptoms, suggested causes, and solutions that are reported in the forums make it difficult to draw any firm conclusion regarding these issues, save for the fact that what seems to be an unusually high number of SuperDrives are indeed failing. Even comments on both my original article and this article point toward there being some sort of deeper problem at play.

Here at TidBITS, we cover issues such as this in part because we hope that by drawing greater attention to them, we can accelerate their diagnosis and resolution. As Apple pays little, if any, official attention to their own discussion forums, the more people can talk about some problem — both via word of mouth and in the media — the less the company can ignore it. That's especially important with slippery issues such as this, since only Apple is capable of accurately determining what is going on.

In this case, it appears that Apple may finally be acknowledging that there is a widespread problem. A TidBITS reader, who has asked to remain anonymous, was told by an Apple Developer Relations representative that the company will be looking into the issue. Our reader writes, "I provided Developer Relations with a link to the article on your site and to the Apple tech support forums and the woman who called me promised to investigate."

In previous tech support phone exchanges, the same reader had been told that Apple employees are directed to treat every SuperDrive failure as an isolated incident, and were not allowed to consider press reports or user discussion forums when attempting to determine whether a problem was widespread.

Despite this, it seems odd that the widespread nature of the SuperDrive problems wouldn't have become obvious before this if Apple is indeed checking repair logs for commonalities. Perhaps in this case, reportage had a trickle-down effect.

While the support rep's assurance that an investigation would be conducted is far from an official announcement, it is a step in the right direction. We hope Apple will continue down the path towards doing the right thing for Mac users suffering from flaky SuperDrives. 🍏

What's New in Snow Leopard

In order to write “[Take Control of Exploring & Customizing Snow Leopard](#),” I’ve had to live fairly intimately with Snow Leopard, and naturally I’m brimming with impressions of what’s new, what’s not, and what it all means.

Snow Leopard’s very name, and its low upgrade price (urged and predicted with startling accuracy by TidBITS Swami-in-Chief Adam Engst in “[Why Snow Leopard Should Be \(Almost\) Free](#)” 2009-04-21), suggest that its primary purpose is to enhance Leopard with bug fixes and tweaks. What you should expect, then, isn’t a startling “whizzy” release, but a better Leopard. On the whole, a better Leopard is exactly what you get. Take Control Editor-in-Chief Tonya Engst commented while editing my book that Snow Leopard felt “familiar but faster.” That’s extremely apt.

For me, one reason why Snow Leopard feels so familiar is that my pet peeves were not addressed. (See my “[Six Things I Hate About Leopard](#)” (2007-10-26), as modified by “[Leopard 10.5.2: TidBITS Complains, Apple Listens, Sort Of](#),” 2008-02-12.) Translucent menus, the floating online Help window, the shiny Dock, the annoying Stacks behavior, the tiny Finder sidebar type size, the indistinguishable dull grey special-folder icons — they’re all still with us.

So much for my jealousy that Apple appears to do what Adam suggests but not what I suggest! (What is his secret, I wonder?) Let’s look at what has changed in Snow Leopard.

A Lot of the Good Is under the Hood – Snow Leopard feels speedier than Leopard, and some things (such as Spotlight searches) feel a lot speedier. It’s hard to know exactly why (and of course some of it could be due to my running a very clean system; new systems are always faster). Macworld Lab has been [gauging Snow Leopard speed](#) boosts with 16 speed tests of real-world tasks. They found speed improvements with half the tests, but little change with the other half.

To most users the technical reasons behind any speed increases won’t matter. The term “64-bit” has been much bandied about, but I’m skeptical of assigning too much credit to applications running in 64-bit mode. Bitness is really a developer-level feature; along with Grand Central Dispatch and OpenCL, it will probably matter more on future machines and in future software.

(Grand Central Dispatch makes it easier to write applications that take deliberate advantage of multi-core CPUs. OpenCL helps developers harness the processing power of modern graphics chips.)

The Finder has at long last been rewritten in Cocoa, and is a 64-bit application, but on the whole this won’t register with users beyond possible performance improvements. It still looks and behaves as it did in Leopard. (I was hoping Apple might incorporate some of the enhancements demonstrated by Path Finder; see “[Path Finder 5 Beats the Finder’s Pants Off](#),” 2009-06-29).

Snow News Is Good News – Another thing you won’t see, by and large, is older applications not working. Backward compatibility is always a worry, but in general the news here is good.

Of course there will be exceptions, and one can’t prove a negative; but during the writing of my book I used a lot of applications and preference panes that predate Snow Leopard, and they all ran just fine. In fact, I’ve deliberately tested Snow Leopard against some of the oldest, most worrisome software I use (including a system extension for my Tascam USB sound device), and it all works as it did in Leopard. You may be able to find Snow Leopard compatibility information about your third-party applications on [Macworld’s Snow Leopard Compatibility page](#).

If there’s going to be trouble, it’s more likely to strike from within Apple’s own repertory of upgraded applications. Apple had a kind of user mandate for Snow Leopard to fix bugs and make the interface clearer and cleaner, and where it has stuck to that strategy the results have generally been good. It is when Apple has varied from its mandate that the results feel premature and ill-advised.

My chief example is Preview, which has several new bugs that we noticed particularly because it’s the primary medium for Take Control readers. We’ll cover these elsewhere, but basically, Apple tried to play some cute games under the hood with “intelligent” URL recognition and “intelligent” copying, only it wasn’t so intelligent after all. Oh, and Preview now shows a PDF’s table of contents in the sidebar at a type size that is vanishingly tiny; perhaps Apple needs some older interface designers without such good vision.

Of course, it’s entirely likely that you’ll run into some older piece of software that doesn’t work properly in Snow Leopard, but developers are pushing out new releases as quickly as they can (they had no more advance notice of Snow Leopard’s early release date than the rest of us). So, if something doesn’t work, check for an update.

We Three Things – The changes you will see can be placed in two categories: a few large architectural changes, and a whole bunch of tiny tweaks. Let’s start with the former. There are three.

First, the new QuickTime Player, although acquiring some useful new capabilities such as recording screen activity, saves only in a few fixed formats and (aside from rudimentary trimming) can't edit movies at all. (And the interface for playing movies, without the traditional "controller" below the movie frame, is atrocious.) QuickTime Pro still exists, and its subscribers can keep using the older version of QuickTime Player, which is an optional install. So now there's a split three ways: the new QuickTime Player, the old QuickTime Player, and the old QuickTime Player with QuickTime Pro. This is not what I was hoping for; I'd heard a rumor that QuickTime Pro would be abandoned, so I thought we'd finally all be on one level playing field.

The second large architectural change is in the handling of services. Services let one application supply its powers to another; for example, a Grab service helps TextEdit paste a screenshot into a document. Most users either don't know that Services exist, because they're in an obscure hierarchical menu (ApplicationName > Services), or they mostly don't use them because there are so many of them, some with keyboard shortcuts (possibly conflicting, usually forgettable).

In Snow Leopard, there won't be so many Services menu items at once, because only services appropriate to the current context will appear. And in addition to the hierarchical menu, services will be discoverable as custom contextual menu items — Control-click in a TextEdit document to access the Grab service, for instance.

The downside of Services appearing as contextual menu items is that the existing form of custom contextual menu plug-in — such as [Nudge](#) or [Symbolic Linker](#) or anything else that lived in your ~/Library/Contextual Menu Items folder — won't work in Snow Leopard.

In addition, the revamped Keyboard preference pane lets you manage services for the first time ever. You can enable and disable them, and even change their keyboard shortcuts. Previously, this required trickery from an independent utility, like Service Scrubber (see "[Service Scrubber Cleans Services Menu](#)," 2008-06-06). Unfortunately, Apple's interface doesn't tell you which application supplies each service, as does Service Scrubber, so you might find yourself wondering what certain services actually do.

Third and finally, there's Expose, which is brilliantly redone. Windows are more neatly arranged, and labelled (though not, alas, with the owning application's name). Minimized windows are shown, and (in Application Windows mode) windows in other spaces.

There are new, easier ways to enter Application Windows mode — click-and-hold on a Dock icon, for example (though this may confuse users initially). With these and many other improvements I detail in my book, Expose actually helps you find a desired window. The proof: previously I never used it, but in Snow Leopard I use it all the time.

All Features Great and Small – In listing some of my favorite smaller Snow Leopard changes, let me remind

you: sometimes small is the new big. It isn't just that lots of small things can sum to a big one; it's that a tiny tweak that takes only a few words to say can make in practice all the difference between frustration and happiness.

- Snow Leopard's text engine now implements things like smart quotes, smart copy-and-paste, and data detectors, along with user-configurable text substitutions — like a built-in version of [Typinator](#), [TextExpander](#), or [TypeIt4Me](#) (see "[You Type, It Typinates](#)," 2005-06-27) — and spelling corrected as you type. These are available system-wide, but an existing application might need recompiling to access them. (The independent typing utilities, which work in all applications and have additional features and built-in word lists, will thus remain useful, especially if users want to go beyond Snow Leopard's capabilities.)

- Similar to the Command-Tab application switcher, there's now a keyboard layout switcher. For those of us who switch keyboard layouts (like me, when I'm alternating between typing English and Ancient Greek), this is way better than the Input menu.

- The date can be shown in the menu bar.

- In Time Machine, the previously obscure Action menu commands for pruning backups (I wrote about them in "[Prune Your Time Machine Backups Selectively](#)" 2008-05-01) now appear as contextual menus.

- In the Finder's Icon view, the icons can page through a multi-page PDF or play a sound or movie file, without opening a Quick Look or preview pane.

- The Finder Spotlight search window is configurable; your choice of view and customizations of that view (such as what columns appear in List view) are remembered the next time you search.

- Open and Save dialogs in List view are configurable: you can add and rearrange columns — and sort on them, of course. (To me, this is huge.)

There are lots more tiny changes, many of which I mention in the book, and others of which we're discovering as we go (see "[More Hidden Refinements in Snow Leopard](#)," 2009-08-27). From rewritten checkbox text to cool new preference tweaks, it all goes to make Snow Leopard a more pleasant experience.

Conclusions – A couple of days ago, TidBITS Managing Editor Jeff Carlson mentioned in passing that he had already installed Snow Leopard as the working system on his primary computer (a somewhat aged MacBook Pro). It wasn't even officially out yet, and Jeff was living in a Snow Leopard world. It's a measure of Snow Leopard's solid, reliable feel that I wasn't surprised at all.

The litmus test for Snow Leopard, indeed, is whether you'll install it and make it your primary system. In my case, the answer is clear: You bet! Snow Leopard really is a better Leopard, and that's just what I wanted. And I don't think Jeff and I are the only ones. I confidently predict that there's going to be a whole lot of upgrading going on. ☑

October Software Review

Freshly Squeezed Reviews: A Mac Diet

Review by Frank Petrie

Product: Xslimmer 1.7

Author: LateNiteSoft <www.xslimmer.com>

Requirements: OS X 10.3.9 minimum. Price: \$14.95

Test Rig: 13" MacBook Pro; 5GB RAM; OS X 10.6

Ah. Fall is here and Snow Leopard is in the air. But before you install/upgrade, you should really do a few things first. Naturally, perform a back up — RIGHT!? But then root around your virtual attic. Are there pieces of bric-a-brac just floating around in there? No longer used applications? Stray .plist's? Toss 'em.

Then your ready to use Xslimmer to finish up the job and get everything ready for Snowy.

"Xslimmer not only frees space wasted by unused code, it can even increase your Mac's performance. Some of our users have reported applications loading in almost half the time, because OS X does not need to analyze Xslimmer applications in search for the most suitable version of the code."

Doesn't Snowy deserve a nice clean bed?

THE JUICE

Xslimmer is great for separating Intel from PowerPC apps, giving you a head's up as to which applications will work with your new system. Also, it gives you a chance to see if any of your favorite PowerPC apps have been updated to Intel apps. You could do this manually through "About This Mac," but it would take much longer and besides, isn't your computer supposed to work for you?

Xslimmer also uses a downloadable blacklist, which tracks apps that do not allow themselves to be modified — to prevent piracy, usually. "Blacklisted apps will be ignored, and the list will be automatically updated as new troublesome apps are discovered."

And you could use Xslimmer like a stealth version of Time Machine. "Xslimmer save[s] a copy of your originals for you, and let[s] it delete old backups periodically so that you don't have to remember about them. Restore your app

quickly if you suspect it does not work correctly after being slimmed down."

And that's just a few of the bonus features.

THE PULP

Xslimmer has a very clean GUI. Read the Help file to familiarize yourself with the Toolbar Buttons and you'll be at it in no time. I cleaned out the flotsam on my machine in about half an hour. And my machine is littered with apps and extra code from the software reviews that I do.

Next step, will to eventually go through my apps and weed out the 32-bit from the 64-bit. (64-bit FCE? Hint, hint.)

THE RIND

Nada.

SUMMARY

This is an absolute toolbox necessity that should be used once a month if you're always adding apps. Even using it otherwise, couldn't hurt. I know that I'll run it when I do my monthly run of Disk Warrior. And don't forget that you can also use it for backing up your files.

For \$14.95, you'd have to be one dumb cat to pass this up.

RATING : 10 of 10

Apple Updates

iWork 9.0.3

September 28, 2009

System Requirements

- OS X 10.4.11
- OS X 10.5.6 and later

This update addresses general compatibility issues, improves overall stability, updates the help, and fixes a number of other minor issues in Keynote, Pages, and Numbers. The issues addressed include:

- Reducing file size of images that have Instant Alpha applied
- Managing file size when inserting some movies

- Working with dates and durations in the Chart Data Editor in Keynote and Pages
- Exporting to CSV from Numbers when using table categories

Improvements to comment notification and security in iWork.com Beta are also included in this update.

This update is recommended for all users of iWork '09

iTunes 9.0.1

September 22, 2009

System Requirements

- Mac OS 10.4.11 or later

iTunes 9.0.1 provides a number of important bug fixes, including:

- Resolves issues browsing the iTunes Store.
- Addresses a performance issue where iTunes may become unresponsive.
- Fixes a problem where iTunes may unexpectedly quit.
- Fixes a problem syncing Podcasts in playlists to iPod or iPhone.
- Fixes a problem sorting albums with multiple discs.
- Addresses an issue with the Zoom button not switching to Mini Player.
- Improves application syncing for iPod touch and iPhone.
- Genius is now automatically updated to show Genius Mixes.

iTunes 9 comes with many new features and improvements, including:

- An improved look and feel, including a new Column Browser for easily browsing your artists or albums, movies, TV shows, and more.
- iTunes Store has a brand new look, with improved navigation for quick and easy exploration.
- iTunes LP and iTunes Extras create unique experiences that feature exclusive interviews, videos, photos, and more – available with select album and movie purchases on the iTunes Store.
- Home Sharing helps you manage your family's iTunes collection between computers in your home. iTunes can automatically transfer new purchases, or you can choose just the items you want.
- Genius Mixes are created for you by iTunes and play songs from your library that go great together.
- iPod and iPhone syncing now allows you to organize your iPhone and iPod touch home screens directly in

iTunes. Syncing is now also more flexible, allowing you to sync individual artists, genres, or TV show and Podcast episodes.

- iTunes U items are now organized into their own section in your iTunes library.

- Sync with iPod nano (5th generation), iPod classic (Fall 2009), and iPod touch (Fall 2009).

- iTunes 9 also includes many other improvements, such as HE-AAC encoding and playback, more flexibility with Smart Playlists rules, simpler organization of your media files inside an iTunes Media folder, and more.

Logic Express 9.0.1

September 22, 2009

System Requirements

- OS X 10.5.8

This update improves overall stability and provides numerous fixes and enhancements.

Issues addressed include:

- Flex Markers can align & snap to MIDI notes
- Performing a punch-in recording with Replace Mode now behaves correctly
- The I/O plug-in adds an option for latency compensation

The update is recommended for all users of Logic Express 9.

Logic Pro 9.0.1

September 22, 2009

System Requirements

- OS X 10.5.8 or later

This update improves overall stability and provides numerous fixes and enhancements.

Issues addressed include:

- Flex Markers can align & snap to MIDI notes
- Performing a punch-in recording with Replace Mode now behaves correctly
- The I/O plug-in adds an option for latency compensation

The update is recommended for all users of Logic Pro 9.

Main Stage 2.0.1

September 22, 2009

System Requirements

- OS X 10.5.8

This update improves overall performance and provides numerous fixes and enhancements, including the Loopback and Playback plug-ins:

Continued on page 12

October Software Review

Issues addressed include:

- The Reverse option for Loopback now behaves consistently
- Pitchbend data is transmitted properly to external instruments
- A recording in Loopback can be used to define the tempo for MainStage
- The I/O plug-in is now available in MainStage

The update is recommended for all users of MainStage 2.

HP Printer Drivers for OS X 10.6 September 21, 2009

System Requirements
– OS X 10.6.1 or later

This download includes the latest HP printing and scanning software for Snow Leopard.

Brother Printer Drivers for OS X 10.6 September 11, 2009

System Requirements
– OS X 10.6.1

This download includes the latest Brother printing and scanning software for Snow Leopard.

Canon Printer Drivers for OS X 10.6 September 11, 2009

System Requirements
– OS X 10.6.1

This download includes the latest Canon printing and scanning software for Snow Leopard.

OS X 10.6.1 Update September 10, 2009

System Requirements
– OS X 10.6

The 10.6.1 Update is recommended for all users running OS X Snow Leopard and includes general operating system fixes that enhance the stability, compatibility, and security of your Mac, including fixes for:

- compatibility with some Sierra Wireless 3G modems
- an issue that might cause DVD playback to stop unexpectedly
- some printer compatibility drivers not appearing properly in the add printer browser

- an issue that might make it difficult to remove an item from the Dock
- instances where automatic account setup in Mail might not work
- an issue where pressing cmd-opt-t in Mail brings up the special characters menu instead of moving a message
- Motion 4 becoming unresponsive

Security Update 2009-005 Server (Leopard) September 10, 2009

System Requirements
• OS X 10.5.8

Security Update 2009-005 is recommended for all servers and improves the security of OS X. Previous security updates have been incorporated into this security update.

Security Update 2009-005 (Tiger PPC) September 10, 2009

System Requirements
– OS X 10.4.11

Security Update 2009-005 is recommended for all users and improves the security of OS X. Previous security updates have been incorporated into this security update.

Security Update 2009-005 (Tiger Intel) September 10, 2009

System Requirements
– OS X 10.4.11

Security Update 2009-005 is recommended for all users and improves the security of OS X. Previous security updates have been incorporated into this security update.

iMac Graphics FW Update 1.0.2 September 10, 2009

System Requirements
– OS X 10.5.2 or later

This update is for iMac computers with an ATI Radeon HD 2600 Pro or ATI Radeon HD 2400 XT graphics card installed, running OS X 10.5.2 or later.

Apple RAID Card Firmware Update September 10, 2009

System Requirements
– OS X 10.5.8 or later

This update provides several fixes, including:

- Reliability improvements during boot and power fail recovery
- Addresses a potential issue when rebuilding a degraded RAID 5
- Resolves an issue that can fill the on-board flash file system

- Improves battery handling and reporting

The update is recommend for all Mac Pro (Late 2006, Early 2008) and Xserve (Late 2006, Early 2008) systems with the Apple RAID card.

Security Update 2009-005 (Leopard)

September 10, 2009

System Requirements

- OS X 10.5.8

Security Update 2009-005 is recommended for all users and improves the security of OS X. Previous security updates have been incorporated into this security update.

QuickTime 7.6.4 for Mac

September 09, 2009

System Requirements

- OS X 10.4.9 or later
- OS X 10.5 or later

QuickTime 7.6.4 includes changes that increase reliability, improve compatibility and enhance security. This release is recommended for all QuickTime 7 users.

iPhone Configuration Utility 2.1 for OS X

September 09, 2009

System Requirements

- OS X 10.5.8

iPhone Configuration Utility lets you easily create, maintain, encrypt, and push configuration profiles, track and install provisioning profiles and authorized applications, and capture device information including console logs.

Configuration profiles are XML files that contain device security policies, VPN configuration information, Wi-Fi settings, APN settings, Exchange account settings, mail settings, and certificates that permit iPhone and iPod touch to work with your enterprise systems. For instructions on how to use iPhone Configuration Utility, see the iPhone and iPod touch Enterprise Deployment Guide, available for downloading at:

Enterprise Deployment Guide -

<http://www.apple.com/support/iphone/enterprise/>

Java for OS X 10.5 Update 5

September 03, 2009

System Requirements

- OS X 10.5.8

Java for OS X 10.5 Update 5 delivers improved reliability, security, and compatibility for Java SE 6, J2SE 5.0 and J2SE 1.4.2 on OS X 10.5.8 and later.

This release updates Java SE 6 to version 1.6.0_15, J2SE 5.0 to version 1.5.0_20, and J2SE 1.4.2 to 1.4.2_22. ☞

by Christopher Breen

Mac 911

Dealing with a full hard drive

Reader Matthew Mitchell feels the walls closing in. He writes:

I have a 17-inch MacBook Pro with a 320GB hard drive. (Formatted it has 297GB, but who's counting?) I'm down to 70GB and I heard that a full hard drive is a slow hard drive. I went looking for files to delete and found a fair few that were either hardly ever used or never used. Are there any secret locations on my hard drive that large and disposable files could be hidden?

There's lots to talk about here.

Let's start with the capacity of your hard drive. For just about ever, hard drive manufacturers have defined a megabyte as 1,000KB. The Mac OS defines a megabyte as 1,024KB. It's for this reason that a 320GB drive (using the 1,000KB measurement convention) appears to have much less capacity, because it's being measured by the OS using the 1,024KB definition. It's been reported that this behavior will change in Snow Leopard so that OS X 10.6 will show a 320GB hard drive having exactly that capacity.

As for a full hard drive slowing down your Mac, it's true. OS X uses your hard drive to swap files out of RAM and if there's very little room to do that, your Mac needs to work harder at the job and therefore slows down. Note, however, that at 70GB your 320GB isn't there yet. Continue to leave 10 to 15-percent of your hard drive free and you should be in fine shape.

Now, let's turn to lurking files and folders. In this regard it's worth your while to download a copy of The Omni Group's free OmniDiskSweeper. This utility will tell you how much space is consumed by folders and files on your Mac. When you find something you believe you can do without, simply highlight it and click on the Delete button in the bottom-left corner of the window.

Good places to start looking are in the /Library and ~/Library folders. For example, look in the Audio folder within the /Library folder and you'll find an Apple Loops folder that holds GarageBand's audio files, which take up

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Mac 911

many gigabytes of storage. If you don't use GarageBand, this folder can go. Similarly, iDVD's themes (found in /Library/ Application Support/iDVD) take up a couple of gigabytes of storage that you can free up if you never touch iDVD.

Because it doesn't go without saying for everyone, allow me to offer a couple of safety tips. First, don't throw out items in the System folder unless you really, really, really know what you're doing. And, more generally, don't toss out files and folders stored elsewhere on your Mac unless you know the purpose they serve. Doing so could land you knee-deep in the soup.

Streaming large movies

Reader Michael Quinn has a lot of questions regarding a single movie. He writes:

I have a 1.75GB MPEG-4 Quicktime Movie file. If I subscribe to MobileMe and upload it using iDisk, will friends and family be able to see it? If so, could they stream it, or would they have to download it? Or, is this file too large for them to access at all? If MobileMe can't do this, is there any other movie/video hosting app that could?

If you dropped it in your iDisk's Public folder your friends and family would be able to download it but not stream it. But let's back up a second. That's a honkin' big movie and one that, in its current form, I wouldn't advise streaming. First of all, it could take a long time to start streaming to your viewers. And, perhaps more importantly, if a lot of people access the thing, you could easily run over your MobileMe monthly data transfer limit (that limit is 200GB of data transfer for a standard MobileMe account).

If you want to go with MobileMe I'd severely slim down that movie. One good way to do that is to import it into iMovie '09, pull it into a project, and then choose Share -> MobileMe Gallery. In the sheet that appears you can choose a size that will work better for streaming — Tiny (176 x 144), Mobile (480 x 272), Medium (640 x 360), or Large (960 x 540) for a 720p HD movie.

From the sound of your question, you don't yet have a MobileMe account. If the MobileMe Gallery feature is the single thing that's pushing you toward this \$99-per-annum service, perhaps you could save some money by creating a YouTube account and posting your video to that fine free service using the Share -> YouTube command. As with MobileMe Gallery you have options for creating movies of different sizes and you needn't grant the general public access to your movie. Just make it a personal movie and then grant access to your family and friends.

No, you're not infected

A reader who wishes to remain anonymous is concerned about a very scary looking website. I attempt to calm the waters.

I used Yahoo to search for something and was sent immediately to the following [redacted] site. I believe my Mac was invaded and don't know what to do!

First, relax. Your Mac wasn't invaded, infected, compromised, co-opted, or conquered. If you'd clicked through a few of those dire pop-up warnings you might have been as amused as I was to see a phony Windows Security Alert appear on a Macintosh. What you've encountered is termed "scareware" — a scam that attempts to frighten those confronted with these pages into downloading a hunk of software that will allegedly deal with the problem.

The chain of events goes like this: A perfectly legitimate URL is hijacked by the scammers and you're redirected to the scareware page. That page is designed in such a way that several dialog boxes pop-up, warning you that your computer is infected. Click Cancel and you'll just get more warnings and an interface that makes it appear like your computer is being scanned. If you fall for the trick and click the buttons necessary to download the offered antivirus software, you'll pay for a product that is likely a hunk of malware (and I hate to think what happens to your credit card information). This malware is bad for Windows PCs but has no effect on Macs.

Regrettably, these pages are sometimes difficult to dismiss because the constant pop-up warnings prevent you from leaving. Clicking OK may get rid of the pop-ups so that you can close the window or tab (and no, doing so won't automatically download the software to your Mac), but I faced a situation with my wife's Mac (who was just concerned as you were) where I had to force-quit Safari to get away from the scareware page.

You can take some comfort in knowing that the search engine folks do their best to weed out this junk and that those who promote it have been — and will continue to be — prosecuted for engaging in such malicious and scammy activities.

[Macworld Senior Editor Christopher Breen is the author of "Secrets of the iPod and iTunes (6th edition)," and "The iPod and iTunes Pocket Guide (4th edition)" both from Peachpit Press

and

"OS X 10.5 Leopard Essential Training (video)" from lynda.com Find Chris' books at www.amazon.com and www.peachpit.com. Get special user group pricing on Macworld Magazine! Subscribe today at <http://www.macworld.com/useroffer> ☛