

printout

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

The Hype about Skype

by Eric Adams

When asked if I would do a presentation for KeyMac on Skype, I said, "sure... it's simple enough." But then they asked me to write the article as well. I don't claim to be an expert, so the information you will read in this article is mostly copied from other places on the Internet.

Simply put, Skype is a software application that allows users to make voice calls over the Internet. Calls to other users within the Skype service are free, while calls to both traditional landline telephones and mobile phones can be made for a fee using a debit-based user account system. Skype has also become popular for its additional features, which include instant messaging, file transfer, and video conferencing. The network is operated by a company called Skype Limited, headquartered in Luxembourg and partly owned by eBay.

To begin, you just need to download and install the Skype software, which you can get for free at www.skype.com. Registered users of Skype are identified by a unique Skype Name, and may be listed in the Skype directory. Skype allows these

registered users to communicate through both instant messaging and voice chat. Voice chat allows calls between pairs of users and conference calling, and uses a proprietary audio codec. Skype's text chat client allows group chats, emoticons, storing chat history, offline messaging and (in recent versions) editing of previous messages.

At our house, essential may

Skype has become an essential piece of software! As you know, our family has hosted many foreign exchange students from places like Belgium, Argentina and France (to name a few). We used to have a special international calling plan through Verizon that allowed us to make fairly inexpensive overseas calls for a relatively small monthly fee. But when we discovered Skype, we dropped that service. In fact we've dropped all our long distance at home, since we have international plans with our cell phones. It's looking more and more likely that we may someday eliminate our landline altogether. Now, thanks to Skype, we talk more frequently with our foreign friends. And the best part is we

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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 © 2010, Keystone MacCentral, 305 Somerset Drive, Shiresmanstown, PA 17011.

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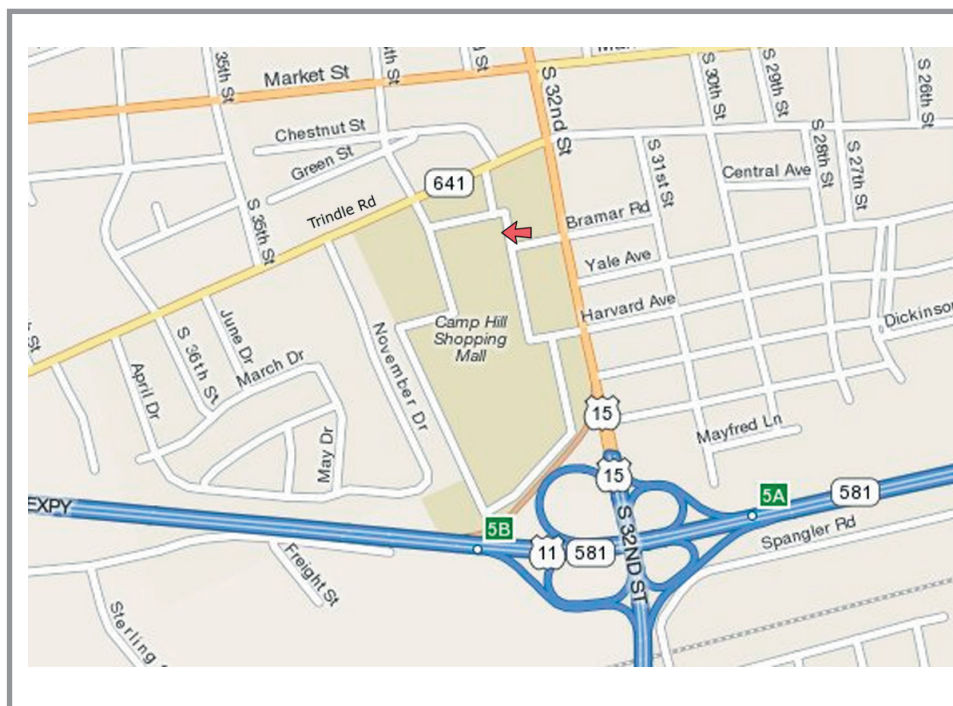
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can SEE them at the same time! Or wait... maybe the best part is that it's FREE! Tough to decide.



On the computer screen is Rossana Goette (Wendy's exchange student sister) and Marcellito (Rossanna's son). Both are located in Buenos Aires, Argentina

Come out to the September KeyMac meeting to see it for yourself. You'll discover just how easy it is to set up and to make a Skype call to anywhere in the world. We're going to try to have a couple international call examples as well as a local call, so you can see how awesome it can be. The quality of the Skype call is really just dependent on your Internet connection, and the video quality depends on your camera. Actually, I should say the video quality depends on the quality of the camera of the person you are "Skyping" (if I may use it as a verb). We've proudly discovered that the camera built into the iMac at our house has one of the best pictures out there.

I'm not sure I'll be able to answer all your questions, but I'll do my best. One question I know someone will ask is "Why is it called 'Skype'?" Answer: Skype was founded in 2003 by the Swedish entrepreneur Niklas Zennström and the Dane Janus Friis. One of the initial names for the project was "Sky peer-to-peer", which was then abbreviated to "Skyper". However, some of the domain names associated with "Skyper" were already taken. Dropping the final "r" left the current title "Skype", for which domain names were available. 📺

by Linda J. Cober

President's Corner

First of all, welcome back to KeyMac! It will be good to see all of you again and to continue our mission to explore strange new worlds, products, and apps created by the Mothership. Whoops, I may have gotten a bit carried away by my space theme, but you get the idea. 😊

School has started, albeit without me this year, the days are getting shorter, and fall is in the air, so it is time to resume our education. Many articles state the importance of keeping one's mind active and involved to stave off the mental perils of aging, so keeping up with all things Mac is not only interesting, it is healthy! Things keep changing all the time, and while one does not have to be cutting edge in everything, keeping ahead of the curve at least in some things means that one will not end up unable to function in today's world without a grandchild as a guide. You laugh at that, and well you might, because your interest in computers means that you do not walk into the library and ask, "Where did the card catalog go?" I have been educating some older friends who are in that situation, unable to locate a desired book or DVD in the local library. They know that they can ask for help, but they don't want to look dumb. After all, these individuals are well educated and were used to being in charge of things in their working years. Now, finding a movie on DVD means wandering up and down the rows, looking for the title alphabetically without knowing if that particular library owns the DVD or whether it is checked out or perhaps available for request at another library. I have been showing these friends how to access the information from the computers in the

library, but their unfamiliarity with computers makes it hard for them to remember what to do when I am not at their sides. To us, using a mouse is second nature, but to them, it is not. I will continue to help my friends whenever possible, but since one of my friends does not have a computer and the other has one but rarely uses it (it's a PC, based on her daughter's recommendation), practice time for them is either impossible or frustrating. What does all this have to do with us? Actually, there are several applicable points. First, volunteer to help friends who have been "left behind" by the digital age. Remember that one lesson will not be sufficient because unless one uses new skills, they are quickly forgotten. Next, invite them to attend a KeyMac meeting. Maybe they will see the advantages of a Mac and decide to buy their own. Finally, congratulate yourselves on your computer skills and remain determined to keep adding to those skills by attending KeyMac meetings. With our new location at the Camp Hill Giant, you can buy dinner or drinks downstairs and eat during the meeting. Food always improves any meeting, in my opinion! This month we will be learning how to use applications such as Skype to make free, long-distance calls through our computers. I am eager to learn this and to see if I can then convince my friends in Bonaire to set up Skype or Google Voice on their computer. That would save me a LOT of money on my phone calls to them! So, bring your curiosity and perhaps a friend or two and join us at 6:30 on Tuesday, September 21, for what should be an interesting and potentially money-saving meeting! (Cue music from the old TV show "Welcome Back, Kotter!") 📺

by Glenn Fleishman

Skype 2.0.1 Brings Background Calls to iOS

The latest version of Skype for iOS brings several long-awaited features, including background call continuation in iOS 4, where an in-progress call will continue to work even when you switch away from the Skype app. Version 2.0.1 is free, like its predecessors.



The revision also includes improved voice quality, and notifications for incoming calls when the Skype app isn't the active foreground program. This latter feature, coupled with the background call continuation, could make the Skype iPhone app into a serious competitor for standard phone calls.



Skype said in a [blog post](#) that it had dropped its plan to start charging a fee for each Skype-to-Skype call placed over 3G. When the company [first announced](#) it would set a price on internal network mobile VoIP calls, which is unprecedented across the rest of its services, it offered no explanation for why it would need to levy a fee, since the user was responsible for 3G data. ☹

by Glenn Fleishman

Place Calls using Google Voice - in Gmail!

Google Voice lets you forward calls to multiple numbers that ring at once, listen in to voicemail as it is being recorded, and bounce strangers into a confirmation stage, all for free. But it could not handle placing calls - until now. Google is rolling out [computer-based VoIP](#) calling.

This update offers free VoIP calls within the United States and Canada, although the feature will initially be available only to U.S. Google users. Calls placed to other countries are charged at reasonably low international rates.

Before this update, you would use Google Voice more as a hub for communication with a Google Voice phone number as the entry point. The service lets you associate phone numbers with an account, and choose behavior based on Caller ID, time of day, and other factors for what happens when someone calls the Google Voice number. It also offers free U.S. text messaging, and voicemail - along with hilariously weird voicemail transcription. (A message from my wife the other day read, "We've had a knife... Mark emergency in Indiana.")

You could place calls that would ring on one of your associated numbers, but you still had to have a phone nearby to make that work. (See "[Google Voice Opens to All Americans](#)," 22 June 2010.)

But because Google seemingly forgets which product is which, the site you use to make Google Voice calls is... Gmail. Yes, that's right. The webmail app that brought you Google Buzz and Google Chat (audio, video, and text) now brings you phone calls. Why not within, say, Google Voice? It's hard to understand that decision. (Sure, Google Chat is found within Gmail, and activating "real" phone calls there makes sense, but not as the first and only method to use it.)

You need to install Google's voice and video plug-in to use Google Voice in Gmail. Log in to your Gmail account, click Settings, and then the Chat tab, and follow the instructions there. With that set up, you will see a Call Phones item in Google Chat once Google activates the service for your account.

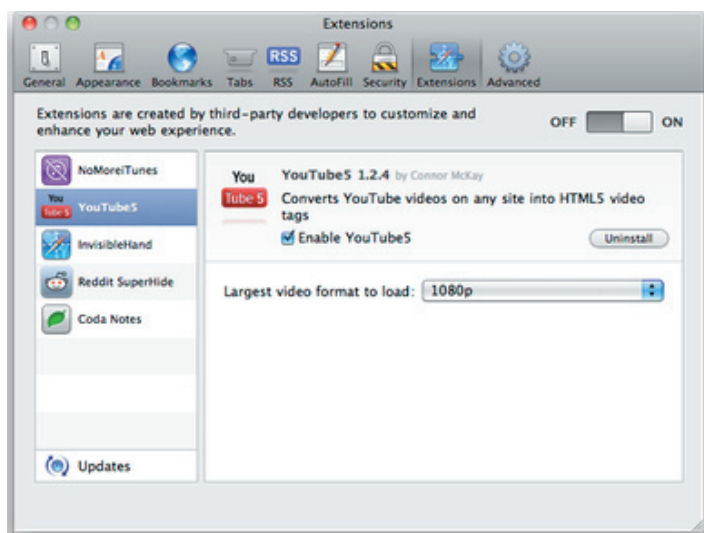
Google's new offering competes directly with Skype, which charges fees to have an inbound phone number (or more than one) associated with your Skype account, and has a fixed-rate U.S./Canada calling plans. Skype does offer one notable advantage so far: it's available for iOS devices, and Google Voice still remains missing there. ☹

Five Essential Safari Extensions

Web browsers like Firefox, Chrome, and even Internet Explorer have offered support for add-ons and extras since soon after their respective releases. Apple's own Safari browser, however, took seven and a half years to gain support for extensions, which arrived with the recently released Safari 5.

Apple launched its own [directory of Safari extensions](#) last month; before then, Jonas Wisser's [Safari Extensions blog](#) was the easiest place to find new extensions - but both sites can feel a bit overwhelming. There are hundreds of Safari Extensions, with more arriving every day, so it can be hard to find the signal in the noise. I've already dug up several extensions that vastly improve my own daily Internet surfing - perhaps they can help you, too.

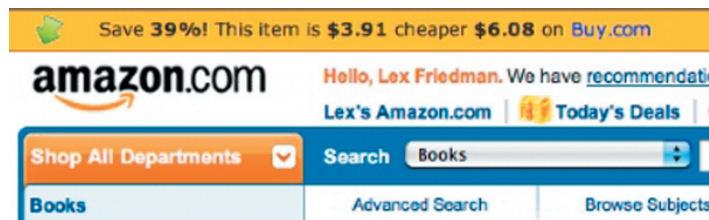
YouTube5 – Connor McKay's [YouTube5](#) is one of my favorite Safari Extensions - but don't judge the extension by the creator's Web site. Enabling this extension dramatically reduces the number of Flash videos you'll encounter on the Web. YouTube videos, whether on YouTube itself or embedded elsewhere, will no longer use Flash; rather, they will leverage the magic of HTML5, which should mean much lower processor demands (and thus less power consumption) for your Mac.



The YouTube5 extension includes a single preference: you can choose the largest video format the extension should load when available: 360p, 720p, or full high-definition 1080p.

InvisibleHand – Created by the eponymous shopping site, the [InvisibleHand](#) extension makes me happy because I love saving money. Before I make a purchase online, I

spend considerable time searching to make sure I'm getting the best deal possible. Or, at least, I used to.



With InvisibleHand installed, you see a small yellow bar across the top of some shopping sites. That bar tells you how much you could save if you instead purchase that product from another source (it also tells you if you're already at the retailer with the best price). For example, when I looked at the iPod touch on Amazon.com, InvisibleHand suggested that I could buy it elsewhere for \$37 less - a savings of more than 20 percent.

When InvisibleHand works, it's awesome, and can save you some serious coin. Unfortunately, the extension does have a few weaknesses: You can't configure which other online retailers it should search, so if you'd prefer not to see, say, eBay price comparisons, you're out of luck.

NoMoreiTunes – Another Safari extension that works to eliminate one major Web-browsing annoyance goes by the catchy name of [NoMoreiTunes](#). Whether you're clicking on an iPhone or iPad app link, or an iTunes song or movie, you always know what to expect: After the Apple-hosted preview page loads, then iTunes opens, and it (slowly) loads the content you were after.

Well, that's what happened in the era before NoMoreiTunes. Now, when I click those links, I see Apple's preview page for the given content (like this [one](#)) - and iTunes remains undisturbed. It's delightfully refreshing. It would be nice if Apple would code its iTunes Preview Web site so it doesn't pop open iTunes anyway, but until Cupertino comes to its senses, NoMoreiTunes makes a great sanity restorer.

[Editor's note: It appears that Apple has indeed come to its senses and changed this behavior on the iTunes Web site after the initial publication of this article, so there's no need for NoMoreiTunes any more. -Adam]

Ultimate Status Bar – Safari's status bar - the strip at the bottom edge of your browser window that displays a URL when you hover the cursor over a hyperlink - is off by default, but once you turn it on, it's always there. In some

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Five Essential Safari Extensions

browsers, like Google Chrome, the status bar appears only when necessary when you move your cursor over a link.

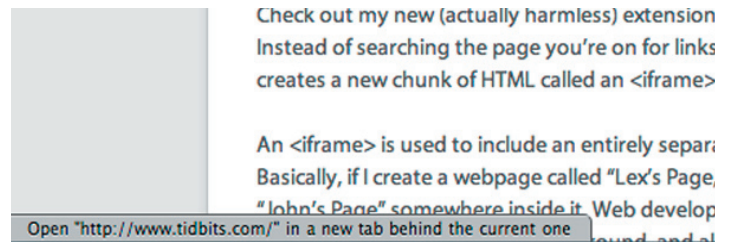
Ultimate Status Bar emulates that behavior, freeing a few precious vertical pixels to show you more of your Web pages. On top of that, the extension offers numerous benefits over Safari's default status bar. For one thing, you can change its appearance; the extension includes ten themes, from the subtle Classic to the technicolor, unicorn-laden Sparkle. Beyond that, it shows the destination URL's favicon and even expands shortened URLs like those you'd find on Twitter, so you can know where you're going before you click. And the extension can even show the size of a linked file to download.



A promising competitor called **Gentle Status Bar** offers similar functionality, but hews much more closely to Safari's own design aesthetic, with the added benefit of reflecting when you're holding down keys that will make the clicked link open in a new window or tab. But it lacks some of Ultimate Status Bar's niceties, like revealing the favicon or file size for the link in question.

AutoPagerize — Many Web sites break their articles into separate pages, to encourage extra page views (which lead to extra ad impressions). **AutoPagerize** magically makes that extra clicking (and waiting for pages to load) go away. Subsequent pages of the article you're reading simply load right into the page, waiting for you to scroll down and read them. The Japanese developer's Web site is a bit tough to parse, but I needed only to install the extension to start using it successfully.

But Wait, There's More — While those five extensions are the ones that most regularly impact my daily Web surfing, there are plenty of others. John Siracusa's stand-alone **Reload Button**, an unofficial **Instapaper** button called **Instafari**, the **Reddit**-improving extension **Reddit SuperHide**, and Panic Software's **Coda Notes** all provide handy features and are worth trying out. **Apple's own directory** includes new extensions from big partners like Twitter, The New York Times, and Major League Baseball; those are certainly worth a look, too.



In another, not-too-distant life, I was a Web developer. Since Safari Extensions just use familiar bits of Web code - like HTML, CSS, and JavaScript - I realized that I could create some for my own purposes. To date, **I've built two**. The first, **Facebook Improved**, removes considerable amounts of cruft from that social networking site - invasive ads, unnecessary elements (that ever-present callout to create an event), and the like. It also changes the site's font to Helvetica, and makes subtle changes to the placeholder text on certain fields to ensure you never get confused about whether you're posting on someone else's Wall or your own.

My other extension, **Affiliatizer for Safari**, automatically rewrites Amazon links across the Web so that they include the Amazon affiliate code of your choosing. The extension, which affects only links that don't already include affiliate codes of their own, accepts up to three affiliate codes, and picks one at random on each page view. It's a nice way to reward yourself, or a friend who has an affiliate code. By default, the app includes my affiliate code and those of our friends John Gruber and Jason Snell, until you save your own preferences instead.

But ounce for ounce, no extensions benefit my day-to-day Web surfing as much as YouTube5, InvisibleHand, NoMoreiTunes, Ultimate Status Bar, and AutoPagerize. Try them out, and you'll see for yourself how handy these tools are when you're on Safari. And of course, if you decide you don't like what a particular extension does for you, just visit the Extension pane in Safari's Preferences window to uninstall it. ☒



Apple Spreads Magic to New Trackpad, Battery Charger

Apple introduced something new last week: the Magic Trackpad, a wireless touch-sensitive trackpad that brings Multi-Touch gestures to the company's desktop Macs.



Matching the height and depth of the Apple Wireless Keyboard, the [Magic Trackpad](#) enables gestures like swiping, pinching, and rotating items in programs that support them. Apple's Web page notes that the "entire surface is a button that clicks," and according to Dan Frakes at Macworld, the trackpad clicks via buttons in the feet.



The trackpad communicates with the Mac via Bluetooth and is powered by two AA batteries. It also reduces its power consumption when inactive, and includes an On/Off button.

[The Magic Trackpad and Multi-Touch Trackpad Update 1.0](#) (75.09 MB) enables the Multi-Touch controls (and offers options for choosing which ones to activate) in the Trackpad preference pane. It also provides inertial scrolling and three-finger drag gesture support to a [number of MacBook and MacBook Pro models](#).

The Magic Trackpad costs \$69 and is available now.

Apple Battery Charger — Here's something unexpected. Apple also unveiled the [Apple Battery Charger](#), a \$29 charger that includes 6 rechargeable AA batteries and powers two at a time. Apple claims the Apple-supplied NiMH batteries have up to a 10-year lifespan, with a self-discharge rate that retains 80 percent of their original charge even after sitting unused for a year. The charger works with other companies' NiMH batteries, too.

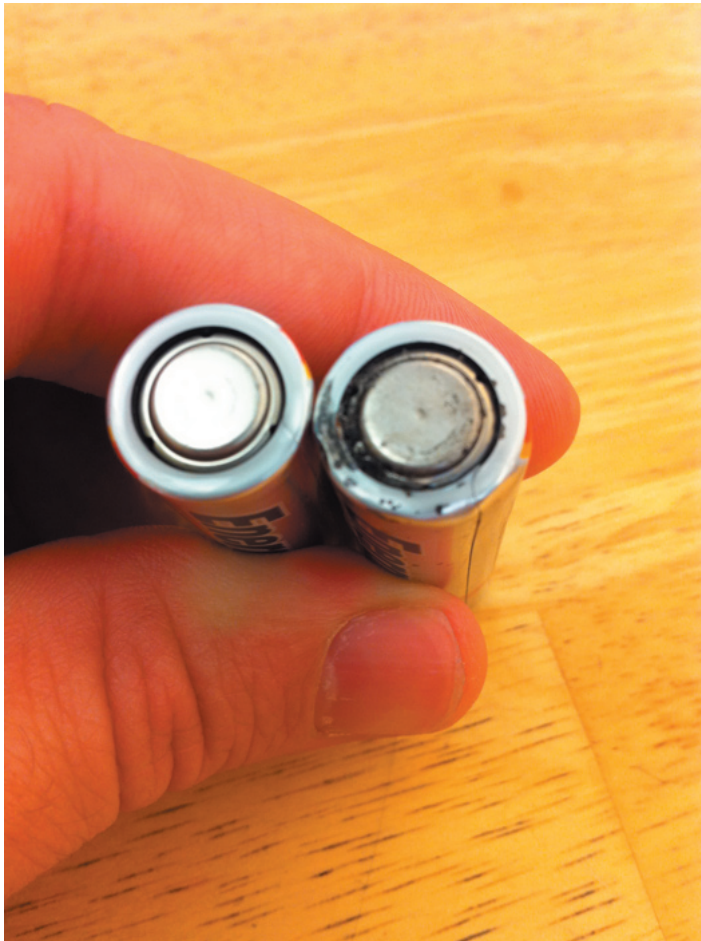


What sets Apple's charger apart is the amount of power it uses once its batteries have been charged: 30 milliwatts (mW), compared to 315 mW for other chargers. The reduction in the "vampire draw," as Apple terms it, promises to reduce your house or office's overall energy consumption. The Apple Battery Charger is available now. 🗑️

A Rational Response to a Magic Trackpad Glitch

I received a [Magic Trackpad](#) for review from Apple last week, and immediately ran into a problem: it wouldn't turn on (for more details about the device, see "Apple Spreads Magic to New Trackpad, Battery Charger," 27 July 2010).

I tried pressing the power button once, pressing and holding it, and trying again a few times - but nothing worked. So I opened the battery compartment and discovered that the battery on top, a typical Energizer alkaline AA, was corroded.



Now, realize we're talking about an Apple product, and it's common knowledge that Apple is infallible and everything the company creates is perfect... except of course when it isn't. So what's the obvious response to this situation? Product recall? Class action lawsuit? Angry blog post

demanding a redesign of not only the Magic Trackpad, but also everything Apple uses that includes a battery? I suppose I should also include frothing, seething rage in here somewhere.

Or not. Because I like to think I live in the real world.

The batteries in this Magic Trackpad were no doubt installed in a factory in China. Although it came from Apple's public relations department, the box was shrinkwrapped, so any consumer could have gotten this particular Magic Trackpad.

According to [Green Batteries](#), more than 15 billion batteries are produced and sold worldwide every year. When talking about quantities like that, there are bound to be a sizable number that don't work or have some minor manufacturing defect, even considering quality control procedures.

We see this all the time with tech products, and, yes, Apple products too. Someone's [iPhone 4 doesn't work correctly](#) or a Mac arrives completely dead on arrival - and some people freak out. As a longtime follower of Apple products and news, I've seen it over and over again.

In this case, because the trackpad came from Apple PR, I sent an email to my contact explaining what happened; she asked for the serial number and I passed that along. In the extremely unlikely chance that there's a wider battery supply problem, Apple can use that information to track down the source. If I had purchased the trackpad at an Apple retail store, I'm sure I could take it back and either be given a new trackpad or just a new set of batteries.

Oh, and then I put a new battery in, after which the Magic Trackpad worked perfectly. End of story, and no need for drama. ☺



Matias Tactile Pro 3 Keyboard Returns to the Alps

Over six years ago, I reviewed the original Tactile Pro keyboard from Matias, and I think my article's title summarized things nicely - "[The Majestic Alps and the King of Keyboards](#)" (29 March 2004). Put simply, the Tactile Pro was the best keyboard I had used in a very long time, in the genre of loud, clicky keyboards with great tactile feel. I don't run any software that records how many keystrokes I type, but it's a lot, and I had basically typed that keyboard into the ground. In fact, I typed two of them into oblivion, since Edgar Matias had initially sent me a prototype without a case, and after a key failed on the production unit that I reviewed, I shoehorned the prototype into the production unit's case and used it for another few years.

Now, you might wonder why this happened (surely a keyboard should last for more than a few years) and why I personally went to such lengths (surely Matias would have given me a new keyboard to test if I'd asked).

Although the Alps keyswitches that give the Tactile Pro its excellent feel were historically reliable, Edgar Matias had to order a million keyswitches to convince the Alps factory in Taiwan to keep the tooling active for him. However, that tooling was old, and I believe the reliability of the keyswitches suffered. I'd had a key fail quickly on the first production unit I tested, and although the second production unit that I reviewed performed well for some years, it too eventually died, followed by the prototype I had pressed into service.

So why didn't I just get another one? After I wrote my review, Matias was utterly swamped with orders and went through the 9,000 or so keyboards they'd ordered fairly quickly. So by the time I needed a new one, they had moved on to the Tactile Pro 2.0 keyboard, among other products. I tested the Tactile Pro 2.0 briefly, but it was maddening to use due to keyboard matrix problems. Let me explain.

When you press a key on a keyboard, a circuit is closed and the keyboard controller sends the keystroke to the operating system. But each key does not get its own independent circuit. Instead, up to four keys generally share a circuit, and the keyboard controller figures out which of the keys was pressed by the way the current flows. The problem comes when multiple keys are pressed - specifically when three of four keys in a particular group are pressed. At that point, with a simple circuit, the keyboard controller gets confused and believes that the fourth key was pressed - a so-called "phantom key." Most people don't press three

keys at the same time intentionally, but if you type quickly, the effect is the same. For those with some electronics background, [Dave Dribin explains the system](#).

Every keyboard has a matrix, and mostly they're pretty good, such that you don't notice. Unfortunately, the Tactile Pro 2.0 had a bad matrix, so much so that my speedy fingers ran into numerous phantom keys that turned "TidBITS" into "TidBIT<S", "Adam" into "AĀam", and "from" into "frlom", among others. Needless to say, the phrase, "Adam from TidBITS here..." was nearly impossible to type.

Apparently, the manufacturer that Matias used had other problems, and the Tactile Pro 2.0's reliability was poor overall. So Matias quickly stopped selling them and pulled them back from distributors. That's when the wait for the Tactile Pro 3 started.

Tactile Pro 3 Ships – The wait ended in February 2010, when Edgar sent me an early unit from the first production run of the [Tactile Pro 3](#). It completely solved the phantom key problem, and, thanks to the continued use of Alps keyswitches, felt just like the original Tactile Pro.

Alas, the integrated USB 2.0 hub in the Tactile Pro 3 was flaky, causing lots of USB connects and disconnects. (I use the [HardwareGrowler](#) utility that comes with Growl so I can tell what's happening at a low level on my Macs.) Trading that keyboard in for a second one reduced the problems, but they didn't go away entirely. Apparently, about 3 percent of the keyboards in Matias's first production run had bad hubs, so Matias subjected the hub design to more stress testing for the second production run and when that came in a month later, replaced all the keyboards that were flaky, including mine.

I was excited to see if the new Tactile Pro 3 eliminated the USB problems. Unfortunately, when I plugged it into my powered D-Link hub, it didn't work at all. However, when I connected it directly into my Mac Pro, it worked perfectly. When I asked Edgar about my findings, he said that daisy chaining USB 2.0 hubs - remember, the keyboard has its own USB 2.0 hub - was generally a bad idea. Oops.

That got me thinking that perhaps my D-Link hub itself had gone bad, and indeed, when I removed it from the system and plugged everything into either the Mac Pro or one of the Tactile Pro 3's three USB ports, my USB problems disappeared entirely. So it's possible, even likely, that the first two keyboards were not faulty, but were merely

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Matias Tactile Pro 3 Keyboard Returns to the Alps

interacting badly with a failing hub. It's amazing I still have my hair left.

With the spurious USB issues out of the way, let's turn to the Tactile Pro 3 as a keyboard, although there isn't much new to say here. It's a big, traditional keyboard, with 15 F-keys just waiting to be assigned their duties with Stairways [Software's Keyboard Maestro](#) macro utility, which I adore for this sort of task. There's an inverted T of arrow keys, along with the usual Help, Forward Delete, Home, End, Page Up, and Page Down keys above it. Finally, the keyboard has a full numeric keypad, and above that, dedicated Volume, Mute, and Eject keys. There are no application-specific keys, or other media keys, but I've never seen the point in those - I'm happy to bend generic F-keys to my will.



Each keycap is gently sculpted to hold your fingertips, in contrast to many modern keyboards that have entirely flat keycaps. And printed on each keycap is not just the character and shifted-character that will be typed, but also the characters that result from pressing Option and Shift-Option in conjunction with the key. In other words, those of us in the United States can just look at our keyboards to see that typing the euro symbol (€) requires pressing Shift-Option-2. Those symbols aren't painted onto the keycaps, they're laser etched, so they shouldn't wear off.

If you, like me, are a fan of clicky keyboards with the classic feel of the old Apple Extended Keyboard, you'll love the Tactile Pro 3. It feels great, and just like the original Tactile Pro. My perception is that I type more accurately and more quickly than on other keyboards I use regularly, such as the one in my MacBook.

There's no question that the Tactile Pro 3 is loud - if you're taking notes while on a conference call, people will know you're typing. It won't wake the dead, but I recommend closing doors between you and anyone who is actually sleeping. That's personal experience speaking there - Tonya will make up for her motherhood sleep deprivation eventually, but it hasn't happened yet.

The case has been improved from the original Tactile Pro, so the fit and finish is better, and it will prevent dust and

crumbs from sneaking inside better, which turns out to be important for reliability with people who regularly eat and drink at the keyboard (still a bad idea). It has a pair of feet underneath for increasing the angle, but that's usually bad for your wrists, so I don't recommend using them. The white keys can get a little dirty from finger oils, but that's universally true and they're easily cleaned with some rubbing alcohol and cotton swabs.

The integrated USB 2.0 hub works fine. It isn't powered, so I suspect it works best with low-power devices like mice, flash drives, and digital cameras. Matias says the hub won't charge the iPhone and technically a non-powered hub shouldn't charge, but in an unexpected bonus, my iPhone does get enough juice to charge. The hub definitely can't charge the iPad, which needs a lot more power, but it syncs fine.

There's little more I can say. If you know you like clicky keyboards with that old-school feel, and you're in the market for a new one, you won't go wrong with the Tactile Pro 3. It's not cheap as keyboards go, but there's a reason that cheap keyboards rely on cheap rubber dome keyswitches instead of the Tactile Pro's precision Alps keyswitches. The keyboard has a 1-year warranty, and from what I've heard from customers, Matias has been great about replacing defective keyboards.

A U.S. version of the keyboard is available now for \$149.95. You can buy directly from Matias, which adds \$10 shipping, and other retailers have it for somewhat less (the cheapest I found was \$117.52 via [Amazon.com](#)). German and Japanese versions of the Tactile Pro 3 will reportedly be shipping next month for the same price. Overseas shipping costs for orders placed through Matias will be high, but if you ask to be notified via their [e-mail form](#), they'll let you know when local resellers in Germany and Japan have the keyboard in stock. You can also ask for models for other countries there, or just direct your questions and feedback at Matias's [Tactile Pro Twitter account](#). ☒



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GadgetTrak 3.0.3

<http://www.gadgettrak.com/products/laptop/>

Requires OS X 10.5, 10.6/10.5. Works with PPC and Intel.
Licenses start at \$34.95 for 1 year.

GadgetTrak 3 Locates Stolen Laptops

by Lex Friedman

Cars use LoJack. For iPads and iPhones, there's MobileMe's Find My iPhone feature. But how do you find your MacBook or MacBook Pro if someone steals it? GadgetTrak Laptop may be the perfect solution.

The concept works like this: You install GadgetTrak on your Mac, and if it's stolen, you activate the software remotely. Then, GadgetTrak aims to help you find your Mac, even providing photos of the thieves themselves. That's the pitch, at least. But how well does it work? I'm hesitant to test this by leaving my laptop at Starbucks, but

GadgetTrak's blog links to news stories about the company's software helping recover a number of stolen laptops across the country, including a theft ring that was targeting schools in Portland, Oregon.

Nevertheless, I wanted to test GadgetTrak to the extent I could without endangering my Mac. The first step is deciding [which license](#) you want, since what you're really buying is GadgetTrak's monitoring service. You can order GadgetTrak Laptop for \$34.95 for one year, or \$74.95 for three years. A Family Pack, which lets you install the software on up to five Macs and PCs, costs \$99.95 for one year, and \$199.95 for three years.

Once you've decided, you download and install the software, which, on the Mac, lives mostly in System Preferences. Note that a restart is required after you first install GadgetTrak. When I initially tried to install the software, its preference pane didn't appear properly after my first reboot; after I ran the uninstaller and then re-ran the installer itself, everything worked perfectly. The company said it hasn't seen this problem, but since GadgetTrak 3 has just come out, it would be watching for similar installation issues in its support system.

System Information	
Device Description	Lex's MBP
User Name	Lex Friedman
Host Name	lex-friedmans-macbook-pro.local
MACAddress	34:15:9e:10:38:a8
Memory	4 GB
Hard drive	Serial: 100203FC3410NEJRJNEJ
	Size:298.09 GB
Hard drive	Serial: KZ8A1OG0159
	Size:
Network Information	
External IP Address	67.84.194.168
Internal IP Address	10.0.2.10
WIFI based location	
Latitude	40. [REDACTED]
Longitude	-74. [REDACTED]
Map	http://maps.google.com/maps?q=40.[REDACTED],+-74.[REDACTED](Approximate+Device+Location)&iwloc=A&hl=en

Continued on page 12

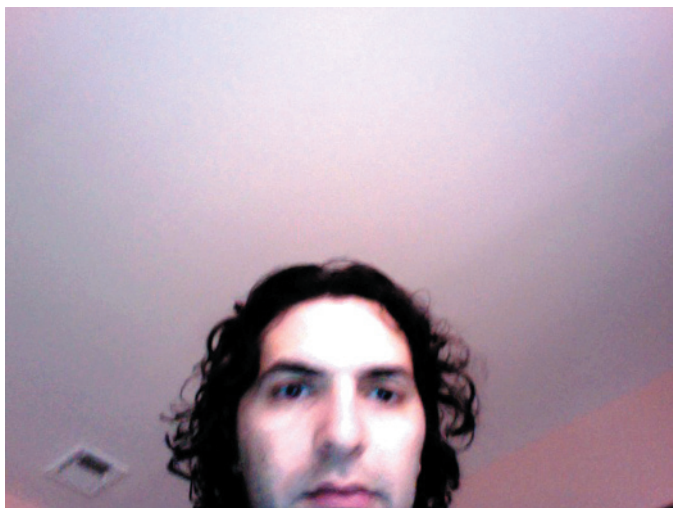
September Software Review

Configuring the software after installation isn't particularly difficult or even time-consuming, but it does require several steps. You enter your license code and provide a name for your Mac in the preference pane, and then you also need to create an account on the GadgetTrak Web site and verify your email address. You receive numerous confirmation email messages as you work through this process. After you've created your account and activated the GadgetTrak preference pane, you're good to go.

And the clever developers at GadgetTrak know exactly what you're thinking at this point: Is it working? Thus, the preference pane sports a Test Tracking button, which almost instantly kicks back an email message to you showing your Mac's geographic location. GadgetTrak figures out where your laptop is via Wi-Fi positioning. In my testing, the tool was astonishingly accurate at determining my location. (See "System Information".)

Obviously, though, you can't really put GadgetTrak through its paces unless your Mac is stolen. If that happens, you activate the tracker via the Web site, and GadgetTrak gets to work. In my testing, while the Test Tracking button worked immediately, it took about 25 minutes for the service to update me on my "stolen" Mac's location when I turned on live tracking.

Again, though, once it was active, GadgetTrak was impressively precise at identifying my laptop's whereabouts. Beyond your stolen Mac's location, GadgetTrak also snaps photos using the laptop's built-in iSight camera and sends them to you via email. When I had the software running in thief-tracking mode - and then forgot all about it - it managed to snap a creepy photo of me looking shifty without my noticing.



Once you activate tracking, GadgetTrak continues to send you periodic updates on your Mac's whereabouts whenever the laptop is powered on and connected to the

Internet. The bad guys can't disable the tracking without your administrative password, and very likely wouldn't even know it's happening. For those especially concerned about privacy, you can configure the software to use your own custom mail server settings when it sends you tracking email messages and photographs, instead of relying on GadgetTrak's servers.

That GadgetTrak's tracking is powered entirely via a Flash-free Web site is great; you can use the site from your iPhone or iPad if you're on the go when you realize your MacBook Pro has gone missing.

Unlike competitor Undercover (see "[Undercover Theft-Recovery Software Update Gives You the Details](#)," 19 April 2010), GadgetTrak doesn't take screenshots of your stolen machine that might reveal identifying information about the thief. Ian Schray of GadgetTrak told me that conversations with police around the country have led the company to believe that screenshots aren't that valuable in the recovery process. Plus, he said that such a feature could be construed as violating wiretap laws, so GadgetTrak has shied away from it.

What the recent GadgetTrak 3 upgrade does include, however, are assorted improvements for tracking more devices and keeping better records. The latest release includes a centralized, Web-based console to track all the laptops on your account, and makes it easier to manage multiple machines. The software also now logs historical tracking data; instead of merely looking up where your laptop is right now, you can see where it has been recently, too.

Armed with your stolen laptop's geographical location, and a photo of what may very well be the individual who stole it, you'll have better luck than most folks seeking help from law enforcement. Most of us probably won't ever need GadgetTrak, but it's like any other kind of insurance: You're really, really, really glad it's there if you ever do need it.

Apple Updates

iWork 9.0.4

August 26, 2010 – 63.44 MB

System Requirements

– OS X 10.5.6 and later

This update addresses issues in Keynote, Pages, and Numbers, and adds export compatibility to Pages with the standard ePub file format (for use with iBooks).

This update is recommended for users of iWork 9.0, 9.0.1, 9.0.2, and 9.0.3.

MacBook Pro EFI Firmware Update 1.9

August 26, 2010 – 2.2 MB

System Requirements

- OS X 10.6.4

This update is recommended for all 15-inch and 17-inch MacBook Pro mid 2010 models. The update resolves a rare issue that may cause the system to freeze during startup or intermittently stall during operation, and it improves compatibility with external displays.

Security Update 2010-005 (Snow Leopard – Client)

August 24, 2010 – 80.63 MB

System Requirements

- OS X 10.6.4 Client

Security Update 2010-005 is recommended for all users and improves the security of OS X. Previous security updates have been incorporated into this security update.

Security Update 2010-005 (Leopard-Client)

August 24, 2010 – 211.88 MB

System Requirements

- OS X 10.5.8

Security Update 2010-005 is recommended for all users and improves the security of OS X. Previous security updates have been incorporated into this security update.

Snow Leopard Graphics Update

August 16, 2010 – 65.65 MB

System Requirements

- OS X 10.6.4

The Snow Leopard Graphics Update contains stability and performance fixes for graphics applications and games, including fixes that:

- address frame rate issues occurring in Portal and Team Fortress 2 on certain Macs
- resolve an issue that could cause Aperture 3 or StarCraft II to unexpectedly quit or become unresponsive.

iMac (Mid 2010) Display Brightness Update 1.0

August 12, 2010 – 378 KB

System Requirements

- OS X 10.6.4

This update addresses an issue with 21.5-inch iMac (Mid 2010) display brightness.

iOS 3.2.2 Software Update for iPad

August 11, 2010

System Requirements

- Mac or PC computer with USB 2.0 port
- iTunes 9.1 or later
- iPad (Wi-Fi and Wi-Fi + 3G)

Fixes security vulnerability associated with viewing malicious PDF files.

iOS 4.0.2 Software Update

August 11, 2010

System Requirements

- Mac or PC computer with USB 2.0 port
- iTunes 9.2 or later
- iPhone 3G
- iPhone 3GS
- iPhone 4
- iPod touch 2nd generation
- iPod touch 3rd generation (late 2009 models with 32GB or 64GB)

Fixes security vulnerability associated with viewing malicious PDF files.


Digital Camera RAW Compatibility Update 3.3

August 02, 2010 – 5.68 MB

System Requirements

- OS X 10.5.8
- OS X 10.6.2 or later

This update extends RAW image format compatibility to Aperture 3 and iPhoto '09 for the following cameras:

- Canon PowerShot SX1 IS
- Olympus E-PL1
- Panasonic Lumix DMC-G2
- Panasonic Lumix DMC-G10
- Samsung NX10
- Sony Alpha DSLR-A390
- Sony Alpha NEX-3
- Sony Alpha NEX-5 



Mac 911

Resize images with Automator

Last week I told you how to use Automator to convert a bunch of iPhoto images to black and white. This prompted similar questions from forum visitors Macnutjohn and Matthew Bushey. Wrote Macnutjohn:

I wonder if this could be used to resize images using ColorSync?

To which I would reply, not using ColorSync but rather a different Automator action. It goes like this:

As I explained in the original entry you can choose images in iPhoto and then copy them to a folder on your Desktop by using Automator's Get Specified iPhoto Items and Copy Finder Items actions. You'll want to create an album for images you intend to convert — I called mine "To Convert" — and place it in the first action. Then create a folder on your Desktop — mine's called "Converted Photos" — and make it the destination folder in the second action.

At that point I went on to use the Apply ColorSync Profile to Images action to convert the image to black and white and then a Change Type of Images action to convert the image to the TIFF format. You can forego these actions and move right to changing the image's size, or you can add another action to this workflow that changes the size of the image.

The action you use for this is Scale Images. Drag it into your workflow and you see that you can configure the pop-up menu to allow you to scale the image to a specific pixel width — 640, for example — or choose a particular percentage, such as 75 percent.

Automator also includes a Pad Images action. By default this changes the canvas' dimensions. You can ask the action to also scale the image before padding it. And there's also a Crop Images action that you use to crop images to particular dimensions or percentages. Choose the former and you can elect to scale the image before you crop it.

Split GarageBand project into separate tracks

A reader who wishes to go by the name OldMacster needs some advice on an audio recording. He/she writes:

I recently recorded our church choir singing many songs using GarageBand. Trouble is, because I recorded all the songs at one time, GarageBand treats it as one very long song. How do I separate each song that the choir sang so that the CD that I burn has each song on a separate track, like a commercial CD I find in the store?

Thank you, OldMacster, for providing me with the opportunity to gripe about one of GarageBand's weaknesses — the inability to insert markers in a track and then export separate tracks based on those markers. But you can't. And so, oh well.

Although you could split the tracks in GarageBand, then cut and paste the split portions into separate tracks, and then export each track separately, it's a bother. I'd consider, instead, saving the GarageBand track as a single AIFF track and then opening that single track in a different application that handles this kind of thing with greater aplomb. To do that, choose Share -> Export Song to Disk. In the sheet that appears, make sure that the Compress option is not enabled. Now save the track to your Desktop.

To proceed on the cheap (meaning, free) download a copy of the open-source Audacity audio editor. Launch Audacity and choose Project -> Import Audio (Command-I). Navigate to the track you saved from GarageBand and click Open. The track will open in Audacity's timeline.

Now click the Selection tool in the top-left corner of the Audacity window (represented by the I-beam icon) and click at the very beginning of the track. Choose Project -> Add Label at Selection (Command-B) to create a label (properly called a marker) at that point. Move to where the next break between tracks occurs and, with the Selection tool still active, click at this point. Add another label. Continue doing this until you've marked all the breaks.

Now choose File -> Export Multiple. In the Export Multiple window that appears, make sure that the Split Files Based on Labels option is enabled. Choose a location for saving your files, and click the Export button. If asked for an audio format, choose WAV, as this creates audio files at their original fidelity. Audacity will now split your long track into separate songs based on where you placed the labels.

You can now take those tracks and drag them into iTunes. Create a playlist from those tracks, select that playlist, insert a recordable CD, and click the Burn Disc button to burn a CD of that material.

Syncing iPhone notes to MobileMe

Reader Barbara Mehlman finds the steps for syncing notes between MobileMe, Mail, and her iPhone a little tricky. She writes:

When I plug my iPhone 4 into my Mac and select it in iTunes, in the Info tab I see an option to sync my iPhone notes. But they sync only to the Mac's Mail application. I'd also like them to sync with MobileMe. Is there a way to do that?


Let's run through the steps necessary for notes to sync among your iPhone, MobileMe, and the Mail application on your Mac.

On your iPhone (which must be running iOS 4 or later), tap Settings and then tap Mail, Contacts, Calendars. On the resulting screen, tap your MobileMe account and in the MobileMe account screen that appears, flip the On/Off toggle switch next to Notes to On. Return to the Mail, Contacts, Calendars screen and scroll to the very bottom, where you see the Notes entry. Tap this entry and the Default Account screen appears. On this screen, select your MobileMe account rather than the On My iPhone entry (or any other entry that appears).

Launch the Mail app, choose Preferences from the Mail menu, and click the Composing tab. In the Addressing area you'll see the Create Notes and To Dos In entry. From the pop-up menu select your MobileMe account. Close the Preferences window. Now, click the triangle next to the Notes entry in Mail's Mailboxes column and select On My Mac. Select any notes that you'd like to sync with your MobileMe account and drag them onto the MobileMe entry.

Now, when you create a note on your iPhone or within Mail (you can't create notes in MobileMe's Mail page, though you can view them by going to me.com/mail and clicking on the Notes folder) that note should fairly quickly sync with all interested parties — iPhone, Mail, and the MobileMe site. If it doesn't (and I had this problem when I first tried to do this), delete the MobileMe account on your phone (after making sure everything in it is backed up to your satisfaction), and then recreate the account by going to the Mail, Contacts, Calendar setting, tapping MobileMe, and entering your name, username, and password to create the account. Then run through those iPhone configuration steps I outlined.

[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> 

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