mini'app'les newsletter
the minnesota apple computer users' group, inc.

May Meetings

To the right is a list of mini'app'les meetings for May 2009. The information was compiled as this newsletter was being assembled and is subject to change. As always, confirm the Special Interest Group (SIG) date, time, and location with the cognizant SIG Leader or the mini'app'les website (http://www.miniapples.org).

May 2009				
Tuesday	May 5	7:00 pm	Mac OS X SIG
Wednesday	May 6	6:30 pm	iWork/AppleWorks SIG
Wednesday	May 13	7:00 pm	VectorWorks SIG*
Thursday	May 21	7:00 am	Macintosh Consultants SIG
Thursday	May 28	7:00 pm	FileMaker Pro SIG

Meeting	Location	Leader
Board of Directors	Merriam Park Library, 1831 Marshall Ave, St Paul	Bruce Thompson, 763-546-1088
FileMaker Pro SIG	Partners, 2250 Terminal Rd, Roseville	Steve Wilmes, 651-458-1513
iWork/AppleWorks SIG	Penn Lake Library, 8800 Penn Ave. S., Bloomington	John Hunkins Sr, 651-457-8949
Mac OS X SIG	The Foundation, 311 7th Ave N, Minneapolis	Bob Demeules, 763-559-1124
Mac Q&A SIG	Merriam Park Library, 1831 Marshall Ave, St Paul	Les Anderson, 651-735-3953
Macintosh Consultants SIG	Good Day Café, 5410 Wayzata Blvd, Golden Valley	Bob Demeules, 763-559-1124
Multi-SIG Meeting	St. Charles School, 2727 Stinson Blvd, Minneapolis	Tom Gates, 612-789-1713
TC Photoshop User Group*	Minneapolis College of Art & Design, Auditorium 150, 2501 Stevens Ave S, Minneapolis	Jeff Tranberry, phone number not available
VectorWorks SIG*	CJR Office, 4441 Claremore Dr, Edina	Charles Radloff, 952-941-1667

Looking Ahead to June

To the right is a list of mini'app'les meetings for June 2009. The information was compiled as this newsletter was being assembled and is subject to change. As always, confirm the Special Interest Group (SIG) date, time, and location with the cognizant SIG Leader or the mini'app'les website (http://www.miniapples.org).

June 2009			
Monday	June 1	7:00 pm	Board of Directors Meeting
Tuesday	June 2	7:00 pm	Mac OS X SIG
Wednesday	June 3	6:30 pm	iWork/AppleWorks SIG
Wednesday	June 10	7:00 pm	VectorWorks SIG*
Wednesday	June 10	7:00 pm	TC Photoshop User Group*
Thursday	June 18	7:00 am	Macintosh Consultants SIG
Monday	June 22	7:00 pm	Mac Q&A SIG
Thursday	June 25	7:00 pm	FileMaker Pro SIG

* This SIG is NOT sponsored by mini'app'les; the listing is provided as a service to members

mini'app'les

the minnesota apple computer users group, inc.

Introduction — This is the newsletter of mini'app'les, the Minnesota Apple Computer Users' Group Inc., a Minnesota non-profit club. The whole newsletter is copyrighted© by mini'app'les. Articles may be reproduced in other non-profit User Groups' publications except where specifically copyrighted by the author (permission to reproduce these articles must be given by the author). Please include the source when reprinting.

Questions — Members with technical questions should refer to the Members Helping Members section or bring their questions to an appropriate SIG meeting. Please direct other questions to an appropriate board member.

Dealers — mini'app'les does not endorse specific dealers. The club promotes distribution of information that may help members identify best buys and service. The club itself does not participate in bulk purchases of media, software, hardware, and publications. Members may organize such activities on behalf of other members.

Newsletter Contributions — We welcome contributions from our members. Please send contributions directly to our post office box (mini'app'les, PO Box 796, Hopkins MN 55343) or email them to miniapples@mac.com, or email them to the newsletter editor at ronheck@comcast.net

Deadline for material for the next newsletter is the fifteenth of the month. An article will be printed when space permits and, if in the opinion of the Newsletter Editor or Publications Director, it constitutes material suitable for publication.

Newsletter Staff this month: Ron Heck

The layout of this newsletter was done using Apple's Pages word processor.

mini'app'les forums:	http://miniapples.7.forumer.com
mini'app'les website:	http://www.miniapples.org
mini'app'les email:	miniapples@mac.com

CHANGE OF ADDRESS
Moving? Going to be away from home and leaving a forwarding address with the Post Office? Changing to a better email provider? Please send us a Change of Address when you are informing others. By using a moment of your time, you ensure you receive a notice when your club membership is expiring and you get your newsletter email notification delivered promptly. Change of Address should be sent to the club's mailing address (mini'app'les, Attn: Membership Director, Box 796, Hopkins MN 55343) or to the club's email address (miniapples@mac.com).

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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

It seems the Apple vs. Microsoft battle is heating up more lately than perhaps at any time since the 1990s. Microsoft has launched a slew of "I'm a PC" or made-up computer-shopper ads, and Apple is responding with more "I'm a Mac/I'm a PC" ads.

When it comes to how the companies are doing during the downturn in the economy, they have both posted their first-quarter results. Apple has posted record revenue. Microsoft, on the other hand, marked a milestone for the first quarter — for the first time in 23 years, the Redmond, WA company has reported revenue has declined when compared to last year.

Windows still maintains around 90 percent market share, so they are not going anywhere soon. However, it does seem that Microsoft is feeling a bit more pressure from Apple since they feel the need to respond with a marketing campaign to counter Apple's advertisements.

But people don't choose a computer based on an ad. I think user experience is what drives people toward Apple — they seem to have a better grasp of both

form and function, while Microsoft seems to focus more on function. For me, Windows XP provides a cold, impersonal, uninspiring, dull, clunky experience. Perhaps Vista has improved things, but it seems Apple is now in the driver's seat when it comes to the operating system and user experience., and Microsoft is in the position of playing catch-up and will be trying to emulate the experience Apple provides.

SIG Reports
If you don't see a report from your favorite Special Interest Group (SIG) in this issue of the newsletter, please take a few minutes to provide a summary of the next meeting for the next newsletter. I am happy to help clean up any articles submitted for publication in this newsletter.

Hopefully, understanding what material and what level of material is being discussed at the different SIG meetings will encourage more people to attend SIG meetings and to join the mini'app'les.

Thanks for your help.

Members Helping Members

Need Help? Have a question the manual doesn't answer? Members Helping Members is a group of volunteers who have generously agreed to help. They are just a phone call or an email away. Please call only during the appropriate times, and **only if you are a current mini'app'les member** and own the software in question.

Apple II / IIGS Software & Hardware 1, 2
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1. Les Anderson	651-735-3953	anderslc@usfamily.net	DEW
2. Tom Ostertag	651-488-9979	tostertag@usfamily.net	EW
3. Bruce Thompson	763-546-1088	bthompson@Macconnect.com	EW
4. Pam Lienke	651-457-6026	plienke@aol.com	DEW
5. Ardie Predweshny	612-978-9774		DEW
6. Charles Radloff	952-941-1667		D
7. **Your Name Here**			
8. Ron Heck	651-774-9151	ronheck@comcast.net	DEW

D: Days, generally 9 am to 5 pm
E: Evenings, generally 5 pm to 9 pm
W: Weekends, generally 1 pm to 9 pm

Please call at reasonable hours and ask if it is a convenient time for helping you. By the way, many of these volunteers can also be contacted on our forums. We appreciate your cooperation.

mini'app'les needs more volunteers for Members Helping Members — If you are willing to be a Members Helping Member volunteer, please send an email message to Membership Director Chuck Hauge or contact him on our forums with your name, telephone number, contact hours, and the software and hardware areas you are willing to support.

mini'app'les Directors Meeting Minutes for April 6, 2009

In attendance: Don Walz, Bruce Thompson, Harry Lienke, Ron Heck, Chuck Hauge, Kevin Strysik

Absent: Tom Gates, David Peck

Other attendees: Tim Tierney, Tim Drenk, Dave Lundin

Agenda: Adopted as distributed.

Minutes: The minutes for the February 2, 2009, Board of Directors (BOD) meeting were approved electronically and published on forumer.com on February 9.

Directors' Reports

Treasurer Don Walz's report: All bills are paid. Don distributed a written report covering 1/1/09 to 2/28/09. A motion to approve the report was made, seconded, and passed (MSP). Don received a terrorist insurance rejection form from the company providing our liability insurance. Don gave the form to Bruce.

Publications Director Ron Heck's report: Things are going well. The changes to make the newsletter more attractive and efficient have received two accolades and no complaints. A mistake in the schedule relative to the May Mac Q&A SIG will be corrected in the next newsletter.

SIG Director Kevin Strysik's report: The web site information is now correct with the expired SIGs eliminated. Kevin is exploring having each SIG leader create a web site for their SIG with a link to those sites from the club web site. Another possibility is having a separate page for each SIG on the club site. Tim T. and Kevin will discuss the possibilities.

Membership Director Chuck Hauge's report: This month we had ten membership renewals and two new members. There were two drops as well.

Old Business

Multi-SIG / SWOT — There was discussion of impressions of our group offered by non-members. Someone asked if mini'app'les is relevant. What is our target audience? It was mentioned we get little support from Apple; it seems as though Apple views us as a competitor that consists of a lot of old men who run on obsolete equipment and buy little or no new hardware and software. A motion to establish a sub-committee to perform a Strengths/Weaknesses/Opportunities/Threats (SWOT) analysis and report findings and recommendations was made. The committee should consist of three or four people but not necessarily BOD members. The committee should produce a document outlining thoughtful questions to acquire meaningful feedback. The committee could operate via email or on-line chats. The motion was seconded and passed. Bruce appointed Hauge, Drenk, Tierney, and himself to the committee.

Annual Meeting Follow-up — No report available from Dave.

Election Status / Process — We have received one hard copy and seven electronic ballots to date. John Hunkins, Sr., and Bert Persson have agreed to count the ballots at the May iWork/AppleWorks meeting. Bruce has received one request for a membership number. A motion to certify the election results electronically after the data is gathered at the iWork meeting of May 6 was MSP. Harry agreed to put the data into an article to be approved by the BOD on-line before that article is published on forumer.com and in the newsletter.

Status of iBook (sell?) — Bruce has not authored an ad yet; the ad announcing an auction will be ready for the May newsletter with a starting price (reserve bid) and time length; the highest bid received before the ending date of the auction wins the iBook.

Bylaws update (Electronic Voting) — Bruce proposed a line-by-line review of the proposed changes to the Bylaws. For item C.1 it was decided that mention of the club name, mini'app'les, did not require a preceding "the". There was a protracted discussion of changing "will" to "shall" in a number of places; the outcome was the document needs to be internally consistent and "shall" seems to be more appropriate for our purposes. At the closing bell we were discussing whether a change proposed to item C.5 to clarify a point conflicted with item C.4. Discussion of Bylaws changes will continue at the next BOD meeting, and hopefully, in the interim.

Web Site Update — Dave Peck and Tim Tierney are working on transitioning from Dave to Tim and from DreamWeaver to iWeb. Tim indicated he is coming up to speed. The transition is well along but Dave is not finished yet. Tim provided some details of the changes being made and the process being used. Chuck suggested that soon as Tim is ready to take responsibility for the web site, he should take control. Bruce will talk to Dave about giving control

to Tim. Harry asked which Director has responsibility for the web site. The consensus seemed to be that the Publications Director should have this responsibility. This should be included in the changes being considered for the Bylaws.

Newsletter Archive — Bruce used Acrobat to shrink the file provided by Ken Slingsby from 11 megabytes to 3.8 megabytes; he characterized this as not real small but manageable. Harry asked if it is worthwhile to continue with this effort. It was decided that if Ken wants to do it, okay; otherwise, no.

Discontinued SIGs on the web site — See the SIG Director's report above.

Cartridge World discounts — No report available from Tom.

<u>New Business</u>

Budget for 09/10 — Don and Dave L. will work on a proposal based on last year's budget.

Paypal / Electronic Payment — Chuck indicated it is easy to set up a Paypal account; he thought it might be important to have an on-line payment option to help attract new members since many of them handle all their financial dealings electronically. Paypal charges 2.2% + $0.30 per transaction; this amounts to about 63 cents cost per membership. Chuck pointed out that web-based credit card transactions are very secure. To use Paypal we need to set up an account with Paypal for our charges; we can transfer the money electronically to our local mini'app'les bank account. We could set up a $1 service fee to cover the Paypal charges; we need to look at the 2009/10 budget to see if dues need to be adjusted. A motion to have the treasurer initiate a Paypal account for the purpose of collecting dues and set up our web site to accept payment via Paypal was MSP. We should consider updating the bylaws to incorporate the possibility of electronic payments and to make the Treasurer responsible for arranging and maintaining the electronic payment capability.

Next meeting: Scheduled for June 1, 2009, at the Merriam Park Library at 7:00 pm. All club members are welcome to attend.

iWork/AppleWorks SIG of April 2009
by Harry Lienke

An attendee brought some files he received from a PC-owning friend; these files were not opening on his Mac. One of the files was a PowerPoint (PPS) file, one was a Windows Media Video (WMV) file, and the third was an Advanced Systems Format (ASF) file. On the 15" PowerBook G4 running Mac OS X 10.5.6 we were using at the meeting, the first file opened successfully in both Keynote 5.0 and Powerpoint 2004. The other two files opened successfully in QuickTime. We guessed that to open the PowerPoint file one needs a copy of PowerPoint newer than the Office v.X the user had, and to open the other two files, Flip4Mac WMV must be installed.

I showed two spreadsheets I use quite often. One keeps track of the balance of my credit cards and helps verify the statements the credit card companies send out. The second spreadsheet is used to print labels for Slim CD Jewel Boxes based on the data downloaded by Toast from the Gracenote CD database. One of the attendees had some questions about naming files downloaded into iTunes without CD and track names. We suggested using iTunes' "Get CD Track Names" capability or labeling the track manually within iTunes.

Our genial facilitator, Pam Lienke, followed up on last month's question about darkening lines in spreadsheets.

Pam had some fun playing with shapes in Pages. She showed how an arrow can be morphed into a Christmas tree which can, in turn, be decorated with other shapes. A star had its center size and number or arms changed. Text was entered directly into the shapes. A text box was used to better control the placing of text; Pam combined the shape and the text box so they could be moved and placed as a single unit. Pam transformed a shape like a text bubble in a comic strip into an ice cream cone; she then added a shadow and a reflection to the cone.

We explored the world of blank documents again. Pam showed some of the differences between the blank documents available in Pages and Numbers. She also revisited how to make one's own templates.

We looked briefly into the use of Track Changes. This led Pam a discussion of the options available in

the Pages and Numbers preferences including Automatic Correction and Default Zoom.

We explored the different file formats used by iWork '08 and iWork '09.

We talked about storing and processing photos. Pam stores pictures in Finder folders and processes them with PhotoShop Elements. Bruce Thompson uses iPhoto to organize his pictures; he indicated iPhoto's capabilities have increased greatly over time and it has many handy tools for improving pictures. He also said iPhoto can be used to hand photos to Elements for processing that iPhoto cannot do.

At this point, Pam installed the iLifeSupport902 and iWork09update1 updates while the rest of us looked on in wonder.

An attendee wondered if anyone knew of a way to limit the number of fonts showing up in Pages. We mentioned Linotype Font Explorer and Apple's Font Book but they control fonts system-wide rather than in Pages alone. Pam suggested the Fonts Window Favorites collection could be set up to simulate a reduction in the number of fonts available. No one knew of an appropriate tool for reducing the number of fonts available on the Format Bar Fonts list.

Someone asked a question about Time Machine back-ups failing intermittently. Other attendees indicated this error has been reported but has not been resolved to date.

The next iWork/AppleWorks meeting will be held at the Penn Lake Library, 8800 Penn Ave. S. The meeting will commence on May 6, 2009, at 6:30 pm and will conclude about 8:00 pm.

OS X Meeting of April 2009
by Bruce Thompson

The OS X meeting began, as many do, with trying to figure out the password for the wireless network. Thanks to the friendly staff at The Foundation, that was quickly determined and connection was established.

Les Anderson had a question about alphabetizing his bookmarks. He would do it, but they would later revert. Others had similar experiences, but no one had a definitive answer.

Moving into a discussion of backups, Bob showed how to set up an "unsupported device" for Time

Machine. This is typically a drive connected to an Airport base station or an other network drive. The capability of using Network Addressed Storage (NAS) for backups is great, especially with a laptop and an Airport connection. You don't have to worry about connecting the external drive when you use the laptop in various places. Also, the network drive can be used as a backup device for multiple computers. Just make sure you have enough space.

Bob then moved on to a demonstration of disk images (.dmg). A .dmg file is a file that, when double clicked, opens up and displays a disk drive icon on the desktop; the operating system treats it like an external volume (disk). Many downloaded programs are distributed in disk image format, as it keeps everything together and is very easy to handle in transfer.

A very good use of disk images is to create an encrypted disk image. This allows the user to put a password on the disk image so it can only be opened with that password. This is an effective method of storing sensitive information (e.g., tax or bank information, a credit card list, passwords) in a single file. A disk image is easily backed up but only opened with the password.

Bob showed how to create a disk image using the "sparse bundle" method. This is all done using Disk Utility. By making it a sparse bundle the disk image takes up only as much disk space as necessary and has the ability to grow as more data is added.

The meeting closed with an examination of a bundle and how Apple uses this special file/folder configuration to contain all the necessary files for an application.


Q&A SIG Meeting of March 2009
by Les Anderson

Much of the discussion centered around how to enter special characters in text documents. Special characters are bullets, arrows, foreign characters, etc. Several common characters are easily entered from the keyboard. Some examples are:

- **Accent Acute** (´): Option–E
- **Bullet** (•): Option–8
- **Cent** (¢): Option–4
- **Copyright** (©): Option–G
- **Degree** (˚): Option–K
- **Registered** (®): Option–R
- **Trade Mark** (™): Option–2
- **Apple symbol** (): Shift–Option–K

In OS 9 and earlier we had a utility called Key Caps, in OSX we have Special Characters. It is found in the Finder>Edit>Special Characters.

Below are two screen shots of the Character Palette. Notice the options on the left side. All you need to do is drag the character into your document. Copy and Paste does not work (at least it doesn't for me).
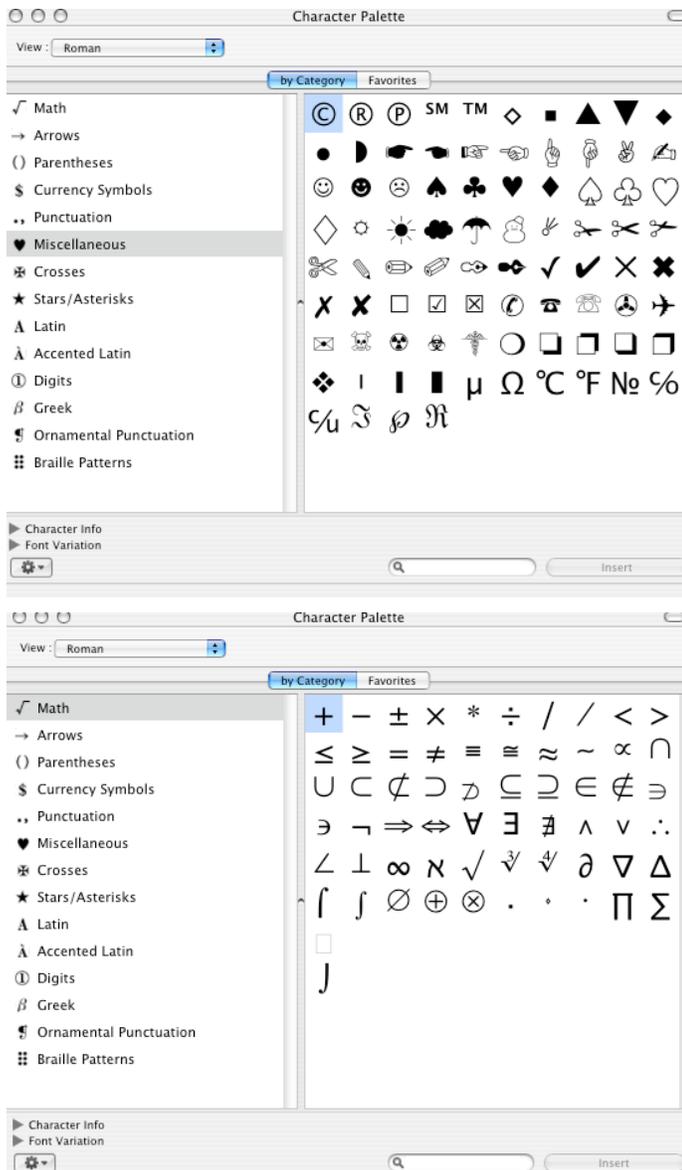
There is also a handy Shareware utility called PopChar X that has many more options for special characters. It can be downloaded at: http://www.ergonis.com/products/index.html

Just select the version for your Mac System.

There is also a Web Site that you can access to get special characters if you only use them occasionally.

Just copy the character you want and paste it into your document. Not all characters are available in all fonts.

http://www.copypastecharacter.com/

We meet at the Merriam Park Library on the 4th Monday of the month. No meeting will be held in May because of the Memorial Day holiday.

Editor's Note: OS X's Keyboard Palette and Keyboard Viewer are available from the Menu Bar after they are enabled through the System Preferences International setting and can be used to insert special characters.

———————

Secure Encrypted & Signed Email, FREE!
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Chaz@CPHSolutions.com

If you use the Apple Mail client application in OS 10.3 or newer and would prefer to have a more secure and trusted way to send email, this is for you! Before I begin, however, I should give you a brief description of what it means to have *signed* or *encrypted* email.

Digitally *signed* email is a more secure way to send email to any email recipient from your email application. *Signed* email does not encrypt your email, but puts your public certificate on your outgoing email telling the recipient they can *trust* you, the sender. Public/Private email certificates (a.k.a. Digital ID, secure certificate, Certificate Authority key, Personal Certificates, X.509, …) are obtained through a trusted third party, such as Thawte Communications or VeriSign, and are part of the reason they are more secure. Spammers **never** use signed email.

Encrypted email is as it sounds, encrypted, so anyone other than the sender or any of the recipients can not read the email. *Encrypted* email is more secure than just *signed* email. But in order to send an encrypted email, the sender must first have the recipient's public key. In order for the recipient to get a public key, they must also go through this process. Technically, there are other ways to send *encrypted* email than what I will describe here, but the Personal Certificate process is by far the easiest and most common method, and don't forget, it's free.

Here's how to set up your own Personal Certificate using Thawte Communications' free Personal Certificate process. It is important to read all instructions carefully, but you can ignore references to the Web of Trust (WoT), and Certificate Bearers Name – these are more advanced subjects, and are

not required. You will receive email as part of the process, so you will need to open your email application to follow some instructions.

1. Use FireFox (Mozilla) only, version 1.5 or newer, and set FireFox as your default browser. Go to http://www.thawte.com/secure-email/personal-email-certificates/index.html, and click the Join button toward the upper right corner. You need only one account for all your email addresses.

2. Go through the process of obtaining a Personal Certificate. Make sure you follow all steps; it can be a bit tedious. You need one Certificate for each email address to which you want to send signed/encrypted email. Use the Mozilla/Netscape key for Apple Mail, and the High Grade-2048 bit options, or simply use the default settings.

3. The Certificate may take several minutes or hours to process, but an email will be sent to you when it is complete. Click on the link in the email, and if you have FireFox as your default browser (according to the instructions in the email, you must use the exact same FireFox version, computer, and connection method (e.g., Comcast from home, Dunn Bros coffee shop), in order to have the key installed properly). Once you have this email the Certificate is automatically installed into FireFox.

4. Use the following link for instructions on how to get the Certificate out of FireFox so you can use it for your email: https://search.thawte.com/support/ssl-digital-certificates/index?page=content&id=SO3798&act=RATE&newguid=0160114058467fb4012035336d6e007f20. Make sure you backup the file as a PKCS12 format, and you can simply put it on your desktop. Stick the original Certificate in a safe place, because it is the key to protecting your digital email identity.

5. Quit completely out of Apple Mail if it is currently running.

6. Double-click on the Certificate. Keychain Access will launch and ask if you want to embed it in your personal keychain; specify you do, and I suggest putting it in your default Keychain usually called, "Login".

7. The next time you launch Mail and create a new message, two new icons should appear to the right of the Signature popup menu - a padlock and an "X" inside a starburst . Click on the "X" and

you should see a check mark inside a starburst ; this is digitally *signing* your email. The padlock icon should be grayed out and not clickable.

8. Once you've sent an email to someone using a Mac, your personal certificate (the "public key" portion) gets automatically embedded in the recipient's Keychain (for an explanation of operations on different email clients, go to http://www.thawte.com/ssl-digital-certificates/technical-support/email/sign.html and follow the link in the line starting with "To sign email on various email clients"). If interested take a look inside your Keychain; you'll find *at a minimum* your own Personal Certificate, and possibly others from people who use Personal Certificates. You can send encrypted email to anyone whose Personal Certificate "public key" is in your Keychain and has not expired. (Your Personal Certificate public key is actually a special kind of attachment to every email you send; it's all automatic.)

9. When you address a message to someone whose own Personal Certificate is in your Keychain (and has not expired), the padlock option becomes available (it is no longer grayed out). When selected, the entire content of your message is securely encrypted, and can only be decrypted by recipients who have your Personal Certificate public key.

10. Any message sent can be verified by your recipient as having truly come from you by verifying the presence of the "digitally signed" icon and checkmark/starburst (in Apple Mail, it shows up in just below the From/Subject/Date/To: lines Security: ⚙Signed). Entourage and other email applications have their own way of noting signed emails. Any messages not actually sent by you will not bear this digital signature icon. Also, if a message is somehow tampered with in transit, the recipient will be told so because the message's checksums won't match.

We'll see you back at this document next year, because the Certificate expires, usually every year for security reasons, so you have to go through this process again. There are different instructions for installing a Personal Certificate in other email applications; see the government web site and other sources, below.

Sources:

http://security.fnal.gov/pki/email_with_dig_sig.html

http://support.apple.com/kb/TA22353?viewlocale=en_US

http://www.thawte.com/secure-email/personal-email-certificates/index.html

Chuck Hauge is the Principal Consultant with CPH Solutions. If you have further questions on how you can get Secure Encrypted & Signed email working on your computer, or other technology questions, contact CPH Solutions at:

Chaz@CPHSolutions.com or 612.963.5064. You can find out more about CPH Solutions at http://www.CPHSolutions.com/

Software to Backup Your Mac
by George Kopp

In my article from last month, I described what to look for when you purchase a hard drive to backup your Macintosh. This month, I am going to discuss software for doing the backup. There are a number of backup applications available for the Mac and many of these have been around for years.

I will describe the types of backups that could be done and the relative merits of the different backup types. I will also list a few applications I have had luck with. By no means is this software list complete. It is only a sample of applications I would trust to do my backup. So let's get started.

First off, I consider there to be 3 different types of backups.

Comprehensive Backup Included in the Operating System

In MacOS 10.5, Apple introduced what I consider to be a revolution for data safety. Time Machine is a utility that is part of the operating system intended for comprehensive backups. Apple has made Time Machine so simple and has given it so few settings, that novices can easily backup their data and be completely protected. Prior to this ease of use, other third-party backups, while able to run automatically, provided nowhere near this ease of setup.

MacOS 10.5 is designed to recognize a new hard drive when it is plugged in and asks if you want to use this for your backup. If you hit OK, you now have just set up Time Machine. If the drive you plugged in is a PC-formatted drive, it may ask to reformat the drive, but even that happens automatically.

Time Machine allows for a full system restore if you lose everything, or an incremental file restore if you just accidentally delete a file. With this, it provides the best of both worlds.

Incremental Backup Utilities (usually third party)

This backup type is usually a utility you download, or purchase, that backs up files from your main hard drive to another drive. Sometimes these utilities will claim they allow a full restore but my experience is that these utilities are best suited for file level backup. This is the act of copying critical files or folders to another drive.

Many utilities in this class (like Retrospect) backup all your files to a single compressed encrypted file. While there is a place for this, most home and small business users don't need it. In fact, it can turn an already bad experience worse if you cannot get the software installed for the restore or if the backup file you created is somehow unreadable. My recommendation is that if you use an incremental backup utility, stick with one that backs up your files to a drive that you can look at to confirm and see that your files are actually there.

Prior to MacOS X 10.5, my backup recommendation in this class was Silverkeeper from Lacie. Silverkeeper is a small application that can run on a set schedule that basically copies files you have preselected from one drive to another. It can be setup to run at a time when you are not busy and it then will update only files that have changed since the last time it was run.

SilverKeeper consists of an application program which will copy, compare, synchronize or restore files, folders, and volumes from a Source to a Destination. It will ease backups from your Startup drive to an external drive. While optimized for hard drives, SilverKeeper is also compatible with network drives, and removable drives, and DVD-RAM discs. Compatible drives may be connected to the SATA/eSATA, IDE/ATA, SCSI, USB, or FireWire busses of Macintosh computers. The only requirement is that the drives must have at a writable volume. SilverKeeper is not directly compatible with tape drives, or CD-R/RW and DVD-R/RW drives.

Unlike other backup and archiving programs, SilverKeeper uses the Macintosh file I/O to perform copy operations, so the backups are always readable files that can be used as-is on another computer without resorting to a special restore application. No special application software is necessary to read the backup files, and it can create and maintain a bootable volume from which it can startup if the internal drive fails.

Apple, through .ME (or .Mac), membership provided a utility called…. Backup that did a similar function. While it was, and still is, a good choice to backup your personal information (addresses, calendars, and settings) to MobileMe, it is not at all a good choice for disk-to-disk backup. It puts the files in a single encrypted file and creates a new file for any new changes making it such that a restore starts at the beginning and then applies all the changes. Restores using this method could take days if you have been backing up for a quite while.

There are also many other options in this category. Most more premium drives come with a backup utility. But, in general most of them stink. They are thrown in for free and are worth every penny of that. There are also more enterprise utilities (like Retrospect) which are good programs but much too complicated to set up, and even more difficult to execute a restore.

Disk image utilities

This is the third type of backup you might consider. A disk image utility will make an exact block-for-block copy of one hard drive to another drive. It usually is a slow process but you end up with an exact block-for-copy of the drive on another drive. I actually use this for my quarterly off-site backup.

There are three free applications that can perform this backup quite well. Disk Utility (included in the Utility Folder of the Applications Folder) can do this for you in the restore tab of the drive. Basically you just restore one drive to another drive, and end up with an exact copy. Not really very intuitive, but it works and you already have it.

The other two of these can be downloaded. One is Carbon Copy Cloner (CCC) and the other is SuperDuper.

CCC features an interface designed to make the cloning and backup procedure very intuitive. In addition to general backup, CCC can also clone one hard drive to another, copying every single block or file to create an exact bootable replica of your source hard drive. CCC's block-level copy offers the absolute best fidelity in the industry. It can also do incremental backups, if needed.

SuperDuper is the wildly-acclaimed program that makes recovery painless, because it makes creating a fully bootable backup painless. Its incredibly clear, friendly interface is understandable, easy to use, and SuperDuper's built-in scheduler makes it trivial to

back up automatically. It's the perfect complement to Time Machine under Leopard, allowing you to store a bootable backup alongside your Time Machine volume—and it runs beautifully on both Intel and Power PC.

When to Backup?

So, this begs the question, "How often do I backup?" My response is, either run your backup, or check your backup at whatever interval you feel you could accept a data loss. In other words, if your data is highly critical, a backup method or schema that backs up every day, or every hour, makes good sense. If you don't want to deal with that much effort, or if you can afford to lose data for a small while, maybe weekly is often enough for you. It all depends on the value of your data to you.

If you are using a backup utility that requires you to schedule the backup, here is what I would do. Consider your backup a religious experience … here is what I mean. Schedule your backup to run while you are at church. On Sunday, before you leave for church, turn your computer on, and the backup can run while you are gone. Making it a routine allows it to get done as part of your regular schedule.

Recommendation

Basically here is my recommendation for this article. If you have Mac OS X 10.5, use Time Machine. If you do not have Mac OS X 10.5, upgrade to this level, and use Time Machine. While other third-party solutions work, and definitely have a place in a belt-and-suspenders approach to bootable backup, Time Machine is reliable, easy and inexpensive. What else can you ask for?

So that's what I have seen work. Give one of these a try. Keep in mind, the most important thing about backing up is to be sure you schedule a time to do it, and verify it is happening at least once a week. Needing the files from a backup is too late to find out your backups have not run. As I mentioned in my earlier article, always pick a backup hard drive that is at least 50% bigger than your internal hard drive.

It is my hope that other people will add to this discussion in the comments and tell us what has worked for them.

Good luck, and keep your data backed up!

This article was reprinted from the web site of the appleJAC Mac Users Group.

Editor's Note: Carbon Copy Cloner is $10 donationware; SuperDuper! is $27.95 shareware.

I Switched to Mac After a Lifetime of Windows, and It Doesn't Matter

By Adam Frucci

This weekend, my Dell laptop caught a virus that made it inoperable less than a week after a complete reformat and reinstall. So I bought a Mac laptop.

Yeah, I've used Windows machines for essentially my entire life, but switching turned out to be not that big a deal. Why? Because an OS isn't that important.

What's kept me from switching all these years isn't because I loved Windows or hated Macs. No, it was more a combination of laziness and self-identification. That's to say I didn't want to switch because I didn't want to deal with learning the ins and outs of a new OS, and also I identified myself as a "Windows guy" and didn't want to become a "Mac guy." Both reasons are essentially bullshit.

First, laziness. Switching from Windows to Mac or Mac to Windows or Windows to Ubuntu or whatever is easier than ever. There are differences between the operating systems to be sure, but none of them are that huge and none will have a real, fundamental effect on your experience. These days, most of what you do is online, or at least most of what I do is. When I switched, my feeds were synced online, as was my IM buddy list. Both my work and personal email accounts are online, as is my calendar. All of my files saved on my external hard drive work in, if not the exact same program, one that's very similar on the other OS. So really, it takes about a week of adjustment and then you're fine.

And as for identification, well, that's a pretty dumb reason to make any kind of decision. When it comes down to it, nobody is defined by their OS. Yes, Apple ads would love for you to think of yourself as a cool hipster for owning a Mac and to think of PC users as chubby nerds, but that isn't the case.

Operating systems are just tools to get things done, and you can do whatever you want with any OS. It's like a car: No matter what kind of car you buy, you're still going to the same places. Driving a Hummer won't make you a tough guy, and using Windows won't make you a nerd.

I realized both of these things a couple of weeks ago after I bought a Dell Mini 9 with Ubuntu Linux. I was worried at first that I'd hate not using Windows, but after about an hour I realized that I was having almost the exact same experience I would be having if it had XP on it. It just didn't matter.

So why switch? Well, having my system taken down twice in a week is not something I can afford to have happen. Macs, as of now, don't really get viruses. And I have a large community of people who can help me out with it if I run into problems. That's it.

So how's switching been? Fine. It's a nice OS with some features I like and some that I find really annoying. It's fun to try something new, but it's not blowing Windows out of the water or making me run to the returns counter. It's a computer. I'd be equally happy with a new Lenovo with similar specs and Windows 7 Beta on it, I'm sure.

The whole experience of using all three major operating systems over the past couple of weeks has been pretty fun, actually. I enjoy using new software and learning these basics again, and all of it feels pretty familiar. I plan on installing Windows 7 on my new Apple laptop so I can access any Windows software I miss and can stay familiar with how that OS is progressing.

And in the end, I'll keep doing what I always do with my laptop: Work on the internet, where what OS you're using matters exactly jack squat.

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iBagz Keeps Your iPod Dry

by Jeff Merron

One afternoon after school, back in the pre-Gore-Tex days, my friend Tim and I set off on what we thought would be an easy six-mile run. Nothing but a routine maintenance workout on a relatively mild New Jersey day. Chilly - maybe 40 degrees - very cloudy, and with just a little drizzle, so we were wearing standard school-issue sweats.

At the two-mile mark, the drizzle turned to rain. We figured it wouldn't get worse, so we kept on. At mile three, our halfway point, the skies opened. Within minutes, our shoes were soaked through and our sweats had become noticeably heavier. Our typical constant chatter had come to a halt. We were running on a heavily trafficked back road with no shoulder, so we focused entirely on avoiding both puddles and cars. It was a true loop, so the fastest way back was to finish the course. By the fourth mile, I remember my sweatpants sinking lower and lower, as the sheer weight of the water began to drag them down. My socks and shoes had devolved into unified spongeballs.

We slogged our way back to the locker room, and were able to joke about the experience for weeks to come, but I had no idea that it would become an unforgettable episode, a lifelong cautionary tale. It had been - and remains - the worst training run I've ever taken. Worse than running in 26 degrees below zero, one winter Wisconsin morning. Worse than a foot of unplowed snow (that was actually kind of fun). In the 30 years since, even as Gore-Tex and spandex have made bad-weather running much more comfortable, the only kind of weather that can genuinely alter my workout routine is cold rain. I hate it, hate it, hate it.

Meanwhile, over the past six or seven years, I've become reliant on my iPod as a training partner. Music and the measurement capabilities of the Nike +iPod system eventually evolved from valued companion to necessity. Some days the first five "American Idiot" tracks get me through a quick workout I never really wanted to do. Other days, the prospect of listening to an entire Beatles album uninterrupted inspires me to set off on a longer run.

Cold rain, my old nemesis, attacked me again about a year ago. I was about two miles away from home and running with an iPod nano protected with a silicon skin. But that thin covering was no match for the heavy, windswept sheets that arrived suddenly and continued until I reached home. My iPod stopped playing near the end of the run, and although I hoped it would dry out and recover, it never did.

This past weekend in North Carolina we've received an uninterrupted drenching of cold rain. Between the caution with which I now treat an iPod in the wet weather, and my own reluctance to run in these conditions, I've had every excuse to stay home and give my legs a rest.

But, about three months ago, I ordered a hard plastic case for my new iPod touch. And for some reason, the online store I bought it from offered an iFrogz iBagz [1] for only an extra buck or two (it normally retails for $11.99). The iBagz is a thick plastic pouch with plenty of space for an iPhone or iPod touch. But it's not just a glorified baggie. Running through a seal in the pouch is a headphone connector; on the inside is the male end, which plugs perfectly into my iPod's headphone jack. On the outside is the female end, which seals solidly with my Koss SportaPro headphones [2].

Thanks to this connector, I can completely seal my iPod inside the waterproof and transparent iBagz. Near the top of the iBagz, there are three Ziploc-style seals that close with a reassuring snap sound. The top of the bag then folds down, three times, after which you secure the enclosure with a strip of Velcro.

This may sound like a clunky, heavy, and perhaps overly complex solution, but here's the thing: it's not. It's easy to see your iPod after it's sealed in the bag, and almost equally easy to access all of the iPod's controls, both on the exterior and on the touch screen.

After a few short light-rain trial runs with the iBagz, from which I emerged with a perfectly dry iPod, I began to have real trust in it. Yesterday, after two days and two runs that I delayed and cut short because of cold rain (I used the iBagz both times and

it performed flawlessly), I decided to give the iBagz its toughest test yet: an hour of running on a muddy trail in a constant downpour.

I wanted to run, but I was unenthused, to put it mildly. So I promised myself to take it long, slow, and relaxing - no pressure. I put on the Beatles' compilation album "Love," and I ran. There was no way around some of the puddles, which resembled nascent fishing ponds, and my socks and shoes were soaked through within 15 minutes. While my water-resistant gear made the hour-long outing immensely more comfortable than my unforgettable sweatsuit slog of decades past, it couldn't prevent me from becoming mud-splattered and drenched by the midway point.

But the Beatles - protected, without any worry on my end, by the iBagz - kept me keeping on. There was a stretch in my run when I had a chance to cut it short. I was passing by my car, which I had driven to the trail. I was faced with about two miles to finish the run I had planned, or two minutes to be ensconced in complete warmth and dryness. And then "Help" kicked in - the symbolism didn't escape me.

Neither did the great dependability and utility of the iBagz. After my soggy struggle, as I plugged my iPod in to sync, I put the plastic pouch next to my iBook and promised myself that I would write about it. "An ode to a plastic bag," I thought. Silly, in a way, but it's helped me through some tough workouts, and if you like to exercise while listening to your iPod, and have avoided doing so because of rain, I highly recommend you try it. Even if you aren't a runner, the iBagz would be worthwhile for anyone who spends enough time outside to risk a soaking, perhaps at a summer festival or while walking home from work. The iBagz may be one of the simplest iPod accessories I own, but it's also the one I treasure most.

[Jeff Merron is a freelance writer and editor. He lives in North Carolina.]

[1]: http://ifrogz.com/products/bagz.php
[2]: http://www.koss.com/koss/kossweb.nsf/p?openform&pc^pt^SportaPro

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iBook G3 600 Mhz, 384 MB memory, 20 GB drive . Includes all original disks (OS X 10.1) and OS X 10.2 stand alone installer. Fresh install of OS X 10.2.8. This was used (lightly) by mini'app'les as the "club computer". Includes original documentation, Apple Hardware Test Disk (from Applecare), external USB floppy drive, internal modem, video adapter cable, mini mouse, laptop carry case, and several phone extension cables. Note that it DOES NOT include an airport card, but is airport capable (original airport card only, not the Extreme).

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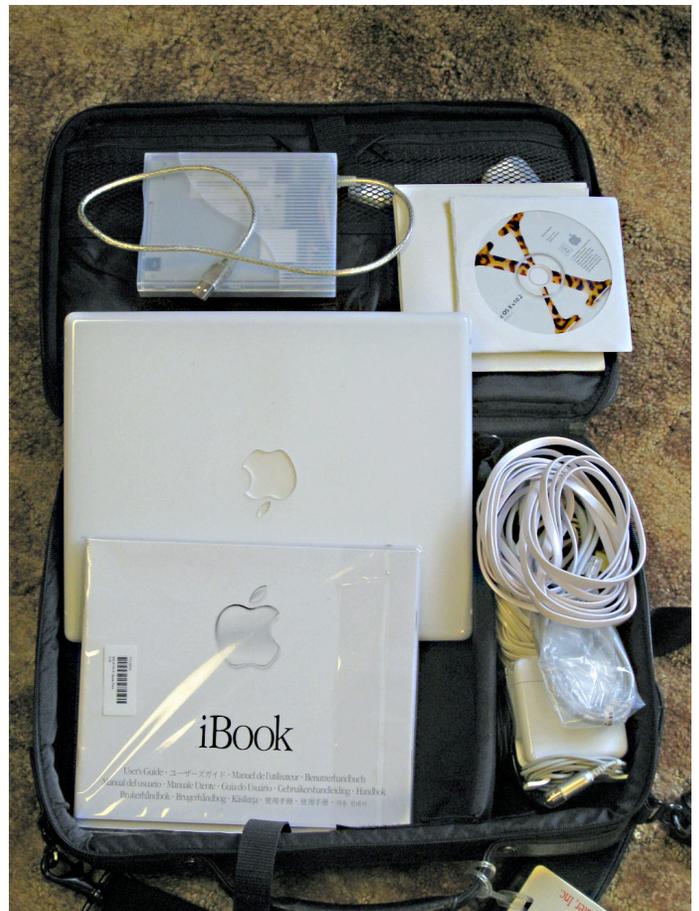
Hot Links of the Month
by Ron Heck

Apple tops PC customer satisfaction survey

CNET.com reports on a recent survey that shows Apple ranks first among computer manufacturers when it comes to customer service.
http://tinyurl.com/cftqde

Gizmodo.com also weighs in on the survey at the following site:
http://tinyurl.com/df4urk

An intriguing look at Microsoft's new ad campaign

Have you seen poor "Lauren" on her TV ad quest to find a PC she can afford? Turns out she's an actress and not a real PC shopper. Anyway, Technologizer.com reviews the differences between Apple's 17-inch Macbook Pro (the one Lauren turns down in the ad) to several 17-inch Windows laptops to see how they really compare.
http://tinyurl.com/cbvjnu

What's Steve Jobs up to?

Are you wondering if Steve Jobs is still involved with Apple? According Arstechnica.com, he is still keeping an eye on things during his leave of absence to focus on his health.
http://tinyurl.com/c4fj8b

Review of Elgato's video conversion gadget

If you're looking for a faster way to convert video into files you can play on your iPod or iPhone, one product by Elgato receives high marks by Gizmodo.
http://tinyurl.com/chdqqv

Answers to your iPod questions

How do you copy music from your iPod into the computer? What are the best headphones you can use with your iPod? Answers to these and many other questions related to iPods can be found at iLounge.com.
http://tinyurl.com/ddcob4

10 Undocumented Changes in iPhoto '09 8.0.2

If you've installed the latest update for iPhoto '09, there may be extra features you may not know about. Tidbits. com has compiled a list of 10 undocumented features
http://db.tidbits.com/article/10204

Is your wireless network secure?

If you'd like to learn more about creating a secure wireless network, you may be interested in an eBook that is available online. The eBook is titled "Take Control of Your Wi-Fi Security." An overview of the book and a link to it is available at Tidbits.com.
http://db.tidbits.com/article/10207

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