

Website: <http://www.miniapples.org>

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From the Editor:

Apple has announced unprecedented earnings this month. There are also rumors of a new OSX version, 10.7 (Lion). There were a number of updates, two from Adobe for security issues and a firmware patch. There is also a replacement video card replacement program for the MacBook Pro. Other than that there have been new releases of GraphicConverter 7.0, PhotoShop Elements 9.0, Premiere Elements 9.0, and Thunderbird 3.1.4 with PostBox 2.

I've been thinking about moving all of my Palm PDA info to an iPod Touch or an iPhone... Hmm!

[Tom Ostertag](#), Publications Director

Meeting Calendar

At the right is a list of mini'app'les meetings for November 2010. 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 SIG Leader or the mini'app'les website: www.miniapples.org.

Meeting Calendar – November 2010			
Tuesday	November 2	7:00 pm	Mac OS X SIG
Thursday	November 4	6:30 pm	Mac Applications SIG
Monday	November 8	7:00 pm	Board of Directors Meeting
Wednesday	November 10	7:00 pm	VectorWorks SIG*
Thursday	November 18	7:00 am	Macintosh Consultants SIG
Monday	November 22	6:00 pm	Mac Q&A SIG
Thursday	November 25	7:00 pm	FileMaker Pro SIG

Meeting Locations and Leaders

Meeting	Location	Leader
Board of Directors Meeting	Southdale Library Conference room, 7001 York Avenue South, Edina	Tim Drenk, 952-479-0891
FileMaker Pro SIG	Partners, 2250 Terminal Rd., Roseville	Steve Wilmes, 651-458-1513
Mac Applications SIG	Ethel Barry Room, Southdale Library, 7001 York Avenue South, Edina	Tim Drenk, 952-479-0891
Mac OS X SIG	The Foundation, 311 7 th Ave North, Minneapolis	Bob Demeules, 763-559-1124
Mac Q&A SIG	Merriam Park Library, 1831 Marshall Ave., St. Paul	Chuck Hauge, 612-963-5064
Macintosh Consultants SIG	Good Day Café, 5410 Wayzata Blvd., Golden Valley	Bob Demeules, 763-559-1124
VectorWorks SIG*	CJR Office, 4441 Claremore Dr., Edina	Charles Radloff, 952-941-1667

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

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mini'app'les Q&A SIG Meeting, 27 September 2010

by [Tim Tierney](#)

The September Q&A SIG meeting was held 09/27/10 at the Merriam-Park Library from 6:00 to 8:00 PM. Chuck Hauge, the new leader for this SIG, greeted the 11 attendees.



Les Anderson was recognized for his years serving as the Group's leader and was given a round of applause.

Chuck started the meeting with a presentation on "Email Spam & Phishing". It dealt with recognition, prevention and avoidance, and how to use some of the tools and sources of information available. Resources and tips offered by Chuck, or suggested by members, included:

Report malicious spam to the government, go to: www.ftc.gov/spam.

Apple's stance on Spam is [here](#):

Things you can do to prevent or mitigate Spam and Phishing:

- Turn on Spam (Junk) filtering in your email client.
- Mark Junk mail as Junk so your email program "learns" the good from the bad.
- Turn off automatic loading of pictures in email as many contain links to malware or unwanted sites.
- Move Spam to a Junk folder. This can be done manually, or you can develop a "Rule" in your email client to do this automatically. (You may want to check this folder periodically as sometimes desired mail might have been filtered.)
- Automatically delete Spam after xx days. Set a time interval that works for you.
- Minimize the Mail Viewer in the Apple Mail window. To do this, double-click on the horizontal bar between the list of messages and the message viewer. To view "safe" email, double click the emails you want to read
- Adjust your ISP (email host) settings to be more aggressive about Spam when practicable.
- Do not "Unsubscribe" to suspect email lists. By clicking Unsubscribe, or other buttons or

links on a suspect email you could be redirected to a malicious site, or activate malware.

- Consider using SpamSieve, a third party Spam filtering application

Bruce Thompson mentioned, and many members recalled, Apple's link to the company that eventually became AOL in the very early days of personal computing.

Apple Mail Tip by Bruce: Press Cmd-I on an Account name in the Mac Mailboxes pane on the left. This will produce a list of information for that email account that may be helpful.

A member with an iMac running OS 10.4.11 had a problem with frequent crashes. The computer recovers after restarting, but may again fail after minutes or days. Some disk and system trouble-shooting software was suggested and discussed. All of these programs are very powerful and need to be used with caution, especially by the novice. They included:

1. "Disk Utility", an app in your Utilities folder, can be used to repair permissions.
2. Another option in the Apple OS is to boot into Safe Mode (hold down the shift key until the pinwheel appears on the screen when restarting). After booting into Safe Mode, then Restart normally. This will replace the Boot Cache in the event it may be corrupt and causing issues.
3. "Disk Warrior" is a commercial disk diagnostic and repair utility. It is very powerful, but sells for about \$100. It's a good program, especially for the professional, but may be out of reach of the average user.
4. "Apple Jack" will do several disk diagnostics and repair functions. It's a freeware app that runs in "single-user" mode in the Terminal. It's highly rated and does a variety of tests in the

"automatic" mode.. This was said to be a useful free software download for identifying and repairing many Mac problems. More information, including a link to the developer's site can be found at MacUpdate.com.

5. Onyx is another good free option for performing system maintenance. It's very powerful and flexible. Caution is advised for novices as some options can harm the system under certain circumstances. It can also be found at MacUpdate.com.

The meeting went well and we had active and interesting discussions on the topics.

In Search of the iTunes Media Server

by [Michael E. Cohen](#), [Adam C. Engst](#)

From the beginning, iTunes has been a personal music player and organizer. The "personal" is important here: iTunes seems tuned, as it were, for handling one person's media collection.

By default, iTunes puts your media in your account's Home directory at ~/Music/iTunes/. Unlike the myriad Fonts folders in Mac OS X, there is no corresponding Music folder that's available to all users of a particular Mac. Although the iTunes application itself is shared among users on a Mac (or on Windows, for that matter), each user has his or her own iTunes folder in the Music folder of the user's home directory, and each running instance of iTunes looks at only one iTunes folder, and displays the contents of only one media collection, for each user.

For those of us who have spouses, companions, siblings, children, or parents with whom we share both musical tastes and living quarters, the "one person, one media collection" model doesn't work well. Nor does it work well even for one person, if that one person has, for example, a computer in a home office and

another in the living room, and wants access to the same iTunes library in both places. What we want is a central iTunes library that everyone on a home network (or using separate user accounts on a single Mac) can share when each of us runs iTunes. But that's not quite what Apple has given us.

Apple's Sharing Solutions -- Over the years, in various versions of iTunes, Apple has attempted to ameliorate the media-sharing problem to some extent, although their attempts have been hobbled by, among other things, their contractual arrangements with, and the influence of, the music publishers who stock the iTunes Music Store (and who, truth be told, would be more than happy if you had to pay for music each and every time you listened to it).

- *CD sharing*: This is the oldest method of music sharing that iTunes supports, and the most limiting. You burn a CD containing the songs you want to share. The disadvantages of this method include the cost of the media and the limited storage available. Furthermore, if you're sharing DRM-protected music, you also may have to deal with the limited number of times you can make an audio CD from the same playlist of protected music (currently seven times), and that CD then must be imported into the recipient's own iTunes library, with a concomitant loss of some fidelity.
- *Shared libraries*: You can use this iTunes feature to make your iTunes library visible over a local network to iTunes running on other computers on the network. The main disadvantage of this method is having to keep iTunes running on the computer sharing the library for the library to be visible - if you shut down the iTunes host computer, or put it to sleep, or log out of the account running iTunes, or if iTunes crashes, the other users can't access the music. Also,

those sharing your library can't create their own playlists of your music, but are restricted to the playlists that you have created and shared. Nor will they be able to keep track of their play counts or rate the music for themselves. And, finally, only five other users can connect to your iTunes library within a 24-hour period.

- *Home Sharing*: This feature is Apple's latest spin on iTunes media sharing (and it may be their preferred sharing method going forward - until they come up with some other way). You can turn on Home Sharing to allow other iTunes users on a local network to copy iTunes media items between computers. You can also set Home Sharing to synchronize media purchased from the iTunes Store automatically: when you buy music or video on one computer, the files are automatically copied to another.

The disadvantages start there: Home Sharing synchronizes only iTunes Store purchases - songs from ripped CDs, GarageBand ditties, and other stuff you must copy from one iTunes library to another manually. Other disadvantages include having to go to each computer and enter your Apple ID and password, being limited (again!) to only five computers for sharing (one of the Brady Bunch kids would be left out), and the fact that the items are not really being shared but copied and, therefore, taking up space on every computer on which they are "shared."

Note, too, that Home Sharing shares media from one iTunes Store account among multiple Macs, but not among multiple iTunes Store accounts. This can create its own set of problems. Consider a parent (let's call him Rupert) who shares his iTunes Store media with three teens via Home Sharing. If one of those teens (let's call her Sophie) buys an app on her iPod touch with her own iTunes Store account

and then wants to share that app with her siblings, Home Sharing must be turned off and then turned back on using Sophie's iTunes Store account, not Rupert's account. And that only takes care of the original sharing of the app: once that app is copied to everyone else's iOS devices, each time the developer updates the app, the siblings have to enter the correct password for Sophie's iTunes Store account. If Sophie changes her password, nobody can update the app unless she shares her new password ("Da-a-a-ad! Sophie won't let me update my Fall Fashion Guide app!").

However, if you step away from Apple's supplied solutions, and if your home network is up to the challenge, you may be able to build your own iTunes media server. Some small inconveniences will remain, and some protocols (the human kind, not the computer kind) will have to be observed, but you, and everyone on your local network, will all share a central iTunes media repository. (If it all works, of course: see the conclusion of this article, "What Could Possibly Go Wrong?" for some of the obstacles you can encounter.)

But first, a quick digression. Some non-Apple media syncing solutions do exist, although that's a topic complex enough to deserve its own article. Until we get around to it here at TidBITS, you can take a look at Macworld's "[Sync your iTunes libraries](#)" by our own Joe Kissell.

And now, back to the show, which is already in progress...

The iTunes Folder and Its Contents -- iTunes "wants" to find its iTunes Library in ~/Music/iTunes. Note that I said *Library* not *library*. The iTunes Library is a *file* that lives at the top level of ~/Music/iTunes/. It contains a database that includes information about all the songs and other media in your iTunes collection, along with playlist information and other bits of housekeeping information.

There are other database files in ~/Music/iTunes/ as well, such as iTunes Library Genius.itdb, which contains information related to the iTunes Genius feature. iTunes looks for all these database files in ~/Music/iTunes/, and if it doesn't find them there, it creates them.

None of these files, though, contains your actual iTunes media collection (what I have been calling your "iTunes library" - small "l"). All of your music, videos, podcasts, books, iOS apps, and other media, at least starting with iTunes collections created by iTunes 8, is in your iTunes Media folder. This is the folder that you want to use as the basis of your homegrown iTunes media server.

Hold Yer Horses! What iTunes Media Folder?

-- I'm sure that some of you have opened your ~/Music/iTunes/ folder only to find no iTunes Media folder. Instead you probably saw several folders, including an "iTunes Music" folder. If that's the case, you have almost certainly been using iTunes for a number of years, and the contents of ~/Music/iTunes/ are arranged in the way that versions of iTunes prior to iTunes 8 required. iTunes 8 and later can still use the older ~/Music/iTunes/ organization, which is why you don't see the iTunes Media folder.

Nonetheless, you'll need to reorganize the iTunes folder to consolidate and to organize properly all of your media in the iTunes Media folder, should you wish to use it for your iTunes media server. (This isn't entirely a required step; if all the copies of iTunes in your family are set up using this old version of the iTunes folder, they can all continue to use the old iTunes folder hierarchy rather than looking for everything inside a new iTunes Media folder. However, this article assumes you are using the new iTunes Media folder hierarchy.) The next section of this article discusses how to reorganize your iTunes folder properly, along with some of the possible consequences of this significant and irreversible act. Those of you who already have properly organized iTunes Media folders can skip the following section.

Organizing the iTunes Media Folder --

Although organizing your iTunes collection can be a massive undertaking as far as the amounts of material to be rearranged are concerned, there's not much work for you to do, since iTunes does all of the heavy lifting:

1. Choose File > Library > Organize Library.
2. In the Organize Library dialog, make sure that both Consolidate Files and Upgrade to iTunes Media Organization are checked, and then click OK.



3. iTunes proceeds to move all of the media files in your ~/Music/iTunes/ folder into their proper places in the iTunes Media folder, and to copy any media files that you had stored elsewhere on your Mac but had included in your library (you did know you could do that, don't you?) into the iTunes Media folder. Even for a media collection of 100 GB, this process usually only takes a few minutes.

There are some consequences from running this command:

- *The iTunes Music folder name may not change:* In some cases, your iTunes Music folder won't be renamed to iTunes Media. Don't worry about this; the name isn't important. What's important is that the folder contents are arranged properly. In the rest of this article, when I refer to the iTunes Media folder, I also mean this reorganized-but-not-renamed iTunes Music folder.

- *Disk space may drop:* This process can require lots of disk space if you have many large files stored elsewhere on your hard disk that are part of your iTunes media collection, because the command doesn't *move* those files but instead *copies* them. For example, I have a number of large movie files stored elsewhere on my Mac, but that appear in my iTunes library. Consolidating the library would make copies of each of those movies and put them in my iTunes Media folder. If you are running short of disk space, you'll have to free up enough space on your disk to accommodate those copies before you undertake the reorganization.
- *Time Machine space will drop:* Time Machine will see the reorganized iTunes Media folder as a new folder, and will back up all its contents. You may want to prune older iTunes backups from your Time Machine drive before you undertake the reorganization if Time Machine space is running low.

See the Apple support note, "[iTunes 9: Understanding iTunes Media Organization](#)," for more information about what will be put where.

Set Up a Shared Media Folder -- Here's the key to making your own iTunes media server: iTunes doesn't care where the iTunes Media folder is stored or what its name is. As long as you set iTunes' preferences (stored in ~/Library/Preferences/com.apple.itunes.plist, if you care) so that iTunes looks for the media folder where you have placed it, iTunes will use that folder. The database files - which, as I've said, contain things like your playlists - still remain in ~/Music/iTunes/ no matter where your music and other media resides. Thus, if you put the iTunes Media folder on a shared volume or on a file server on your network, several people can use it and still have their own personal playlists and all the other

information that is unique to their view of the iTunes library. (Apple describes how to move an iTunes Media folder in the support note, "[iTunes for Mac: Moving your iTunes Media folder.](#)")

In the following scenario, I assume you have copied your iTunes Media folder to a file server on your home network and have set the folder's permissions so that other users on the network can read from and write to that folder. One user (probably you) will be the main person who should add media to the iTunes Media folder. Think of this user as the designated Media Librarian. It's not a major problem if other users have read and write privileges and add media, but using and maintaining the media server will be less confusing if one person does most of the work.

You may have noticed that I've been rather vague about the "file server on your home network" and how to set permissions on it. That is, unfortunately, intentional: I don't know the equipment that you own and so I can't say exactly what this device might be, nor how you should set it up. It could be an older Mac that you have sitting around that you've pressed into service as a file server. It could be an external USB drive attached to an AirPort Extreme base station. It could be a NAS (network-attached storage) device of some sort. All of these *could* work (though nothing is guaranteed: see below, "What Could Possibly Go Wrong?"), but the details of installing the server and setting the appropriate permissions on it vary.

If, instead, you share the iTunes Media folder from *your* Mac, you need to make it a Shared Folder using the Info window for that folder:

1. Move the iTunes Media folder to your account's Public folder. (This isn't absolutely necessary, but putting it there both makes it accessible to other accounts on your Mac and serves as a reminder to you that the iTunes Media folder is publicly available.)

2. Select the folder, and then choose File > Get Info.
3. Click Shared Folder in the General section of the Info window.
4. At the bottom of the Get Info window, click the lock icon to authenticate, and then give everyone Read & Write permissions. That's necessary so users can subscribe to podcasts and other subscriptions (but this sort of data opens another can of wriggly annelids, as described below in "Podcasts and other subscriptions").
5. From the action menu (the gear icon) at the bottom of the Info window, choose Apply To Enclosed Items, and then, in the confirmation dialog, click OK. Other users can now connect to your Public folder as Guest to see the folder and its contents.

If you're sharing the iTunes Media folder from your Mac, there are two things to keep in mind. First, your Mac must remain on, awake, and your user account must remain logged in, so that other users on the network can access the folder. Your Mac *is* a file server now. Second, you, of course, are the Media Librarian I mentioned above. Feel free to don a mask and cape.

There's one more step before others can connect to the shared iTunes Media folder: "stamping" the media with the names of the users who will share it. Why? Because this will help identify new media later on. To "stamp" all of the types of media you want to share (that is, the music, movies, TV shows, and EPUB-based books - this step doesn't work for PDFs or apps), select all the items with Command-A, press Command-I to display a Multiple Item Information window, and put the name of each person who will share the folder, separated by spaces (as in "Adam Tonya Tristan").

Now, to use the shared folder, each user on each Mac should perform the following steps:

1. In the Finder, under Shared in any Finder window sidebar, select the server that contains the iTunes Media folder. If you can't see the server in the sidebar, use Go > Connect to Server. (If you have shared the folder from your Public folder, you can skip this step for yourself.)
2. Connect to the server, using an appropriate account. (If you have shared the folder from your Public folder, other users can connect as Guest; you won't need to connect at all.)
3. In iTunes, choose iTunes > Preferences and click Advanced.



4. To the right of the iTunes Media Folder Location panel, click the Change button, and then navigate to and choose the shared iTunes Media folder within the volume from the server you just mounted. (If you are sharing your own folder, just navigate to it on your own Mac.)
5. Select both Keep iTunes Media Folder Organized and Copy Files To iTunes Media Folder When Adding To The Library. This ensures that everything gets added to the shared iTunes Media folder.
6. In the Finder, open the shared iTunes Media folder, select all the media folders inside it that *don't* contain subscription-based content (most notably, podcasts, although possibly TV shows as well), and drag them into the iTunes window

to import them. This won't import PDFs in the Books folder for some reason; they must be selected as files and dragged in separately. (If you are sharing your own iTunes Media folder, skip this step, because iTunes already knows the files are part of your iTunes [big "L"] Library.)

Note that the above steps assume each user other than the Media Librarian has an empty iTunes library. If that's not true, and it likely won't be, the Media Librarian will have to work with each user to gather and add the media from each user's personal media collection for storage in the shared iTunes Media folder. Home Sharing would likely be the most effective way to see and merge multiple libraries.

(By the way: With recent versions of iTunes, if you launch iTunes while pressing the Option key, a dialog appears that you can use either to create a new, empty iTunes Library or to switch to an existing one. This is how you'd switch back and forth between two different iTunes libraries if necessary.)



At this point each person has the shared media in his or her iTunes library. Yay! There's one major downside to sharing an iTunes Media folder this way: every time someone adds new media - by, for instance, ripping a new CD, or purchasing something from the iTunes Store - each other user must import the files manually by dragging them into iTunes. However, that's not true of things that you subscribe to, such as podcasts; see below, "What Could Possibly Go Wrong?" for tips.

It's up to the Media Librarian to let everyone know when new media has been added to the shared iTunes Media folder so that other users

can import it by dragging it to iTunes on their computers. This is, unfortunately, easier said than done, especially if quite a few pieces of media have been imported by the Media Librarian since the last addition.

How do you identify newly added media? You could try to match dates, but that doesn't work well, since Date Modified can change and Date Created isn't always representative, depending on the source of the file. So here's a better approach (and it's why you went through the media "stamping" exercise above). Whenever anyone adds media (songs, movies, TV shows, or EPUB books; it won't work with apps) to the shared iTunes Media folder, that person should follow these steps:

1. Select all newly added items, and type Command-I to open a Multiple Item Information window.
2. In the Comments field, type the name of the person who has added the media. For example, typing Adam indicates that Adam's iTunes Library file (note the large "L") "knows" about the added media.
3. For each other Mac, open the shared iTunes Media folder in the Finder and in the Finder window's Search field, type "comment:" followed by the name of the person who added the media, followed by a hyphen and the name of the person whose Mac it is, as in "comment:Adam - Tonya" (also, make sure to select the iTunes Media button in the Search toolbar; searching This Mac will skew the results). This search finds all items in the shared iTunes Media folder that were imported by one person, but which haven't been added to other libraries. In this example, it would find items imported by Adam, but not yet imported by Tonya.

4. Drag any or all of the found items to the iTunes window to add them to the iTunes Library for that Mac.
5. Sort the Finder window by either the Comments column or the Date Added column, select the newly added items, and then press Command-I to open the Multiple Item Information window.
6. Change the Comments field to *include* (don't replace) the name of the person who has added the media; for example, changing the comments field to "Adam Tonya" indicates that these files have been added to Tonya's iTunes Library.

Unfortunately, although the Comments metadata for each file will now contain "Adam Tonya" in this scenario, the iTunes Library of the Adam user (who imported the music to start with) won't display that change until Adam plays a song or changes other metadata. There seems to be no way to force iTunes to refresh the metadata contained within media files.

It's worth noting that each user of the media server can choose which of the shared media files to import, so if you don't want your daughter's Justin Bieber songs appearing in your iTunes Library, you can ignore them. Also, consider what this distinction between the iTunes media and the iTunes Library means for user-specific metadata like playlists, ratings, and play counts. Since iTunes tracks that information within each user's iTunes Library file, every user will have their own metadata even though they share the media. Generally speaking, that's good, since you probably don't want your daughter's playlists, nor do you want her play counts to migrate to your iTunes Library, because your smart playlists that relied on play count might have unintended contents.

However, if you're sharing your content among your own machines - you have a Mac in your basement office and a Mac mini that plays music through your stereo system upstairs - not

having the same playlists might be annoying. In this situation, you might be better off moving your entire iTunes folder to the server and selecting it with an Option-launch of iTunes. You must also make sure that each copy of iTunes looks for the iTunes Media folder itself in the proper location. The downsides there include contention for the iTunes Library file - only one copy of iTunes could be running at any given time - and performance problems if the iTunes Library file is large.

What Could Possibly Go Wrong -- The answer to that question is "lots of stuff." Keep in mind that over the past decade Apple has had to tap-dance faster than a caffeinated hummingbird just to make sure that iTunes and its complicated ecosystem remain compatible with all the devices and the user scenarios that Apple supports. A roll-your-own iTunes media server is not something that Apple prohibits, but neither is it something that they support.

Here are a few of the pain points that might keep you from implementing an iTunes media server and instead could send you back to the supported solutions I described in "Apple's Sharing Solutions," above:

- *NAS issues:* Network-attached storage devices are computers designed specifically share files with other devices on a network. They typically run a stripped-down operating system, often Linux or a customized version of FreeBSD, designed to handle file-sharing tasks. From this description, you might think that such devices are a perfect place from which to share iTunes media. In theory, you are right; however, in theory, there is no difference between theory and practice, but in practice, unfortunately, there often is. Many people have tried using NAS devices to share iTunes media, some with success, some without. Problems that I've heard reported include such minor inconveniences as an inability of a NAS

to share album artwork to such major problems as, well, as not working at all. The reasons why they might not work are often unclear, and I've seen all sorts of theories, workarounds, and configuration suggestions proposed that solve problems for some users and not for others.

- *Podcasts and other subscriptions:* Podcasts and other iTunes Store items to which you subscribe involve a complex interaction between your iTunes Library file, the podcast source on the Internet, and your iTunes Media folder. It's not enough just to drop a podcast downloaded by someone else on your iTunes application: iTunes gets information from the podcast server that isn't part of the file itself in order to keep track of which episodes you have obtained, which ones you've discarded, and which ones you need to get. Consequently, it does no good for the Media Librarian for your homegrown media server to subscribe to the podcasts you want and tell you about them: the podcasts still won't appear in your podcast collection with the necessary information you need to manage these evanescent items. In short, all users must subscribe to their favorite podcasts and TV shows rather than relying on the Media Librarian and manual copying of files. If multiple users subscribe to the same podcast, the podcast media will be downloaded more than once, but since each copy of iTunes is tracking its own downloads (the files are given unique names) there shouldn't be any confusion.
- *Rights management:* One of the reasons for sharing the iTunes Media folder instead of using Home Sharing, aside from the duplication of data, is to avoid having every user share the same iTunes Store authorization. After all, the music that

the iTunes Store currently sells no longer has digital rights management restrictions, so any user on the network can play it. However, you do have to share the authorization even when using a shared iTunes Media folder if you want to play media that is still protected by Apple's DRM system, FairPlay (such as songs purchased in the "bad old days" or for TV shows and movies purchased from the iTunes Store). And FairPlay limits the number of users sharing the same authorization to five. If you have more than five users on your home network, some of the users won't be able to play any FairPlay-protected media from the shared iTunes Media folder.

- *iOS apps purchased on an iDevice:* When you purchase an app on your iPod touch, iPhone, or iPad, it syncs back to the iTunes Media folder the next time you connect your device. That's fine, and if other users wish to share that app (up to five), it can be added manually from the Finder to iTunes like any other piece of media. Duplicate purchases aren't a problem, since the files are given unique names. However, if an app purchased by one person is updated by another, the second person will need the first's iTunes Store password.
- *Road warriors:* This is an obvious pitfall though not a big one. If you use a laptop and rely on a shared iTunes Media folder on a local server, you won't have access to it when you are traveling. The best solution to this is to create a second iTunes Library on the laptop, reset the location of the iTunes Media folder in the Advanced preferences, and copy a subset of your content to it manually when you travel. Remember, you can Option-launch iTunes to create a new iTunes Library and to switch back and forth between the one that looks to the shared iTunes Media folder on your network

and the one that has its content stored locally; you must also reset the location of the iTunes Media folder each time, since that is stored in ~/Library/Preferences/com.apple.itunes.plist, not in the iTunes Library file. This approach requires you to keep track of what media you have stored where. And it also means that play counts, ratings, and playlists between the two iTunes Library files will inevitably differ.

- *Birds leaving the nest:* Sharing media among family members is great - until one of those members, say, grows up and goes away to college. It's a problem similar to those that road warriors would have with a shared iTunes Media folder, but one that has to be solved only once: the departing user needs to make a new iTunes Library, reset the location of the iTunes Media folder to the local disk, and copy the media she wants into it from the shared iTunes Media folder. There still may be issues involving authorization for any protected media that gets copied, of course. And, again, playlists, play counts, and ratings won't be copied: the departing user has to start fresh with those.

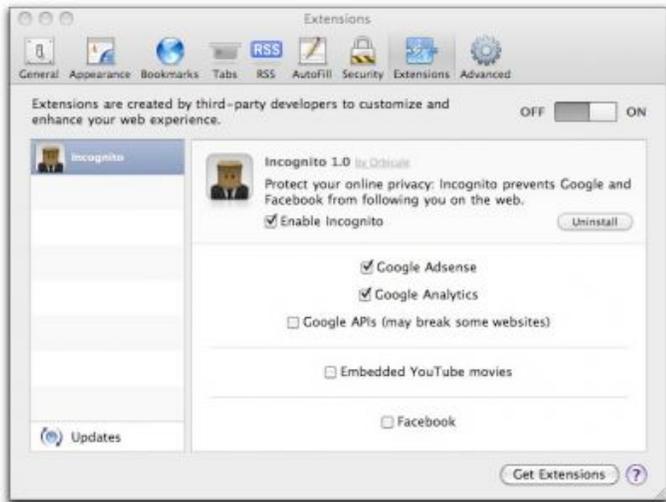
But, if none of the issues mentioned above are too troublesome, you can enjoy a shared iTunes media server right now, and not have to wait until that glorious day in the far future when Apple, and all the media companies with whom it partners, finally allow the development of a true Apple-supported iTunes Media Server. For more on what that would require, see Kirk McElhearn's thoughts at Macworld in "[Opinion: Apple needs an iTunes Server version.](#)"

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Safari Extension Hides You from Google

by [Glenn Fleishman](#)

Orbicule has released a free extension for Safari 5 that blocks several methods of tracking your behavior across multiple Web sites. The [Incognito extension](#) can prevent Google's AdSense and Analytics JavaScript from phoning back to the mothership. This incidentally blocks Google ads from appearing, but it's not the primary intent.



AdSense is used to deliver advertisements on third-party Web sites; Analytics to track page usage and behavior, such as which sequence of pages a surfer follows. Google offers opt-out options for [AdSense](#) and a browser plug-in to opt out of [Analytics](#) - but not for Safari. (TidBITS uses both AdSense and Analytics.)

Incognito also optionally lets you turn off all Google APIs, which use JavaScript to communicate to the firm. The extension notes that this "may break some websites," as Google's application interfaces are used for a host of reasons beyond tracking.

The extension can disable embedded YouTube videos, which send tracking information to Google's YouTube division about who you are even if you don't watch the video. YouTube has [its own opt-out page](#) for advertising and some tracking. You can also use a Flash blocker to allow YouTube selectively on specific sites.

Finally, Orbicule lets you disable Facebook's third-party data sharing in which a Like button and other Facebook-related information appears related to your account on a Web site other than [Facebook.com](#) if you recently logged into Facebook.

The use of extensions in Safari 5 isn't turned on by default. Select Safari > Preferences and click Extensions to flip the switch to On. Then you can download the Incognito extension from Orbicule's site, install it, and configure it.

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Pushing Pixels with Photoshop Elements 9

by [Jeff Carlson](#)

Photoshop is one of those rare products whose name recognition has transcended its source. Many people who may otherwise have no familiarity with computers beyond the basics of Web browsing and email understand that to manipulate digital photos, they need "Photoshop," without realizing what they probably have in mind is the professional Photoshop CS5.

The software has even become a verb in the popular consciousness. It's not difficult to find examples of news articles about images being poorly "Photoshopped" for advertising or even political gains. (And if you haven't seen [Photoshop Disasters](#), you really must check it out.)

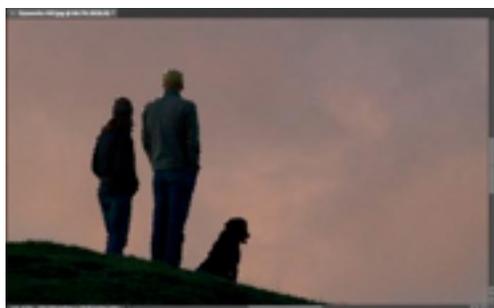
So when an average person goes looking for Photoshop - either as a starting point or in search of a tool more advanced than iPhoto - you can imagine their shock at the \$699 starting price of Photoshop CS5. Adobe learned long ago that making a consumer version of its flagship image editor satisfied a need in the market, but early versions were primarily stripped-down versions that shipped with

scanners. Now, [Photoshop Elements](#) is packed with features, and in the new version 9, the software gains a few key capabilities of Photoshop CS5, but at the much more reasonable price of \$99.

Photoshop Elements Basics -- In truth, when people think of needing Photoshop for their digital photos, they're typically thinking of the basic color-correction tools offered by iPhoto - lightening underexposed images, cropping, adjusting color balance, and the like. And, of course, iPhoto makes it easy to apply such edits. But iPhoto's correction tools are broad, affecting the entire image. Photoshop Elements offers additional layers (literally) of granularity for more specific edits.

One of the strengths of Photoshop Elements is that it caters to multiple skill levels. Using the Quick Edit environment, for example, you can adjust an image's lighting, color saturation, and other attributes using familiar sliders. Click the expansion triangle to the right of a slider to display Quick Fix previews, then click a thumbnail image for the amount of the adjustment to apply. (Here's a tip: Click and drag on a thumbnail to fine-tune the amount.)

But what if you don't want to apply an adjustment to the entire image? The selection tools in the Full Edit mode are first-rate. Grab the Quick Selection tool to select a specific area of the image. In the image below, I've "painted" around the figures and selected the sky; I want to brighten the sky, but keep the figures in silhouette. I didn't need to be very precise with the Quick Selection tool, because it detects edges and snaps to them as I draw close.



I could easily apply a lighting

adjustment here (by going to the Enhance > Adjust Lighting menu), but that would change the values of the image's pixels. As much as possible, I want to retain the original color values in case I change my mind later. Instead, I create a new adjustment layer: from the bottom of the Layers panel to the right of the image, I click the Create Adjustment Layer button and choose Levels. The adjustment layer sits above the image's layer (the Background layer) and changes the appearance of the image without actually changing the pixel values themselves.

Because I made a selection before creating the adjustment layer, any changes I make affect only the selected area - in this case, the sky. I can then play with the sliders in the Adjustments panel to get the result I want. If I decide later that the sky is too bright, I can select the adjustment layer and change the sliders again. Better yet, if I want to go in a completely different direction with the photo, I can just delete the adjustment layer and start over - again, without disrupting the original pixels.



This sounds like advanced Photoshop work, and in a way it is, but it's

also very accessible (and, importantly, non-destructive). Photoshop Elements' tools make it easy to get your head around what's being done to your image.

Adjustment layers aren't new in Photoshop Elements 9, but they do point to a welcome new feature. At last, the program supports real layer masks. You can make a selection and create a mask, hiding everything that is not selected. Layer masks are good for making adjustments, but also extremely useful when compositing elements of several images together, like a collage.

Content Aware Healing -- One of the best new features in Photoshop Elements is almost undetectable if you don't look closely. The Spot Healing Brush has been a great tool for making repairs like removing blemishes or dust spots. Now, the tool uses Adobe's Content Aware technology, which was introduced in Photoshop CS5 earlier this year. If you've ever done any image repair or touchup work, Content Aware really seems like magic. It's smarter about analyzing an area to repair and filling it with similar pixels, making it a much faster alternative to the traditional way to make such edits, the Clone Stamp tool.

For example, in the image below, I want to remove a power line that bisects Seattle's Space Needle. Unfortunately, the line cuts through an area that includes a lot of detail.



To remove the line, I drag across it once using the Spot Healing Brush. The same edit would have taken more time using the Clone Stamp tool in the past.

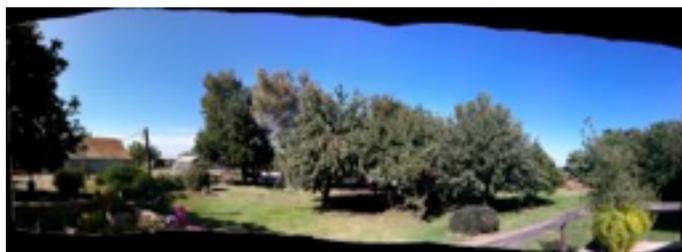


The implementation of the Spot Healing Brush in Photoshop Elements is limited compared to Photoshop CS5, as you might expect in a consumer-level program. For example, in Photoshop CS5 you can make a selection and hit the Delete key, and the program will replace the area with sensible imagery. In Photoshop Elements, however, you can still get much of the same effect with a little elbow (or wrist)

grease: paint over a large area with the Spot Healing Brush and see what happens.



The technology is also used by the Photomerge Panorama feature. After stitching together a panorama, there's always some dead space left around the edges, which is normally just cropped out.



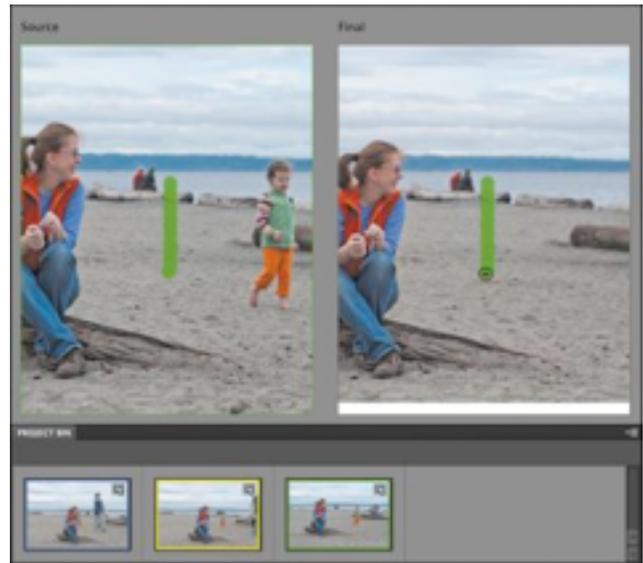
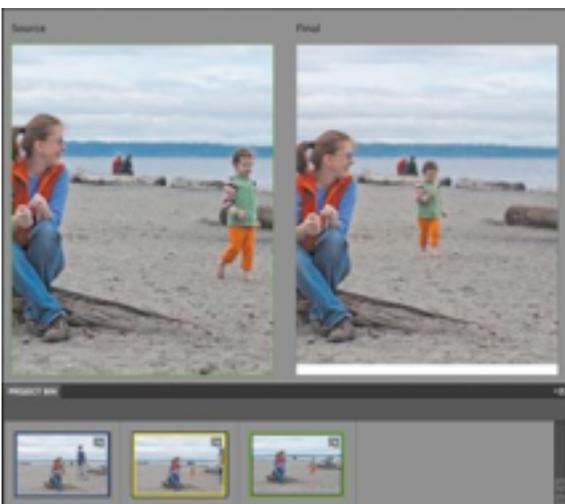
But now you're asked if you want to fill that space using the content-aware feature. The results can be mixed, depending on the source material; it's great for skies, but can muddle areas with identifiable objects, such as the ground in the version below.



Photomerging -- One of the things I love about Photoshop Elements is that Adobe has put effort into helping photographers overcome common problems. Yes, the tools are there to compensate for dark photos or spot-fix aberrations, but it often takes some know-how to do it. The Photomerge features tackle specific problem situations.

To give one example, the Photomerge Scene Cleaner - introduced in Photoshop Elements 8 on the Mac - lets you remove unwanted elements from a scene by sourcing multiple similar shots. (This is a good example of why shooting in burst mode, where you can fire off three or more pictures in rapid succession, can be helpful.) The feature was originally billed as the Tourist Remover for its ability to erase bystanders who had unwittingly wandered into a shot.

In the example below, I've opened three shots into the Photomerge Scene Cleaner editor, and specified the best of the lot as the Final image at right. I don't want the girl in orange to appear, so I set as Source (at left) a shot where the girl was no longer occupying the same space.



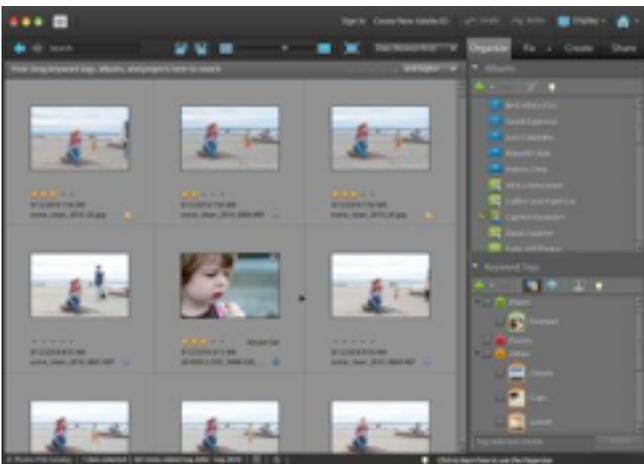
To erase her from the image, I draw a line through her on the right; Photoshop Elements pulls the corresponding pixels from the Source image. This action accomplishes the same effect as the Spot Healing Brush I mentioned earlier, but in this case the program is replacing original corresponding pixels rather than synthesizing an area algorithmically.

A new Photomerge module in Photoshop Elements 9 is Style Match, which is designed to apply the photographic style of one image to another. In theory, it will let you approximate the look of, say, an Ansel Adams photo to one of your own. Adobe provides a handful of stylized source images, but you can also use your own photos or any other image.



In practice, I find the results to be heavy-handed, consistently blowing out highlights and requiring that I pull back on the Style Intensity slider. Just as bringing a camera and tripod to Yosemite won't necessarily result in images that look as good as Ansel Adams photos, the Photomerge Style Match won't magically make your photos look like a master's. However, in either situation you'll have fun getting the picture.

The Organizer -- I've saved the biggest change for last, because it's something that is likely to be embraced or just ignored by Mac users. Photoshop Elements 9 now includes the Organizer (officially the Adobe Elements 9 Organizer), a separate application for managing one's library of photos and videos. The Organizer has been a staple of Photoshop Elements under Windows for several versions, and on the Mac it replaces Adobe Bridge.



Like iPhoto, the Organizer imports and manages digital photos and videos, lets you organize media into albums, and lets you rate items on a scale of one to five stars. I particularly like the full-screen mode for sorting, rating, and tagging photos quickly.

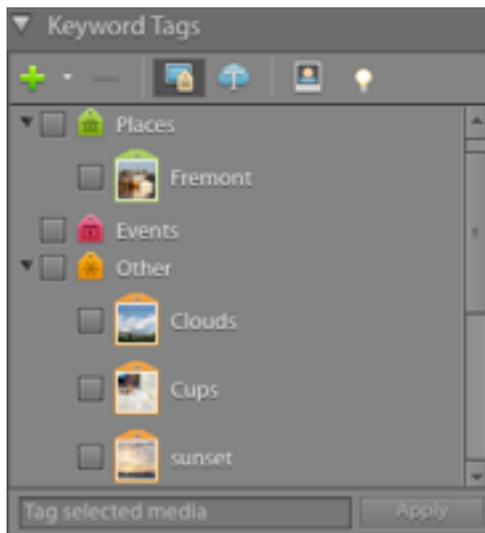
(However, the Photo Downloader - a separate utility - crashes when connecting to an iPhone 4 or iPhone 3GS, the models I was able to test; Adobe is looking into the problem.)

It also includes quick-fix options for making basic adjustments to photos without opening them in the Photoshop Elements application, and options for sharing images to Flickr, Facebook, SmugMug, email, and more.

It also makes extensive use of keyword tags, which are alternately helpful and irritating. An option to automatically analyze media as it's imported into the library applies smart tags that make it easy to weed out clips that are blurry, overexposed, or otherwise faulty. The feature is on by default, though I turned it off because it slows down the computer while processing. (You can manually activate the Auto-Analyzer whenever you want.) The analysis also looks for people's faces in photos, so you can identify and group them on a per-person basis.

Keyword tags in general, however, are cumbersome. The tags appear in the Keyword Tags panel in a list, with corresponding icons, grouped hierarchically under categories such as Places and Events. You end up dragging, scrolling, and expanding categories to manage what really should just be text elements. (iPhoto suffers from this, too, which is why I never bothered to tag images in iPhoto.) Keyword tags have a peculiar engineer feel to them. The structure and process makes sense - and you can almost envision the flowchart that explains it all - but it doesn't reflect how people would want to use tags. To see tags done correctly, look to Adobe's Photoshop Lightroom or Apple's Aperture, where you type tags, separated by commas, and they appear in a list.

One feature I use in every photo program that offers it is support for smart albums. For example, instead of creating a new album and dragging favorite photos from a recent vacation into it, I create a smart album that automatically locates all items ranked three stars or higher within the vacation's date range. As I add new photos or change rankings, the smart album's contents change dynamically.



The problem is, you can't easily edit a smart album. You can change its settings after the album is created (in the options bar, click the Options

button and then choose Modify Search Criteria), but that doesn't actually edit the smart album. You must save the new criteria as a new smart album. This behavior has prevailed for several versions of the Organizer under Windows; perhaps people never edit (or use) smart albums, but it amazes me that the feature is as clunky as it is, and has been that way for so long.

A couple features of the Organizer didn't transfer from Windows to Mac: there's no Map feature for assigning geo-location information, nor is there the capability to create a photo slideshow.

If you don't want to use the Organizer to manage your library, you can still use Adobe Bridge (if you installed it with a previous version of Photoshop Elements, or as part of the Adobe Creative Suite) or iPhoto. In Bridge, right-click or Control-click a photo and choose Photoshop Elements from the Open With

submenu that appears. In iPhoto, go to preferences, click the General icon, and from the Edit Photo pop-up menu choose In application; then select Photoshop Elements in the dialog that appears.

Photoshop.com Integration -- Photoshop Elements 9 now includes support for Adobe's Photoshop.com service, enabling you to publish photos to that service, edit them online, and sync them back to your library in the Organizer. As someone who's had a [Flickr](#) account for many years, what interests me is being able to back up photos off-site.

Included with the purchase of Photoshop Elements is 2 GB of online storage at Photoshop.com, which won't count for one's entire photo library (not even close), but does give you an opportunity to have off-site backups of your top-rated photos, for instance.

Cost and Availability -- Photoshop Elements 9 costs \$99, or \$79 with a mail-in rebate. The program is also available in a bundle with Premiere Elements 9 for \$149.99 (or \$119.99 after mail-in rebate).

For an additional \$49.99 per year, a [Plus membership](#) increases the Photoshop.com capacity to 20 GB and includes member-only seasonal templates and artwork for creative projects like calendars and books, and how-to lessons. You can also purchase [Photoshop Elements 9 Plus](#) for \$139.99 and save \$10, or buy [Photoshop Elements 9 & Adobe Premiere Elements Plus](#) for \$149.99 and save \$30.

(If you're interested in editing video using [Premiere Elements 9](#), which makes its debut on the Mac, see my review for Macworld.)

As you can tell, I'm a big fan of Photoshop Elements—not just because it offers professional photo editing capabilities at a reasonable price, but because Adobe has done a good job of figuring out how it can best help photographers who don't push pixels for a living. I've just finished updating my

"Photoshop Elements 9: Visual QuickStart Guide" for Peachpit Press (both [Mac OS X](#) and [Windows](#) editions), and after using the program for the past few months, I recommend it highly, even given some of the quirks I noted in the Organizer.

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TidBITS Watchlist: Notable Software Updates for 4 October 2010

by *Tidbits Staff*

Premiere Elements 9.0 -- Adobe has released [Premiere Elements 9.0](#), the first time the formerly Windows-only consumer video editing software has appeared under Mac OS X. Premiere Elements boasts native AVCHD editing without the need to transcode footage, a Scene line mode for editing movies in a far simpler manner than the full Timeline mode, integration with the new and included Adobe Elements 9 Organizer application for managing one's media library, and built-in DVD menu creation and burning capabilities, among other features. Premiere Elements 9 is available now as a downloadable installer (which also serves as a free trial version) or on disc. (For a full review of Premiere Elements 9, see Jeff Carlson's review in [Macworld](#).) (\$99 new, 1.71 GB)

Photoshop Elements 9.0 -- Adobe has updated [Photoshop Elements](#), its consumer image editing software. This new version brings the program closer in line to the Windows software, introducing to the Mac the Adobe Elements 9 Organizer for managing one's media library. (The Organizer replaces Adobe Bridge for those tasks.) This version finally gains the capability to create layer masks, adds content-aware technology to the Spot Healing Brush for intelligently making repairs, and introduces a new Photomerge feature called Style Match that attempts to replicate the look of one photo by

analyzing another. The Guided Edit tools also gain a few Fun Edits presets for creating reflections, pop-art effects, a Lomo effect, and steps for improving portrait photos. Photoshop Elements 9 is available now as a downloadable installer (which also serves as a free trial version) or on disc. (\$99 new, 2.01 GB)

GraphicConverter 7.0 -- Lemke Software has released [GraphicConverter 7.0](#), a substantial upgrade to the popular image conversion and editing powerhouse. The new version sports GraphicConverter's first major new coat of paint in years; it has finally shed the Classic look in favor of a modern, Cocoa-based interface. Beyond the major makeover, GraphicConverter 7.0 introduces a few new features. It now shows images' embedded geo-data on a map, offers a new window for converting multiple files at once, provides step less zooming of preview images, better organizes the preferences screen, and offers improved support for computers with multiple processors. GraphicConverter 7.0 requires Mac OS X 10.5 Leopard or higher. (\$34.95 new, \$29.95 upgrade, 100.0 MB)

Eudora OSE 1.0 -- A group of Eudora's original developers has at long last released [Eudora OSE 1.0](#), an open-source email client based on Mozilla's [Thunderbird](#) email program, but boasting features and interface elements pulled from the classic Eudora that so many people used and liked. Eudora, of course, began life in the late 1980s, but Qualcomm stopped development of the paid version of the software four years ago with version 6.2.4 (see "[Eudora Goes Open Source with Thunderbird](#)," 16 October 2006). Progress on Penelope, as the open-source update to Eudora was code-named, moved slowly, with the first beta release a year later (see "[Penelope Project Ships Eudora 8.0.0b1](#)," 5 September 2007), and the final release after three more years. Many long-time Eudora users have switched to other email programs, but for those who either aren't happy after the switch or who have held on to Eudora 6.2.4, Eudora OSE is worth a look. The developers

advise users updating from the beta versions of Eudora OSE to back up mailbox and preference files before installing the new release. (Free, 21.1 MB)

Postbox 2 -- Postbox, Inc. has released version 2 of its [Postbox](#) email software, which gives the open-source Thunderbird email code base a new interface and advanced features. Postbox 2 enables you to create account groups, which are multiple unified inboxes containing just the accounts you specify. Also new is what Postbox calls Conversation View, which will look familiar to Gmail users; it provides additional context by grouping all the messages in a given thread. The new Quick Reply feature lets you compose a response without leaving the message you already have open - you can dash off a terse reply inline as you're reading a message. Postbox 2 is free to try for 30 days, and family pack licenses are available. Postbox, Inc. also makes the free [Postbox Express](#), which [lacks some the features](#) in its big brother, but which gives you an unlimited taste of Postbox's basics. (\$39.95 new, \$19.95 upgrade, 12.0 MB)

Thunderbird 3.1.4 -- Mozilla has released [Thunderbird 3.1.4](#), the latest version of its open-source email client. The 3.1 release - which came out earlier in September - made it easier to switch to Thunderbird, whether from earlier versions of the software or from other email clients, thanks to its new Migration Assistant. The new version also introduced tabbed email browsing, mirroring the popular Web browsing feature. Other new niceties include one-click Address Book editing, an attachment reminder (which warns you if you try to send an attachment-free email when your message implies that you planned to attach one), and a Quick Filter search bar for finding messages faster. The 3.1.4 maintenance update corrects a few bugs related to the program's stability and interface. (Free, 20.5 MB)

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by [Les Anderson](#)

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Compiled by [Tom Ostertag](#)



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Classic Macs.....	NV	Microsoft Word.....	2, 5
Cross-Platform File Transfer.....	2, 3	Networks.....	NV
FileMaker Pro.....	NV	New Users.....	1
iMacs.....	NV	PhotoShop.....	NV
Intel-Based Macs.....	NV	QuarkXPress.....	5
iPhoto.....	3	Quicken.....	NV
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W= Weekends, generally 1 p.m. to 9 p.m.

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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 Members volunteer, please send an email message to Membership Director Les Anderson or contact him on our forums with your name, telephone number, contact hours, and the software and hardware areas you are willing to support.

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- A variety of Mac Special Interest Groups (SIGs) that meet each month.
- Multi-SIG meetings and workshops to help members with computer problems. You can bring your equipment to these events and receive support from knowledgeable Mac users to help diagnose your problem(s).
- Participation in drawings for computer hardware, software, and other computer related materials.
- Discounts from vendors and manufacturers. Refer to the on-line forums for current offers.

mini'app'les

the minnesota apple computer users group, inc.

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Submissions — We welcome contributions from our members. Perhaps you're using new software that you just can't live without. Maybe you have a new piece of hardware that you find extremely useful and of high quality. On the other hand, you might be struggling with problematic software or hardware. Why not share your experience with other members by writing a product review? Doing so may steer others towards quality products or help them avoid the problems you may be having.

Submissions must be received by the 15th day of each month to be included in the next month's newsletter. 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.

The 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.

This newsletter was produced using Apple's Pages word processor.

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