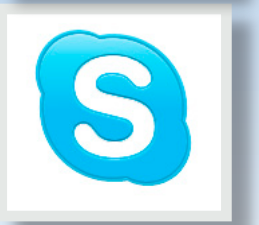
Washington Apple Pi eJournal

July –August 2009
Volume 31, No. 4

- **New Pi President "You can call me Jay!"**
- **Mac does Windows... and lots more!**
- **Skype for the masses!**



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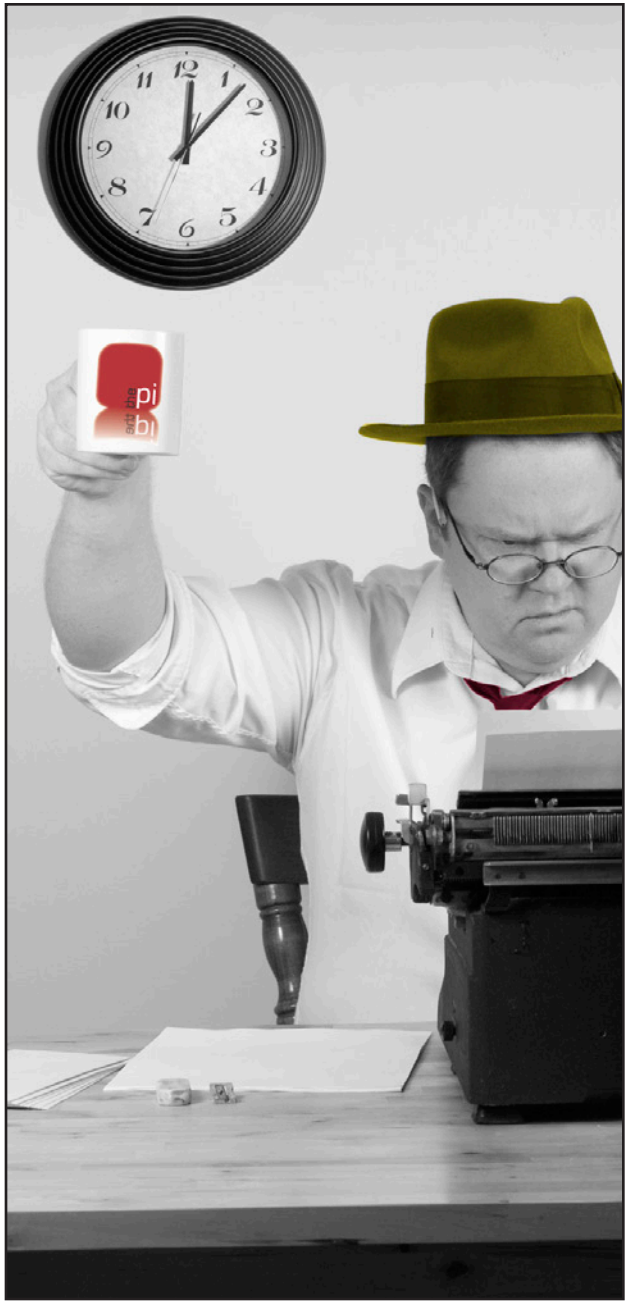


Editor's Column

By Bob Jarecke

As the new Managing Editor of the *Washington Apple Pi Journal*, I have some huge shoes to fill. Lawrence Charters (*Size 12*) has been a masterful Managing Editor for many years. He has decided to take a well-deserved break, however, and has turned the job over to me. In case you're concerned, Lawrence will continue to be involved with the Journal as Review Editor, and he has promised to continue submitting his informative and wry compositions. And although I (*Size 9*) lack Lawrence's decades of experience, I will do my level best to maintain the long, distinguished tradition of an A-1, top-notch *Journal*. Wish me luck!

An *eJournal* theme!

Before I talk about what's inside this *eJournal* (electronic *Journal*), I would like to explain the theme of the publication: it's Windows! While having several articles about Windows might seem a bit different, the topic does relate to Mac users. Some of our members still use Windows for a variety of reasons; others may want to run Windows to satisfy their curiosity or a particular need. In any case, Mac does Windows, and we are going to try to illustrate how Mac users can have the best of both computing worlds!

As for the Windows theme in this *eJournal*, it evolved from the coincidence that the first couple of article submissions were about Windows. We built on the topic, and in the end the publication grew to a record size with a *Skype* article included for good measure. Of course, *Skype* runs on Windows, too!

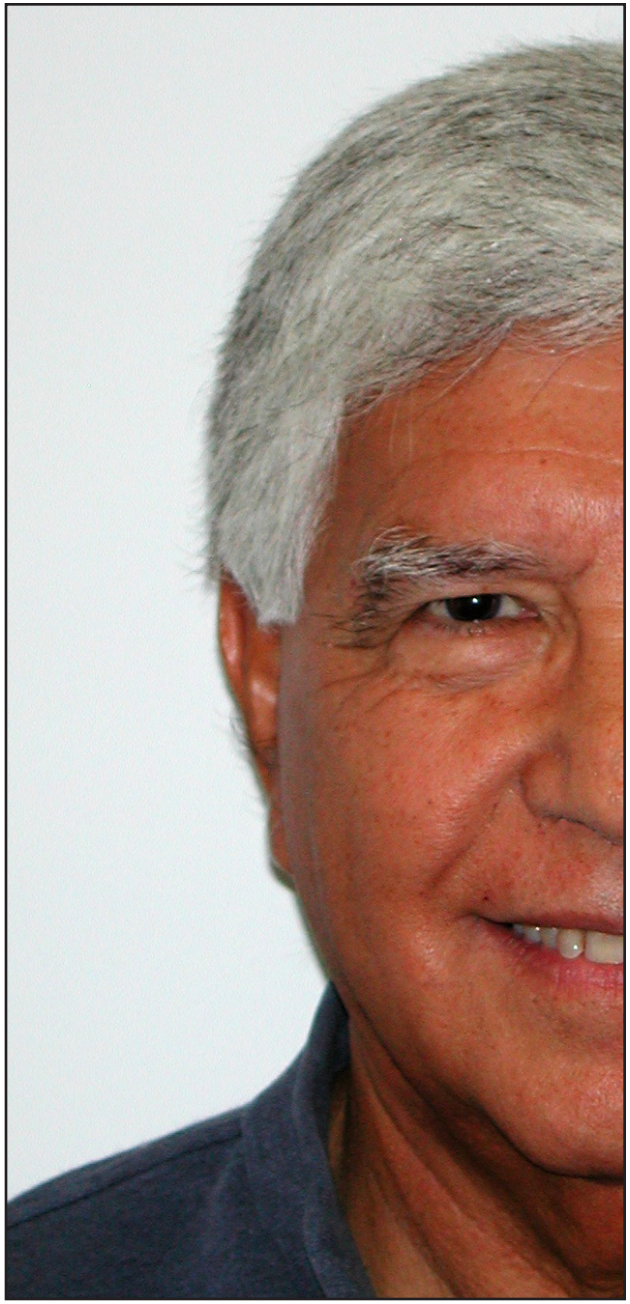
What's inside?

For your reading pleasure we have a number of articles on the Windows topic. A piece by Ken Goldman sets the stage by addressing the "*us versus them*" issue. George Hogeman tells us how to get a free copy of the newest version of Windows — Windows 7 — and how to put it on an Intel Mac. Richard Orlin provides two articles (*thanks, Richard*), the first a review of a "*Take Control*" book on Windows, and the other a look at converting a Windows-based portable PC into a "MacBook Mini" by installing Mac OS X Leopard. For good measure, we include a detailed look at the *Skype* application. Finally, we also cover the most recent General Meetings. Lots to read. We hope you enjoy this edition of the *eJournal*!

Volunteer pitch!

As always, we are looking for a little help! A rejuvenated Publications Committee will be tasked with editing and publishing the Pi written word. While there are a goodly number of worker bees on the committee, we urge anyone with specialized publishing skills such as writing, editing, page layout, or graphic design to join the team. We will meet in person periodically to hash out issues and pre-plan upcoming editions of the *Journal*. Can we recruit you?

Here's my email address: **editor@wap.org**



From the President

By Jay Castillo

Greetings, fellow Pi members. My name is Joseph B. Castillo Jr., but you can call me Jay. At the June 6th Board Meeting of the Washington Apple Pi (WAP), I was elected President, succeeding Bob Jarecke. Bob has set a high standard for me to meet with his dedication and passion for all things Pi. He will continue to be involved with ensuring that we make the Washington Apple Pi an even better organization.

As a member of the Pi Management Committee, last year I led the effort to develop the Pi Strategic Plan (see the January-February *eJournal*). In that effort, we refined our Mission and Vision Statements, and I would like to remind you of them:

The WAP Mission Statement
Washington Apple Pi is a community of people with a common aim: to improve our knowledge and enjoyment of Apple products. We approach this through social interaction, sharing, fun, cooperative activities, mentoring, and education.

The WAP Vision Statement
The Washington Apple Pi will be the best Macintosh User Group. We will be a dynamic service organization with a growing membership of Apple enthusiasts who are mutually supportive, socially interactive, and dedicated to learning, volunteerism, and helping others. The services we provide to our members to enhance their Apple experience will be useful, effective, and efficient, embodying modern Web and Internet technologies.

I would not agree to be President of the Pi if I did not take these statements seriously. They give us common understanding of what we want to do, and who we want to be. As we execute the Strategic Plan following from these statements, they serve as reminders, and guidelines if we flag in our efforts, or lose our way. I urge you to think about them, and help us with ideas, and volunteer assistance. You are the ultimate benefactor.

We are making mixed progress in accomplishing our Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives. But that's always the hard part. Yet we are making progress, and as an example, the successful launch of the *eJournal* is a proud accomplishment of many people.

Additionally, we have taken advantage of the good offices of one of our Board members, Larry Kerschberg, Associate Chair for Graduate Studies of the Computer Science Department at George Mason University, to hold the WAP General Meetings on the George Mason campus. The facilities are excellent, and we are excited about the potential for a new venue.

Finally, as an adjunct to this volume of the *eJournal*, we are providing the results of the 2009 Pi Photo Contest. I'm certain that you will appreciate, as I do, this fine example of contributing members, enthusiastic volunteer organizers and judges, and great artistry. **This is the Pi at its best.**

Mac vs Windows: Why Can't We All Just Get Along?

by Ken Goldman

About a year ago, I showed off my bright and shiny new MacBook Pro to a friend. When I took it out and opened it up he said, "I didn't know that you were a Mac person." I didn't give it much thought then, but it is something I do think about today.

My computer history goes back to the early 1980s. I have owned a VIC-20, a Commodore-64, the original IBM PC, a Gateway, and several Dell desktops. At work I have used DOS/Windows machines, a Mac Plus, a Mac II and miscellaneous VMS and Unix machines. On top of that, sometimes I boot up a machine with Ubuntu Linux, just for fun. So no, I would have to say that I am not "a Mac person." I am not a "Windows person" either. I do enjoy my MacBook Pro, but I also still use two Dell Windows desktops on a regular basis. I don't really have any strong feelings about operating systems and hardware; to me they are just tools, and I am just trying to get the best tool that I can afford.

I have always wondered how the split between users of DOS/Windows Personal Computers (PCs) and Macs developed. Now that I have spent well over a year with a foot in each world, I see that the division still exists. I have encountered "Windows people" who think that anyone who buys a Mac is delusional; they say it is crazy to spend extra money for a Unix computer, which, in the long run, is not any better than a generic PC. On the flip side, I have heard from some "Mac people" who seem to think that all things Mac and Mac OS are good and everything Windows — or as some say, "Windoze" — is bad. And so, the debate continues.

So, why did I buy a MacBook Pro rather than a Windows-based laptop? One reason is that I use Dell laptops at work and I have not been very impressed with their build quality. I checked out multiple PC laptops in stores, and none excited me. Then my daughter bought a MacBook Pro to use while she was overseas. I checked it out and set it up before we sent it to her, and was very impressed with the build quality of the machine.

Now that I have been a Mac owner for over a year, here are some of my observations.

Have I had software or hardware problems with my Windows machines? Sure. In fact, the reason I still have two desktop machines is that my DVD editing software will not run on the newer machine. Sometimes my PC cannot find other computers in the Workgroup without a reboot. Excluding these glitches, I cannot remember the last time I have had a hardware or software problem on these machines.

Have I had software or hardware problems with my MacBook Pro? Originally I wrote, "Sure, but not often or recently." Unfortunately, as I was doing my final proof of this document, something caused the Mac to lock up so completely that I could not get into Finder to "Force Quit" the recalcitrant software. I had to power down the machine.

What other problems have I had? One of my first challenges was ejecting a bad CD that was stuck in my new MacBook Pro. None of the obvious solutions worked. After scouring the Internet, I discovered that if I went into Terminal and entered the Unix commands:

drutil tray open <enter>

drutil tray eject <enter>

I am not saying that everyone has to use or like Windows...

the CD just popped right out. Not an obvious solution, but it worked. *[Editor's note: Of course, it might have been faster/more helpful to look for advice on the TCS instead of scouring the Internet.]*

My MacBook Pro also had problems keeping a wireless connection to my Linksys wireless router, a problem not shared by MacBooks or PC laptops. According to the discussion boards on the Apple Website, this was a fairly common problem that MacBook Pros had with several brands of wireless routers. I finally set my router to Wireless "g" only rather than mixed "a+g" (who uses "a"?) and it fixed the problem.

Talking to some other Mac newbies at Pi General Meetings, I have discovered that I am not the only one in the Pi with one foot in the Windows world and the other in the Mac world. I think that we are likely to find that Mac users increasingly fit this description. And, I think that is a good thing. Personally, there are some things that I still find easier to do on a Windows computer than on the Mac. Perhaps this is because I know Windows and associated programs better, or perhaps there *are* some things that are easier to do on a Windows computer. More than likely, it is a bit of both.

Let me give you an example. Let's say I want to make a copy of a DVD. As best I can tell from the information in the help file, to do the job on my Mac I need to open *Disk Utility*, copy an image of the DVD to my desktop, and then eject the source DVD, put in a blank DVD, and burn the image to the blank DVD. I can't find any way to tell the machine to copy a DVD to a blank DVD in an external drive, at least not without the intermediate step of creating the disk image. On my Windows machine I plug in my external DVD drive and insert a blank DVD, put the DVD to be copied into the drive in the computer, start up the Roxio Creator program that came with the computer and tell it to copy the DVD in drive X to the blank DVD in drive Y.

It may be that I could install similar software on my Mac and copy a DVD just as easily. But the Roxio software, or something like it, comes pre-installed on every Windows machine I have bought since CD drives became standard equipment. The Mac did not come with this sort of software and *Disk Utility* seems to have a more hands-on approach for accomplishing this.

Also, in Windows, if I sort a folder by Name it puts all the subfolders at the top, followed by the files. I find this very useful. The closest I can come to this on the Mac is to sort a folder by Kind. This will group all the subfolders together, but I can't find a way to group them at the top. Not a big deal, but…

Having said that, I'm sure that many of you can point out to me all those things that are easier to do on Mac. For the record, I'm ready!

Finally, and this is where I am going with all this, I saw something on the Washington Apple Pi Web site under "Who-What-When-Where-Why" that struck me. It says:

"We've been around far longer than most personal computer organizations, and virtually all computer companies. That means we not only have a vast knowledge of what went before with Apples and Macs, but a desire to keep pushing ahead as well. We have accomplished so much over the years, but there is still much that needs to be done. Won't you join us?"

I am not saying that everyone has to use or like Windows. I am, however, suggesting that we can be a stronger user group and "keep pushing ahead," if we welcome and respect all of our fellow computer users — those who use Macs exclusively and those who also have a foot in other computer worlds.

Mac OS X Leopard on a Dell Mini!

By Richard Orlin

...Mac enthusiasts discovered that they could hack the netbooks to run Mac OS X Leopard. It took a kludged installation DVD and a lot of work, but it worked!

I've been a Mac user for nine years now. It all started when I bought a used Mac 7100 PowerPC at a yard sale. The 7100 had a G3 upgrade card in it and only cost me 20 bucks! Since then, I've had eMacs, iBooks, iMacs, MacBooks and MacBook Pros. I love my new aluminum MacBook, and I think it's the best portable that Apple has produced. But at four-and-a-half pounds, it's not that great for traveling — especially overseas. And when you add in the weight of the power adapter, any necessary accessories, and your shoulder case, you've got one out-of-whack shoulder when you come home. It's only a little better if you use a roll-on case. So what to do?

The Netbook answer

This past year has seen a new type of mobile computer arrive on-the-scene; it's called the netbook. With a nine or ten-inch screen and weighing in at two to three pounds, the netbook has become the darling of the road-warrior — at least the Windows road-warriors. So, where is an equivalent Apple?

Apple has more-or-less stated that it won't produce a cheap netbook because the product would end up being a piece of junk! That leaves traveling Mac users with "netbook envy" as we ogle the PC user in the airplane seat next to us. However, just a couple of months after the netbook came on the market, Mac enthusiasts discovered that they could hack the netbooks to run Mac OS X Leopard. It took a kludged installation DVD and a lot of work, but it worked!

I tried two different netbooks, an Aspire One and an MSI Wind. I returned both of them, though, because I would have had to download an illegal hacked copy of Mac OS X Leopard and jump through hoops to install it. And to top it off, not everything worked, and the first Mac OS X version upgrade broke the installation!

Then Dell entered the netbook market with the Dell *Mini 9*. Using a boot-loader program written by some genius, you can install Leopard onto the Dell notebook right from the retail DVD. Everything works and you are able to update the operating system without breaking anything. There was only one stumbling block: the price.

A new Dell *Mini 9* with the features I wanted — a good-sized solid-state drive (SSD), 2GB of RAM, and a USB camera — would set me back $450.00, and I had already invested quite a bit in a MacBook. Then someone told me about the Dell outlet store on the Web (see Resources section below for the link), where in only a week I found a black *Mini 9* with a 32GB SSD and the other specifications I wanted, for only $272.00 including shipping. The only thing missing was Bluetooth, but that was not a deal breaker.

The easy part was finished. Now all I had to do was to install Mac OS X Leopard.

A Dell running Leopard

There is a wonderful Web site that covers everything about the Dell Mini family: the *Mini 9* (discontinued), the *Mini 10* (and 10v), and the *Mini 12* (discontinued). Everything you need to know about installing Mac OS X Leopard on the Dell *Mini 9* can be found there. The link is

http://tinyurl.com/qc4kdy.

You begin by preparing a boot-loader file on a USB flash memory stick, which you use to install the Leopard operating system. It is almost as easy as installing Mac OS X 10.5 on a Mac. After the installation is complete, you run a small program that installs an emulator on the netbook drive. The emulator directs booting into Leopard straight from the drive. In my case, everything went smoothly and I was able to install and update the programs that I regularly use.

As for my assessment, I found the netbook's LCD screen bright and crisp, the wireless connections responsive, and the 32GB SSD drive big enough to hold everything that I would use on the road. The next test would be traveling with what I now called my "MacBook Mini." A weeklong trip to San Francisco was next on the schedule and toting the netbook and charger in a backpack resulted in no sore shoulder. The trip was a breeze, computer-wise. I conveniently surfed the Web and checked email both at the airport and as allowed on the airplane. I used the Mini at the hotel to look up sightseeing information, book a rental car, and make reservations for the Alcatraz tour. I even played a few movies. I could do everything I did on my MacBook. The only drawback: the Dell *Mini 9* keyboard is rather small and a few of the keys are not in the standard positions.

There are several netbooks on the market that lend themselves to what is referred to as this "hackintosh" process. The Dell *Mini 9* is a good choice, however, because it is very easy to upgrade. Access to memory and the solid-state drive is easy via a rear cover on the bottom. As of this writing, there were still some refurbished *Mini 9s* at the Dell outlet store at reasonable prices. The minimum SSD drive I would recommend would be 16GB, which could minimally hold the Leopard operating system with a word processor and several mobile applications. A netbook with a 16GB drive and 512MB of RAM can easily be purchased for around $200.00. You can replace the RAM with two 2GB chips for $40.00 and, in the end you have a pretty decent netbook.

Another option would be to order a new Dell *Mini 10v*. It has the same specs as the now-discontinued *Mini 9*, but with a 10" screen and a bigger keyboard. Leopard installs the same way.

If you decide to go down this road I have a few caveats: this is not for the novice; and Apple licensing support will be disallowed, since the Apple warranties do not cover Apple operating system software running on non-Apple computers. Other than that, have fun; it's an inexpensive, miniature computer that runs Leopard just fine and totes like a dream!

Figure 1: Dell *Mini 9* running Mac OS X Leopard

Resources:

Dell refurbished computers online store:
http://tinyurl.com/l4nkom

myDELLMINI (instructions for loading Mac OS X):
http://www.mydellmini.com

Easy World-Wide Live Communication – Skype

By Jonathan Bernstein, Len Adler & Richard Allen

...Skype was described as "better than long distance—not only can you see your partner at the other end, but it is free."

Introduction

Our Macs, with our Web cams and broadband Internet connections, allow us to communicate over long distances and for little or no cost. We can use *Skype*, *Sightspeed*, *iChat*, *Yahoo Instant Messenger* (Yahoo IM), or numerous other Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) applications. *iChat* is only available for Mac users — no additional software is required — and connects through AOL's Instant Messaging servers. *Yahoo IM* is used mainly for exchanging typed messages. *Skype* and *Sightspeed* allow us to make VoIP telephone calls, and also to make Internet telephone calls to landlines or cell phones. *Skype* is the most ubiquitous of the VoIP programs; according to Wikipedia, it claims to have more than 443 million open accounts.

Internet Telephony using VoIP

Did you know that you could use your Internet connection to make telephone calls using VoIP? VoIP, which stands for Voice over Internet Protocol, is the technology for transmitting voice conversations over the Internet. This protocol has been referred to as Internet telephony, peer-to-peer (P2P), IP telephony, broadband telephony, and voice over broadband, as well as many other names. *Skype* prefers to use the catchier phrase: "free calls over the Internet"!

We discussed *Skype* first as a "One More Thing" presentation at the February 2009 monthly General Meeting. Then, it was the focus at the March 19th meeting of the Afternoon Learners - Retired SIG at the Pi Clubhouse. At that gathering, *Skype* was described as "better than long distance—not only can you see your partner at the other end, but it is free."

Len Adler, in the Pi Clubhouse, and Richard Allen, from his home in Northern Virginia, demonstrated *Skype's* capabilities in Mac to Mac video calls. The transmissions of their conversation were clear and the video images and sound were quite good. There was at least one spurious dropout or disconnect during the 90-minute connection, however. While disconnects in *Skype* video conference rarely take place with wired broadband connections, they will most often occur if one or both parties is using a wireless connection. The occasional interruption in wireless signals is the culprit.

Some of our Pi members reported using *Skype* on a regular basis for weekly video conversations with their family members who are scattered in various parts of the country—and the world. One such person communicates often via *Skype* with his daughter in Canada. Another member used *Skype* to telephone home from a work project abroad at very low cost. And yet another uses *Skype* telephone forwarding to phone his family members abroad from his cell phone at very low cost. *Skype*: keeping families together!

While *Skype* works with Mac OS X or Windows, this article focuses exclusively on the new Mac version of *Skype*.

Getting Started

Skype works with all recent versions of Mac OS X starting with Mac OS X 10.3. The latest Mac version is 2.8 Beta. Several Pi members using this test version of *Skype* report having no problems. It is available here:

http://www.skype.com/download/skype/macosx/beta/

To start using *Skype*, go to Skype.com, and Click on "Download," as shown in Figure 1. Install the application. When you open *Skype* for the first time, the free *Skype* registration process begins. You will be asked to choose a *Skype* name and password as shown in Figure 2. Your *Skype* name is the identifier that people will use to call you on *Skype*.

Figure 1, below: Download and Install Instructions.

Figure 2, right: Choose *Skype* Name.

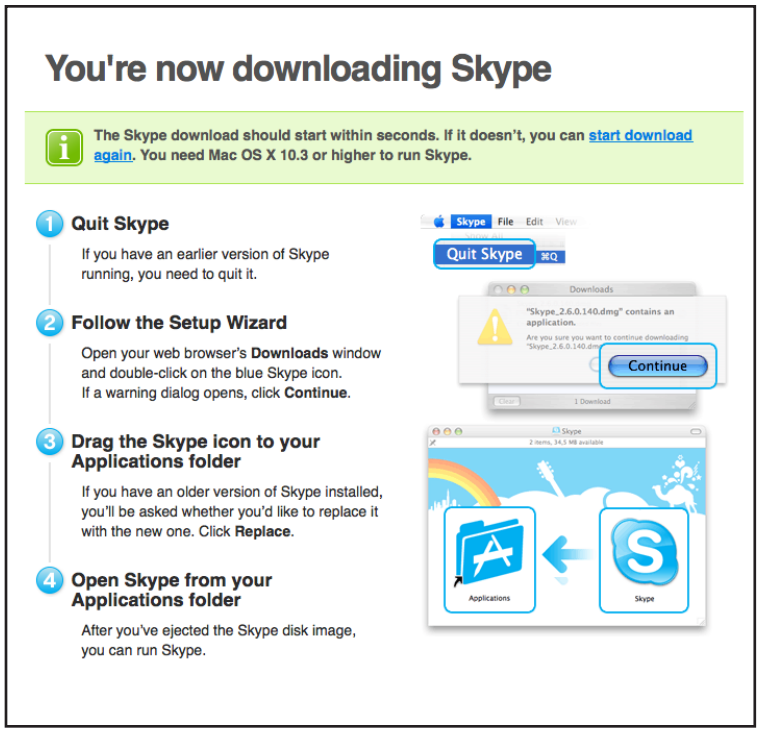


Figure 2

Next, in the *Skype* application window, choose "edit profile" to add personal information including a photo, home phone, address, etc. You can decide not to include such information, but be aware that including at least your name and city can help friends and relatives who search for you on *Skype*. Figure 3 shows you how this on-screen window appears.

How to use *Skype*

The first step in using *Skype* is to add contacts as Figure 4 shows. You can search for people on *Skype* from the Contacts menu of the application, or import contacts from *Address Book*. Friends and family already using *Skype* can be added as well by entering their *Skype* user name. Much like *iChat*, you can change your online status so your *Skype* Contacts can tell if you are available for a call. Then, from the contact window, double clicking a contact brings up a window showing the several choices for contacting the person: a green phone to start an audio call; the blue video button to start a video and audio conversation; a button to send a text message; and, in the new Mac version, an option for Screen Sharing. Figure 5 gives you a good idea of these options. Bear in mind, of course, that you will need a microphone and speakers of some kind to be able to talk and listen to your contacts.

Several Pi members have shared their *Skype* names on the TCS. If you want to join the group, the TCS thread is shown below.

http://tcs.wap.org/topic?b=talk&top=3738#3749

This kind of *Skype* to *Skype* Internet telephony is free! *Skype* also allows calls to landlines and cell phones, however, for a fee. You can deposit money into a pre-paid account and pay for the calls as you go, or you can sign up for a subscription plan, where you pay a set amount for unlimited calls to landlines and in some cases cell phones, to a particular country or countries. In either case, the cost is low. For example, you can sign up for a plan that gives you unlimited landline and cell phone calls to the US and Canada for $2.95 per month. Note that many communications costs continue to decline so be aware of the phone coverage of your landline, cell phone, or Internet telephony to know when Skype is the tool of choice.

You can access your *Skype* account online by choosing Account from the tabs at the top of the page. This allows you to add *Skype* Credit for calls to or from landline and cell phones, and to sign up for other *Skype* features. You will find that ten dollars will go a very long way.

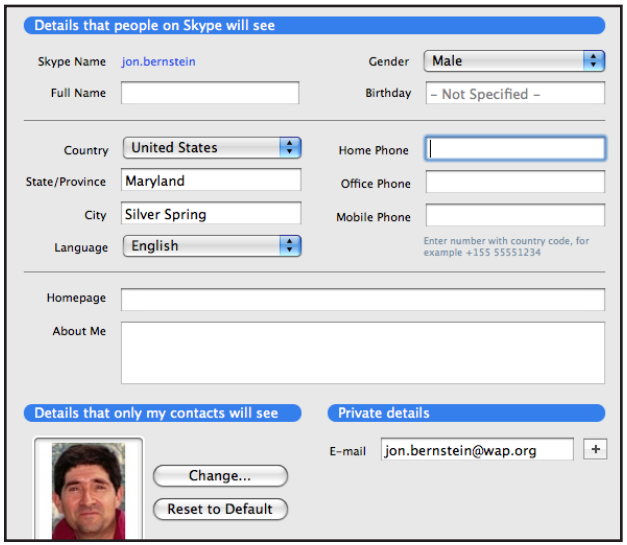


Figure 3: Skype Profile Information.

Dialing an outside phone number using Skype

To call someone on a landline or cell phone, click the gray telephone at the bottom left of the contacts window to get the telephone-dialing screen. This screen allows you to check rates for the destination of your call. The cost varies from $.02 per minute to $.20 per minute depending on the destination. Figure 6 shows some call costs and rates. *Skype* automatically inserts the country calling codes for your destination country. A partial list of Country Calling Codes is shown in Figure 7.

Skype to Go

Skype To Go is a feature that allows you to make low-cost international calls from landlines and cell phones. Basically, you set up a phone number as a *Skype to Go* number. Then, you can call that number from any telephone and your *Skype to Go* number will place your international call at the low *Skype* rate. You can get a *Skype to Go* number for free if you buy some *Skype* Credit, or if you buy a subscription.

The steps are simple when you follow the onscreen prompts. First, put in the phone(s) you'll be calling from, then a PIN number, and finally set up speed dial numbers for the telephone numbers you'll want to call. Now you can call your *Skype To Go* number from your mobile phone or any other phone. Voice prompts easily connect to your party overseas. And if you want to call a number that is not on your speed dial list, you can do that by simply dialing the number.

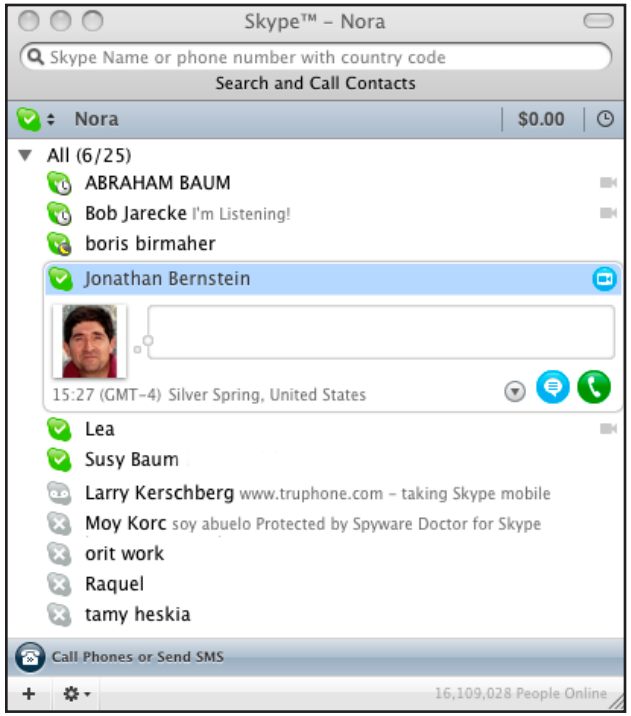


Figure 4: *Skype* Contact window.

Skype Etiquette

The contact window shows you whether or not contacts are online and available. Once you see that the person you want to call is available, *Skype* allows you to easily send them a text message asking if it is a good time to call.

Important hint: Avoid international call fees by setting up your *Skype* number in the country from where you'll be calling.

Sign up for a *Skype To Go* number here:

http://www.skype.com/allfeatures/togo/

Skype Access

Skype Access is a new feature that is available in the latest Mac version, but is not yet available in the Windows version. It lets you access the Web at wifi hotspots at airports, restaurants, and other public locations, and pay by the minute using your *Skype* Credit. No longer do you have to pay for all-day access when you're in an airport for only a few hours. In *Skype* 2.8 beta, *Skype Access* is available by pulling down the Account menu.

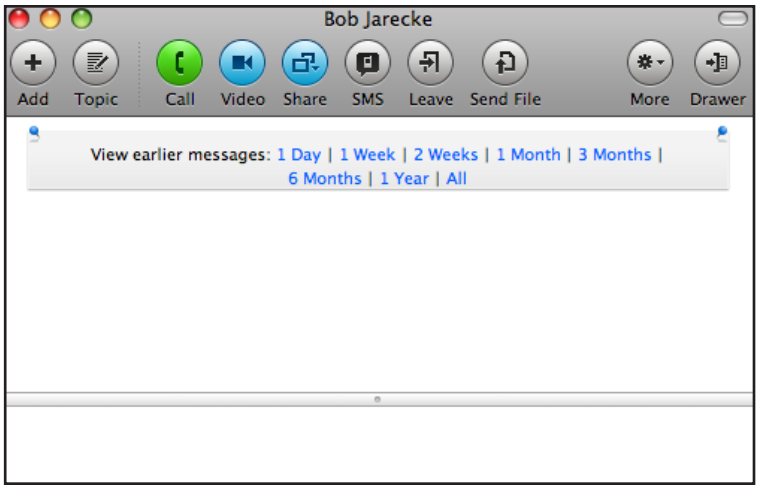


Figure 5: Opening a *Skype* Contact

The service is available at over 100,000 wifi hotspots worldwide. You select the available wifi network, and *Skype* will automatically pop-up a message if you can connect to this network using your *Skype* Credit balance.

We invite Pi members who are using this new functionality to report *via* the TCS Forum so we'll have the benefit of their experience.

A Few Cautions

Be cautious about adding *Skype* Credit overseas. One Pi member reported a problem adding *Skype* credit in Shanghai, because of the suspicious transaction programs his credit card company was using. The safer practice is to add *Skype* Credit at home before traveling.

Skype limits video calls to two parties. You can avoid this limitation with an audio-only *Skype* conference call. The Pi Management Committee recently conducted on online meeting this way with great success.

A Comparison — *Skype* and *Sightspeed*

As noted, *Sightspeed* is similar to *Skype*. It allows both phone calls and videoconferencing with other registered *Sightspeed* users without charge, as long as there are only two Macs or PCs involved. Adding additional Macs or PCs requires a paid subscription.

Sightspeed's picture and sound quality are very good when using a high-speed Internet connection. Video conferencing between Virginia and England is a snap, even with several people gathered around the computer at each end.

With good equipment and Internet connections also comes the possibility of auditory feedback. Fortunately, *Sightspeed* has easy to use, built-in access for microphone controls to quickly minimize or eliminate this potential problem. Video quality is optimized when installing the application and does not seem to need any further effort.

Like *Skype*, *Sightspeed* will take over the video camera if it is not already in use by another application. If *Sightspeed* has taken control of the video camera, you must quit *Sightspeed* before using another video camera-dependent application.

In general, you may find the controls for *Sightspeed* more intuitive and easier to use than those of *Skype*. The prevailing view is that *Sightspeed* is better for video quality while *Skype* is better for robust dialing to or from landlines and cell phones. Of course, this view may change with each new release of the programs.

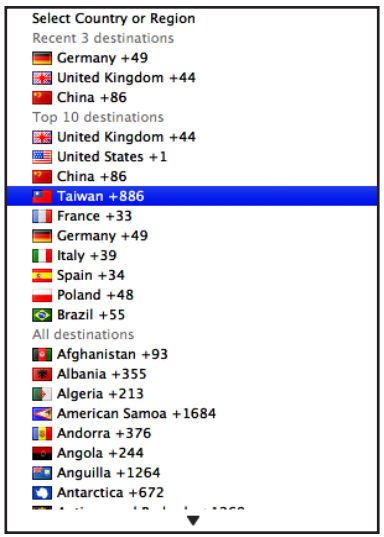
If you use more than one Web cam, you need to select the one you want to use with your *Skype* session to make sure that you don't use the wrong camera. You must set the Web cam preference as soon as you launch *Skype* and before you initiate a *Skype* contact

Skype doesn't "play well" with other Video applications, including *iChat*. This has been a problem for some time, and the new *Skype* 2.8 beta version does not appear to have resolved it. It might be wise to close *iChat* (and any other program that might want to control your Web camera) before launching *Skype*. If you are using *Skype* and the Web cam doesn't seems to be working, check to see if other programs are open that might conflict; if so, close *Skype* and the conflicting program(s). Restart *Skype* and see if things are better.

Skype Rocks!

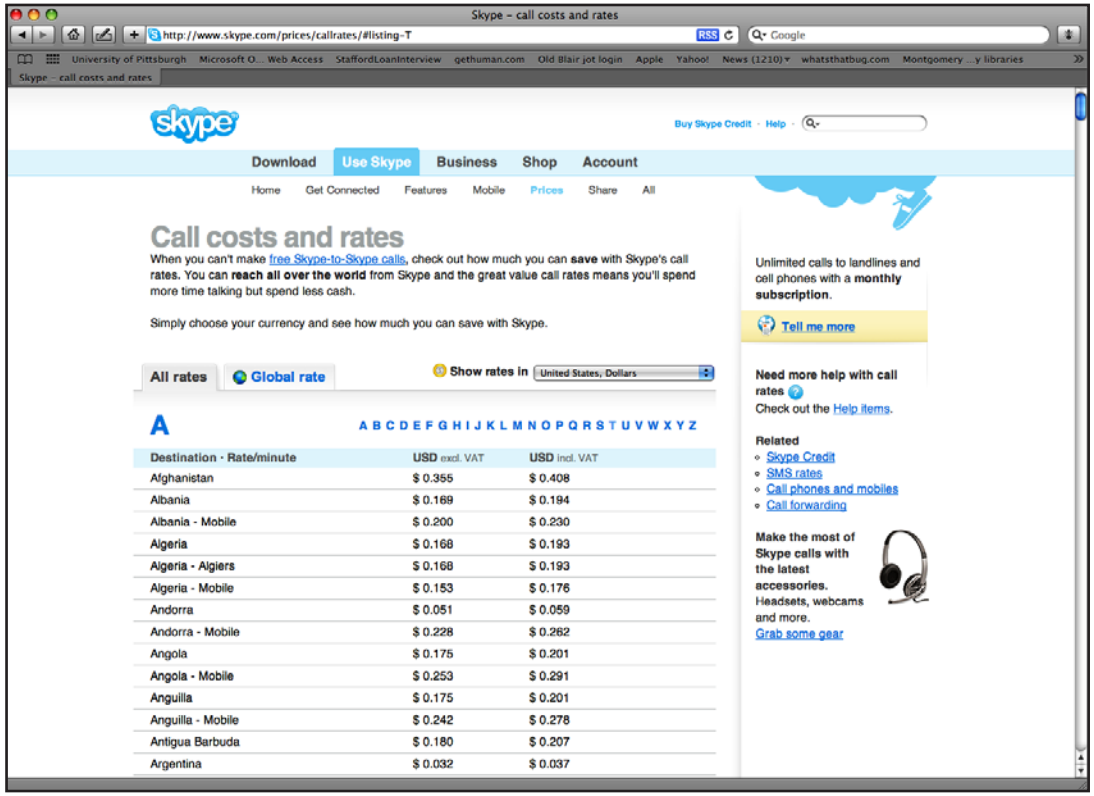
We hope you agree that *Skype* is a great asset. And, since the application is evolving, any problems may be resolved soon. We may also see new enhancements or cool features. Stay tuned for article updates — and a report on the iPhone version of *Skype*.

Figure 7: Country Calling Codes.



We hope you agree that Skype is a great asset. And, since the application is evolving, any problems may be resolved soon.

Figure 6: Call Costs & Rates.



Run Windows On a Mac for Free!

By George Hogeman

Microsoft's release of Windows 7 Release Candidate enables anyone with an Intel Mac to run Windows 7 for free using Sun Microsystems' *VirtualBox* software. Lest you think Microsoft is suddenly giving away its new operating system, please understand that this is the Release Candidate, which will expire on June 1, 2010. Starting on March 1, 2010, it will automatically shut down every two hours. Until then, however, it is a fully functional Windows operating system, and it will be available as a free download at least through the end of July.

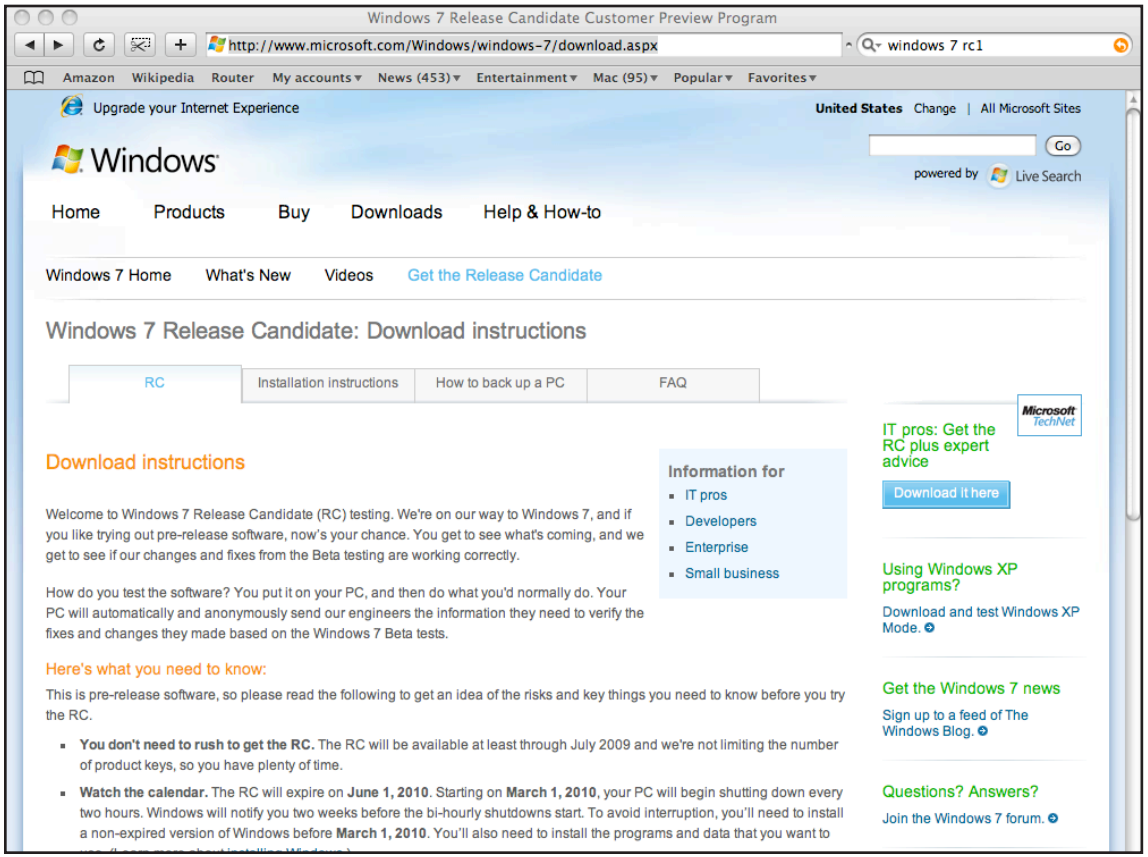


Figure 1: Web page depicting Windows 7 Release Candidate downloading instructions.

Sun's *VirtualBox* is a free virtualization product that runs on a wide variety of hardware and supports a number of operating systems. However, I can't think of any reason why any Intel Mac user wouldn't be able to run the pre-release version of Windows 7 using Boot Camp, or any Mac-compatible virtualization software.

For me the trickiest part was downloading Windows 7 and preparing the installation DVD. You have to provide Microsoft with some basic information establishing a Microsoft Live ID in order to access the download page and get a product key, which is valid for up to three installations. According to Microsoft, your computer will then "automatically and anonymously send our engineers the information they need to verify the fixes and changes they made based on the Windows 7 Beta tests." Microsoft provides detailed instructions for the download here:

http://www.microsoft.com/Windows/windows-7/download.aspx

You can download *VirtualBox* at

http://www.VirtualBox.org

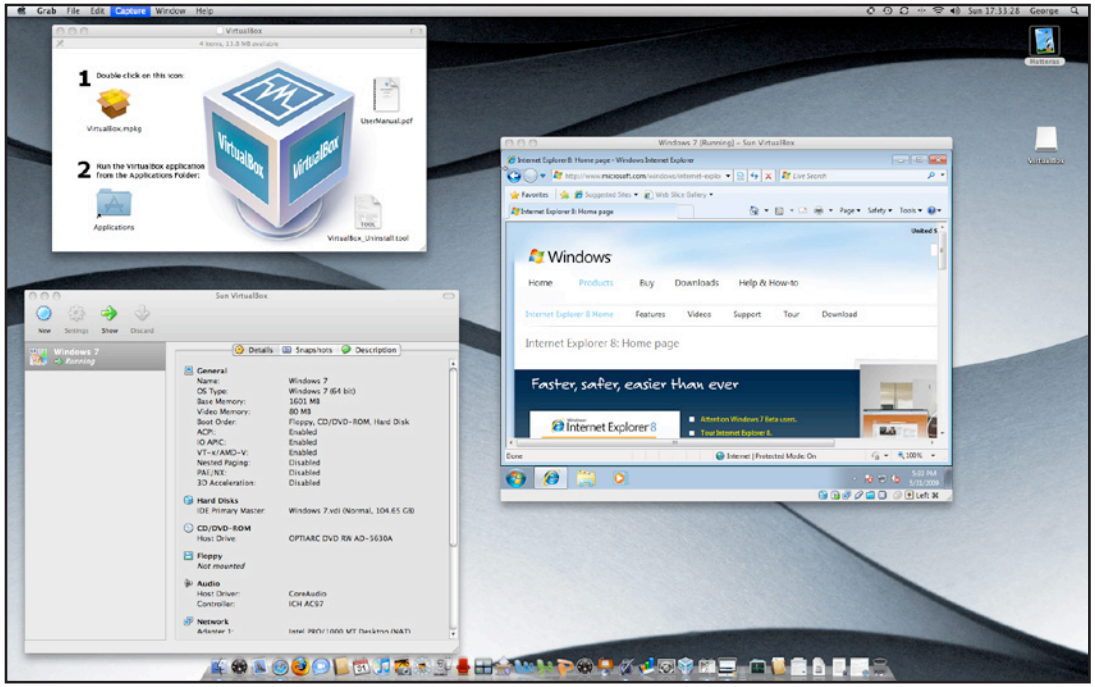
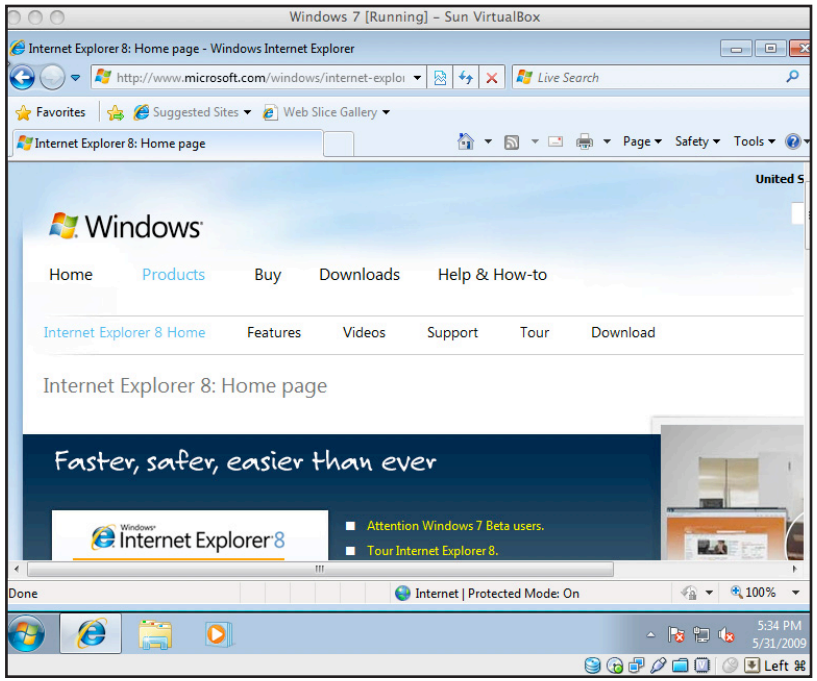


Figure 2: Mac desktop with *VirtualBox* and Windows 7 windows open.

Figure 3: Windows 7 running on *VirtualBox* and displaying Microsoft's Internet Exporer 8 Home page using the Internet Exlorer 8 application.



Once you have done that, installing Windows 7 is pretty straightforward. It took less than an hour, not counting download time.

Of course, this begs the ultimate question of "Why should I do this?" One could say, as George Mallory did, because it is there. Or, as pointed out in a recent MacBreak Weekly podcast, this allows you to run a variety of Windows programs, and an extended opportunity to try Windows 7 before committing to buy it. Makes sense to me!

In my household, I confess, we have Macs with partitions in four different flavors of Mac OS X as well as System 9.2.2. I also have an HP laptop, which boots into either Windows XP or Ubuntu Linux. That makes Windows 7 our eighth operating system. I concede that I don't have a particularly compelling reason for having it. But having it seems to impress my Windows colleagues. And for what it is worth, my initial impression is that Windows 7 is a lot more Mac-like than previous Windows operating systems, and compares favorably to Vista.

Take Control of Running Windows on a Mac (Third Edition): A Book Review

By Richard Orlin

One of Apple's selling points for the Macintosh and Mac OS X Leopard is that it allows you to run Windows effortlessly on your Mac. Well, that's stretching the point a bit. However, with the help of Joe Kissell and the latest version of *Take Control of Running Windows on a Mac,* you will be able to do it when the need arises.

Let's face it, it's a Window's world, and there are some things that just won't run correctly on a Mac. Many games, Microsoft applications like *Outlook, Access,* and *MS Project,* Web sites that are not compatible with Safari, and some internal corporate software are all examples that come to mind.

Take Control of Running Windows on a Mac starts off with a summary of the several options you have for running Windows. The list includes *Boot Camp, Parallels Desktop for Mac, VMWare Fusion,* and the free *VirtualBox.* It also discusses how to run Windows programs without having a copy of Windows by using CodeWeaver's *Cross Over Mac* or an open-source program called *Wine*. The author's recommendation, unless you're a gamer, is to use one of the virtualization programs: *Parallels Desktop for Mac, VMWare Fusion,* or *VirtualBox.* Because virtualization software allows you to run multiple operating systems simultaneously on a single computer, you can switch rapidly and seamlessly between Mac OS X and Windows without sacrificing performance of either operating system. As a bonus, you can easily transfer files between the operating systems and your peripherals work on both simultaneously. Kissell is of the view that it's a toss-up between *VMWare Fusion* and *Parallels Desktop for Mac,* and notes that both applications gain improved performance and added features with each new iteration. He suggests that you download the free demos of each and decide which one will better meet your needs. The links to download *VMWare Fusion and Parallels Desktop for Mac* are shown below.

https://www.vmware.com/tryvmware/?p=fusion

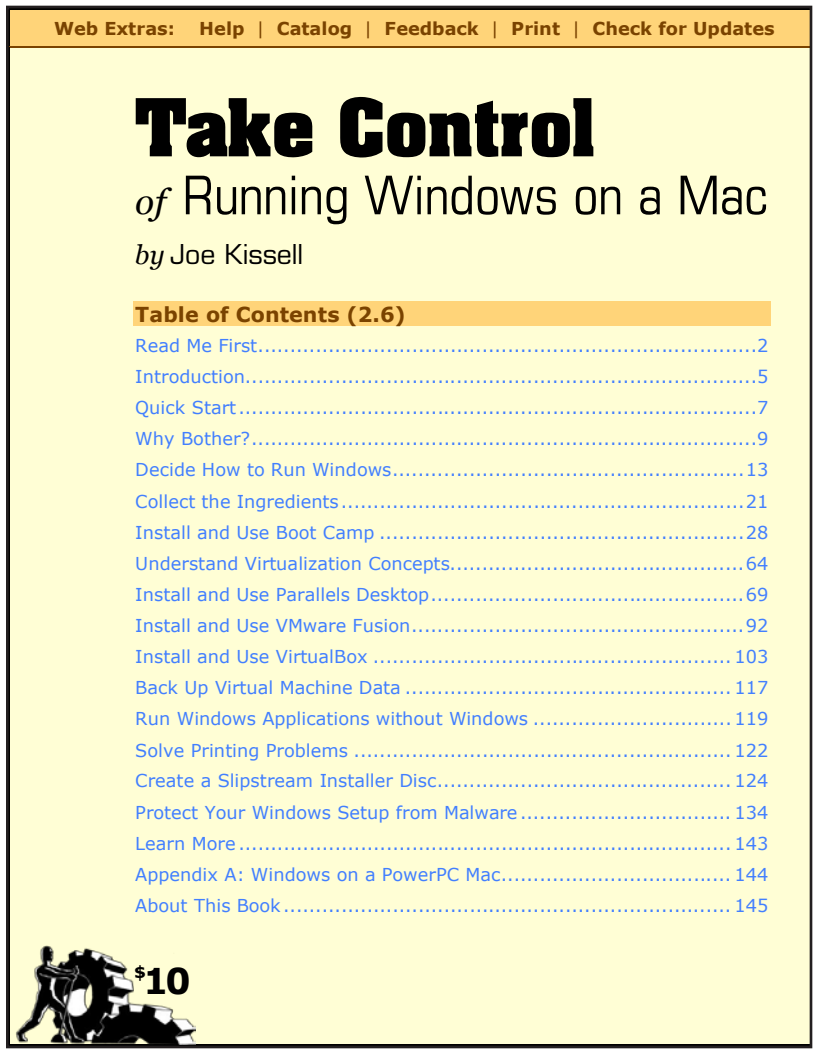
http://www.parallels.com/download/desktop/

The author also recommends that you look

at the comparative review that *Macworld* did last December, to help you make a decision. You can review it at:

http://www.macworld.com/article/137305/2008/12/choosevm.html

Once you decide whether you want to use Boot Camp or one of the virtualization



programs mentioned above, the author takes you through the necessary steps for preparing your Mac for running Windows. He discusses the different versions of Windows that you can install on your Mac. Then he walks you through the installation of each of the programs you can use. And trust me, he goes over EVERYTHING! I especially liked his side-notes like the one that describes the different nomenclature for carriage-returns: "Enter" in Windows and "return" in Mac OS X.

Once you have Windows up and running, Kissell has more information for you. He tells you how to back up your virtual machine data, whether you want to just take snapshots of your data (which is the default), or get down and dirty with a block-level backup, or even store your personal data on your Mac. He also tells you how to print without problems (something that is often a problem in Windows) by following three simple steps.

Apple advises that, if you want to install *Windows XP* using Boot Camp, you must have a retail version of *XP* and no less than Service Pack 2. Well, if you're as cheap as I am and you don't want to buy *XP* Service Pack 2 when you already have a copy of XP, this book has a section on how to create a slipstream installer disc. A slipstream installer disc is a CD or DVD with a customized version of the Windows installer that has certain additions, updates, or options pre-configured. It can make installation faster—and also give you a way to install Windows XP in Boot Camp even if your CD contains a pre-SP2 version. But be forewarned: you will need to use a Windows computer or one of the virtualization products to build the slipstream installer disc.

The book also has a section on how to protect your Windows setup from malware and viruses. The steps are few, but nonetheless important: First, apply all Windows updates; second, use a firewall; third, install anti-virus software; and fourth, put in place spyware and ad blocker software. And finally, if you are still operating in the stone age, the author explains how to run Windows —albeit maddeningly slowly — on a Power PC Mac.

I found the book to be very informative and discovered a few tips that were new to me. Much of the information, other than the section on slipstreaming a DVD, could be found on the Internet, but the $10 price tag seems a small price to pay for the wealth of information Joe Kissell has carefully organized and placed at your disposal here.

And, as a bonus, you get coupons for $5 off *Parallels Desktop for Mac 4.0* and 10% off *VMWare Fusion 2*. I recommend looking around the Web though before using the coupons because, at the time of this writing, you could find heavily discounted copies of either program with a simple Google search.

Take Control of Running Windows on a Mac,
Third Edition
by Joe Kissell
167 pages
Released February 18, 2009
5.2 MB download
Format: Adobe PDF
ISBN: 193367153X
Price: eBook $10; print $21.99
Available at:
http://www.takecontrolbooks.com

April General Meeting: Making a Movie, from Soup to Nuts

By Lawrence I. Charters

Just a few days after income taxes were due, the April Pi General Meeting offered something less onerous, but not necessarily less taxing: movie making. Every Mac, for several years, has shipped with everything needed to make movies on a Macintosh. Technically, you don't even need a camera; some very clever movies have been made using nothing more than the titling capabilities and special effects that come with *iMovie*. But where to begin?

Steve Roberson, head of Zurka Interactive in Alexandria, VA, outlined an almost effortless technique for making movies during the main presentation. But first, there were –

Questions & Answers

Q: How many of you own an iPhone? How many own an iPod touch? How many own neither?

A: About a third in the audience of 50-plus owned neither an iPhone nor an iPod touch. Amazing.

Q: What's the rumor I'm hearing that they're going to upgrade Mac OS X again?

A: Yes, there is such a rumor. Apple has announced that the next version will be called Snow Leopard. What is the difference between Leopard and Snow Leopard? Snow leopards are much more rare…

Apple has talked quite a bit about Snow Leopard, but at the same time been stingy with details. What is known: Snow Leopard will offer few new "features," but instead concentrate on core technologies. For example, Apple has stated they will make a major effort to improve security, and has hired a number of the leading security gurus to, presumably, work on security.

Snow Leopard will also be 64-bit, and still be backward compatible with 32-bit applications. In theory, this means you could have 16 terabytes (16 trillion bytes) of RAM, which might be adequate even for *Photoshop*. It will come with *QuickTime X,* which presumably will do something cool. It will support Microsoft *Exchange 2007* for Apple *Mail*, *Address Book* and *iCal,* as well as everything *Mail, Address Book* and *iCal* currently support. It will have even better support for multiple processors and multi-core processors.

One of the most interesting capabilities is support for OpenCL. Open CL will allow Mac OS X to use advanced video cards for computational purposes.

Taken as a whole, it sounds like Snow Leopard will be much the same as Leopard, but much faster and more secure.

Q: Will Snow Leopard require an Intel-based Mac?

A: Apple hasn't said one way or the other. But just reading the tea leaves, it sounds like it will be Intel-only. It would be much easier to do many of the things Apple says it is doing if it were Intel-only. But they haven't said.

[Editor's note: At the June Apple World Wide Developer Conference, Apple did state that Snow Leopard would require an Intel-based Mac.]

Q: I'm thinking about moving from Microsoft *Word* to *Pages*. What problems will I run into?

A: *Pages* is a superb page layout package. It isn't as full featured as *Word*, and if you have been using Microsoft *Word* since 1984 and understand how it works, *Pages* seems limiting and, at times, somewhat slow. On the other hand, *Word* is loaded with a whole bunch of specialized functions most mortals never use, such as Track Changes, an essential tool for government bureaucrats. Track Changes, with its random auto-corruption feature, is something you won't find in *Pages* (thankfully), and is something most people won't miss, either.

For most people, *Pages* is a great word processor. If you aren't writing a massive novel, if you aren't writing a heavily indexed document, *Pages* is outstanding. *Pages* also works with Mac OS X services, allowing you, for example, to have Mac OS X's text-to-speech capabilities read out loud whatever you have written.

Q: What about going back and forth between *Pages* and *Word*?

A: You can go back and forth between *Pages* and *Word* fairly effortlessly, though all the effort is on the part of *Pages*. *Pages '09* (and, in Mac OS X 10.5, *TextEdit*) can read *Word 2003*, *Word 2004*, *Word 2007*, and *Word 2008* files, and can export files in *Word 2004* format.

There are problems with heavily formatted *Word* files, complete with tables, illustrations, and whatnot. *Pages* displays the *Word* document in a way that it understands, which may not be the same as it looks in *Word* itself. But if you aren't working for a government agency, or an organization that thinks *Word* is a database, a spreadsheet, and a project management package, *Pages* has no problem with reasonably normal *Word* documents.

Q: Can a *Word* user easily open up a document created in *Pages*?

A: No, *Word* can't open a *Pages* document. *Pages* can export a document in *Word* format, but if the formatting is particularly complex (text flowing around graphics, background images, etc.), it probably will not look right in *Word*.

In addition to *Pages* capabilities, *Keynote*, bundled with *Pages* as part of *iWork '09*, can open up *PowerPoint 2003*, *2004*, *2007* and *2008* files, and write *PowerPoint 2003* files. *Keynote* is far, far more useful and easier to use than *PowerPoint*. When you toss in *iWeb '09*, *iWork '09* is a better value for most Mac users than *Office 2008* – unless you work for the government, or a corporation that insists on using Microsoft *Office*.

Q: I have a whole bunch of stuff done in *AppleWorks* and *ClarisWorks*, including Word processing documents, spreadsheets, databases, and drawings. I now have a Mac running Leopard, what can I run that will read these files?

A: Export as many of these documents as possible as .doc (Word format) files, tab-delimited files (which can be read by *FileMaker*, Excel, and Numbers), and other modern formats. Apple stopped all work on *AppleWorks* and *ClarisWorks* in 1999. The original *AppleWorks* dates back to 1984 and it was written for the Apple II. Apple Corporation has officially declared all of this to be history, and has discontinued all support.

Pat Fauquet notes that *Pages* can, with some success, read some *AppleWorks* and *ClarisWorks* documents, but if at all possible, export these documents from *AppleWorks* or *ClarisWorks* into a modern format, and then migrate the exported files to *iWork '09*, Microsoft *Office*, or *FileMaker*, depending on the type of document.

Q: My girlfriend has just been appointed to head a very large online health care project. She has never used a Mac, but her son and I have both tried to get her to switch. She is open to the idea, but is afraid that using a Mac might be a problem since all the computers at work are Windows. What can I tell her?

A. First, this particular project will have high security concerns, and generally speaking, "Windows" and "security" don't go well together. Second, most of the data used in the government – word processing documents, slides, spreadsheets – are not operating system specific; Microsoft *Office* works just as nicely on a Mac as it does under Windows. Third, when you are talking about online projects, such projects must, of necessity, be operating system and browser agnostic: they really shouldn't care what browser you are using, and don't know what operating system your computer is using. There really aren't any problems in moving back and forth between a Mac and a Windows machine.

Another thing to keep in mind: if an organization is Windows-only, that organization must change away from whatever they are using in any case. *Windows NT*, *Windows 95*, *Windows 98*, *Windows Me*, *Windows 2000*, and *Windows XP* are all either out of date and unsupported or at end of life. Microsoft recently advised large clients to stop migrating people to *Windows Vista*; it, too, is being pushed to the side in favor of *Windows 7*, which doesn't exist yet. So change is coming no matter what, and she might as well change to a stable platform: Mac OS X.

Q: I have a lot of E-mails from my PC friends that come with attachments that end in .wmv. I can't open them up. What are these?

A: A .wmv file is a *Windows* Media File, usually a video file. There are a number of ways to do this. One is to install *Flip4Mac*. It comes in several flavors, a free version that allows you to view most .wmv files, and a variety of increasingly expensive commercial versions that allow you to export QuickTime files to .wmv and various other tricks.

The second option – if you just want to view files – is to install VLC, an open source, cross-platform multimedia player. VLC is highly recommended, as it does not interfere with existing software on your Mac.

Q: For *Windows* Media Files, can't you just use Microsoft's *Windows* Media Player for Mac?

A: Microsoft has completely abandoned *Windows Me*dia Player for Mac. It hasn't been updated in several years, and it cannot play anything produced by the last several versions of *Windows* Media Player. Microsoft explicitly recommends *Flip4Mac*; most Mac techies recommend VLC.

Club Business

After the Q & A, Bob, the Pi President, covered various topics that fell under the general theme of Good News and Bad News.

The not so pleasant topics included the shortage of nominees for the soon to be open Board of Directors' positions, something the club has to deal with on an annual basis. Bob explained there was a fall back option of appointing Directors into open positions, but it still couldn't happen without the necessary person agreeing to be on the Board. The second disappointing news was that the next edition (May 1) of the Journal was going to be delayed due to unavailability of some of the key editors of the publication.

Bob moved on to the more pleasant news. First there was an encouraging report on the Pi Photo Contest that was in progress. Bob encouraged everyone to get out there and take those winning images! He predicted a great awards event at the May 30 General Meeting. Next, Bob covered the upcoming Pi events and the calendar was going to be full in the month of May. Along with the normal Special Interest Group (SIG) and other meetings, the Pi was hosting Dr. Mac on May 16 at Luther Jackson Middle School. Also, it was pointed out that the Pi would be moving the May General Meeting to George Mason University. If it is received well, this may become a new, more comfortable setting for our monthly gatherings.

Long-time Pi member Jim Little looks on (with envy?) as Dail Doucette, the iLife '09 Raffle Winner, proudly displays his latest addition to his software collection! Photo by Richard Sanderson.

To close out the short presentation session, Bob asked for questions and one lone hand went up. The inquiry was about the inactive Tuesday Night Clinic program and when it would return. Bob sympathized with the member's desires to have it available again, but could not offer any information other than that the project's champions were still searching for a compatible location. He did promise that as soon as there was a change, it would be announce far and wide; keep checking your email and the Pi Web site!

Making a movie, from soup to nuts

Given the subject, it was appropriate that the general meeting was filmed (though without film) as an experiment. Two digital video cameras were employed to record the sights and sound, with one generally focused on the screen and one on the speaker. Periodically the film crew (Pi members) interrupted the proceedings to talk about various problems (video or audio cables too short, ran out of room on a tape, forgot to switch on the external mike, etc.) encountered during the taping, and the interruptions were sometimes as enlightening as the presentation. One lesson was very clear: longer presentations are much harder to tape than shorter ones, and live events are much harder than pre-scripted events.

Steve Roberson's presentation, however, had a different set of lessons: easy steps to making wonderful short films using *iMovie '09*. He included slides (available on the Pi Web site,

http://www.wap.org/events/apr2009/, still photos, digital video, and iTunes-based music in his presentation, all of which are a bit difficult to reproduce in a narrative. His understated sense of humor and whimsy are equally difficult to capture in print. But the themes were clear.

iMovie '09*: It's not your grandfather's *iMovie

OK, maybe *iMovie* isn't that old, but it has come a long way from the first version. The most recent incarnation is a cross between *iMovie* HD of 2006 and *Final Cut Express*: an extremely powerful suite of tools for turning video clips, sounds, music, special effects and titles into complete short films that look shockingly professional, and with minimal effort. The great experiment, *iMovie* '08, which most people didn't use, has been reborn with the best elements of the original *iMovie*, plus some technology borrowed from the more expensive (and complex) *Final Cut Express*. The result is a set of tools of surprising subtlety and power, yet quite easy to use.

Even easier if you've bothered to read the help files, or followed Steve as he made a film from scratch, while the audience watched. He took some pre-recorded clips of his family, demonstrated how to crop them to show the best of the best, arranged them in order, and brought in some still images to add additional perspective.

One of the more intriguing segments involved *GarageBand*. He took a piece of music, broke it down by beat (*GarageBand* makes this easy), and then matched a slide show of still images and video clips (can video clips be "slides?"), and then set it all to music. The result brought gasps from the audience: it was endearing, it was quick, and there was no magician hidden behind the curtain. All you need is *iLife '09*, some music, some photos, some video, and an idea.

Along the way, Steve demonstrated some less than obvious elements of *iMovie*, such as Precision Editing, which allows you to make very, very precise adjustments to video and sound. While Steve demonstrated video stabilization, and admitted the results are eye-popping, he confessed it wasn't as useful as many other more mundane enhancements.

He listed some recommendations for making good movies:

- Think about your audience;
- Record establishing shots (i.e., clips that give context, such as a landmark hotel or mountain or sign);
- Cut on action;
- Stretch the music;
- Better too short than too long (who wants to see even more of Timmy's first ride on a trike?);
- Make it; then make it better.

Resources:

VLC media player:
http://www.videolan.org/vlc/

Flip for Mac:
http://www.telestream.net/Flip4Mac-wmv/overview.htm

Steve Roberson tries out a Gallic shrug when asked about preferences in movie making technique. Preferences are up to the individual, a certain amount of planning, and an understanding of your audience, on the other hand, are universal. Photo by Richard Sanderson.

Steve spent a short amount of time on some cool special features in *iMovie '09*, such as green screen effects, picture-in-picture effects, and transferring *iMovie* projects to *Final Cut*, which is the industry standard for professional digital video. But this was frosting; his goal was to show how easy it was to put together a short video clip, and he succeeded admirably.

One More Thing

Prior to the One More Thing segment of the meeting, we held a raffle for a copy of Apple's *iLife '09* application suite. With the use of our own Programming SIG's creation, the *Raffler* program, the winning number was selected. After what seemed like an eternity, Dail Doucette finally acknowledged that he had the winning

ticket. He gratefully accepted the shrink-wrapped prize and posed and grinned as Dick Sanderson took his picture for posterity (and this *Journal*) — another happy Pi camper!

As for One More Thing: Travis Good conducted a brief, yet comprehensive tutorial on how to use *iWeb '09* (part of *iLife '09*) to quickly and easily populate your member Web site. Pick a template. Drag in movie clips and photos. Type in some text. Add a link or two. And upload it to members.wap.org. It's easy. The accompanying graphic (Figure 1) lists the five steps.

To show how easy it was, he took some photos of the meeting audience, added some text, and uploaded his mini-Web site, in a matter of minutes.

Special Interest Groups and other events

SIG (Special Interest Groups) following the meeting included the Genealogy SIG, with four attendees and the *iLife* SIG with ten attendees. The *members helping members* had one taker while the iPhone and iPod Meet Up number varied since some of these attendees also attended other post presentation sessions. Given that the General Meeting was off schedule (a week early, due to room conflicts), it was a fair turnout, and you can't improve on the one-to-one ratio for the *members helping members*' session.

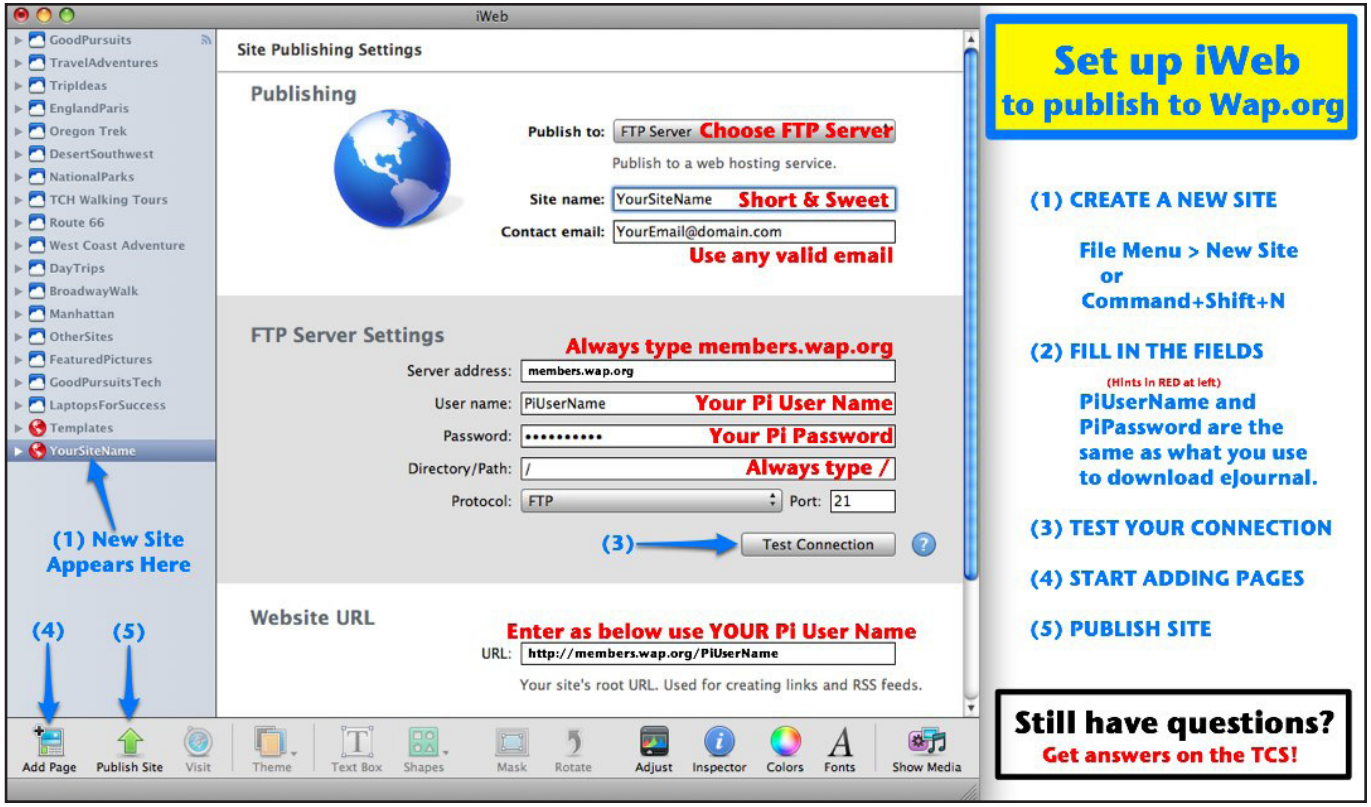


Figure 1: Travis Good condensed the five easy steps to publishing using iWeb on the Pi's member server in the right sidebar: 1) Fire up iWeb and select New Site; 2) Fill in the required fields; 3) Test your connection (to see if you filled in the fields correctly); 4), Add content, and 5) Publish the site.

May 2009 General Meeting: Pi Photo Contest 2009 and Briefings on the Past and Future

By Lawrence I. Charters

May brought one of the longest General Meetings in the entire 30-plus year history of the Pi. The meeting started at 9:30 with the usual Question & Answer session, and then progressed on to a superb overview of the quarter century history of the Macintosh, complete with a working museum display of Macintosh hardware and software. The 2009 Washington Apple Pi Photo Contest award winners were then announced, and after lunch, an Apple representative provided a nice overview of Apple's present and future. Five hours after it started, the meeting came to a close.

Questions & Answers

Q: Directions to the meeting were not all that great.

A: The Pi Webmaster was given an address, and that address was put on the Web site. Little did he know the address was for George Mason University as a whole, and was clear across the campus from the meeting site. Thank goodness for GPS.

Q: What is the best way to archive E-mail?

A: There are lots of ways, depending on what you mean by "archive." If you have a MobileMe or Google Mail account, you can just leave everything on the server; both offer ridiculous amounts of space for mail. If you are using Apple Mail as your E-mail client, you can select multiple messages at once — hundreds or thousands if you wish — and save it as a single file, including attachments. After saving the message, you can then delete them from your active mail. Apple Mail will save multiple messages as an .rtfd document, which can easily be read by TextEdit, or Pages, or Microsoft Word. Since these archived messages are just very large documents, you can open them up and use the Word or Pages or TextEdit Find commands to search for things, or use Spotlight to search for items without even opening the files. The files can be copied to other drives, burned to CD, or archived in some other fashion.

Naming such files so you can find them also requires thought. Mail you sent in April 2009, for example, should be named something like Sent Mail 200904. rtfd. Naming files with the year first and then the month ensures that the files will be sorted correctly; if you named things Sent Mail April 2009, it will be clumped with August 2004 and close to December 2007.

Q: I do things differently. I find where the mail program stores stuff, and then I make a duplicate of that.

A: What you are describing is really a backup strategy, rather than an archiving strategy. Archiving is a method of saving for posterity; backup is a way to keep a copy of your working mail in working condition.

Q: Mail keeps asking for my password, even after I've told it the password. It isn't remembering what I told it.

A. The problem isn't Mail, but Apples Keychain. Keychain is the Mac OS X password management system, and at some point Keychain was told that your password is X, but the mail server thinks it is Y. Apple Mail is using your password provided by Keychain to get your mail, and the mail server is saying, "No, that isn't right."

The way to overcome this constant nagging is to open up Keychain Access (in your Utilities folder), find the setting for Mail, and type in the correct password. Apple Mail stores any passwords in Keychain; the mail server stores them on the mail server. The passwords must match to avoid nagging.

Also, beware of possible confusion if you have multiple mail accounts. Mail can access multiple accounts at once, and display everything in one window. When you reply to a given message, make sure which mail account is asking for a password. If your Pi account asks for a password and you re-confirm your MobileMe password, and even reset it in Keychain Access, the Pi's mail server will not be impressed, and still prompt you for a valid password.

Q: I have five Macs. They're generally working well,

but one is giving me problems. When I take it to the Apple Store Genius Bar, they restore everything back to factory defaults and it works fine, but when I go home and put my stuff on it, the problems return. The computer was under Apple Care but that has expired. What can I do now?

A: Your question has many parts, but first a question for the audience: how many of you have more than one Mac? (More than three quarters of the attendees raised their hands). The difference between "armed" and "armed and dangerous" is having more than one Mac. With one Mac, you are armed; with multiple Macs, you are definitely dangerous.

If your problem is a maintenance issue, yes, there are third-party dealers that will work on a Mac after Apple Care expires. But there is a cost: good diagnostic skills are expensive, and a problem that requires a lot of time can quickly cost more than the market value of the machine being repaired. This is why, incidentally, Apple Geniuses tend to restore your Mac to factory defaults. They can get it working — without your data. They can do that reliably. If problems occur once you restore your data, the problem is with your data, and fixing such problems can take many hours of time. Apple Geniuses generally will not do this, but third party dealers will — at a cost.

You can also learn to do it yourself. Apple and Peachpit have combined to publish an approved course on Mac OS X 10.5: *Apple Training Series: Mac OS X Support Essentials.* The book guides you, lesson by lesson, through the protocols of checking your computer and fixing common problems, and telling you how to avoid problems in the future.

Q: I used to depend on the Tuesday Night Clinic for maintenance. What is the status of the Tuesday Night Clinic?

A: That's not a question the Q&A moderator can answer; the status of the Tuesday Night Clinic is in the hands of the Pi Board of Directors. [At this point Pi President Bob Jarecke stated that an update on the Tuesday Night Clinic would be posted on the Pi forums, the TCS, at http://tcs.wap.org/.]

Q: Are there some sites that tell you how to do maintenance yourself?

A: Yes, there are such sites — but any recommendation of such sites needs to come with a caution. These sites tend to be visited by people with problems, and they tend to give the impression that every Mac operating system since System 1.0 in 1984 has been a disaster. You need to have a certain level of expertise before you visit these sites; otherwise, you won't be able to separate fact from hysteria.

In addition to the book mentioned, Apple also has do-it-yourself manuals and guides published on the Apple Web site (see the Resources section at the end of this article). Finally, don't forget that the Pi hosts, usually twice a month, Clubhouse Saturdays. These meetings often have some kind of theme, but much of the time is spent on questions and answers, and troubleshooting problems that people might have.

Usually you can learn a great deal — at the Pi General Meeting Q&A session, or at a Clubhouse Saturday — by just listening. Good computer maintenance isn't a question of secret or arcane knowledge, but more of a protocol, a sequence for problem solving. For example, when someone says they are having a problem with a Mac — almost any problem — launch Disk Utility and check the disk with the Disk First Aid tab. Verify the drive. If the drive verifies correctly, then look elsewhere. But if the drive will not verify, don't even think of doing anything else before fixing the drive.

The second useful thing to do is to launch TextEdit, or Pages, or Word, or almost any program, and save a file. Then in the Finder, select the file and Get Info. If the date of the file is wrong, there may be a problem with the battery. If the icon is wrong, or some other attribute is wrong, there might be a different issue. But check the quick, easy, simple stuff first. Learn what these quick, simple and easy checks are, and what to look for, and what to do if you find a problem.

Q: I was dragging things from the iTunes browser window to places on my hard drive and it suddenly stopped. It sometimes starts up again, but why is it stopping?

A: I've never tried to drag an iTunes file out of the browser window to someplace else; I don't know why you'd want to do that. But in any case, why would it seem to hesitate or stop?

iTunes, as it turns out, is complicated. It may not look like it or appear to act like it, but iTunes is a Web browser. It is also a complex database system. It is an application for metatagging (i.e., adding additional information to a file to describe the file; the files in this case tend to be songs). It is a library. It is a network application. And in particular, if the Web or network parts of iTunes are busy (iTunes is updating your iTunes Genius settings or busy downloading

album covers or something else), iTunes will stop doing everything *except* play music and sound files.

Q. I have a first-generation iPhone, and when I try to type an "R" it goes to one side or the other. This happens in Mail and in other applications, too.

A. The problem is you have it in English Cockney mode, and it tends to drop "R" and "H" and certain other letters...

Seriously — the iPhone probably has a corrupted setting. So, first off, re-sync it with your computer, to make sure everything is backed up. Then reapply the last update, or take it to an Apple Store Genius Bar and they can reset the iPhone. Then resync it with your computer to copy everything back, and life should be good.

Pi Happenings

President Bob Jarecke went over the logistics of using George Mason University as a meeting space. This is a new meeting venue for the Pi, so he wanted to check on what people thought of the location as well as explain some logistical issues. Individuals have to pay to use the George Mason parking garages, but the Pi has purchased vouchers; members are requested for donations to defray the cost. The meeting space itself is very nice, with adult-sized seats, but no food or drink is allowed in the auditorium. A more precise set of directions will be posted on the Pi Web site prior to the next meeting, to cut down on the number of people wandering around at random in Northern Virginia.

25 Years of Macintosh

Travis Good then introduced Robert "Bo" Huttinger for a review of a quarter century of Macintosh computers. Huttinger has a private museum of Macintosh hardware, virtually all of it in working condition. Since he was a child when much of this hardware was released, getting everything to work shows a considerable mastery of both current and obsolete technology.

Not mentioned in other photos: the black Mac in the center is a rare Macintosh TV (complete with built-in Sony Trinitron screen). The flying saucer thing to the right is a PowerCD, an external CD that came with a remote control and speakers, and could be operated independently of a computer. The small camera at the right of it is a QuickTake 200, made by Fuji Film. Photo by Lawrence I. Charters

Bo's Keynote-based slideshow (most of it is available on the Pi Web site; some brief video clips are not included) was an interesting mix of Macintosh flash and dazzle and a few inside jokes. He started with a melodious chord that signaled, on some of the first Macs, a hardware error. Control of the slideshow was via an application he wrote, running on an iPhone. There is something both charming and funny, watching a relatively young man talk about a quarter century of Macintosh computing, all controlled by a mobile phone that thinks it is a Mac.

In the beginning, the Macintosh came with 128K of RAM and a single 400K floppy disk drive. On that single floppy were MacWrite (a word processor) and MacPaint (a drawing program). The screen was black and white, 512 pixels across by 384 pixels down. All this cost $2,495. If you wanted to print anything, you used an ImageWriter dot matrix printer (manufactured by C. Itoh Electronics) that cost an additional $1,000.

While this may be unimpressive by current standards, in 1984 the Macintosh was earthshaking. Information technology gurus

Robert "Bo" Huttinger sets up a Macintosh museum for the May 2009 General Meeting. Photo by Lawrence I. Charters.

dismissed the WIMP (Windows Icons Menu Pointing device) interface, claiming that "real computer users" used command line driven programs. Despite this hostile reception, the original Mac soon became an icon in its own right of "progressive" and "user centric" computing. Significantly, none of the computer companies that competed with Apple and the Macintosh still exist except IBM (which has famously "left" the personal computer market) and Compaq (which is a division of Hewlett-Packard).

The next big earthquake in the computer field came in 1986, when Apple introduced the LaserWriter. If the ImageWriter was a good way to print graphics in 1984, the LaserWriter was a good way to print professional-quality graphics. Macs moved out of the computer enthusiast world and into the world of publishing, where they are firmly entrenched thirty years later. The LaserWriter essentially killed off the typeset printing world, ushered in the world of the professional computer graphics artist, created the desktop publishing universe and, ironically, gave a major boost to computer networking. These very expensive ($7,000) computers included a network interface, so offices instantly discovered they could make the printers more cost effective if every computer was networked. The office local area network was born.

In making the Macintosh graphical, Apple changed not only computers, but also computer peripherals. Bo specifically called attention to flatbed scanners that allowed non-artists (as well as artists) to take flat objects and create bitmap images that could be manipulated by the Mac. The introduction of the Macintosh II in 1987 brought color to the Mac, and soon there were color scanners as well.

While Apple didn't have the first digital camera, the introduction of the Apple QuickTake 100 in 1984 was essentially the beginning of the end for film cameras. With a resolution of 640 x 480 pixels, it was just a fraction of the resolution of the camera in Bo's mobile phone (an iPhone), but it instantly captured the imagination of photographers, computer hobbyists, and even scientists. Scientists, for example, were fascinated with the camera's ability to take photos under computer control, and the QuickTake 100, 150, and 200 soon found themselves in laboratories where they were used to collect all manner of scientific data.

While Bo has a complete set of QuickTake cameras, he is especially fond of a rare QuickTime Video Conferencing Camera 100. Introduced in February 1995 and discontinued in 1997, this camera, as the name implies, was designed for video conferencing. The entire kit, complete with a NuBus card, cost $1800, but Bo's working model still produces extremely

Two of the three Apple QuickTake cameras. These were not the first digital cameras, but their introduction greatly boosted the adoption of "consumer" digital cameras. The QuickTake 100, on the left, was introduced in 1994; the QuickTake 150 in 1995. Both were designed by Kodak, built by Chinon Industries.
Photo by Lawrence I. Charters.

clear color video, provided you happen to have an appropriate 20th century Mac in working order. By comparison, the Apple iSight camera (also out of production) retailed for $149.

Along the way, Apple popularized technology that is now considered standard on computers, and has even gone so far as to move away from some of these former standards. Apple was the first company to include 3.5" drives on personal computers; now, they don't. Apple was the first to include CD-ROM drives on personal computers; now, all their computers use DVD drives. The mouse has made dramatic strides, moving from the "bar of soap on a rope" original Mac mouse to today's wireless mice with built-in roller balls; on laptops and the iPhone and iPod touch, the mouse has given way to "virtual mice" via trackpads and touch screens. Apple was the first company to introduce beige computers. After the entire industry moved to beige computers, Apple famously moved away, and beige is now considered positively antique.

Blocky black-and-white graphics and tinny sounds have given way to 24-bit color images, high definition movies, and very rich, vibrant sound. Instead of simple memos written in MacWrite (MacWrite couldn't produce anything longer than a few pages), our Macs today hold tens of thousands of music files, hundreds of thousands of photos, hours of video, complex databases, and whatever else we might collect, all at the same time. Large sections of this digital wealth can be shared with our televisions (via AppleTV) or with an iPhone or iPod touch. This digital wealth can also be pushed out to share with the rest of the world via Apple's MobileMe service, or any number of other Internet services.

And what did this quarter century of innovation and progress lead to? Bo pointed out that the next meeting topic, on the photo contest, is wholly Mac-centric. While Macs didn't take the photos, Macs were hugely responsible for the development of scanners (used to scan in older photo entries) as well as digital cameras (used for the majority of the entries), and Macs were used for sorting, selecting, and touching up the entries.

2009 Washington Apple Pi Photo Contest Winners

Travis Good then introduced the 2009 Washington Apple Pi Photo Contest winners. His presentation started with a review of the winning entries from the 2007 Photo Contest, arranged at the front of the room. He also named the contest judges, Kent Mason, a landscape and nature photographer, and Cynthia Keith, a garden and natural landscape photographer. Cynthia was able to attend the meeting, and offered occasional comments on the winning entries. The individual award winners and their photos are presented in a supplement to this Journal.

Cynthia did call attention to the "Best in Show" entry, Jerry Eisner's "Water view from the Kennedy Center." The contest rules allowed for minimal photo editing, and Eisner's entry is so dramatic as to call into question how it was eligible for an award. The answer: it is an infrared image.

President Bob Jarecke presents "The Brownie" trophy for Best in Show in the Washington Apple Pi 2009 Photo Contest to Jerry Eisner. Travis Good attempts to disappear in the background.
Photo by Lawrence I. Charters.

Long associated with security and military cameras, infrared also has great possibilities for artistic photography, as Eisner's entry shows so spectacularly. As Travis ended the awards presentation, audience members were busy writing notes to themselves, wondering if their cameras supported IR photography.

Then came lunch — an excellent pizza — followed by…

Apple in mid-2009

Apple graced the May meeting in the form of Aaron Davis. Aaron is a regional Apple representative for the education market, mostly focusing on universities. Given that "education" can mean anything from laptops for freshmen to the Virginia Tech Power Mac G5-based supercomputer, *System X*, Aaron has a vast range of responsibilities.

But not, alas, all that much confidential information. Apple likes its field representatives to be bright, friendly, and helpful, so Apple corporate makes sure their reps are as starved for information on future products as everyone else. Otherwise, the representatives might helpfully offer some secret information, such as — we don't know. And neither did Aaron.

Despite such a handicap, Aaron gave a genuinely interesting overview of Apple's explosive growth this century. It is the current market leader in MP3 players (the various iPod models), the largest music retailer on the planet (eclipsing even Wal-Mart), and the only major computer firm to have made significant increases to its installed base over the past several years. And it has tens of billions of dollars in the bank.

What was most striking about Aaron's talk was that he spent most of his time discussing the company, and not the technology. He didn't demonstrate any hardware or software, he didn't offer any great deals on anything, and he didn't say anything that Mac zealots couldn't have read somewhere else. Yet it was a stellar presentation; the audience gave him an almost unnerving intense focus. He packaged up the known, said it was good and getting better, and that he — like almost everyone else — couldn't wait for the forthcoming World Wide Developers Conference.

And after five hours, the meeting came to a close.

Apple Education representative Aaron Davis gave the Pi an update on Apple's financial strength (excellent), Macintosh sales (growing), iPod and iPhone sales (growing), and general outlook (positive). He then capsulized what is known about the forthcoming iPhone 3.0 upgrade, and the forthcoming Mac OS X Snow Leopard operating system. Photo by Lawrence I. Charters

Resources

Apple Training Series: Mac OS X Support Essentials,
http://www.peachpit.com/store/product.aspx?isbn=0321489810

Apple manuals,
http://support.apple.com/manuals/

Apple legacy product manuals,
http://docs.info.apple.com/article.html?artnum=305118

Apple service parts for Do-it-Yourself
http://www.apple.com/support/serviceassistant/overview.html

Apple "Find out how,"
http://www.apple.com/findouthow/mac/

JUXTAPOSITIONS

Washington Apple Pi Meetings

Social Networking – A two part General Meeting series!

July 25 and August 22, 10:00 a.m., George Mason University

One of the aspects of the Mac that we enjoy is the ease with which we can store our photos and movies, and with specific programs, enhance and manipulate these images to transform them into personal treasures. The results are irreplaceable and they represent our ties to the people in the images. Our photo and movie libraries keep us bonded with our families and friends — our personal social network.

If we now incorporate various aspects of the social networking phenomena developing through use of the Internet, we have at our disposal a greater circle of personal contacts and a means to be more aware of what is going on in their lives. Of course, we can share more of ourselves with those whom we so invite. The end result is a greater awareness of and involvement with family and friends.

Because this topic covers a great many areas, we are going to have two, back-to-back General Meetings in which we look at the relationship of select *iLife* applications and the use of a number of social networking tools. Even if you feel this is a bit beyond your computing needs, think about how these social networking tools are commonplace for your kids and grandkids, and who knows, you might strike up a whole new relationship with them as you become more involved in their world.

The meetings will also feature our question and answer venue, SIG meetings and the *members helping member* sessions.

Both meetings will be held in Enterprise Hall at George Mason University. Directions are available on the GMU and Pi Web sites.

As always, check the Pi Web site for additional, updated details on these meetings.

Washington Apple Pi

Members helping Members