



Washington Apple Pi

Journal

September – October 2010
Volume 32, No. 5

**The Pi's New Mac mini.
Anyone else got one?**



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Editor's Column

By Bob Jarecke

Thanks for reading the *Journal*.

Each edition of the *Journal* is a product of hard work by the Publications Committee and the members who supply much of the *Journal's* content. While it is a real challenge to build and publish it — especially when it comes to meeting publishing deadlines — it is always a proud moment when the final proofing is complete and the *Journal* is ready to be uploaded to your Connect page.

This edition features a lot of hardware-related articles. We figured with so many Apple computers, mobile devices, and other digital playthings to choose from, it is only fitting that we pass along the experiences and advice of those in the know. Even the two comics make light of equipment issues.

In this edition, we have added back the Question & Answer Forum, and we hope that it, along with the Tips & Tricks articles, will provide something for everyone. Finding these golden nuggets of information isn't always easy, so if you know of some, practice some, or would like to do research for more, let us know so we can publish what we hope are crowd-pleasing tidbits.

In the near future, we expect to be publishing a *Journal* supplement that will showcase the winning images from the recently completed Pi Photo Contest. While it is not yet fully ready (the contest winners won't be announced until the September General Meeting), we are planning on giving you a colorful presentation of some of the outstanding photos that were entered. Stay tuned, for this is going to be a real nice pictorial tribute to those who participated in the third Pi Photo Contest. Did your photo make the cut?

Finally, I want to let you know that I am stepping down as Managing Editor of the *Journal*. I have dedicated a lot of time over the past several years to helping the Pi progress, and the publications duties are some of the most demanding for me. The tasks associated, and lots of other Pi stuff, are keeping me from some personal projects that I want to do before time slips away. Check out the brief announcement in the Opportunities pages; maybe you could use a challenge. Let me know and we can talk about it.

Enough already. Enjoy your *Journal*!



A Progress Report

By Jay Castillo

Several objectives that Pi management has been working on have been completed, or are well under way. These objectives derive from our goals of improving member services and offerings, developing a modern and efficient Web-based services and management infrastructure, and attracting new members to the Pi.

The Clinic Returns! Almost two years ago the Tuesday Night Clinic went on hiatus due to a lack of facilities. Now a favorable location has been found, and the Clinic is again in business. The day of the week is different, but the service will not be. Get all the details in the article on page 22 of this *Journal*. Check it out, and then visit the new clinic's Web page at the following address: <<http://www.macrecycleclinic.org/site/>>.

New Equipment. The Pi's Web-based member services have long operated on non-Intel Mac servers, many of them machines donated by members. As Apple drops support for these older servers, we will soon be purchasing a new Apple Intel Xserve that will dramatically upgrade our server capability and allow us to take full advantage of the latest Snow Leopard Server operating system. Also, we have already installed our first Intel Snow Leopard machine at the Pi's Clubhouse, a new Mac mini with a 24" LED Cinema Display. This will assist with Clubhouse Saturday activities, give us a development platform, and offer our members a top-of-the-line Mac with various Apple and third-party applications for members to try out or use.

connect.wap.org. & PiChat. We believe we have made significant advances in member services, which are outlined on each member's personal Pi portal at connect.wap.org. Also, we encourage everyone to upgrade to either the Leopard or Snow Leopard operating system to take fullest advantage of our new PiChat help service. This service enables a Pi volunteer to connect with you and use *iChat* (in particular its screen-sharing feature) to directly address problems on your computer, or to conduct a short tutorial on applications or operating systems. Check both of these services out.

Finally, we continue to search for ways to increase our outreach, not only to members but to non-members as well. Pi volunteers now post news of meetings and activities on social media such as Facebook, Twitter, and Meetup. We are doing a feasibility study on developing a version of the *Journal* for the iPad and having it for sale to non-members through *iTunes*. We are proud of our *Journal*; we believe that it shows the Pi at its best and that if others saw and read it, they would join our ranks. In the meantime, talk up the Pi!





Think You Need a Laptop? No, You Need an iMac!

© 2010 Lawrence I. Charters

In 2010, laptops are by far the most popular type of personal computers. The vast majority of users justify purchasing laptops by saying they don't need the *power* of a desktop computer, don't have the *space* for a desktop computer, or don't want to deal with the *hassles* of a desktop computer.

Most of these users are wrong. They really do need a desktop computer, and for all the reasons they cite, plus more. This is especially true if they compare a laptop to an iMac. So let us look at the various aspects of such a choice.

Who needs that much power?

Desktop computers are more powerful than laptops, and the biggest reasons involve size and weight. A heavy laptop computer means more weight to lug around, and a larger machine means a more awkward burden to carry, so manufacturers make laptops ever smaller, and the price goes up as the size goes down. Desktop machines, obviously, are not designed to be carted everywhere, so size and weight are not that much of an issue.

However – the most common computer use in 2010 is Web browsing. “All I do is a little Web browsing, a little work with *iPhoto* or *Photoshop* to send photos to relatives, and I use Email.” Email, the oldest of these computer activities, dating back to the early 1970s,

requires very little power. An Apple II from 1977, provided you can connect it to a network, has all the power you need to handle email

iPhoto, Adobe *Photoshop Elements*, and the full Adobe *Photoshop* are another matter. Each of these programs will cheerfully use all the power your computer has to offer, and often demand even more. A seemingly simple operation, such as cropping out unwanted relatives from a family photo, is computationally intensive. Creating a photomontage, or applying filters to sharpen, lighten, darken, or otherwise change an image, requires even more horsepower.

If you get ambitious and decide to edit a video clip taken with your pocket camera, things get decidedly more complicated. Laptops have slower hard drives (to conserve energy and reduce heat), making video editing more of a chore, even in some cases impossible. Desktop machines, with their faster drives, are a better choice.

Web browsing, the most common computer task in 2010, is also one of the most demanding. Looking at a Google Map, using Web-based mail, watching YouTube video clips, or reading *The Washington Post* are all tasks that involve vast amounts of memory, dozens or hundreds of files being passed back and forth, and significant amounts of network bandwidth.

While a massive glass tube monitor may have crushed your desk or table in the past, you will discover a modern iMac is nothing if not svelte.

Power translates into ease of use. Power means doing things that you never dreamed of doing before.

Most people need more power than a laptop can provide, and the lowest-priced 21.5-inch iMac, at \$1199 (September 2010), will have no problem keeping up with even the highest-priced MacBook Pro 17-inch (\$2,299 as of September 2010). If you need massive amounts of power, the new 27-inch iMac is frighteningly fast. If you need to run your own space program, there is always the Mac Pro...

But a desktop is so big

Another great fallacy is that desktop computers require more space than laptops. If you are thinking of a Mac Pro – with a 50-pound aluminum case, multiple separate monitors, separate speakers, mouse and keyboard – you may well be correct. But a laptop, unless you put it on your lap, uses about the same amount of space on a desk or table as an iMac, even the glorious 27-inch model. If you prefer to use a separate mouse with the laptop (most people do), you'll be hard pressed to find any differences. While a massive glass tube monitor may have crushed your desk or table in the past, you will discover a modern iMac is nothing if not svelte.

Desktop computers are a hassle

Desktop computers have developed a reputation as something of a hassle, in part because of the multiple pieces involved with them: All those cables! All those power cords! Again, if you compare a laptop with a Mac Pro – two or more monitors, two or more speakers, one or more keyboards, one or more mice, plus the giant Mac Pro itself – this might be true. But an iMac has one power cord, requires one network cable (or none, if you go wireless), one keyboard cable (or none, if you go wireless), one mouse cable (or none, if you go wireless), no speaker cables...

A laptop will frequently require a power cable, a network cable, and a mouse cable (most users still prefer a mouse to the built-in trackpad), which gives it almost no competitive advantage over the iMac. If you then start adding in external speakers to take over from the tiny, tinny built-in speakers, an external drive to handle Time Machine backups, and other external components, the iMac starts to look remarkably hassle free, compared to a laptop.

But sometimes I need to travel

Without question, a Mac Pro is not very portable, unless you have a touring bus or a large yacht, and an iMac isn't much better. But portability has a cost. If you look at the cost of the lowest-priced, least capable MacBook (\$999) and the lowest-priced, least capable iMac (\$1199), the price differences are pretty much a wash. The iMac is delivered complete and ready to go, but the MacBook requires a case, at the least, and possibly a travel power supply, narrowing the differences.

It is no longer a question of “desktop or laptop,” though. You now have a third option: iPad. Even if you use your laptop as a stationary “desktop,” you may well find an iPad a less expensive, lighter, and more capable “travel computer” than a laptop. Take an iMac and pair it with an iPad, and you have a combination that is less expensive than many MacBooks alone, yet far more powerful – and far more portable.

Using an iPad as the traveling version of your desktop computer makes taking a computer on travel more likely, not less. You want proof? Think about going through security. For the iPad, just put it in a bin and then pick it up after it is X-rayed. No fumbling with a case and snaps and zippers, and no trying to pack it

all back up again while hopping around, trying to put your shoes back on.

Is this really just an article about the iPad?

The best computer today, for both those who never move their computers and those who travel, may be two computers, an iMac and an iPad. The iMac offers a far better screen and keyboard than any laptop, as well as power and expansion not possible with a laptop. The iPad, on the other hand, offers the ability to interact with the rest of the world using a highly portable, highly flexible device that weighs less than half that of any MacBook, and you can get the combination – iMac and iPad – for less than the cost of many MacBooks alone.

You can have your cake and eat it, too. It simply requires two forks.



My Journey from iMac to Mac mini

© 2010 Dale Hrabak



It started with a thunderstorm. I was working in my basement study when a sudden flash and a loud crash jolted me out of my seat and made me realize that my iMac was in jeopardy. I performed an orderly shutdown, and thought my Mac and I were both safe. Once the storm had passed and all was quiet again, I resumed work, thinking I had dodged another Mac disaster.

Some weeks later though I went to start up my trusty G5 iMac to work on my upcoming tax returns. I pressed the start button (on the back of this model), only to be rewarded with nothing. No reassuring start-up chime, no matter how many times I pressed the button. Now panic started to set in. My taxes would be due shortly, and all the records were on this machine.

Fortunately, I have a laptop too. I was sure the answer was waiting on the Apple support Web site. I did an advanced search, and found the answer, but it was not good news.

The Apple Web site support article <http://support.apple.com/kb/HT2173> detailed how to find the internal diagnostic LEDs. I followed the instructions, and was confronted with the following question: “Does LED 2 come on momentarily, or not at all?” Follow-up diagnostics told me that if the LED in question came on momentarily, the logic board has detected power, but the power supply cannot maintain it and would have to be replaced. If, on the other hand, the LED 2 did not come on at all,

the logic board would have to be replaced. Consistent with my luck in other things such as the lottery, my LED 2 fell into the “not at all” category. Now my tax return was trapped in a dead computer.

Remembering that line from Frank Herbert’s *Dune*, “Fear is the mind killer,” I sat down to think this through as calmly as possible. Yes, the logic board appeared to be toast, but there might be nothing wrong with the hard drive. After checking the Tech Specs on the Apple Web site, I was relieved to find that my first generation G5 iMac had a Serial ATA (SATA) drive. A useful page on the iFixIt.com Web site showed me how to extract that hard drive. Next I acquired a suitable external hard drive enclosure, a USB case that made for an easy install of the SATA drive. All I had to do was slip the drive in, close the enclosure, and hook it to my Mac portable. Zip, zap and done!

The G5 iMac had been running Leopard and the Intel laptop runs Snow Leopard, so I had doubts about whether it would work. I must have stored up some good karma, because the drive came up on the laptop screen the first time I tried it. Not only did it appear on the desktop, but I was able to boot the laptop from it. Yes, I got the taxes in on time.

The emergency behind me, I began to explore my new environment. Because the MacBook screen seemed cramped after my 20” iMac, it wasn’t long before I started to eye a low-cost flat screen monitor.

My MacBook mini-DVI output port requires an adapter to connect to a DVI display, and my local Apple Store was only too glad to sell me one. Now I was enjoying the luxury of a Mac with a dual screen display. Since I spend significant time editing photos, I put all the tool pallets on the laptop screen and had the whole 20” flat screen for my images.

The large screen was great, but I soon grew tired of disconnecting the MagSafe power cord, a FireWire and two USB cables, and an audio connector every time I wanted to move my so-called mobile computer. The question was, how best to replace my desktop iMac with a computer I could afford? The economy’s in the tank and I’m now on a fixed income. The new iMacs all cost over a thousand bucks and the new Mac Pros are way more than that.

To my rescue came the new Mac mini. It’s nearly as good as another laptop at a fraction of the cost. Never mind that it costs more than last year’s model; you can change the memory to 8GB without a putty knife. It has a DVI and an HDMI connector that supports a second monitor or HDTV, plus it supports an extended desktop across both ports. The SuperDrive reads and writes most CD and DVD formats.

I may have saved enough to be able to afford an iPad soon.

If Mac minis Could Talk

I am unique, powerful,
and cool; I am mini.

I shall call you... mini Me!

PAST TENSE BUDDY,
FOR I AM MINI NOW!



Lighter, Smarter Travel Photography

© 2010 Travis Good

This is a story about weight loss. No, not my personal weight, the weight of the photography gear I carry around when I'm traveling. I needed to slim down. I was carrying around an 11.5 pound backpack, and that was getting me down. Either I was carrying my gear less frequently and not taking pictures, or I was carrying my gear but resenting it so much that I wasn't enjoying taking pictures. Something had to be done.

Since the dawn of digital photography I'd been striving for better image quality, which traditionally meant the big sensors and quality lenses that went along with Digital SLRs (Single Lens Reflex cameras). These cameras weigh a lot. The extra lenses weigh a lot. The tripods that support them weigh a lot. Then there was the computer I needed to process those big photo images which, for me, has been a MacBook Pro. Can you feel your back sagging under all that weight?

The changes I made to my camera bag were many, but nothing had more of an impact on weight than switching away from my MacBook Pro. Theoretically I could have traveled without a computer, but I won't do that. When I'm on the road for many weeks I don't like to have my photography and blog work back up. Nothing is worse than arriving back home with six weeks of pictures and journal entries and having to sort through it all. To avoid a backlog, I need to work while traveling. A less weighty computer was called for.

Could I use an iPad as my computer on the road?

My MacBook Pro weighs six pounds. My iPad weighs one and a half pounds. If I could travel with an iPad instead of lugging around my MacBook Pro, then I could reduce the weight of my

bag by four and a half pounds. I needed a powerful machine though. The camera manufacturers had for years engaged in a "battle of the pixels," which meant the size of image files kept increasing. Did an iPad have the horsepower to handle modern image files?

Figure 1: The iPad app *Photogene* (\$3.99) provides an assortment of basic adjustments to enhance or improve an image. All of the features of the app are shown in the adjoining figure.



\$3.99 Buy App

Category: Photography
 Updated: Jun 07, 2010
 Current Version: 1.2
 1.2
 2.3 MB
 Language: English
 Seller: Omer Shoor
 © Mobile-Pond

Rated 4+

And even if the iPad had the “umph” to handle large files, did it have the software I needed to do my work? I’ve spent years refining how I process my pictures — my workflow. Could I do the same things on an iPad? If not, could I at least come close enough so that I could get by with it on the road? In addition, when I’m traveling I use my laptop for many other purposes and I’d expect the iPad to take these on too.

The easiest way I knew to test the iPad was to put it through its paces. If it measured up then I’d have my answer. If it fell short then I’d know where. After my tests I’d be able to determine if I could shed the extra weight of the MacBook Pro.

I tested the iPad’s capabilities in four different areas related to my photography: Planning for a photo shoot; Importing images; Processing images; and Sharing and exporting images and commentary. I also considered the extent to which I could use the iPad to learn and grow in my photography. This is what I learned.

Planning for Picture-Taking

Before I commit time to a photo shoot there are things I need to know, relating to weather, sunlight, and depth of field. I have used my computer to get the information I need. Could I do that with the iPad?

Weather. Is the weather supposed to be rainy, cloudy, or sunny? Apps that forecast the weather are abundant but *Accuweather* did the job to my liking in a simple and graphical way. It makes accessing forecast by hour an easy task.

Sunlight. At what times will the sun rise and set? I need to know this to know when I can capture those

magic hours of light. *Darkness* is a fabulous app, which will tell me the time of sunrise and sunset on any date for cities all over the world.

I also need to know about the angle of the light. Sunlight casts shadows, which can affect a picture, so I need to know when the sunlight will be at the right angle for my shot. *LightTrac* is a small wonder; on a map overlay it shows you the angle of sunlight and moonlight for any hour of the day.

Depth of Field. How can I anticipate what will be in focus for any picture I take? *PhotoCalc* will provide depth-of-field information for any given setting on hundreds of cameras, and will also perform flash

exposure calculations, exposure reciproaction, and more. I concluded that the iPad has applications that can easily satisfy my planning needs.

Importing Images

When I take pictures, whether with a camera or with my iPhone, I need to be able to get the images into my iPad. How do I do that?

When I take a picture with a camera that has a memory card, I need to connect that card to the iPad. Apple’s \$29 Camera Connection Kit is by far the best and fastest solution for transferring pictures. This kit comes in two pieces: an SD Card Reader and a USB Connector. Either can be plugged into the iPad’s dock



Figure 2: *TiltShift Generator* (\$2.99) is a unique app that lets you apply radical depth-of-field effects by throwing certain areas of an image out of focus. Using just a hint of imagination, doesn’t this image look like a model railroad scene?



\$2.99 Buy App

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 Languages: English, Chinese, French
 German, Japanese, Korean
 Seller: Art & Mobile
 © Takayuki Fukatsu & Takuma Mori

Rated 4+

connector. SD cards are plugged in directly; other card types are left in the camera and connected via USB cable into the USB Connector. Both connectors are small, speedy, and do an excellent job of getting your pictures into the iPad.

What if I have an Eye-Fi SD Card? How do I get images off my Eye-Fi SD card without plugging it into the SD Card Reader? *ShutterSnitch* does an amazing job of transferring images wirelessly from Eye-Fi SD cards into the iPad, provided both the iPad and the Eye-Fi SD card are sharing a network.

If I take pictures with my iPhone, there are apps I can use to get those pictures onto the iPad for processing. *PhotoZap* is a quick-and-simple solution; you run the app on both devices, tell the iPhone to send an image and tell the iPad to receive it. Done! *Photo Transfer* is a much richer application that will transfer many pictures between the two devices, and it can also extend to include any Mac OS X or Windows computer.

Are there other ways to get pictures onto the iPad? Yes, many! The solutions above were oriented toward images captured in a camera or an iPhone. Pictures from other sources can be added to the iPad through Safari, through *Mail*, through *iTunes*, and through a myriad of file transfer applications such as *Air Share*. In addition there's a novel niche, which allows you to wirelessly link your iPhone's camera to the iPad to take and transfer images. These include: *Camera A*, *R Camera*, and *Camera*.

I concluded that I can get my images transferred to my iPad. There is a problem with the transfer though. The only destination is Apple's *Photos* app and, while that's a good start, it's not enough. When I import im-

ages to my Mac I also rate the images (on a 5 star scale), and tag them (with keywords, copyright, descriptions, etc.). Currently it's not possible to do this with the iPad, although apps such as *Meta Editor* look promising.

Processing Images

Before I share pictures I often want to apply fixes or special effects. Can I apply the post-production adjustments that I typically do on my Mac such as leveling, cropping, exposure, etc.? *PS Mobile* is Adobe's free solution for doing basic adjustments; as of this writing, though, it's an iPhone app, meaning it's a bit awkward to run on the iPad. *Photogene* (Figure 1) can do everything you'd expect in the way of simple corrections, and also do more, including such things as adjusting levels and curves, and red-eye removal.

Beyond touch-up, can I create any special effects with my photos? *AutoStitch* will take a string of overlapping images and stitch them into a seamless panorama. *TiltShift Generator* (Figure 2) brings controlled diminishable-depth-of-field to your pictures, creating focus



Figure 3: The *ColorSplash* (\$1.99) app produces some dramatic results by converting your images to black and white and then allowing you to re-colorize key details. Neat effect wouldn't you say?



\$1.99 Buy App ▾

Category: Photography
Updated: Jul 01, 2010
Current Version: 1.2
1.2 (iOS 4.0 Tested)
14.9 MB
Language: English
Seller: Pocket Pixels Inc.
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Rated 4+

and a sense of miniaturization. *ColorSplash* (Figure 3) converts images to black and white and then allows you to paint color back in.

I concluded that there is no shortage of applications for the iPad for processing images.

Sharing/Exporting Images and More

Besides syncing back to my Mac, I want to be able to get images off the iPad to share. Is there a simple way to get my picture and a short description to a friend? *Lifecards* will do this through a variety of services including email. Just choose a picture to annotate and optionally create a postcard-style back with a short message. *goPostal* will do this through snail mail, by printing your picture, message, and address onto postcard stock and dropping it into the U.S. Postal Service for delivery — and all for only \$1.27!

I also want to be able to keep a diary on my iPad that I could share with friends. *Chronicle* is a journaling application that allows you to embed images, generate daily emails, and back up to Google Docs. I use this to accumulate fodder for my Web site, which I update when I get home using *iWeb*. *WordPress* is a wonderful app that works fluidly with its namesake hosting platform, allowing you to create and edit blog updates and publish them when you have an Internet connection. *BlogPress* is a slightly less capable tool but one that works with a wide variety of blogging platforms including *Blogger*, *WordPress*, *Movable Type*, *Live Journal* and others.

And if I just want to get my pictures out there on the Web for others to see, *Flickr* will upload your images, let you view others' pictures, and also display yours. *Photobucket* does pretty much the same for its service but in a lovely iPad-specific app. *Gallery* is an uploading and display app from Apple for use by those with MobileMe accounts. There are many other options for managing photo galleries as well. This is probably the easiest thing to do from the iPad.

The Bottom Line

So where did this leave me? Well, it all starts with something I haven't yet mentioned and that's the speed with which the iPad handles pictures. It's fast. Were it not for its speed at handling large jpg files, my investigation would have been pointless. However, as I said, it is fast. So what did the testing show?

For having been on the market for only a few months, the iPad is a remarkably capable tool for photography. It's great for backing up images from your camera, for performing a myriad of fun and creative activities on those pictures, and it will sync all your images back to your Mac or PC.

It also has resources that will help me (and you) learn and grow in my photography. I can see the best that online photo services have to offer. *ExploreFlickr* displays an ever-changing grid of thumbnails of the best of *Flickr*; a simple tap enlarges the image to full-screen. *PhotoBuzz* lets you search and subscribe to albums of photographers whose work you like as well as search for images across both *Picasa* and *Flickr*.

I can see excellent professional photos and have them explained as well. *Pixcetera* pulls from the best of photography, updates images daily, and presents them by category with captions. *Eyewitness* draws from the best pictures of *The Guardian* and presents them with professional tips explaining the shooter's technique.

And I can learn photography as though I were taking a class. *Lynda.com* is a subscription service that provides training galore in classes broken down into extended outlines where each bullet is a short video.

For the vast majority of photographers the iPad is a good replacement computer.

But is it right for my demanding requirements?

The iPad falls short for me in two respects. The first is in the area of rating/tagging when I import my pictures. The second relates to my blog. You'll notice that I've not talked about publishing my blog using the iPad. This is because my blog is built using *iWeb* and the iPad has no equivalent program.

These shortcomings are real frustrations to me, but likely are not issues for most people. Few people work with the volume of pictures I do, where it's most efficient to tag/rate at import. Furthermore, most people have not committed to Apple's *iWeb* for Web site publishing to the extent that I have.

These deficiencies can and will be fixed. The app marketplace is dynamic and problems are being solved almost as fast as they're being discovered; I suspect the rating/tagging issue will be addressed even before this article is published. In any case, I've decided to travel with my iPad and work around its shortcomings. What I won't do to lose weight!

And what about the camera?

Choosing to move from MacBook Pro to iPad shaves four and a half pounds off my camera bag. That's a HUGE step in the right direction. However, there were plenty of other things in my old bag. What else did I do to lighten my load?

The next decision was another biggie. It got me slimmed down by another pound and a half.

That decision? I chose to ditch my SLR and its accoutrements.

About two years ago the megapixel wars of camera manufacturers seemed to calm. Not every new camera needed more pixels than the last. Quality of image moved more to center stage, and this change was having a positive impact. No longer were good images the exclusive domain of large SLR sensors; high-end *prosumer* (professional consumer) point-and-shoot cameras were capable of producing great images too with their smaller, better sensors. I first experienced this with my Panasonic Lumix LX3. Its excellent image quality, world-class fast Leica lens, and support of RAW made me a believer. There are many cameras in this class now which produce similar results: Canon's Powershot G11, Sony's NEX series, Olympus' PEN EP-1, and others.

I took a deep breath and decided that I would stop traveling with my digital SLR. I'd ditch the heavy body. I'd leave the lenses behind. I'd stash my external flash, my flash bracket, my tripod, my GPS tracker and a variety of other hardware. I'd replace it all with a couple of good *prosumer* cameras.

Why replace my SLR with two cameras? That's what it would take to retain the flexibility and capability that I had with my Sony SLR kit. I already had my Lumix LX3, but for all its strengths it was sorely lacking in zoom, had no GPS tagging, and wasn't the best at video. So I bought another camera. Yes, another Lumix, the ZS7. All this took up much less room, so I moved from a large backpack bag to a courier style bag. You can see both bags and their contents in the accompanying picture.



Figure 4: On full display, my weighty gear next to the downsized equipment I am using now. Time will tell if I will be as happy with the end result as I am with the weight savings.

In the end, I had changed almost everything about my travel camera kit: computer, camera(s) and bag. The result was a marked reduction in carrying weight. I started with 11.5 pounds. I dropped to five and a half pounds, a loss of six pounds (Figure 4). I had cut my weight by more than 50 percent. What a pleasure!

It's not all smiles. The iPad doesn't quite satisfy my requirements ... but I'll live with the shortcomings for now and place my faith in the app developer marketplace. Solutions will emerge and I expect the iPad will soon be serving me perfectly. In the interim I've dramatically reduced my carrying weight, I'm saving my back, and thoroughly enjoying travel photography again!



Putting Video on Devices Using *HandBrake*

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If you are like me, you are bummed at the prospect of taking a trans-continental flight, knowing that the instructional DVD showing how to use your new financial accounting system won't work on your iPad. The iPad has neither a DVD drive, nor any means to attach one. So how will you ever learn the exciting details of assigning hours to correct accounting codes, or categorizing purchases according to the proper funding source?

Fortunately, there is a solution, a curiously named open-source software package called *HandBrake*. *HandBrake* does not directly install video on anything;



Figure 1: Many DVDs are “region encoded,” in an attempt by manufacturers to control distribution and prices. If you attempt to play a DVD from a region other than the one your Mac is set to accept, you get this warning message.

it extracts video from a DVD to a *QuickTime* or MPEG file on your computer, which can, in turn, be transferred to your iPod, iPad, iPhone, Apple TV, or other device that doesn't have a DVD drive. (*Note:* references to Apple TV in this article refer to the “old” Apple TV, the one with a hard drive, rather than the recently introduced video streaming appliance with the same name but a completely different operation.)

To do this trick, you need the following:

- A Mac OS X-based computer (preferably running Mac OS X 10.5 or 10.6) with a DVD drive. Since Leopard and Snow Leopard require a DVD drive to install the operating system, this covers pretty much all current Macs except the MacBook Air;
- A copy of *HandBrake* (free, see below);
- A copy of *VLC* media player (free, see below);
- Several gigabytes of empty disk space; and
- Patience.

Installing *VLC* media player

Installing *VLC* is easy. Download the image file, open it up, and drag the application to your Applications directory. That's it. While you can use *VLC* to watch various types of media files, including Windows media and *QuickTime* files, you never have to open it at all; it just has to be in your Applications folder. *HandBrake* uses code libraries from *VLC*, but you neither need to know how this works nor do anything to make it happen.

Installing *HandBrake*

As with *VLC*, installing *HandBrake* is easy. Download

the image file, open it up, and drag *HandBrake* to your Applications directory. That's it.

Finding an appropriate DVD

The next step is usually easy, but can be complicated: you need a DVD that your computer can read. Obviously, if your computer doesn't have a DVD drive, you're stuck. But even if you do have a DVD drive, not all DVD drives and not all DVDs are equal.

Figure 1 shows a screen shot from an early model MacBook after a British-manufactured DVD is inserted. This warning screen states that the disc cannot be played on the MacBook unless the region encoding is switched from Region 1 (U.S. and Canada) to Region 2 (Europe and the Middle East). Such a switch can be done only four times, and then the MacBook will be permanently set to whatever region was the last choice.

Newer Macs may never see such a warning, as many now ship with multi-region DVD drives. Such drives can read DVDs from any region.

Launching *HandBrake*

Unless you've figured out how to stop it, a DVD-equipped Mac will launch the *DVD Player* application as soon as you insert a DVD. The first step in capturing the DVD, then, is to quit *DVD Player*.

The next step is to launch *HandBrake*. If a DVD is already in the drive, *HandBrake* will automatically open a window that lists all your disk drives on the left and, usually at the bottom of the list, any CD or DVD you

have. In Figure 2, the disc “NOAA_AT_THE_POLES” is in the DVD drive, so select that, as shown in Figure 3. Do not try and get strange and further select something inside the DVD; just select the DVD itself.

After selecting the source DVD, *HandBrake* will do a scan of the disc, looking over the content, and automatically select the longest piece of content for processing. A DVD can contain multiple video clips, including (on commercial video discs) previews of coming attractions, commercials about the video producer, and countless other bits and pieces of trivia. *HandBrake* assumes the longest piece is usually what you want to work with, but that isn't always the case. At the top of Figure 4, under the icon bar, you will see a rollover menu called “Title” that allows you to select various clips on the disc, and pick one or more for processing. Note that the name of the saved

video file is pre-entered in the Destination section; you will almost always want to rename the file, getting rid of underscores, surplus capital letters, and other silliness.

Figure 4 also indicates that the Output Settings are set to Universal, which produces an MP4 file with an extension of .m4v. This is ideal — but not automatic. However, with a little work you can set *HandBrake* so that it always saves files in Universal format.

What is Universal and why should I care?

HandBrake is really the graphical front end of a whole bunch of command-line utilities created (mostly) by Linux and Mac open source developers. By playing with the various settings, you can extract video clips from a DVD and save them in a wide variety of file formats, with a wide variety of file sizes, bitrates, audio

characteristics, and even subtitles. To put it another way, you can fiddle with options and easily create a video file that can't be read by your Mac, much less an iPod, iPad, iPhone, or Apple TV.

For example, earlier versions of *HandBrake* allowed me to easily create video files that displayed fine on a Power Mac G5, but *iTunes* refused to even try and transfer them to an iPod touch or iPhone. Some that did transfer were marginal, and tended to “stall,” forcing you to watch the video in fits and spurts.

Fortunately, the *HandBrake* team has recently added the Universal preset which, in their words, provides “universally compatible, full resolution settings for all current Apple devices: iPod, iPhone, Apple TV, and Macs.” However, when you first launch *HandBrake*, it is set for Normal, which may be “normal” but which

Figure 2: This *Handbrake* box pops up immediately after *HandBrake* is opened, showing you available volumes.

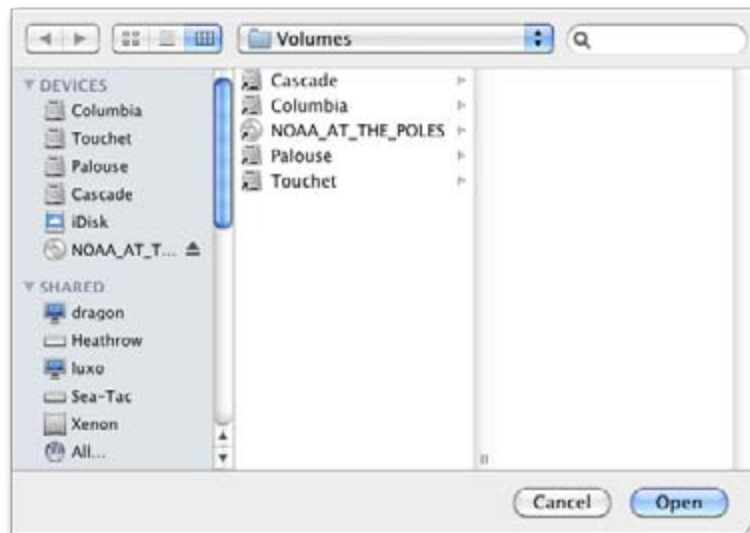
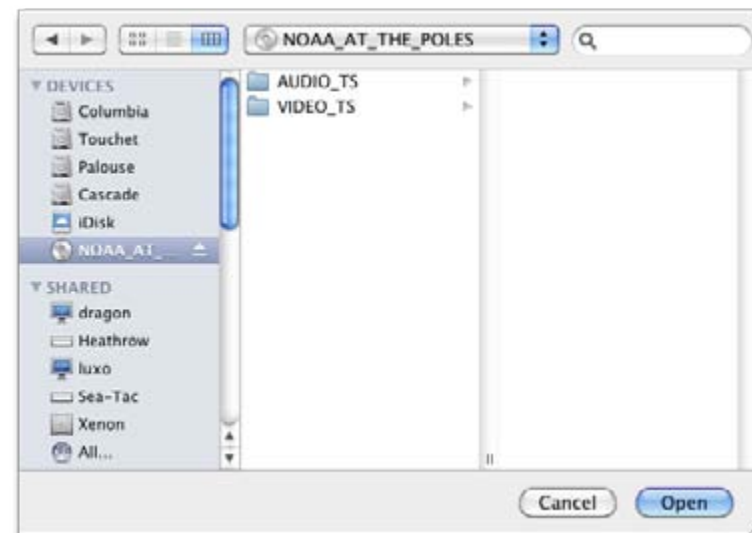


Figure 3: In this case, the volume “NOAA_AT_THE_POLES” has been selected as the target of *HandBrake*'s attentions.



does not work on most things that you'd probably like to use for viewing video.

The default can be changed by, first, making sure you see the Presets drawer (found under the Windows menu, Figure 5), then selecting Universal from the list (Figure 6), and finally, at the bottom of the Presets drawer, clicking the cog button and selecting Make Default. From that point on, when you launch *HandBrake* it will use the Universal settings, and your iPad, iPod, iPhone, and Apple TV can all load and play the same video file.

Experimenting with Universal settings and comparing the result with video clips produced using much higher bitrates, it isn't easy to see much qualitative difference. Stick with Universal unless you have lots of time on your hands.

Other Options

While there are a great many possible settings in *HandBrake*, the two most commonly useful ones are Add to Queue (shown at the top of Figure 4) and Subtitles. Many DVDs have multiple "titles" on them, which means multiple video clips. Confusingly, the "title" is really just the length of the clip in hours, minutes and seconds, so you can either save every clip or guess at what you think is important. Rather than saving each title separately to your disk drive, you can add them to the queue, then press the Start button to process them one after the other. Keep in mind that each title you save will need a different file name; if you fail to give five titles five different names, *HandBrake* will cheerfully process all five clips, and write each over the top of the previous one, leaving you with just the last file. You may say bad words.

HandBrake also allows you to add subtitles to the video clips, provided the original DVD has subtitles. I prefer to watch foreign language films with the original soundtrack, and pick up the narrative via the subtitles. *HandBrake* supports this quite nicely, but it doesn't always work. No matter what options I tried, one video insisted on playing the original soundtrack in Finnish, and the subtitles in Finnish as well. Similarly, a Japanese video has the original Japanese soundtrack, and Japanese subtitles.

If I seem obsessed with subtitles, it is a requirement for government Web sites to have subtitles for all video clips. Unfortunately, there is no consistency in how subtitles are added in video, so expect to spend some time experimenting.

Patience required

After making sure you have the settings you want, and the title or titles in the queue have unique names, press Start. *HandBrake* will read your DVD and slowly

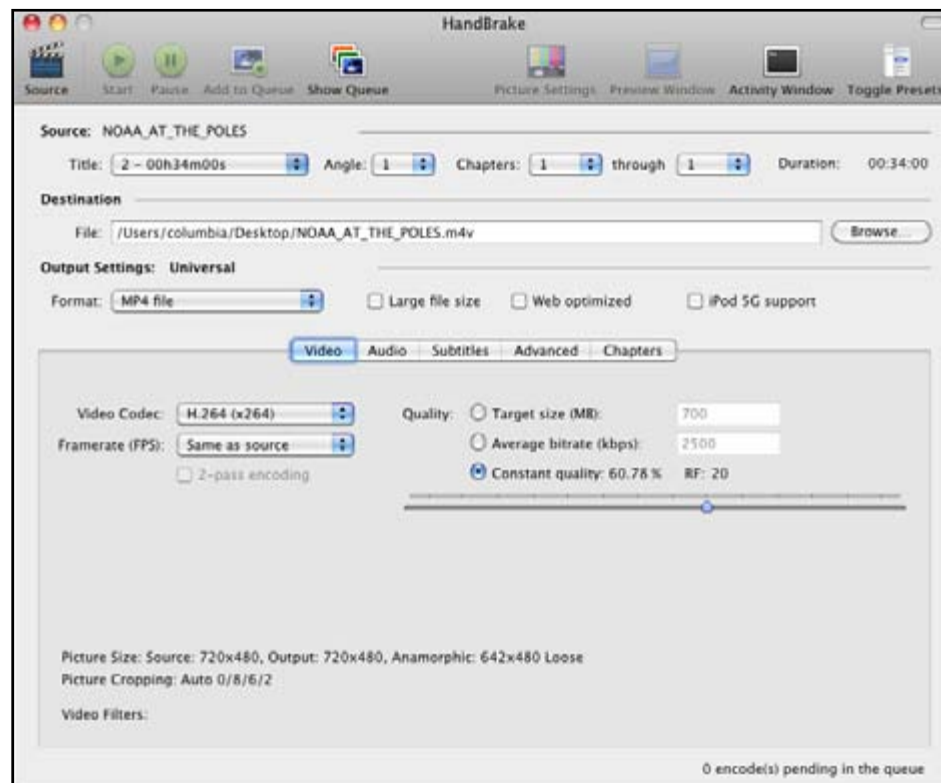


Figure 4: *HandBrake's* main screen shows controls across the top for selecting a video source, adding things to the queue, and other actions. In the center are the settings selected for the video, including title, chapter or chapters, file name, file format, bitrate, codec, and many others.



Figure 5, above: The Windows menu in *HandBrake* allows you to reveal the Presets Drawer.



Figure 6: Unless you know exactly what you are doing, select Universal from the Presets Drawer. The cog icon at the bottom allows you to set Universal as the default.

convert it to an MPEG file. The speed of this conversion depends on the speed of your Mac and the speed of your DVD drive. DVD drives in older model Macs were rated at 2X or 4X, while recent Mac Pros have had 16X and 18X drives. The faster the DVD drive and the faster the machine, the faster *HandBrake* can convert the DVD.

The conversion from DVD to MPEG is complex, so it is best not to have other things running at the same time. In particular, the process of matching video frames to audio is sensitive to interruption; you will be very unhappy if the audio is distorted, or gradually falls farther and farther behind the video. While *HandBrake* is churning away, find something else to do.

The finished .m4v files can be imported into *iTunes* for playing on your Mac, or transferred, via *iTunes*, to your iPhone, iPod, iPad or Apple TV. You can even import the resulting files into *iMovie* or *Final Cut* for editing, allowing you to remove Aunt Midge's annoying ex-boyfriend from all those wedding party videos.

In answer to a question you might have, no, I don't know why it is called *HandBrake*. Some mysteries are destined to stay mysterious.



Handbrake's icon has not been updated to handle the new 512 x 512 pixel size supported by Snow Leopard. And I can't explain either the cocktail or the pineapple.



The icon for *VLC* media player. No, I don't know why it looks like a traffic cone.

Resources

HandBrake, free

<http://handbrake.fr/>

VLC media player, free

<http://www.videolan.org/vlc/>

The Apple Magic Trackpad — What's Not to Like?

By Jason Woo

If you've used an Apple notebook recently, then you might know that multiple finger gestures are part of using the Mac's trackpad. And now, many of these same gestures that are used with the newest generation MacBook Pro have been incorporated into the new Magic Trackpad. Things just keep getting better!

As far as using a trackpad, any trackpad, it takes some adjustment, but the rewards are worth it. Once you master the nuances of the Magic Trackpad, you realize it is a more natural and intimate method of interacting with your Mac. You and the Mac are one!

Here are some of my favorite finger gestures:

- **Two-finger inertia scroll:** The faster you flick, the faster you scroll.
- **Three-finger sideways swipe:** It moves entire emails, photos, and Web pages back and forth.
- **Finger pinch:** Most people know this from their iPhone, but it's also useful for making text in Web pages and emails bigger. Great for less strain on your eyes and easy to do.
- **Four-finger sideways swipe:** This brings up the menu so you can quickly switch to another application.
- **Four-finger swipe up:** This brings up your desktop.
- **Four-finger swipe down:** This shows all active applications in a virtual space.

Pros of The Magic Trackpad

The Magic Trackpad is tilted at an angle, making it comfortable to use. Gestures are easy to do and useful. The size is just right to make a difference and yet not take up too much desk space. It is made of glass, so your fingers slide with ease. It uses Bluetooth to connect, so there are no wires to mess with. It can tell when it is not in use, and automatically conserves battery life. It takes two AA batteries (included).

Editor's Note: Other wireless devices, such as Apple's wireless keyboard and the Magic Mouse, also require AA batteries. Getting rechargeable batteries, such as Duracells, might be a wise investment if you don't want to pay more for Apple's batteries and charger.

Cons of The Magic Trackpad

The Magic Trackpad requires Mac OS X 10.6.4 to take advantage of all the gestures. Also, when you press the button for On/Off, it shows a green light either way, so you don't know if it's turning On or Off.

My Rating

An excellent I/O Device

Price

At your local Apple store or through their Web site it is \$69. Other online retailers are offering it at a slight discount.

The Bottom Line

Give the Magic Trackpad a chance, and it can replace your mouse. In typical Apple fashion, it makes my user experience more enjoyable.



The Apple Magic Trackpad works like... er, magic! Rumor has it Apple is working on a six-finger gesture, but there is a delay; they are still looking for a six-fingered Mac user for a test subject.





Wi-Fire: A Review

By Robert Huttinger

Going out to the folks' house in West Virginia used to be painful. As a tech geek, I would be out of touch for at least two days (which is kind of the point, right?). I mean, just how many times can I tweet (on Twitter), "I caught another fish, and it was this big!"

Early morning and the evening are the times that bothered me most, for I like to get online before anyone wakes up or after the children have gone to bed. There is only one wireless Internet access point for the entire property. It works well near its central location, but a problem arises when I take a chair out to the patio by the fire pit, and settle down with some social media and a sunset. I constantly lose the connection, if I can even get a signal. This is where the product being reviewed enters the picture.

The Wi-Fire, a wireless network range extender from Field Technologies, was offered to the Pi for review. I graciously accepted the offer and took on the challenge, hoping that the Wi-Fire might ease my connection pain. This little gadget connects to the USB port and clips to the top of your laptop, and you simply point it in the direction of the network source base station. From the aforementioned patio, the signal went from 0-1 bars to 3-4 bars consistently. I tested just how far it would reach, and I made it all the way down the driveway (about 500') before the signal became unusable. Wi-Fire was a winner!

What could be another use besides getting some additional range from your base station? If you have a computer (laptop or desktop) in a dead zone of the house, you can use this device to get connected to your access point.

This little gadget connects to the USB port and clips to the top of your laptop, and you simply point it in the direction of the network source base station.

The Wi-Fire *Connection Manager* loaded effortlessly and revealed a huge number of wi-fi networks that Airport didn't see.



So how does it work? Simply install the software, which loads the company's connection utility application called the *Wi-Fire Connection Manager*. Plug the Wi-Fire device into a USB port. Make sure your Airport connection is turned off before launching the Wi-Fire connection utility. You may be surprised how many more networks you see beyond what your Airport network was seeing. You are now good to go.

The Manufacturer's Suggested Retail Price is \$49. In my opinion, at that price point the Wi-Fire is a good deal. Some wi-fi extenders cost that much and give you a fraction of the range the Wi-Fire provides. Also, some wi-fi extenders have issues when setting them up to work with your Airport network; that's not the case for this product.

Overall, I recommend the Wi-Fire wireless network range extender. Your mileage may vary depending on your particular use-case scenario. As for me, future trips to West Virginia will be a joy, at least as far as being connected to the Internet is concerned. Can't say the same 'bout the fishing, though!

The Bottom Line

The Good: Works great; price is right (\$49); easy to set up; and coverage distance is great!

The Bad: Some dropped signals on my G4 iBook running Tiger (although every other machine tested worked great); and the user must remember to use the Wi-Fire connection utility instead of Airport.

The Ugly: An obtrusive block sitting on top of your laptop screen.



The manufacturer says the Wi-Fire can rest on any flat surface, laptop display or flat screen monitor, but it didn't mention "ugly"! Talk about ruining the nice clean lines of a Mac portable!



The News You've Been Waiting For: the Tuesday Night Clinic Returns!

By Diana King & Bob Jarecke

**MacRecycleClinic
first opened for business on Monday,
Sept. 13, and it will
continue to meet at
7 p.m. into perpetuity.
The clinicians invite
you to bring them
your Mac equipment
problems for diagnosis
and repair, even
if other repair shops
have thrown up their
hands in defeat.**

The much-loved Tuesday Night Clinic has returned, but under a new name, on a new night, and in a new location. The new name is the MacRecycleClinic, and the time is every Monday night, rain or shine, from 7 to 9 p.m. The new location is the Marvin Memorial United Methodist Church, 33 University Boulevard East, Silver Spring, Maryland, across from Montgomery Blair High School.

As far as the folks involved, nothing has changed there. The two regular ringleaders, Lorin Evans and Jim Ritz, are still heading up the venture, ably assisted by a group of volunteers who are all ready, willing and able to provide help with your computer problems.

MacRecycleClinic first opened for business on Monday, September 13, and it will continue to meet at 7 p.m. into perpetuity. The clinicians invite you to bring them your Mac equipment problems for diagnosis and repair, even if other repair shops have thrown up their hands in defeat. While the doors will be open on a walk-in basis, it would be wise to contact one of the volunteers ahead of time via email or phone to discuss your particular problem and their ability to help with it. See the contact information below.

Contact information:

By email: office@macrecycleclinic.org

By phone: 301-593-4004

On the Web: www.macrecycleclinic.org

Note: The MacRecycleClinic is an independent nonprofit organization that is not affiliated with the Washington Apple Pi. This operation has its own policies regarding repairs, remuneration, donations, etc.; however, the management of the Pi endorses and supports this venture, which is being run by Pi members.

Reclamation Program

In addition to the Monday Clinic, MacRecycleClinic accepts donations of computers and computer equipment for distribution to people in need: A potential new home for your old or outdated Mac and computer peripherals. As a nonprofit, the clinic can issue tax donation letters for equipment you donate.

Alternative Help

Because the Monday evening hours of the MacRecycleClinic may not be convenient for everyone, the Pi's Clubhouse Saturdays will continue at least twice a month. This Pi-sponsored event affords an alternative opportunity to address your equipment problems or software issues.

As you can see, things just got a whole lot better for dealing with a cantankerous Mac or for finding a new home for one with plenty of life left in it. Between the new clinic and the Pi's service, there should be something for everyone. Although it took a while to get the clinic back in business, the old adage — "all's well that ends well" — says it nicely.



Four Questions; Five Answers

By Bob Jarecke

This article is a revival of a *Journal* series focusing on questions and their all-important answers. Whether it's from a General Meeting Q&A session, an electronic inquiry on the TCS Forums (you do log into the TCS, don't you?), or simply a face-to-face encounter, there are tons of questions. Below I am providing some of the more interesting questions that have surfaced recently — IMHO (In My Humble Opinion).

The format is simple: question, then answer. (Oh really, how else would one do it?) Some answers may be in audio or video format. When we published the first article in this series, we asked for comments on its usefulness. Again, we ask that you provide any feedback, good or bad, so we will know if this column is worth the effort. Now, read on.

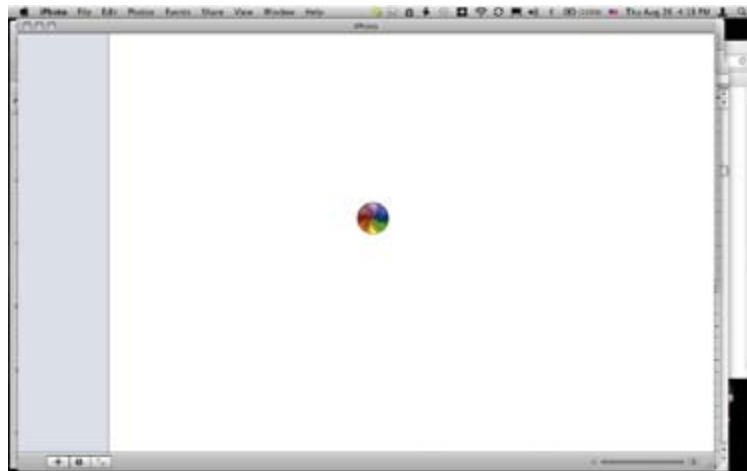


Figure 1. The *iPhoto* application opened up but nothing but the dreaded spinning beach ball appeared. Oh, drat!

Question 1.

**Source: Clubhouse Saturday;
Issue – *iPhoto* Problem**

“Why won't *iPhoto* open?”

On a 12" G4 PowerBook, the *iPhoto* application was not launching properly. The application would start up okay (Dock icon bounced a couple of times, then settled back into its place); however, after the program started opening, it failed to display any images. The cursor morphed into a spinning beach ball, and that was all it would do for minutes on end. (See Figure 1.) What to do, what to do?

Answer: This proved to be a very perplexing problem. Some simple fixes like trashing *iPhoto* preferences (User Account/Library/Preferences/com.apple.iPhoto.plist) or launching *iPhoto* while holding down the Option key to bring up a different *iPhoto* Library did not yield success.

We conjectured the root cause of the problem was that the main *iPhoto* library had become corrupted. We ultimately ended up having to re-import all the member's photos from a backup file of the original images. The modifications and captioning that had been done in *iPhoto* were lost. This ended up as quite a loss of effort, which a Time Machine backup would have been able to save. Are you backing up?

Bottom line: Sometimes you end up losing data during the triage; you can't win 'em all.

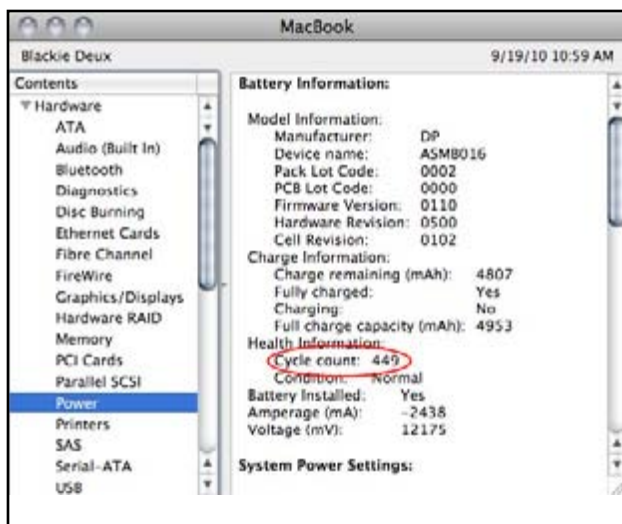


Figure 2. *System Profiler* shows the battery in MacBook Blackie Deux has a 449 Cycle count. All the cycles have apparently not hurt the performance of the early 2008 MacBook's battery; it has 97% ($4807 \div 4954$) of its life left in it.

Question 2.

Source: TCS Forums;

Topic – Notebook Batteries

This TCS question titled “MBP Battery” can be found in its entirety at: #7144 in the Computing Conference, Repair & Maintenance Board.

“I’ve had my MPB for about 3 years (MacBookPro3.1 — 2007). The battery performance at this point is pretty poor — I’ve gone from 100% to 35% in just over an hour.

I’m guessing this would be a good time to replace the battery. I know it varies on usage, but what is the

battery life that others are seeing for laptops? Am I in the range?”

Answer: In Mac laptops where you can replace a battery, the Apple specification is that across 300 discharge/charge cycles the battery holds around 80 percent of its new life.

For laptops with a built-in battery, the cycle rate changes to 1000 for 80 percent.

To read the cycle count on your battery, go to About This Mac > More Info (System Profiler)> Power > Battery Information > Cycle Count. (See Figure 2.)

Question 2, Part B.

The last part of the above reply prompted one TCS follower to check his battery status and pose a related question.

“Most of the time when I use my laptop, I try to connect to AC power if available. Do charge cycles count then? My MBP shows a Cycle Count of 6. In the 8 months I have had it, I would suspect it has charged back up from 50% more than 6 times. What constitutes a Cycle Count?”

Answer: The reply directed the member to a link on Apple’s Web site (<http://www.apple.com/batteries/>), which gave the below explanation.

A charge cycle means using all of the battery’s power, but that doesn’t necessarily mean a single charge. For instance, you could listen to your iPod for a few hours one day, using half its power, and then recharge

it fully. If you did the same thing the next day, it would count as one charge cycle, not two, so you may take several days to complete a cycle. Each time you complete a charge cycle, it diminishes battery capacity slightly, but you can put notebook, iPod, and iPhone batteries through many charge cycles before they will only hold 80% of original battery capacity. As with other rechargeable batteries, you may eventually need to replace your battery.

Question 3.

Source: General Meeting;

Topic – UPSs

This entry is a series of responses to several questions about Uninterruptible Power Supplies (UPSs). To start with, a member who had installed a home surge protection system asked if they still needed a UPS and how long it would last?

Answer: The audio file below answers the opening question and evolves into product recommendations, the best size for certain types of equipment, and where to get battery replacements.



Q&A Audio File

(Audio file length 4:49 minutes.
Click on the link to launch.)

Question 4.

**Source: Clubhouse Saturday;
Topic – iPad Operation**

“Can I do screen shots on an iPad?”

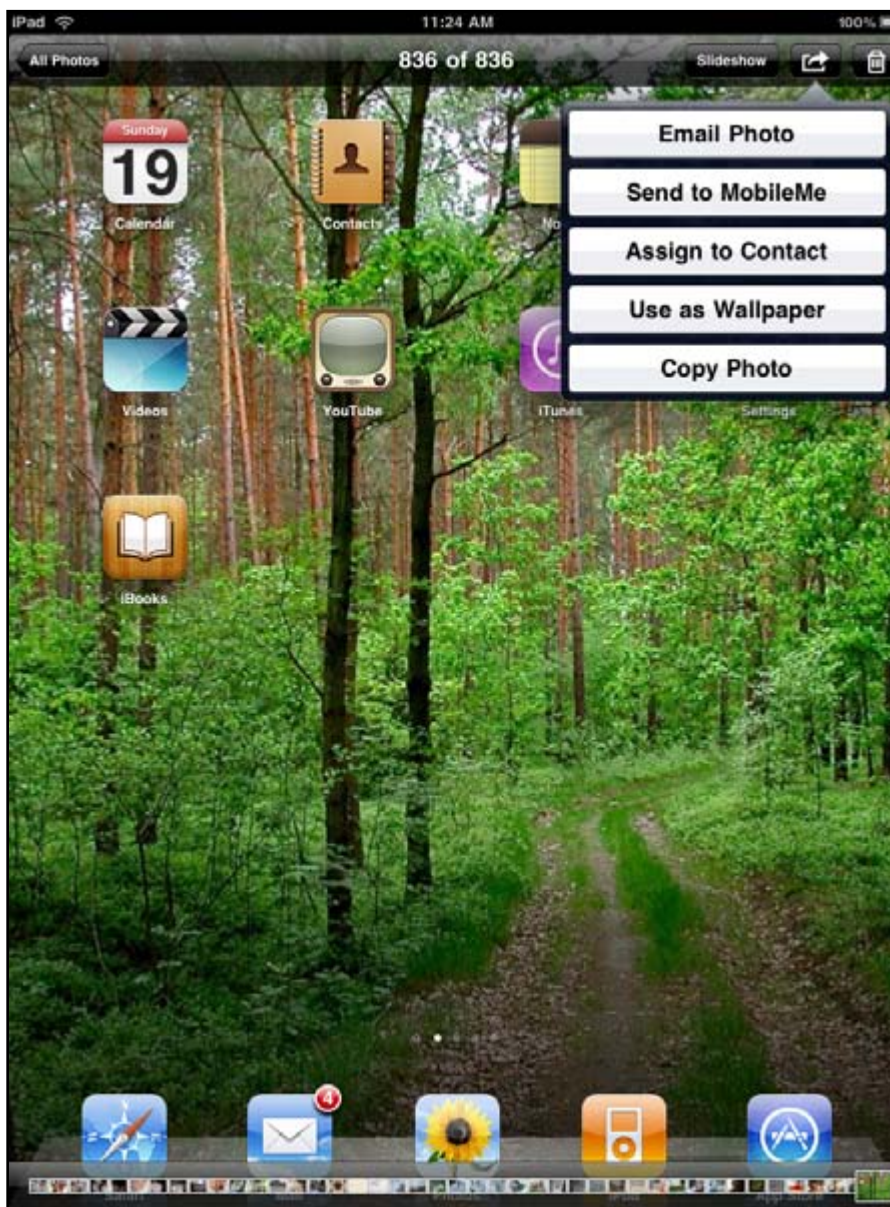
Answer: Yes, just press the Power button on the side along with the Home button on the front. You will hear the familiar camera shutter click and the deed is done!

“Where do I find the screen shot I just took?”

Answer: Screen shots are stored in the *Photos* app. Open the application and the screen shot will be the newest addition to your photo library.

“How do I get a screen shot off of the iPad so I can use it elsewhere?”

Answer: Select the image and from the top menu (before it fades away) tap the icon that looks like an arrow coming out of a box. This will give you several options for moving the image from the iPad to another location such as your Mac.



There are two options for transferring photos from the iPad to other locations: a special iPad Album page on .Mac (oops, MobileMe), or as an attachment to an email.



Combine PDFs and More

By Bob Jarecke

Here are a couple of tips for everyone. See if they make your computing life a little easier, or at least a little more understandable.

1. Combining PDF documents (Mac OS X 10.6)

With Mac OS X 10.6 Snow Leopard, you can add PDF pages to an existing PDF document using the Mac OS X application *Preview*. How, you ask? Just follow the bouncing ball below.

- Open any PDF in *Preview*, making sure the sidebar is viewable.
- In the *Preview* application menu select View/Sidebar/Thumbnails.
- Find the PDF to attach in Finder, select it, and drag & drop it in the sidebar where you want it.
- Add any other PDFs you want in the same way (*rinse and repeat*).
- Save the combined PDF by selecting Save As in the menu and renaming it.

Wow, that was easy!

2. Add & Rearrange Menu Extras Shortcuts

First, a definition: A Menu Extra in Mac OS X is a small icon that appears on the right side of the Menu Bar at the very top of the display screen. It may also be referred to as a **menu item**, **menu-let**, or **status item**. These icons often provide quick ways to use applications, display information (for example, the system clock), or control system-level variables (like audio volume). There are a number of third-party menu items available that can clutter up

the right side of the Menu Bar. Wouldn't it be nice to control the madness?

Rearrange Icons

- Hold down the Command or Apple (⌘) key and drag the menu icons to wherever you want them. Note: you will not be able to move the Spotlight icon as it is not a Menu Extra.

Delete An Icon

- Hold down the Command or Apple (⌘) key and click and drag an icon off the menu bar... POOF!

Add 'Eject CD' Button Icon

Please be attentive if you follow this tip, because it will direct you to go into the System folder on your Mac's hard drive. Indiscriminately mucking around on the hard drive at the base level can be risky, but if you follow the below steps exactly, no harm will come to your Mac (or you). If you are the slightest bit squeamish, do not pass GO, do not collect \$200. Just move on to the following article, a reprint about other tips and tricks.

- In the Finder, click on your hard drive icon.
- Navigate thusly: System/Library/CoreServices/Menu Extras folder.
- Locate "Eject.menu" and open by double clicking on it or by using menu File/Open.
- An "Eject" icon (bar under triangle) will appear in the menu bar.
- Add any other Menu Extras icons you want from this same folder.

10 Useful iPhone Keyboard Shortcuts, Tips and Tricks

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Whether you've taken to the iPhone's touch screen keyboard like a duck to water, or are more of a one-finger-at-a-time typist, there are plenty of shortcuts, tips and tricks that can improve your iTyping experience.

Here, we've rounded up ten useful ways to be faster and more productive with your iPhone's keyboard. We hope these tricks are handy for anyone new to the platform, or those who have not had the time to really experiment.



Ranging from basic how-tos to more advanced trickery, have a read of our ten tips below, and do share any keyboard-, language- or other text entry-related hints you've discovered on your iDevice in the comments.

1. HOW TO: Add an International Keyboard



iOS 4 has more language options than ever before. If you're bi-lingual, there's an easy way to add an international keyboard to your iPhone's set-up so you can switch between English and Chinese — for example — on the fly.

From the home screen, go to "Settings," then "General," then scroll down to see "Keyboard" and tap this option. You can then select "International Keyboards" and scroll through the list to add the language you need.

Now, for all iPhone OS versions, when you have the keyboard on the screen, if you hit the little globe icon next to the space bar, you can switch between languages at the press of a button.

2. HOW TO: Quickly Add a Special Symbol



If you don't quite see the need to add an international keyboard, but will oc-

asionally need to use special symbols, then there's a quick way to do it.

Simply tap and hold the relevant letter

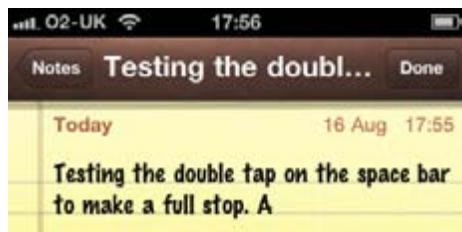


and the special symbols associated with that letter will appear on the screen. This also works for common symbols too, and is particularly useful for changing a currency sign, using alternative quotation marks, longer hyphens, etc.

3. HOW TO: Use a Sentence-



Stopping Shortcut



If you're not already using this trick, you most certainly should, as it can seriously speed up your typing. It is enabled by default, but to confirm it's active, go to "Settings," then "General," then "Keyboard," then make sure the toggles next to the "Auto-Capitalization" option and the fourth option down — "." Shortcut — are set to the "On" position.

Now when you're typing away, a double



tap of the spacebar will add a period (or a "full stop" if you're British!) and automatically capitalize the very next letter you type.

4. HOW TO: Add Proper Names to the Dictionary



EDIT: This option only appears if you have certain Chinese or Japanese international keyboards added (as we did at the time of writing, hence the error) and is not, as you might logically assume, a way to add Western words to the dictionary, even though it appears to give you that functionality. We are sorry for any confusion, and for raising false hopes.

New to iOS4 is the ability to customize the iPhone's dictionary and add words to it that you use often, such as proper names, brands or lesser-known places.

Although previous versions of the iPhone OS's dictionary did offer the ability to "learn" the word preferences of the user, this new feature gives the user complete control.

To add a word, go to "Settings," then "General," then "Keyboard," then tap "Edit User Dictionary" and hit the plus icon in the top right to enter your word. It will then be listed alphabetically and can be edited or deleted as necessary.

5. HOW TO: Insert Punctuation More Quickly



To add punctuation to text, most iPhone users will pause typing, press the "123" key to see the numerical and symbolic options, tap the symbol (or number) they want, and then hit the "ABC" menu to return to the alpha keyboard.

If you're still adding in symbols and numbers this way, then boy, do we have a treat for you. This will take a teeny bit of getting used to, but from now on, the next time you want to add punctuation, pause typing, press and hold the "123" key, then without removing your finger (or thumb!) from the screen, slide it over to land on what you want to insert.

As you release your digit from the display, the symbol will have been entered into your text and you'll be back on the alpha keyboard.

6. HOW TO: Quick Change .com to Other Domains



If you're typing in the browser bar in Safari the iPhone adds a handy ".com" button to the keyboard. However, there are a ton of other domain extensions that you'll likely need to type out on a regular basis. There is a shortcut that can help you out with this — simply press and hold the .com button and other common options will come up.

Similarly, when composing an email, pressing and holding the period will offer a list of domain endings to make entering email addresses super quick.



7. HOW TO: Display Character Counts in Messages



It's often useful to know how long your SMS messages are, either for Twitter purposes, or to be sure that you'll only be charged for the cost of one text. The iPhone does not show character counts by default, but it's not hard to set-up.



Just go to the "Settings" menu, select "Messages," then slide the "Character Count" toggle to "On." Now when you are composing a text message — after you get to the end of the first line — you'll see a running count of how many characters you're sending on the right of the display, above the send button.

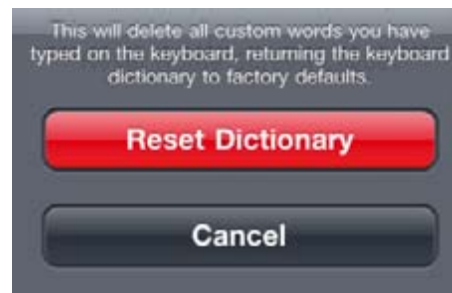
8. HOW TO: Delete Text Using Gesture Controls



We've all done it — while pecking away at the iPhone keyboard with our mind on other things, we realize that last sentence was utter nonsense. Instead of holding down the delete key while you curse your uselessness, there's actually a more fun, and somewhat therapeutic way of deleting the text you've just typed.

Simply shake the handset and you'll get a pop-up asking you if you want to "Undo Typing" or "Cancel." Hit undo, and the latest lot of gibberish will be gone forever.

9. HOW TO: Reset the Dictionary



Although the iPhone's dictionary will notice spelling errors and suggest corrections, it does "learn" your preferences. This means if you repeatedly spell a word wrong, and don't take the phone up on the option to change it, it will eventually stop suggesting the easy correction.

There is a way to fix this by resetting the dictionary, although this will also delete any words you've added via the "Edit User Dictionary" option we highlighted above.

If you want a clean slate for your phone's vocab, simply open "Settings," select "General," scroll right down to the bottom to "Reset," select that and then hit the red "Reset Dictionary" button which will erase any settings that have been overly forgiving of bad spelling or grammar.

10. HOW TO: Change the Fonts in Notes



For some bizarre reason, the default font for the iPhone's "Notes" app is *Marker Felt* — one that's only a few design steps removed from the typographical outcast *Comic Sans*.

However, there is a workaround that will enable you to scribe your notes in the arguably more classy *Helvetica*. Simply add a special symbol-based international keyboard (Korean, Japanese and Chinese all worked for us) and then when you're next in "Notes," change the language (via the globe button), type something, and then change it back to English.

Everything you type after that will be in *Helvetica*, rather than *Marker Felt* — thanks and praise be to the font gods!

Editor's Note: Many of the above iPhone tips will also work with your iPod touch and iPad.

Members Helping Members

Dedicated volunteers are the lifeblood of the Pi. Whether it is installing a hard drive at a Clubhouse Saturday event, answering questions at a General Meeting, or placing advice on the TCS Forums, there are many ways to pitch in and help, depending on a member's interests and talents. **Please consider making a commitment to ensure that the Pi remains a strong, viable, and energetic club dedicated to helping its members. For certain, all volunteer efforts are appreciated.** Check out these areas where assistance is needed.

Featured Position – Journal Managing Editor

The *Journal* is a time-honored, well established publication of the Washington Apple Pi and it is in need of someone to take over as Managing Editor. In addition, this person will be a member of the Pi's Publications Committee, which has oversight and responsibility for all printed material and electronic messages that emanate from the Pi. The job is challenging, but very rewarding.

If you enjoy writing and want to help the Pi progress, this is the job for you. Apply within!

Contact robert.jarecke@wap.org with any questions or to express your interest.



iChat Help Volunteer



Apple's *iChat* application offers a way for Pi members to help other members from the comfort of your own home. Interested? Read on.

iChat is an ideal means for direct communication using text, voice, video, or, in the last two versions of Mac OS X, screen sharing. With the Pi having commercial grade servers and server software, we now have the means to host our own *iChat* network. We are currently testing the capability of this interactive networking software, and the first results are positive.

So what will Pi *iChat* Help volunteers do? Essentially, the task is much like other help scenarios in which members have questions or a problem. But instead of a face-to-face encounter, the primary means for handling the matter will be use of the versatile *iChat* software. What's that? You don't use *iChat* or haven't even launched it yet? No problem, we will train you. We will also be providing guidance on how to deal with common issues, and on problem-solving techniques, and will supply a list of associate helpers who can help with particular issues. All you need to bring to the equation is your people skills and a genuine desire to help.

If you have even the slightest interest or any questions, contact the Management Committee Chair, Jay Castillo, at president@wap.org.

General Meeting Manager

Our General Meeting programs need someone dedicated to the planning and managing of these important club events. The job includes coordinating meeting activities, making any necessary arrangements, and managing the behind-the-scenes specific tasks. While it sounds like a job for Superman, that really is not the case. If you have juggled household duties or been an office administrator, you have the skills. While another Pi manager emceeds the meeting, you will be making him or her look good!

Because this activity needs to be approved by the Pi's Management Committee, the volunteer will serve as an adjunct member of that committee. This volunteer opportunity is guaranteed to keep you busy, and when the meeting is completed and meeting equipment packed up, lunch is on the Pi.

Send your inquires to robert.jarecke@wap.org.



Pi Fillings Editor

We need someone to take over producing the Pi Fillings discs. Pat Fauquet has been doing it for years, but it's time for someone else to lead the charge. Are you up for it?

We are reviewing the current format and publication cycle of the software disc. We are interested in diversifying the content and are open to suggestions on how to add value to the disc.

No previous experience is needed; we will train you. Some of the tasks that you will need to do are to search out interesting and pertinent material and files, organize the disc with the mined material and with other files supplied separately, and design a label for the disc. The production process will be separate and is not necessarily part of the job.

Contact office@wap.org to express interest and we'll go from there.

CLASSIFIEDS:

Seeking:

iPhone Developer for new projects and app updates.

Have some time and experience? let me know!

r.huttinger@wap.org.



Washington Apple Pi Meetings



Photo Contest Winners and an *iChat* Primer

September 25, 9:30 a.m. at George Mason University



This month's meeting has two moving parts: the announcement of the winners of this summer's Photo Contest, and a full tutorial on setting up and using *iChat*. This should be a fun and enlightening ride.

Pi Photo Contest images have been captured, submitted and judged, and it is now time to announce the winners. All the top images will be presented in living color, and the Best of Show trophy will be handed out for the photo judged overall best image. Even if you didn't enter, come and enjoy the winning photos and support those who participated in the contest.

The second portion of the meeting will feature a full tutorial on the Apple *iChat* application. If you haven't yet investigated all the communication options of this program, come and learn from the experts. Watch first hand how to set up an account, connect with your family and friends, and even get personal help via *iChat's* screen sharing option. Heck, bring your portable Mac and follow along to set up your account right there. After this session, the sky's the limit!

The meeting will be held on the GMU campus in the Enterprise building, Room 178. The Pi Web site has the full agenda and a map on how to get there. Check back closer to the meeting date for any updates or changes.

<http://www.wap.org/events/sept2010/>

A Mac Guru with All the Answers

October 23, 9:30 a.m. at George Mason University



October's General Meeting will feature Amy Wooden, the Chief Operating Officer of macUpgrades, a local Apple dealer in Bethesda. Amy has years and years of experience with Macs and Apple products, and she will be talking to us on a variety of topics based on submissions by Pi members beforehand. Did we get yours?

Topics that will be covered include the care and feeding of laptop batteries, transferring photos in *iPhoto* from one Mac to another, file management including searching for lost files, and lots more. Submit your questions prior to the meeting or just come and raise your hand. Amy should prove to be a great source of answers to all of your questions on using the Mac and other Apple products.

This meeting will take place at our usual watering hole — Room 178 of Enterprise Hall — on the GMU campus in Fairfax, VA. Go to the Pi Web site link below for details and any updates.

<http://www.wap.org/events/oct2010/>

Pi General Meetings are planned and executed by Pi volunteers. Please, consider helping at these events, as well as with other Pi activities. Volunteers welcome!

As always, check the [Pi Web site](http://www.wap.org) for additional, updated details on these meetings.

Washington Apple



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