

Washington Apple Pi

Journal

July – August 2010
Volume 32, No. 4

- **Introductory Photography:
Basic concepts plus Tips and Tricks**
- **Pi Photo Contest**



Washington Apple Pi Journal

July – August 2010
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Editor's Column

By Bob Jarecke

This edition of the *Journal* has a theme, and the cover and cover story say it all. With the Pi Photo Contest in full swing, we thought it would also be good to accentuate photography readings to assist prospective contestants in their efforts to produce a winning image. Of course, to those not planning to enter the contest (why not, I ask?), the material is still of value. In any case, we trust that you will enjoy and learn from the photography-related articles within.

Besides the photo-centric items, we have included several reviews, two on iPad cases and one of a book about email spam. And, for a change of pace, there is an informational piece on exploding batteries and an article about *iChat*, which I will talk about further below. Ah, diversified reading at its best.

Now, as you peruse the pages, you might also notice a couple of cosmetic changes in this *Journal*. Nora, our talented Design Editor, said she wanted to spruce up a few things. As a good hands-off

managing editor (stop snickering, fellow editors), I said, "Go for it." I then stood back and watched the magic happen. I can honestly say it is a joy to work with Nora and witness her passion for the *Journal*. Of course, I can't help but join the fun and get a little printer's ink on my hands too! Let us know what you think.

As to the *iChat* article, the title of the piece is "WAP *iChat* Help," and it explains the steps needed to activate a WAP *iChat* account. Why have we included this article? There are two reasons. First, the Management Committee would like to promote use of the Apple *iChat* application and its myriad capabilities. Second, familiarity with *iChat* lays the groundwork for a potential help service for the membership. Without giving away anything more, I ask that you please read the article on page 30, follow its simple, straightforward instructions, and stand by for a whole new way to receive Mac assistance in the comfort of your own home.

Enough already. Enjoy your *Journal*!

News Flash!

Adobe Acrobat and Reader 9.3.3 have updates available. Have you updated your Adobe applications yet?

The latest updates for Adobe Acrobat 9.3.3 and Reader 9.3.3 are security updates to these longstanding PDF creation and viewing applications. The updates address several critical vulnerabilities, including one in Flash 10.0.45.2 that allows an attacker to take control of a user's system after a program crash. There are reports that this vulnerability is being actively exploited in the wild, so it is recommended that everyone update right away. Here's the Web page for the Mac versions of Adobe Reader:

<http://get.adobe.com/reader/>

Now, back to your regularly scheduled program.





Letter of Appreciation

Dear Clubhouse Saturday Volunteers,

I wanted to express my appreciation to you [Bob] and Josh and Jay for your time and assistance at the Saturday Clubhouse this past weekend. I felt so happy when I left the Pi office with my new Snow Leopard and Creative Suite software loaded and ready to go! I think the Pi is a wonderful organization.

I've been a Pi member since around 1991, and I always recommend joining to anyone buying a Mac or other Apple product. That you and the other volunteers are willing to devote a good part of your Saturday to help other members like me is truly amazing! By the way, I wasn't trying to eavesdrop, but I couldn't help but overhear parts of your conversation with the two members you were assisting on Saturday. You were so patient and thoughtful in answering all of their questions. I think the Pi is just the BEST; members helping members just because they can. I sincerely appreciate all you do!

Thanks much,

Bobbi Simmons

Editor's Comment:

This member brought in her Intel iMac to have its OS upgraded. She was so pleased with the end result that, I suggested, she might want to write something up and send it in, so we could share it with the membership.

From the President: A Light Summer Repast

By Jay Castillo

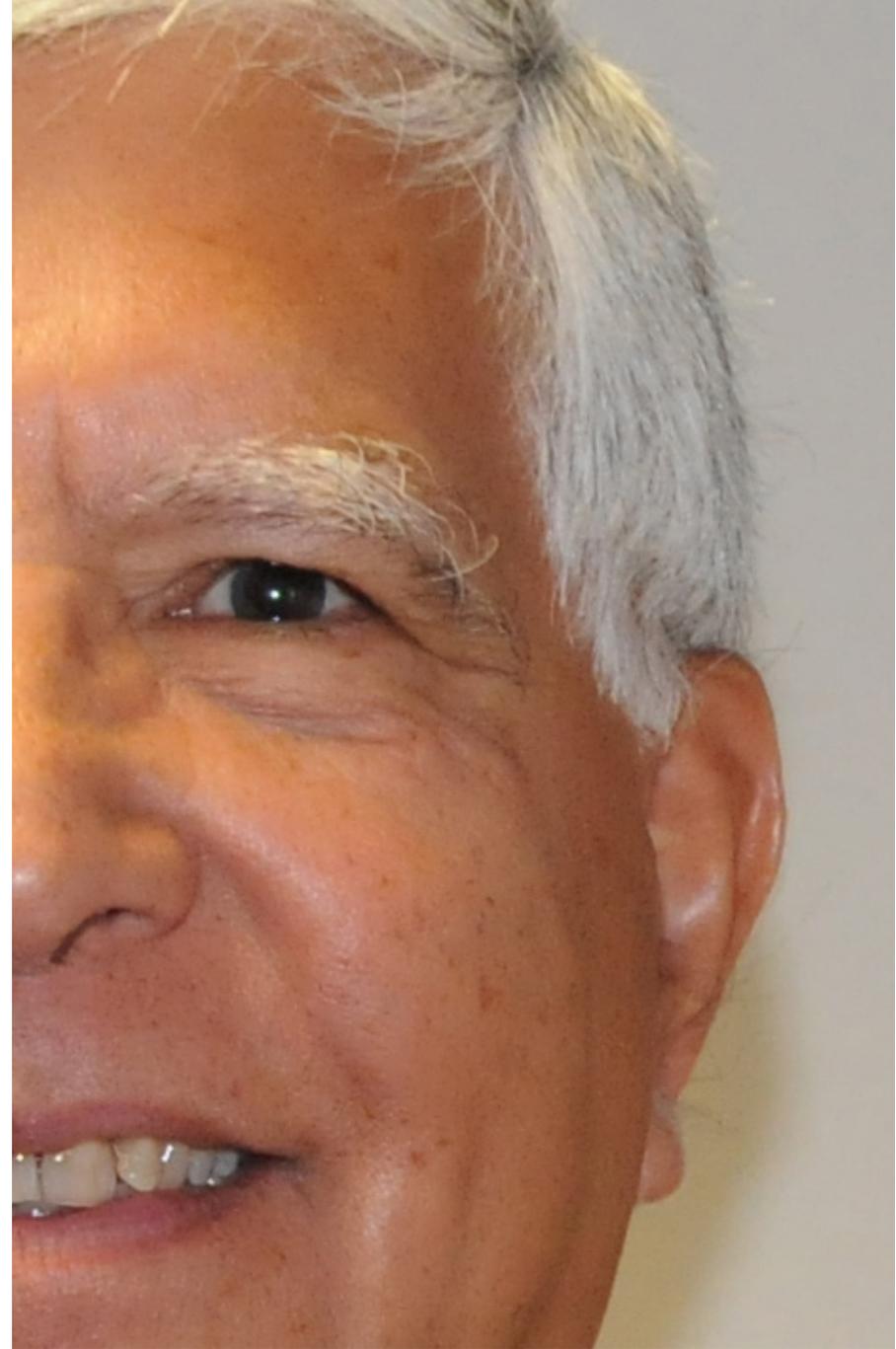
While you make plans for summer vacation and warm weather activities, keep the Pi in mind and participate as you can. We had excellent participation in the election for the new Pi Board of Directors, with nearly 33% of the eligible membership voting. This is close to double the percentage of participation in past years. To be fair, we have fewer members overall than in times past, but the number of votes is still greater. As listed in this issue on page 2, the new members are Diana King, Bo Huttinger, Dick Nugent, and Bing Innocencio. At its first meeting the new Board of Directors elected officers. I was reelected as President and Gordon Nord was reelected as Secretary. We still need a Treasurer, so feel free to step forward and volunteer; we have a vacant Director position waiting for you.

If you attended the May General Meeting, you will recall the visit of a reporter and a cameraman from the Swiss Public Television Network, who were there to do a piece on the release of the iPad in Switzerland at

the end of May. They were enthusiastic and unobtrusive; they were also eager to hear and sought out our opinions after our iPad presentation. Here is a [link](#) to the resulting story. We show up (briefly) at the 03:20 mark. The title of the story is "Das iPad als Hoffnungsrager," so practice your Swiss-German before you click.

With the release of the iPad, the new iPhone 4, and iOS 4 software, we are establishing a new Special Interest Group on mobile devices. A volunteer has stepped forward to organize it, so if anyone else wants to help us get started, climb aboard.

Finally, at the June General Meeting, we kicked off another Pi Photo Contest, which will last all summer. We had an excellent presentation by Ken Goldman on photographic techniques, tips, and tricks. Our July meeting will feature using *iPhoto '09* as the main topic. Check out the contest rules and particulars at [<https://connect.wap.org//photo/>](https://connect.wap.org//photo/). And may the best man or woman win!



Introductory Photography: Basic concepts plus Tips and Tricks

© Ken Goldman 2010

I was asked to present at the Pi's June 2010 General Meeting on the topic of photography basics. I guess I stood out because I have taken many photographic courses, studied more on my own, and, of course, taken thousands of images. Also, I volunteered.

Several of my images had been entered into the club's photo contests, and a couple of them ended up as winners. While I don't consider myself an expert, I do have enough "street creds" to be able to pass along some technical information and a handful of good hints. I like to tell people all those things that I wish someone had told me when I started with photography. This article is a consolidation of the meeting presentation; I hope you find something to your liking.

The presentation covered four main areas: General Thoughts, Cameras, Composition and Miscellaneous Tips and Tricks. While the text on the slides says a lot, it was the words between the lines that provided the substance. I will provide you with my main thoughts and hopefully not put you to sleep like some of those at the meeting — kidding; everyone was wide-awake with plenty of questions. Sorry if you weren't able to be there.

General Thoughts

There are very few hard and fast rules, but lots and lots of guidelines, especially for composition. Included in this piece are hints and quotes that I hope will help you take better photos in the future.

Cameras

In general, there are three types of modern digital cameras — the Point and Shoot, the SLR (Single Lens Reflex), and a hybrid between two, the "Micro Four Thirds." To briefly point out the differences, here are some bullets about the first two cameras and then a comparison of the "Micro Four Thirds" camera.

Good things about the Point and Shoot camera are:

- Easy on the pocketbook
- Small and lightweight
- WYSIWYG (What You See Is What You Get) exposure
- Simple to operate
- They just keep getting better

The not-so-good things about the Point and Shoot camera are:

- Relatively small sensor
- Lenses not interchangeable
- Filters not usable
- Limited zoom options, with digital zoom not practical
- Shutter lag

Positive aspects of the SLR are:

- Larger sensor
- No shutter lag
- WYSIWYG for framing (and for exposure with live view)
- Interchangeable lenses
- Filters
- More versatility
- External flash supported

**Remember,
photography
is art.
In the end the
most important
thing is the
photographer,
not the camera.**

Negative aspects of the SLR are:

- Cost
- Greater size and weight
- Potentially more maintenance

The “Micro Four-Thirds” camera blends some of the best features of the Point and Shoot and the SLR; in a nutshell, they are:

- The sensor is 4/3 inches measured diagonally, which makes it eight times larger than most Point and Shoot cameras
- Size is about the same as a low-end Digital SLR camera
- It is smaller and lighter than an SLR because there is no mirror box or pentaprism; but you lose the optical viewfinder
- It supports interchangeable lenses
- Currently it's too new for second-source lenses

Ken's Quote No. 1: “The best camera is the one you have with you!”



Figure 1.

Composition

Composition is the meat-and-potatoes of taking great photos. There are a myriad of things to think about as you come upon a scene with potential for an interesting shot. The following list of rules and guidelines is far from complete, but I think it will serve you well.

- “Rule” of thirds
- Aperture and Depth of Field (f-stops)
- Deciding what you are going to shoot
- Shooting position
- Get in close
- Use a tripod
- Patience — wait for the right moment

“Rule” of thirds: This composition guideline suggests you divide the prospective photo into horizontal and vertical thirds as shown in Figure 1. The key point is to shy away from placing the main item of interest smack dab in the middle of the photo.

What would the image look like if that interesting person were off to one side or the other? Could there be some mystery added when you hide what it is they are looking at? In a landscape shot, don't place the horizon in the middle of the photo; rather put it at the base of the top or second 'third' line. Overall, this is a quick rule to use to help you look “differently” at what you see through the viewfinder or on the LCD screen. Try it; you may like the results!

Aperture, f-stops and Depth of Field: Aperture refers to the size of the camera's lens opening. Just as the iris in your eye expands and contracts, the aperture — the camera's iris — enlarges or closes down based on automatic inputs or manual adjustments. The f-stop definition is a bit more technical. It is a number derived from the lens's focal length (the distance between the lens and its focus) divided by the (effective) aperture diameter. What it all boils down to is, the smaller the f-stop, the larger the aperture.

So what does this mean? Basically, a larger aperture (smaller f-stop number) means a larger opening in your lens for light to pass through, and light is crucial for taking photos. Got to have light, so the bigger the aperture the better, right? Wrong! There is the matter of Depth of Field.

TIPS & TRICKS

While holding a camera — any camera — form a tripod with your body. Feet should be set apart to steady you while you tuck your arms against your body. You shouldn't be holding the camera out in front in one hand with your arm extended; the motion introduced will invariably blur the image. Use structures available to stabilize the camera; a wall, fence, tree, lamppost or street sign can offer much great support.

Use a neck strap. While it may not help in stabilizing, it will save the camera should you fumble it while moving about.

Keep track of your fingers so one of them hasn't drifted in front of the lens or the flash.

For the larger Digital SLR camera, use the left hand under the lens to support the weight of camera. With the right hand on the controls, get your elbows in and pressed against your chest with your feet spread to about shoulder width.



Figure 2.

Figure 3.

One definition of Depth of Field is that portion of a scene that appears acceptably sharp in the image. Photographs taken with a low f-stop (large aperture) will tend to have one subject in focus, with the rest of the image out of focus, while photos taken with a high f-stop (small aperture) are “flattened” and will tend to have most or all of the image in focus. Figure 2 and Figure 3 are examples of low and high f-stop photos illustrating the Depth of Field focus factor.

Deciding what you are going to shoot: Here are some questions and points to ponder. What is the subject of the picture? What is garnering your attention? Keep in mind what you want the viewer to see in the scene. Consider that you are trying to tell a story. Finally, strive to make the photo interesting as opposed to routine.

Shooting position: Don't always shoot from a normal standing position. In some cases getting low (sitting, kneeling, lying on the ground) will capture an uncommon perspective. Conversely, get higher by standing on something or using higher terrain. It is usually more interesting when we get to view our world from someplace other than eye-level.

Get in close: Sometimes the finer details of subject matter make for interesting photos. A zoom lens can get you much closer to an item of interest; use it. In essence you are cropping the photo as you shoot it, while enhancing the richness and details of the photo's subject.

Use a tripod: Nothing steadies a camera like having a tripod do the stabilizing for you and using a hot-shoe bubble level to ensure that your pictures are straight. Practice using your ball head so you can learn to rotate your camera and make adjustments quickly to get a shot. Try following moving objects and shooting them in motion.

Wait: As you observe a scene, anticipate the actions or position the subject may take. Patience may produce an amazing moment. Sometimes it might take a while for the pieces to come together. Wait and you may be rewarded.

Ken's Quote No. 2: "In the end, what is important is that you like the picture."

Miscellaneous Tips and Tricks

Fill flash: This is a technique of using your flash in a well-lit setting. It serves to fill in shadowy areas of a photograph that would otherwise be lost because of the high dark and bright contrasts that can occur in bright sunlight settings, for example. The technique is useful both indoors and out, day and night. There are three good questions that help you decide when to use fill flash. Is the subject in a shadow? Is there more light behind the subject than in front of it? Am I close enough for flash? (Internal flashes are typically effective between 5 and 10 feet; if your camera has a hot-shoe, consider using an external flash.) Yes to any of the three, then use your flash.

ISO: How to use it. Remember ASA from the days of using film? It referred to the "Speed" of the film. ISO on a digital camera is similar in that it refers to the sensitivity of the sensor to light. Higher ISO values mean you can take photos in lower light settings. The higher the setting values, the more capable the

Sometimes it might take a while for the pieces to come together.

Wait and you may be rewarded.

camera for low light photography. Oh, in case you are curious, ISO stands for International Organization for Standardization.

As for using ISO, here are the main things to consider. Rather than decrease shutter speed in low light, you can increase the ISO, avoiding blurry photos. A high ISO will also help when taking fast moving sports or wildlife photos. The downside to high ISO is that you introduce "noise" into your photographs. "Noise" is the presence of color speckles where there should be none. As a first step, try Auto-ISO on your camera to see if you get the results you are looking for. Many new digital cameras can take low-noise photos at high ISO; check the specs for your camera.

Camera Operating Modes: Most digital cameras have two principal operating modes: Auto and Manual. The modes, in most cases, are set with a circular, nickel-sized knob on the top of the camera. There are several settings for Auto and Manual modes, represented by small symbols, an icon or a letter. Some manufacturers use different symbols for the same settings; check your camera's manual to see which ones your camera uses.

In the realm of automatic modes, the mode options are paired with potential settings or scenes; below are the more common ones, based on Canon cameras, which are the ones I use.

- Portrait Mode: Display icon - profile view of a head. This mode is used with subjects in the foreground in sharp focus. Camera may use a larger aperture (smaller f-stop) to blur the background.

- Macro Mode: Display icon - flower. This mode is for extreme close-up shots where the camera may otherwise have trouble focusing. Camera may use a larger aperture to blur the background.
- Landscape Mode: Display icon - mountain. This mode, for photos of distant objects or for wide-angle shots, sets a smaller aperture (higher f-stop) and brings background objects more clearly into focus.
- Night Scene Mode: Display icon - star. Uses flash and slower shutter speed to illuminate the subject and allow more light to enter the camera.
- Sports/Action Mode: Display icon - person running. For shots in which the subject is in motion and you want to avoid blurring.

While the Auto settings use icons for scenes or settings, the Manual mode uses letters. Here are some common Manual modes:

- Program Mode (P): Similar to automatic mode, but with the flexibility to manually override settings.
- Shutter Priority (TV): You manually adjust the shutter speed; the camera adjusts the aperture.
- Aperture Priority (AV): You manually adjust the aperture; the camera adjusts shutter speed. Use this one for low light or action shots.
- Manual Mode (M): You manually adjust everything.

Backup, Backup, Backup: While the subject of backing up doesn't relate to taking images, it is an essential technique to ensure you never lose all those images you slaved and sweated over. The first part of the photograph capturing process is storing your images. The size of your memory card is important, and having a backup memory card is a good idea too. Safeguarding memory cards with images is an important step in making sure they are not lost. On a related note, some people tend to use smaller memory cards so as not to put "all their eggs in one basket," and then don't back up.

If using a laptop or netbook, there are several ways that you can transfer your images to the portable computer. One is to connect the camera directly to the computer. I would not recommend this method, as it tends to be very slow. Rather, invest in a card reader that plugs into the USB port of your computer. These are not terribly expensive, are seen by the computer as a disk drive, and tend to make transfers go more quickly. Also, some laptops now come with internal slots for SD cards.

I personally back up to the computer, then back up to an external hard drive, and sometimes follow up with a backup to a large thumb or flash drive. Another option is to back up to CDs or DVDs, but with some cameras (especially SLRs) the size of the files makes this impractical.

Now, a few words about portable viewers or storage units. If you don't want to carry a computer with you, these devices allow you to download the content of your memory cards to a hard drive, and frequently review the images on a small screen. The upside of these devices is that they are relatively small and light; the downside is that they also tend to be expensive.

While taking pictures, remember these things: You, the photographer, are more important than the equipment you are using; there are no hard and fast rules, only guidelines; and you need to have fun!

Resources:

National Geographic:

<http://photography.nationalgeographic.com/photography/>

Outdoor Photographer Magazine:

<http://www.outdoorphotographer.com/>

Manufacturers' Web sites:

[Canon Learning Station](#)

[Nikon Digital Learning Center](#)

Other useful Web sites:

Photography 101:

<http://www.photography101.org>

Photo.net:

<http://photo.net/learn/>

iPhone Photography Tips:

<http://mostlylisa.com/blog/streetphotog/>

Wikipedia for explanation of terms:

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Photography>

Photo Contest

This photo competition is gonna be a doozie. There are 5 categories with a wide range of submissions allowed, and the contest runs the whole summer. Events are being specially planned to help you take some winning shots. Check it out!

Qualifications

A Pi member in good standing



Categories

People
Places
Things
Orientation
Shoebox

Classes



Novice
and
Advanced

Duration

June 1st -
August 31st



Awards

Trophy
and
Certificates



Photographs Wanted!

This Photo Contest builds on the preceding ones, with a goal of having more participation, more images, and more fun! The categories are wide open, awards more versatile, and opportunities to learn how to take better photos will also be part of the competition. Care to join in?



Best in Show Winner for the second Photo Contest.
Stunning photo!

All members are encouraged to participate in this club sponsored event. There are differences in this year's contest like different Categories and allowed number of entries. The means for submitting entries has been stream-lined too. A more subtle change is that entries are limited in four categories to photos taken only during the contest period. We hope this nudges everyone to actively seek out subject matter for each category. To help with the process, we will be providing tips and techniques to educate members on what makes a good photograph and how to capture it. Look for these contest related events at various times during the contest period. Read on!

C O N T E S T C A T E G O R I E S & C L A S S

People

Funny expressions, tender looks, or just an odd pose; this group should have at least one member of the human race in the frame. Of course, it is the interaction of two or more that can really add to the captured moment.



Places

Tenleytown to Timbuktu and in between, all will qualify nicely. Or maybe just your backyard will offer up the right setting. The idea is to capture a location, notable or otherwise, with interesting content. The main focus could be structures, architecture, or a creation of nature.



Things

Inanimate or alive, it doesn't matter. From pets to pots, flowers to facades, or birds to beasts, as long as no human is in the photo it will meet the standard. This is a great category to showcase spectacular foliage photos, pictures of the family pet, or some amazing shots of a breathtaking landscape. Don't overlook man-made structures either.



Orientation

This category is unique and may take some imagination. The obvious key is to snap subject matter that defies convention, no top or bottom. If the photo can be viewed any which way, it is in. The cropping tool will come in handy here.



Shoebox

There is no photo that is exempt. Dig through those stacks of old photographs, scan them into digits, and submit. Likewise, sort through your digital image collection for that one (or more) unique capture. Of course, the subject matter, context and image quality are going to play a huge part. This category has the potential for producing the Best of Show winner. Can you come up with an image as striking as the first contest winning photograph as shown below?



CONTESTANT CLASS

There are two classes of entrants, the pro and the amateur. You should know who you are. If you are really serious about taking photos, in the photography business, or enter photo contests regularly, you should probably be in the Advanced Class. The Novice is someone who isn't an overly discerning shutterbug but still enjoys taking and looking at pictures. You be the judge on this one.

C O N T E S T R U L E S & E T C .

Rules, Edits, and How to Submit

The rules are few but there are some constraints; please, review carefully. Photo enhancements are allowed, within limits. There is an easy way to enter your submissions, but having broadband will be essential. Best of luck!

Washington Apple Pi Photo Contest Rules

- Contest is only for Washington Apple Pi members who have active accounts through August 31, 2010. A contestant must be the same person as the photographer and the submitter.
- Each contestant determines his or her Class or skill level. There are two: Advanced or Novice.
- Photos must have been taken within the contest period (June 1 through August 31), except in the Shoebox category which will have no date restriction. Any submissions in any category cannot have been entered into any other photo contest.
- A limit of eight (8) photos can be entered in the contest with a limit of three (3) per category.
- An image can only be entered into one category.
- Only basic photo manipulation of an image is allowed — see a detailed explanation below and on the previous page.
- Image submissions will be entered by uploading them via the member's Connect Web page. An alternate method of delivery via digital data CD/DVD or flash drive will be accommodated in special circumstances. Email submissions will not be accepted.
- Only JPEG and TIFF format files will be accepted. The higher the resolution, the better.
- Basic entrant info will be collected when uploading images. A caption should be included for each photo submitted. If entries are submitted other than through the Connect Web page, include name, class, image category and caption.
- One category winner will be chosen from each category for each class of contestant. Any number of Honorable Mentions can be awarded in each category for other notable photos.
- A Best of Show winner will be chosen from all submissions and will be awarded the associated traveling trophy.
- Certificates will be given to Advanced and Novice winners and to Honorable Mention awardees.
- Contest entry serves as permission to place the contestant's image on the club Web site and to reproduce it in other mediums, such as in the Washington Apple Pi *Journal*. The Pi further reserves the right to display a print of the image wherever it reasonably sees fit.
- Judges decisions are final.

Image Edits Allowed

- Cropping
- Burning and dodging
- Sharpening
- Red-eye correction
- Correcting to natural colors
- Stitching images together to create a panorama
- Fixing perspective (skewing)
- Refining brightness, saturation, and contrast
- Converting a color image to only sepia or black-and-white

Submitting Images

All your photo entries can be uploaded using the Pi Connect Web page. Here is the address to get started: <<https://connect.wap.org/photo/>>.

Alternate Delivery Option

Data CD/DVD or flash drive mailed or delivered to the Pi Clubhouse.

Washington Apple Pi
12022 Parklawn Drive
Rockville, MD 20852



Learning to Love Levels: How to color correct your photos like a pro using Levels

© 2009 Lesa Snider

The article below is reprinted from an entry on The Graphic Reporter Web site, with permission from the author, Lesa Snider. The URL for the article is available here: http://graphicreporter.com/tutorials/elements_levelsadjustment.html.

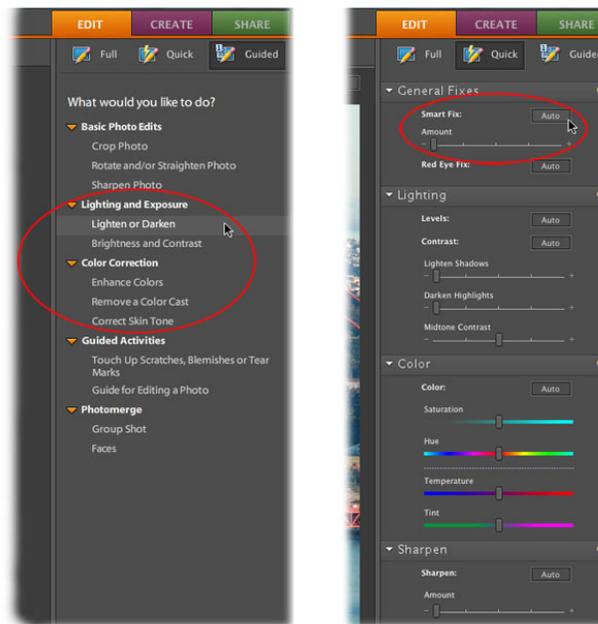
When you think of all variables that come into play when you're capturing images, it's a wonder any of 'em turn out halfway decent at all. Just think about it: Unless you're hauling around your own light kit, you're dependent on ambient light sources — which are less than perfect on a good day — and then it's up to you to set the camera properly so you don't over- or underexpose the image. Even if the stars are aligned and you get all that right, the camera itself may introduce a color cast. Arg!

Thankfully, Elements has several tools that can help fix most any lighting or color problem you might have. For example, you can pop into Guided Edit Mode and choose to lighten or darken the lighting, enhance the color, or zap a color cast by clicking the text buttons as shown in [Figure 1]. In Quick Edit Mode you can click the Smart Fix button and let Elements have a go at fixing both color and lighting, then use the handy sliders to tweak the image further.

These fixes are great when you're starting out with Elements and they're darn handy when you're pressed for time. But to become a real pixel wrangler, you've got to kick it up a notch and learn to use Levels. With a single Levels adjustment you can fix lighting problems, increase contrast, and balance the color in your image. The adjustment changes the intensity levels—hence the name—of the color categories in

your image: the shadows, midtones, and highlights. Once you get the hang of it, Levels is a very visual and intuitive way to improve your images. And because it's available as an Adjustment layer, it's nondestructive and won't harm your original image. Whee!

Figure 1.



In this article, you'll learn how to use Levels adjustments in a variety of ways so you can pick the one you like best. But first you need to get up close and personal with the mighty histogram, your secret decoder ring for interpreting problems in your image.

Histograms: Mountains of Information

A histogram is a visual representation—a collection of bar graphs, really—of the information contained in your image. Once you learn how to read it, you'll begin to understand why your image looks the way it does. More importantly, you'll learn how to use the tools in Elements, namely a Levels adjustment, to tweak the histogram in order to produce a better image. It sounds complicated, but once you watch it in action you'll see it's pretty straightforward...and super powerful.

Elements automatically displays an editable histogram when you create a Levels Adjustment layer, as shown in [Figure 2].

A histogram looks like a mountain range, which is a perfectly fine way to think about it (more on that metaphor in a minute). Its width represents your image's tonal range—the range of colors between the darkest and lightest pixels—on a numeric scale of 0 to 255. Pure black (0) is measured at the far left, and pure white (255) is on the far right. All told, 256 values

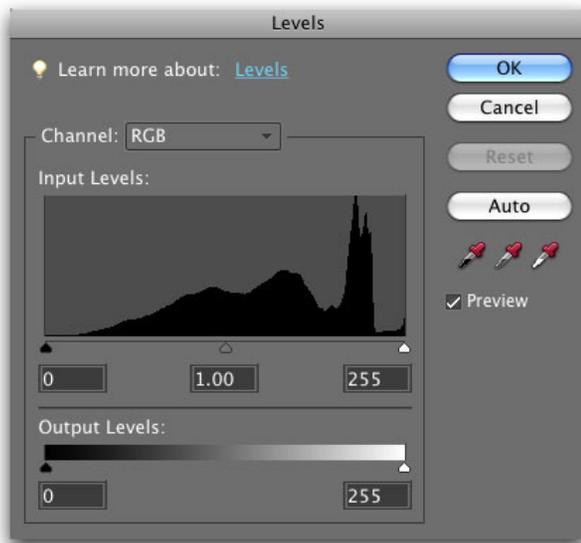


Figure 2.

are measured which represents the minute gradations between a total absence of light (black) and full-on illumination (white). The histogram's height at any particular spot represents how many pixels are at that particular level of brightness. Using the mountain analogy, a noticeable cluster of tall and wide mountains mean that particular brightness range makes up a good chunk of your image. Short or super skinny mountains mean that brightness range doesn't appear much. And a big, flat prairie means there are few or no pixels in that brightness range.

A glance at the histogram, in other words, can tell you whether you've got a good balance of light and dark pixels, whether the shadows or highlights are getting clipped (see note below), whether the image is over-

or underexposed, and whether it's been adjusted before. In fact, many digital cameras can show you a histogram on its display screen (though you may have to root through your owner's manual to learn how to turn it on). Once you get comfy with histograms, you can use it to see whether the shot you're about to snap will have good exposure.

POWER USERS TIP: Clipping is the term used when a light pixel is turned pure white, or when a dark pixel is turned pure black. When this happens, the pixel is stripped of all detail. As you might imagine, clipping in the highlights can be more worrisome than in the shadows, because the highlights usually contain more important details than those found in the dark shadows.

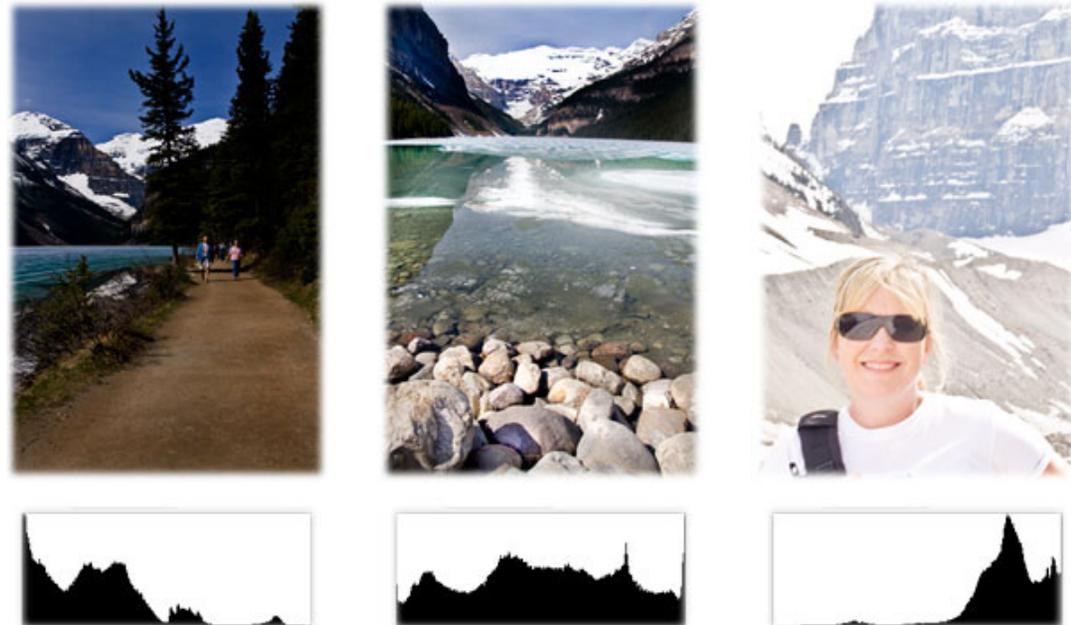


Figure 3

Here are a few tips for understanding histograms, some of which are shown in [Figure 3] (NOTE: The color of the background of the histograms shown here have been changed to white so you can see them more easily.)

- An extremely jagged mountain range means your color info is unbalanced. Your image may contain a decent amount of some colors but very little of others.
- A narrow mountain range means you've got a narrow tonal range, and little difference between the darkest and lightest pixels. Your whole image probably looks pretty flat and lacks detail and contrast.

- If there's a sharp spike at the far left of the histogram, your shadows are probably clipped (meaning they're solid black). If the spike's at the right end of the histogram, your highlights may be clipped (meaning they're solid white).
- If your mountain range is bunched up against the left side (toward black or 0) with a vast, flat prairie on the right, it's underexposed (too dark); see the figure above (left).
- If your mountain range is snug against the right side (toward white or 255) with a vast prairie on the left, it's overexposed (too light); see the figure above (right).
- An image that has a good balance of light and dark colors has a wide mountain range—one that spans the entire width of the histogram—that's fairly tall and pretty uniform in height. Basically, you want your histograms to look like the older, eroded Appalachians (see above, middle), instead of the newer, super-jagged peaks of the Himalayas (see above, right).
- All this histogram (and correction business) is subjective; if your histogram looks terrible but the image looks great to you, that's fine too because in the end, your opinion is all that matters!

Happily, you can fix a lot of these problems using Levels. You can smooth the height of the histogram's mountains thereby balancing color, and you can widen the mountain range to expand your tonal range and increase contrast. However, there's a wee bit-o'-setup you need to do first to make Levels work a little better.

Setting Target Colors

In order for a Levels adjustment to fix the colors and lighting in your image, you need to give it some guidance on what you want those colors to be. You can do that by setting targets for the three categories of color found in an image. They include:

- Shadows are created when light is blocked. Rarely jet black, shadows can vary in color depending upon exactly how much light is blocked.
- Highlights represent the lightest or brightest parts of your image, where the light is at full strength. When an image is overexposed, the highlights are often referred to as “blown out.”
- Midtones are tonal values that fall between the darkest shadows and lightest highlights. By enhancing midtones, you can increase the contrast and details in your image.

Setting target colors is a bit of a pain, but if you save the settings you'll only have to do it once:

Step 1: Choose > Enhance > Adjust Lighting > Levels. Even if you don't have an image open, Elements will open a Levels dialog box, like the one shown here. You can also press Command + L on a Mac (Ctrl+L on a PC). [See Figure 4].

Step 2: To set a target shadow color, double-click the black eyedropper toward the right of the dialog. In the resulting Color Picker, enter 10 in the R, G, and B fields (since you'll be in RGB mode the majority of the time). The reason you want to pick 10 is because on the 0-255 range of brightness levels, 10 is a very dark gray. Once you start using Levels, this gives you

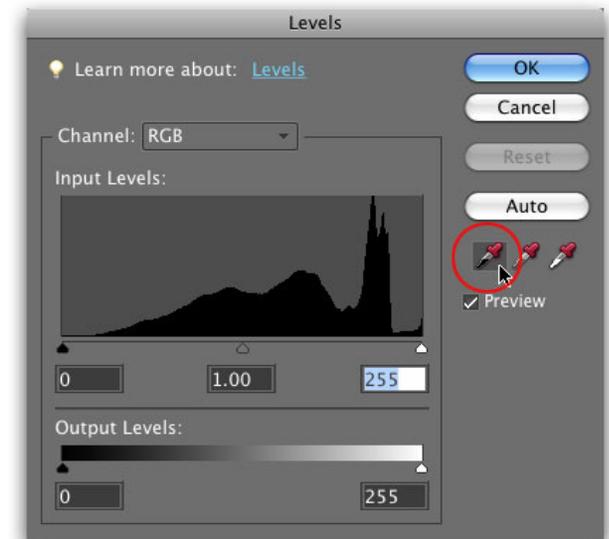


Figure 4.

nice, dark shadows, without them being so black that you can't see details. Click OK when you're finished to close the Color Picker. [See Figure 5].

Step 3: To set your target midtone color, double-click the gray eyedropper. In the Color Picker, enter 133 in the R, G, and B fields. This gives you a nice charcoal gray that's just a touch lighter than 50%. Click OK to close the Color Picker. [See Figure 6].

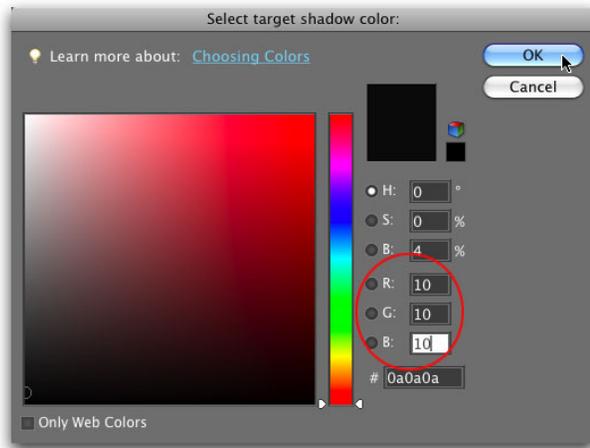


Figure 5.



Figure 6.

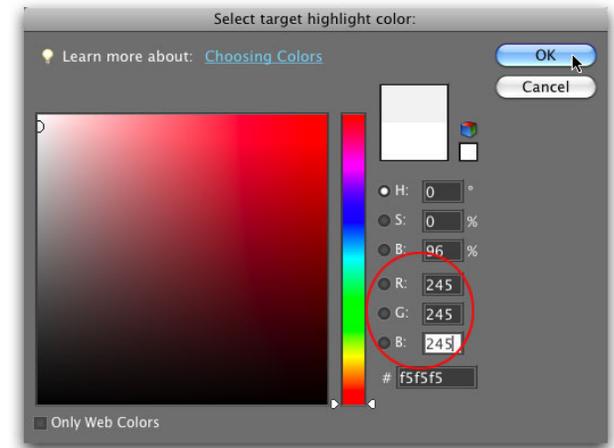


Figure 7.

Step 4: To set a target highlight color, double-click the white eyedropper. When the Color Picker opens, enter 245 in the R, G, and B fields. This helps you get highlights that are really light gray instead of pure, blinding white. Click OK to close the Color Picker. [See Figure 7].

Step 5: Click OK to close the Levels dialog box. When Elements kindly asks if you want to save the new target colors as defaults, click Yes.

Now that you've set your target colors, you're ready to start using Levels. Find a troubled image, pop it open, and proceed with the following steps.

Creating a Levels Adjustment Layer

Step 1: Take a peek at the top right of your screen and make sure you're in the Edit workspace, and then click Full.

Step 2: Locate the Layers palette on the right side of the screen. If you don't see it, choose Window > Layers. Click the little flippy triangle to the left of the word Levels to expand the palette (if it's not already expanded). [See Figure 8].

Step 3: Click the half black/half white icon at the top of the Layers palette and choose Levels. This creates a Levels adjustment layer, which simply means that the adjustment you're about to make will occur on another layer entirely, instead of on your original image. Using adjustment layers gives you a lot of editing flexibility because you can:

- lessen the strength of the adjustment by lowering layer opacity
- double-click the Levels adjustment layer (circled) in your Layers palette to reopen the Levels dialog box to edit it again

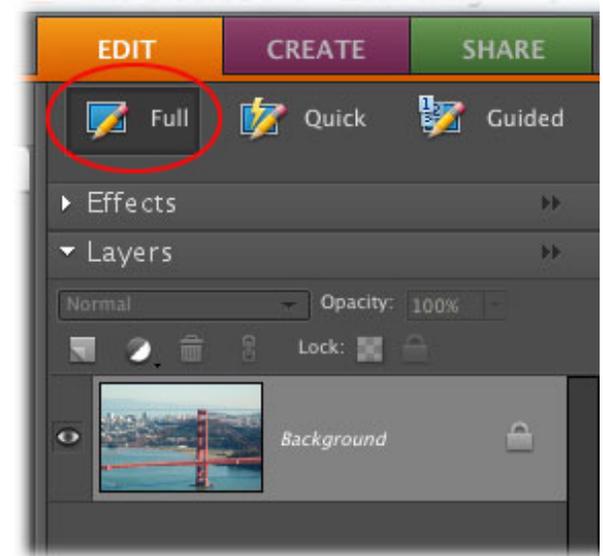


Figure 8.

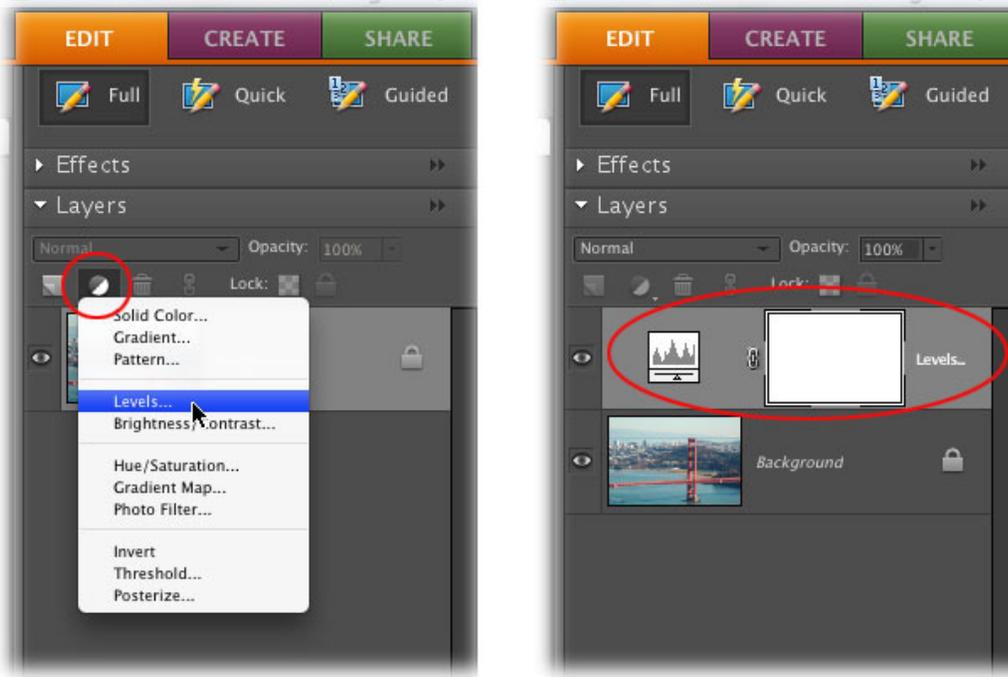


Figure 9.

- hide the adjustment from parts of the image by using the built-in layer mask
- change its blend mode
- toggle its layer visibility on/off to see a before and after, and
- drag the adjustment layer to the trashcan icon if you don't like it. [See Figure 9].

Several of those items are beyond the scope of this article, but hopefully you get the picture about how useful adjustment layers can be. Now it's time to actually adjust your image (finally!). Feel free to choose between the following methods to get it done.

Using the Levels Sliders

By using a set of three sliders, a Levels adjustment lets you reshape and expand the information in your histogram. As shown below, the black slider at the far left of the histogram represents the shadows in your image. It starts out at 0, which is the numeric value for pure black. The white slider on the right represents highlights, and it starts out at 255—pure white. To give your image the greatest tonal range and contrast, you need to situate these sliders so they point to wherever your histogram's values begin to slope upward (at the foot of your mountains, so to speak).

In other words, if there's a gap between the shadow slider and the beginning of the histogram, drag that slider to the right. If there's a gap between the right-hand end of the histogram and the highlight slider, drag it to the left. The figure below should make all this repositioning stuff crystal clear. [See Figure 10].

When you move the sliders, Elements adjusts the tonal values in your image accordingly. For example, by dragging the highlights slider inward to 235, Elements changes all of the pixels in your image that were originally at 235 or higher to 255 (pure white). Translation: they get brighter. Similarly, if you move the shadows slider inward to 32, Elements changes all of the pixels with a brightness level of 32 or lower to 0 (pure black), which makes them darker. The levels of the pixels in between get redistributed accordingly, which gives you an overall contrast boost by increasing your tonal range (widening your mountain range).

The gray slider in the middle (circled at bottom in the image above) lets you brighten or darken the image by changing the intensity of the middle range of grays. Drag it to the left to lighten your image, or to the right to darken it. Because the gray slider focuses on the midtones, it won't make your highlights too light or your shadows too dark—unless you go hog wild and drag it all the way left or right!

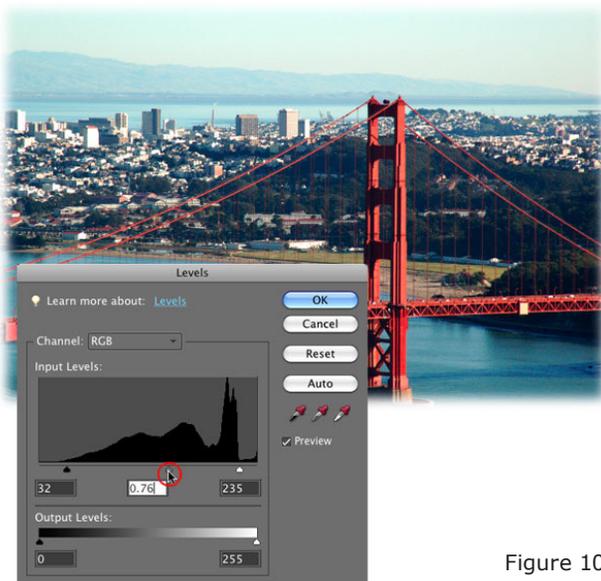
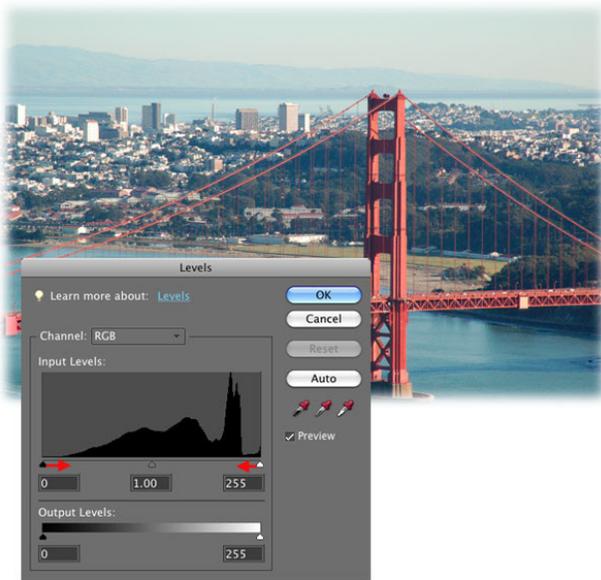


Figure 10.

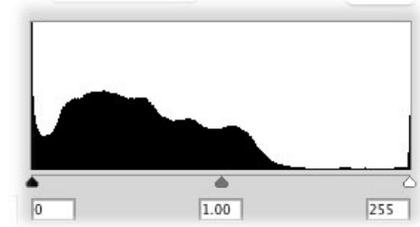
Adjusting Individual Color Channels

Near the top of the Levels dialog box is the Channel pop-up menu, which lets you view and adjust the composite channel—a combined histogram of the red, green, and blue channels—or each channel individually. If each channel’s histogram differs greatly, it’s worth adjusting each one separately instead of adjusting the RGB (composite) channel. If the histograms are almost identical, you can get away with adjusting the composite channel only, as you did above. In the figure below, you can see the gaps on the right side of each red, green, and blue histograms vary quite a bit so in this case, you should adjust each channel separately. Be careful not to drag the sliders too far in, or you’ll make parts of your image pure black or white (or the colors you set as your black and white targets).

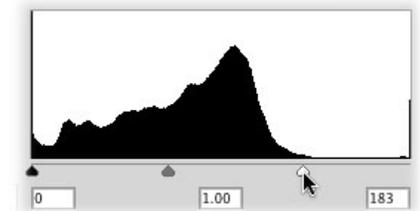
Using the Levels Eyedroppers

Another way to adjust Levels is to use the eyedroppers on the right side of the dialog box [See Figure 11]. Instead of dragging the sliders directly below the histogram, you can use the eyedroppers to sample pixels that should be black (the darkest shadows that contain details), those that should be white (the lightest highlights that contain details), or neutral gray (midtones). If you use this method, Elements takes care of adjusting the sliders for you. With an image open, follow these steps:

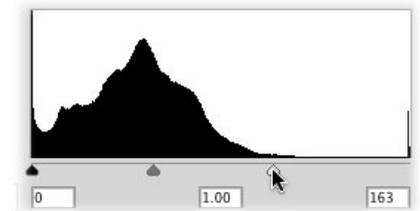
Step 1: Grab the Eyedropper tool and change the Sample Size pop-up menu to “3 by 3 Average.” Press I to activate the Eyedropper tool. Because you’re about to use the eyedroppers to reset your black and white points, you need to change the way the tool measures color (the eyedroppers in Levels uses the main Eyedropper tool’s settings). In the Options bar, the Sample Size pop-up menu is automatically set to Point



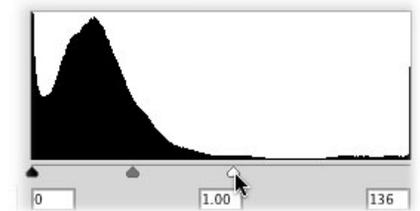
RGB (composite) channel



Red channel



Green channel



Blue channel

Figure 11.

Sample, which means the Eyedropper samples exactly one pixel when you click. By changing it to “3 by 3 Average,” you tell Elements to average several pixels around the spot where you click, which is much better for color correction. [See Figure 12].

Step 2: Create a Levels Adjustment layer. Click the half-black/half-white circle at the top of your Layers palette and choose Levels from the pop-up menu that appears. Elements adds an Adjustment layer to your Layers palette and opens the Adjustments palette.

Step 3: In the Levels dialog box, click the black eyedropper. The right side of the dialog box sports three eyedroppers—the black one resets your image’s black point (shadows), the gray one resets the gray point (midtones), and the white one resets the white point (highlights). Simple enough! Mouse over to your image and click an area that should be black. In most cases, it’s pretty obvious what part of your image should be black, though sometimes it’s hard to tell and there are a few things to consider before you click. First, you want to pick a point that’s near the focal point of your image. For example, if you’re correcting a portrait, find a dark shadow that’s near your subject’s face. Second, try to pick an area that has a little detail in it instead of an area that’s pure black (if it’s pure black then most likely there’s nothing there!).

When you click with the eyedropper, you’ll likely see the colors in your image shift a bit. If you don’t like the results, click somewhere else to set a new black point or undo your click by pressing Command-Z on a Mac (Ctrl+Z on a PC).

Step 4: Click the white eyedropper to select it and then click an area in your image that should be white.

The same rules apply when it comes to choosing a new white point: Try to pick an area that’s close to the focal point and not pure white (because it won’t have any detail). You also don’t want to pick a white point that’s a reflection from a light source, because it’s not a true white. You can use the same Option-drag on a Mac (Alt-drag on a PC) trick to find the lightest highlights, though this time your image turns completely black. As you drag the highlight slider to the left, the first areas that appear in color are what you’re after.

Step 5: Select the gray eyedropper and then click an area that should be neutral gray (pixels that are about 50% gray in color).

That’s it! To see before and after versions of your image, turn off the Levels Adjustment layer’s visibility. In the Layers palette, click the visibility eye to the left of the Levels Adjustment layer to turn it off and see if your adjustment made a difference.

As you can see, it doesn’t take serious voodoo to use a Levels adjustment, and it can sure improve the color and lighting in your image. Until then, may the Levels force be with you!

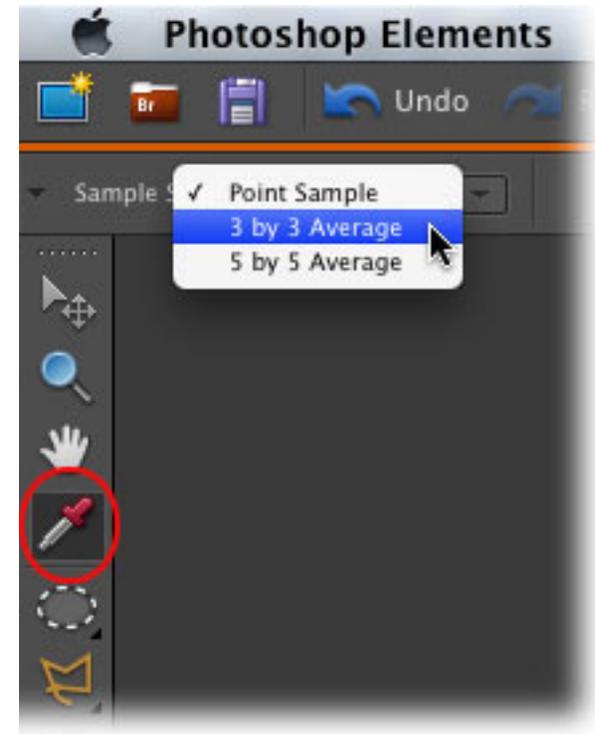


Figure 12.

**Lesla Snider offers more
Photoshop Elements training here:**
<http://tinyurl.com/lesavideos>

Lesla Snider's bio:
<http://graphicreporter.com/aboutlesa/bio.html>





Hitachi 1 Terabyte Deskstar Hard Drive

© 2010 Lawrence I. Charters

Do note that these drives are packaged with instructions for Windows, which is misleading.

...remember to format the drive appropriately.

IBM invented the hard drive, way back in 1956. Over the years, the price of hard drives has plunged from millions of dollars to something closer to a decent lunch, and the capacity has grown from thousands of bytes to thousands of billions of bytes. The largest hard drives currently available are two terabytes – two thousand billion bytes. For most of this long history of soaring capacity and plunging cost, IBM was the technology leader.

When IBM sold its drive manufacturing to Hitachi in 2003, it wasn't clear what would happen to IBM's legacy. But today Hitachi's drives are just as well regarded as they were with IBM's label, and are tops in the field.

Over the years I've tended to favor Seagate drives. Their Barracuda series hard drives have a stellar reputation for durability, plus a five-year warranty. Western Digital's Caviar Green drives are just as robust, but use roughly half as much power. When I needed a hard drive, I tended to get Seagate or Western Digital Caviar Green drives, and have been happy with the result.

But when I needed some more capacity in a hurry late last year, I was tempted by a special offer for Hitachi

1 terabyte Deskstar drives. The Deskstar series was started by IBM in 1994, aimed at corporate desktop workstations, but the Deskstar drives today are many times the speed and capacity of IBM's original model. Hitachi has worked hard to maintain the reputation IBM developed, and these new high capacity drives work perfectly in a Mac OS X system. Pop them into a Power Mac G5 or a Mac Pro, format them, and you'll greatly expand your capacity with less than 15 minutes of work. If you have an external 3.5" SATA case, the Deskstar is a good candidate to fill it, giving you impressive storage via a FireWire or USB cable.

Do note that these drives are packaged with instructions for Windows, which is misleading. Most Windows computers can't even use drives this large, due to limitations in Windows XP and the less than impressive architecture of most Windows computer chassis. The same drive should work just as well in a Linux computer, or a Windows 7 computer, as on a Mac OS X machine; remember to format the drive appropriately.

<http://www.hitachigst.com/internal-drives/desktop/>

Purchased from Amazon.

MiniSuit Black “Leather” Case/Folio for iPad

© 2010 Lawrence I. Charters

When the Apple iPad was introduced, it created an immediate worldwide shortage of folio-style covers. While slipcases and silicon cases were readily available, the slipcases were only useful when you were transporting the iPad. When you wanted to use the iPad, a slipcase became something else to carry. Silicon rubber cases, while making the iPad easier to hold, left the screen unprotected. Folio-style covers were clearly needed — and the available supply was bought up immediately.

MiniSuit’s case (which claims to be leather but is not) was far cheaper than the few folio covers sold in Apple stores, but that wasn’t really a critical factor. The key factor: it was available via Amazon, which was a minor miracle. We purchased it sight unseen and hoped for the best. All we expected was a folio case that would protect the iPad’s screen and allow us to use the iPad without removing the cover. MiniSuit’s folio cover fit our needs perfectly.

There are some small pockets inside the front cover for business cards, which is a nice, unexpected touch. The cover can be propped open to act as an easel, which is great on long flights, or when you simply get tired of holding the iPad. A couple of magnets keep the cover and the “kickstand” for the easel folded flat without any effort on your part, and without any harm to the iPad.

It would have been nice to have real leather, but for the price, it can’t be beat.



MiniSuit’s iPad folio case is quite nice, but not, alas, leather.

The leather-like plastic doesn’t have quite the feel of real leather, but it doesn’t look or feel like plastic, either, and presents a professional appearance. The iPad fits into a pocket on the back cover, the front cover protects the iPad screen, and a snap flap secures everything for transport. Because the case is a folio style, you can use the iPad any time, all the time, without ever removing it from the cover; you’d never believe how many slipcases are left in restaurants and airports simply because they must be completely removed to use whatever it is they were purchased to protect.

[MiniSuit Black “Leather” Case/Folio for iPad](#)

Purchased from Amazon, for \$10.50.

Note: The name MiniSuit does not appear in the product’s listing, although the product when received will have the MiniSuit moniker.

CrazyOnDigital Executive Leather Folio Case Cover for iPad

© 2010 Lawrence I. Charters

Apple's iPad has a stunningly attractive aluminum case, and the slang word "slick" seems tailor-made for the device. But the iPad is very slick to hold in addition to being slick to look at. If you carry it around in a briefcase or backpack, you also need to protect that glorious screen from all the rest of the things you carry around. A great many rubbery, silicon cases are available to make the iPad easier to hold and more shock resistant, but a rubbery case does nothing to protect the screen.

I'd purchased an iPad for my spouse, and after one day at work, she decided it needed protection. So I went looking for a folio cover, something that wrapped around the entire iPad to protect the device from briefcase detritus and coworker clumsiness. Apple stores were sold out of their own folio cover, the Apple iPad Case. Best Buy and other Apple resellers were stocked to the gills with colorful rubbery cases, but nothing that covered the screen. Time to bring out the big gun: Amazon.

The "CrazyOnDigital Executive Leather Folio Case Cover for iPad" was purchased in desperation, based on description rather than the ridiculous name. On the good side, it was much less expensive than most covers. Even better, Amazon said it was available. But was it any good?

It turns out to be excellent. The color scheme, with the red strap and tan cover, looks rather casual in photos,

but quite professional in reality. Because this is a folio and not a slipcase, it offers continuous protection: you never remove it from the iPad, and you never have to carry around a separate piece, as you do with the many iPad slipcases available everywhere. Elastic bands hold all four corners of the iPad snugly inside the folio at all times.



The CrazyOnDigital iPad folio cover protects your iPad and looks very professional, too.

One quibble: the upper right band covers the volume controls for the iPad. While this doesn't really hurt anything, it does make on-the-fly adjustments of volume a bit more cumbersome. I get the feeling that the manufacturer didn't have a real iPad on hand, just Apple's dimensions, when the case was designed.

Apple's iPad Case can be folded to make it into a stand; you can't do that with the CrazyOnDigital folio cover. On the other hand, the CrazyOnDigital cover is nicely padded; the Apple case seems flimsy by comparison, and Apple's case is twice the price (assuming you can find one).

The folio comes with a silicon gel wristband that says "CrazyOnDigital." This might be a cool thing for a teenage girl as of a few years ago, but it is fairly useless in 2010. I've toyed with the idea of shooting it like a rubber band, but my spouse has responded by pointing out that she has a pistol sharpshooter ribbon from the U.S. Navy. We are at an impasse.

[CrazyOnDigital Executive Leather Folio Case Cover for Ipad](#)

Purchased from Amazon, for \$18.99.

Exploding Computers Are Only Semi-Mythical

© 2010 Lawrence I. Charters

Exploding computers have been a staple of science fiction movies since at least the 1950s. Computers exploded on *Star Trek* in the 1960s, on *Star Trek* in the 1980s, and on *Star Trek* in 2009. *War Games*, a 1983 film, had an exploding IBM 1401, built in the 1950s. James Bond films frequently have exploding computers.

For years I made fun of this, since computers are not explosive. They are made of metal and plastic; there are no combustible or fissionable components. They may short out, smoke, and possibly even catch on fire (briefly, as few pieces burn all that well), but they don't blow up.

Hah! On May 27, 2010, my dear spouse picked up her MacBook Pro and attempted to place it on her lap. She couldn't; it caught on her skirt and, wondering how the smooth aluminum bottom could catch on anything, she flipped it over: the aluminum plate covering the battery was bulging out. Very alarmed, she asked, quite calmly, "What happened?"

I was preoccupied with something else and wasn't paying that much attention until she pointed to the warped aluminum plate. Grabbing a quarter (just the right size for the screw head on the battery cover), I removed the battery and, without question, it had exploded. My spouse couldn't recall any kind of noise; she'd been using the computer all day, had put it down for a few minutes, and when she picked it up, she noticed it was "off." And that it caught on her skirt.

Removing the battery and plugging the laptop in, we quickly discovered that the computer was fine, as was her data. Only the battery was dead, and it was very, very, very dead. We marched off to the Apple Store in Columbia, where one of the employees tried to tell us "this happens all the time" and that you know a battery needs to be replaced when it explodes. I rather forcefully suggested he was full of it, and accepted a no-cost replacement battery. It worked perfectly, and the computer is back in service as if nothing happened.



Seen from one end, the bottom plate is separated from the case and pushing down, while the inner shell has separated and is pushing up. This represents a considerable amount of force but, remarkably, neither the user nor the MacBook Pro was harmed.

But something did happen: a consumer device – a non-explosive consumer device – exploded. This is not a normal event, and it is not how a Sony-manufactured lithium battery should normally expire. So we went to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission Web site, and filed a complaint.

<https://www.cpsc.gov/cgibin/incident.aspx>

Even if you love Apple products, please don't be fooled into loving exploding computers. Leave that to Hollywood. If your computer battery explodes, complain. And ask Apple for a free replacement.

A Book Review: Take Control of Spam with Apple Mail

© 2010 Jonathan Bernstein

Quick Start to Controlling Your Junk Mail

I organized this book with background information at the beginning, followed by easy practical steps you can take, and then more complex alternatives. Most readers will find it helpful to follow this overall strategy in order, though you may skip steps that don't apply to you. Here's how I recommend approaching the process of taking back your Inbox.

Understand the problem:

- Begin by learning what makes junk mail different from other messages and why you receive it in the first place. See [Learn about Junk Mail](#) (p. 10).
- Discover the inner workings of Mail's built-in Junk Mail filter—including its benefits and its shortcomings. See [Learn about Junk Mail Filtering](#) (p. 18).

Eliminate your junk mail:

- Make sure your built-in Junk Mail filter uses the best and most efficient settings, and then take additional steps to reduce errors and solve problems. See [Optimize Your Junk Mail Filter](#) (p. 32).
- If you need more power or accuracy than Mail's built-in Junk Mail filter can provide, consider supplementing or replacing it with one of several alternatives. See [Go beyond the Junk Mail Filter](#) (p. 48).
- Customize Mail further with your own rules to handle junk mail (or other messages) in exactly the way you want. See [Appendix A: Rules](#) (p. 60).

Figure 1

Spam email seems to be a part of everyday life. While we have increasingly sophisticated tools to block spam, the spammer's efforts to evade seem to move at the same speed, if not faster. This latest Take Control book by Joe Kissell [graphic 1] comes just as I've witnessed a recent surge in spam emails that Apple's Snow Leopard *Mail* has trouble keeping out of my Inbox. So naturally, I jumped when the Managing Editor asked if I wanted to review this book for the *Journal*.

The book follows a logical progression. It explains spam, explores Apple *Mail*'s basic features for handling spam, suggests optimal ways to handle it, and ends with options for other methods. Kissell helpfully includes an overview page for those who want to skip to a particular topic. [Figure 1]

The author first explains the different kinds of spam, and he prescribes many safe emailing practices that, in fact, the Pi also recommends. For example, if you've been reading the *Journal* or coming to Pi meetings, Kissell's recommendations—to set *Mail* preferences so *Mail* does not automatically load html images (p. 13) or to be wary of using the Preview Pane (p. 20)—will be familiar to you. He warns about phishing emails in easy-to-read language, and then weighs in on the ever-present debate about viruses on the Mac.

(Like others, he minimizes the threat of a true Mac virus but suggests safe practices to eliminate mistakenly sending a virus to Windows-using friends.)

An interesting aside discusses just how spammers collect email addresses. Much as Google compiles Web pages for searching, automated programs called “Bots” (short for robots) search the Web and harvest email addresses. One such spam *Bot* gathers clickable email address links from Web pages. The *Bot* masters, the spammers, then sell these harvested email lists for a tidy sum. Because of this, some Web sites displaying email addresses will prevent them from being clickable. Another means to thwart the *Bots* is to list email addresses without the characteristic “@” symbol, instead substituting the word “at” for the symbol. Kissell suggests that these email address alterations “no longer work reliably, as robots [that troll the Web for email addresses] have gained more sophisticated parsing methods.” Instead, he opines that it's currently safe to include an email address on a Web page, if the email address is in graphic format (p. 16).

Kissell then discusses the basic operation of *Mail*'s junk mail filter. He acknowledges that there are ways to minimize but not completely avoid reviewing the messages

marked as Junk for the small number of false positives. I found particularly helpful his suggestion of add-on rules users can set up to label as junk more of the recent spam messages that *Mail's* junk mail filter doesn't yet reach (pp. 36-39). In addition, he makes a comment that should make Pi members proud of the server side of their wap.org email. He discusses server-based spam filtering, *i.e.* the practice by mail servers themselves to block spam. Users can take this "additional step to reduce spam before it ever reaches your Mac" by choosing an email provider that offers sophisticated filters to block spam emails from ever reaching them. Kissell praises Google's Gmail spam

filter. What immediately comes to mind for me is the heroic efforts of Jon Thomason on our Pi mail server to allow users to customize their settings. This feature helps me greatly. To review, go to your Connect portal page <https://connect.wap.org/>, and once logged in, click on Mail in the left sidebar menu, and explore. Just one more outstanding benefit that you get with your Pi membership!

The final chapter of the book, entitled "Go beyond the Junk Mail Filter," has a series of suggestions outside of Apple *Mail* for dealing with Spam, including third party applications. Kissell explains the pluses and

Here's how to adjust the junk mail setting for wap.org email.

This easy-to-use new feature is reached via the Member Entrance on the Pi Web site. The address is <https://connect.wap.org/> where you log into your personal Connect Web page.

Click the E-Mail option in the left sidebar, then the Junk Mail tab. Here you can individually adjust anti-spam aggressiveness to increase or reduce the threshold past which a message is considered undesirable. You can also adjust the form in which you prefer to get the emails that the Pi email server thinks are spam. And you can list specific addresses from which messages should never be flagged/processed as spam. For instance, I noticed that one message from a music venue in Baltimore that I follow was labeled junk, so I included this email in the "whitelist" section. [Figure 2]

Another option arises from the old form of email address the Pi once used, member@tcs.wap.org. Members could opt for the Pi mail server to also deliver emails using this dated moniker to you. But if you've found that you get a lot of spam at your @tcs.wap.org address, as opposed to @wap.org, then in the Incoming Mail tab, you can de-select that option. [graphic 4] My kudos to Jon Thomason not only for trying to keep Pi members' email safe, but also for these new features.

E-Mail Settings

Overview Incoming Mail **Junk Filter**

Jon Bernstein Sign Out

Select this tab

Junk tolerance (default 5; higher values are more permissive) 5

Add classifying headers but deliver suspicious message intact
 Deliver entire suspicious message as an attachment to a report
 Deliver only safely extracted text as an attachment to a report

Whitelist (always accept from) these addresses
 henry@andiemusik.com

Blacklist (always reject from) these addresses

Apply

Figure 2

On the whole, I found Kissell's book very helpful in adding to my understanding about junk mail and how to deal with it.

minuses of several such applications, and includes a discount coupon for his personal favorite, *SpamSieve*. He also discusses briefly “challenge-response systems” for combating junk mail — email addresses protected by challenge-response systems require anyone seeking to email that address to affirmatively prove bona fides through several steps before an email can actually be delivered to the addressee). Finally, an appendix provides a useful tutorial about “rules” in *Apple Mail*.

On the whole, I found Kissell's book very helpful in adding to my understanding about junk mail and how to deal with it. While several topics seem beyond the narrow scope of taking control of spam in *Apple Mail*, I found they added much value to the book. In terms of technical writing, parts of the book were quite easy to follow, while some of the discussion, e.g. about reducing false

negatives and false positives, would be more challenging to less experienced users.

Joe Kissell, thank you for coming out with this helpful book at just the right time for me.

Take Control of Spam with Apple Mail (Version 1.5)
By Joe Kissell

73 pages
Published by TidBITS Publishing Inc., 2010

ISBN: 978-193367-103-1
Price: eBook \$10; print version \$18.99
Available at: <http://www.takecontrolbooks.com>

E-Mail Settings

Jon Bernstein Sign Out

Overview **Incoming Mail** Junk Filter

Handling

Forward received mail to my preferred outside address:

Some members prefer not to use their @wap.org addresses directly, but to automatically forward their mail to a different service.

Also accept mail for the old-style address `jon.bernstein@tcs.wap.org`

Some members expect long-time correspondents to continue to reach them at this equivalent address from the mid-1990s. Other members prefer to close that door for a possible reduction in junk mail.

Reject all mail unless sent from a wap.org address

Some members just don't want another e-mail address to deal with. Enabling this option blocks incoming e-mail, while still allowing official wap.org communications to be forwarded or collected.

Apply

De-select this option might help





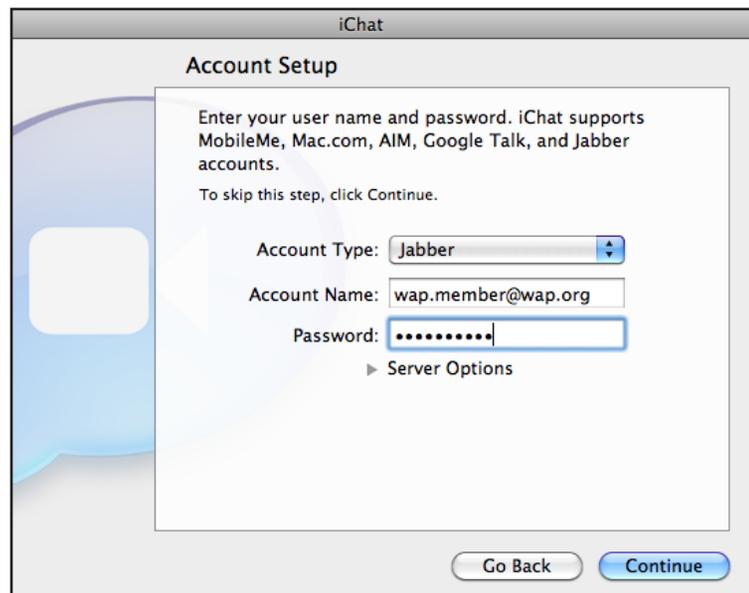
WAP iChat Help

By Bob Jarecke

Finally, for any of you who are familiar with Apple's iChat software and have a desire to help others, consider becoming a WAP iChat Help volunteer.

The Pi's leadership, more specifically the Management Committee, has been reviewing the features available via the club's principal server running Mac OS X Leopard Server software. One of the services available is *iChat*. We believe that activating a WAP *iChat* Help service could provide an opportunity for live hotline assistance and tutorial service for members in their homes. With some inventive thought and program testing, the core leadership group thinks we just might be ready to beta test with the help of some willing members. Might you be one?

Before we can experiment further, we need to ensure that everyone is up to speed on setting up *iChat*. For the beginner, the



section immediately below will explain how to get started with the *iChat* application. For those of you who have already activated *iChat*, see the section on adding a WAP account. Finally, for any of you who are familiar with Apple's *iChat* software and have a desire to help others, consider becoming a WAP *iChat* Help volunteer. To learn more, check out the [Opportunities](#) page for an outline of what that volunteer position entails.

Figure 1

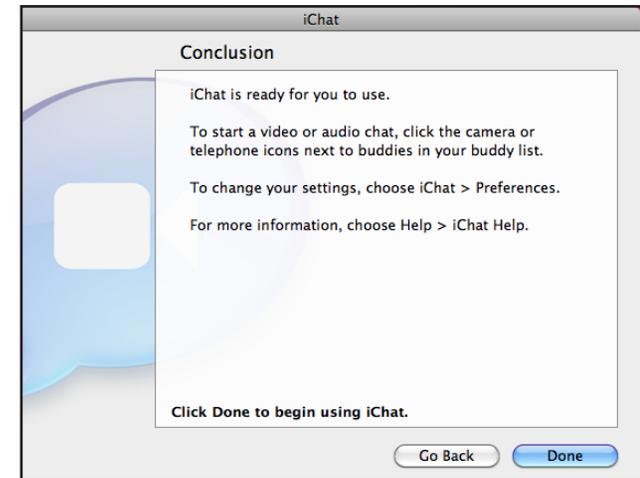


Figure 2

Setting up an iChat WAP Account for the first time

The process is simple, with only three easy steps. Let's go through them one at a time.

1. Launch *iChat* (*In Dock or Applications Folder*). The first thing that shows up is a Welcome window with a message about the capabilities of the *iChat* application. Nothing profound here; click Continue.
2. The Account Setup page is next (see Figure 1). There are three items to input:
 - Select Account Type. Click on the drop down menu (up-down arrows on the right) and select Jabber.
 - Enter your WAP email account address. It should look something like this for most of you: first name.last name@wap.org. (All lower case and don't overlook the "dot")

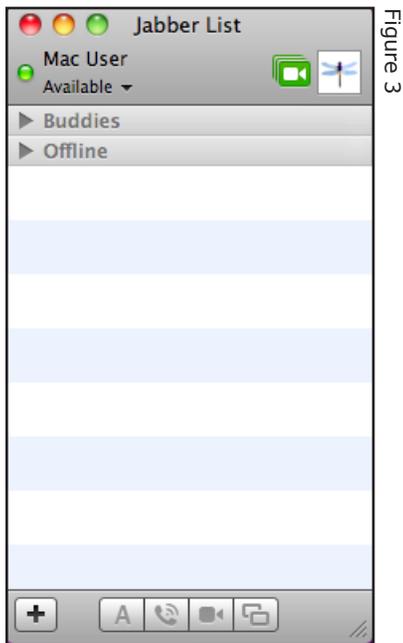


Figure 3

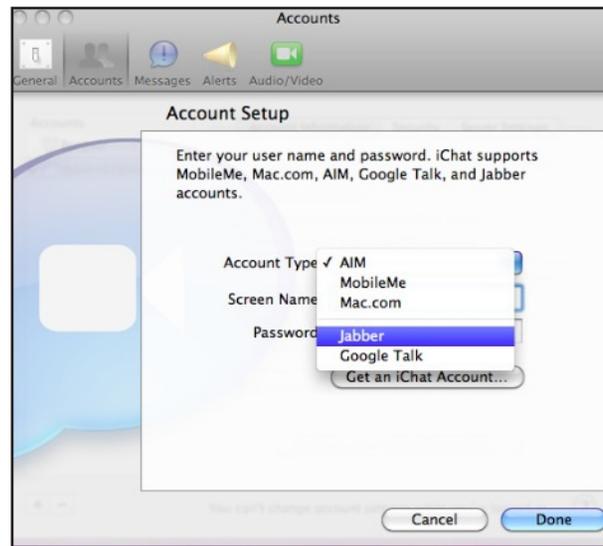


Figure 4



Figure 5

- Enter your WAP password. Click Continue.
3. The next page that comes up is the Conclusion page (see Figure 2). It contains a couple of how-to's, a reminder to set up *iChat's* Preferences, and where to get *iChat* Help. Click Done.

That's it! *iChat* will now open up with a small window titled Jabber List (see Figure 3). This is the *iChat* application interface; simple, yet powerful. The small window contains a list of your Buddies with options at the bottom for contacting and interacting with them.

Remember that this Jabber account is being run on a Pi server, so you only have access to fellow Pi members via this *iChat* account. So how do you add Buddies? This will be covered just after the next section, for those who are already using *iChat*.

Adding a WAP Jabber account to your *iChat*

For those who already have the *iChat* application up and running, adding another account to it is a one-step effort.

Open *iChat* Preferences/Accounts. Click on the plus (+) symbol at the bottom left corner. You will get a dropdown window asking for the Account Type, Account Name, and Password (see Figure 4). As described above for new *iChat* users, select Jabber as your account type, key in your full WAP email address, and enter your WAP password. You're done.

You will notice a new Jabber List window opening, ready for adding buddies. Remember, this account is only good for contacting and interacting with Pi members, since it is hosted exclusively on our own servers.

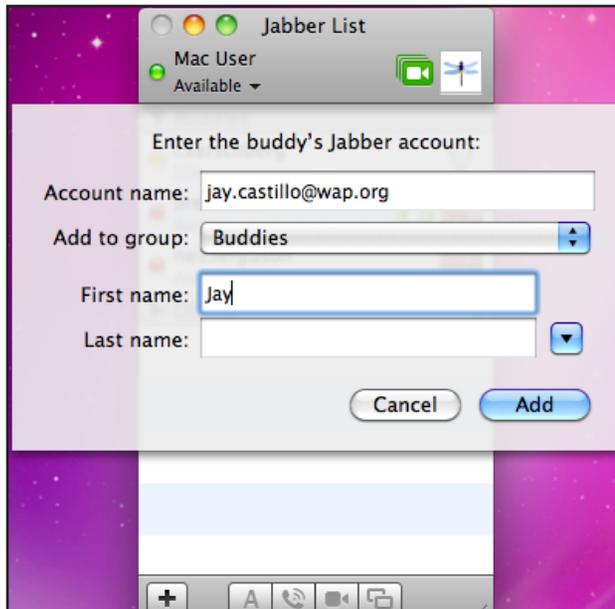


Figure 6

Okay, where are my Pi Buddies?

There are several ways in which you can add Buddies to your *iChat* account. For those who use menus, go to Buddies and click on Add Buddy. Alternately, the keystrokes, as shown on the Buddies menu, are Shift-Command-A. Finally, in my opinion the easiest way is to just click on the plus (+) at the bottom left of the Jabber List window and select Add Buddy. In all cases you will need to know a buddy's account name, or you will need to add them when they contact you, while you are connected with them.

When you add a Buddy, a small drop down window will result (Figure 5) and it will ask you for three items: The Buddy's Account Name; the Group in which to place it; and the Buddy's first and last name (Figure

6). When first activating an *iChat* account, by default there is only one Group, labeled Buddies; but as things progress, you may create other *iChat* Groups to help sort what could be an extensive list of Buddies.

A caution: When you get connected to the network in *iChat* for the first time, you may see a buddy or two on the *iChat* network. The fact that you can see them, though, does not mean that they are on your Buddy list. Go ahead and add them.

Now what happens after you add a Buddy? If your Buddy is online and has his or her *iChat* active, you should immediately see them pop up in the Jabber

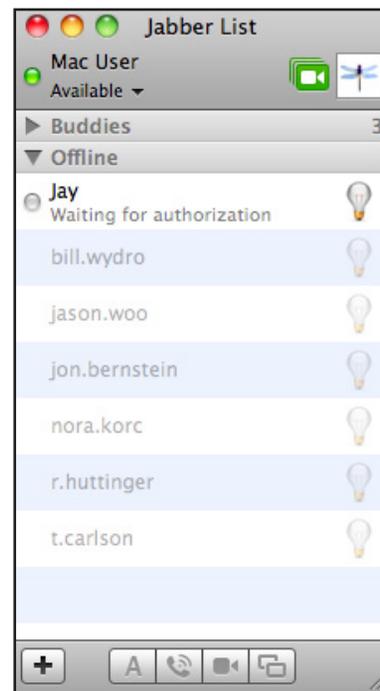


Figure 7

List with their name and a teeny-tiny image or graphic to the right of it. If your Buddy is not available, as shown in Figure 7, they will show up in your Buddy list as grayed out and a message will state "Waiting for authorization." The default icon image will be a light bulb.

Making contact with an *iChat* Buddy

Say you do have a Buddy, who is trying to contact you. What happens next? You will receive an invitation-to-chat message on your screen. You must click on the invitation message if you want to chat. The message will then expand slightly to reveal Decline or Accept buttons at the bottom. If you accept, a separate window opens up allowing text messaging to proceed.

This multi-step process is designed as a security measure. It protects you from others blindly starting chat sessions with you when you don't want to chat.

Other cool stuff

Other chatting options are available too. At the bottom of the Buddy list, there are a number of icons that offer options for contacting and interacting with Buddies: text messaging, audio chat, video chat, and, for those with Leopard or Snow Leopard OS, screen sharing. Screen sharing offers unique communications opportunities, since both parties are observing the same computer screen. (More on this at the end of the article.) You should experiment with each of these messaging options and soon you will see how powerful and useful the *iChat* application is.

To add to the fun, you can customize your settings in *iChat* Preferences. There are cool sound effects that give you audio clues when something is happening in *iChat*. You can modify your text-messaging font and

color, which will show up at the other end of your chat session. The small image associated with your account at the top beside your name can be easily changed into just about anything. All you have to do is click on the current image and you will have several options for taking a new photo with your built-in *iSight* camera or another image you have on your Mac. This can be very entertaining, but alas, too much detail in the image won't really be viewable by others. Simple is better.

You can even change the Jabber List name at the top of the *iChat* window. This is done also in Preferences. Open Accounts and click on the WAP account. With the account offline, simply input a new name in the Description block.

The bottom line — what is this *iChat* account good for?

The Management Committee and other volunteers are optimistic that we have the beginnings of a useful, in-home help service for members. Quite simply, using *iChat* audio or video will allow us to talk directly with members who need assistance or instruction, much better than doing it via email or other text-based methods. Taking it a step further, energizing the Screen Sharing feature would allow the Pi volunteer to actively control the member's computer while explaining exactly what is being done. The potential for help and learning are endless!

To participate you will need Mac OS X Leopard or Snow Leopard on your Mac. Yes, all but screen sharing will work with Mac OS X Tiger and earlier operating systems, but the volunteer won't necessarily have the equivalent older version of the Mac OS in front of them to reference while working your issue. In the end, don't let the fact that you are not running a Leopard OS dissuade you from joining; we will work it out.

This proposed program has a good way to go with much to be worked out. However, we are confident that it is workable and it could prove to be a real asset to being a member of the Pi. To start the ball rolling, the list below contains the names of some of the Management Committee who are willing to be guinea pigs to help you get *iChat* going. Add them to your Buddy list, contact them, and let the Help begin!

robert.jarecke@wap.org
– Bob Jarecke

brent.malcolm@wap.org
– Brent Malcolm

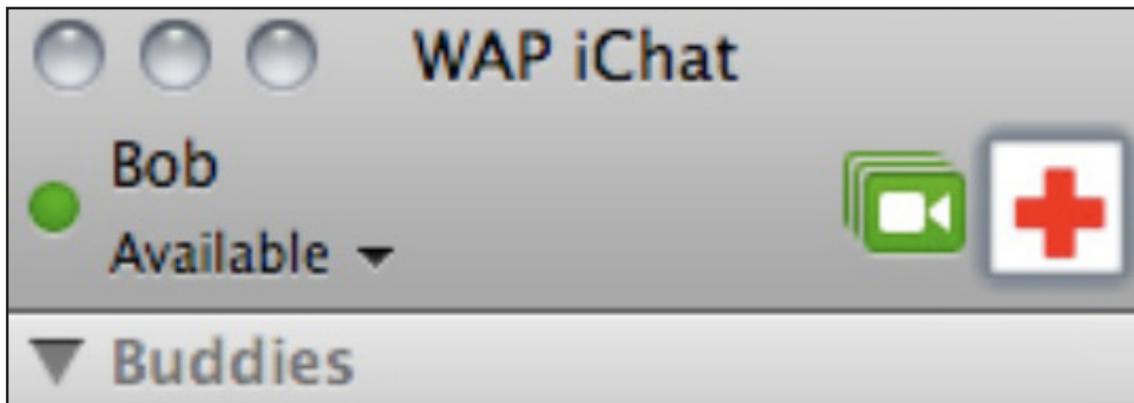
r.huttinger@wap.org
– Bo Huttinger

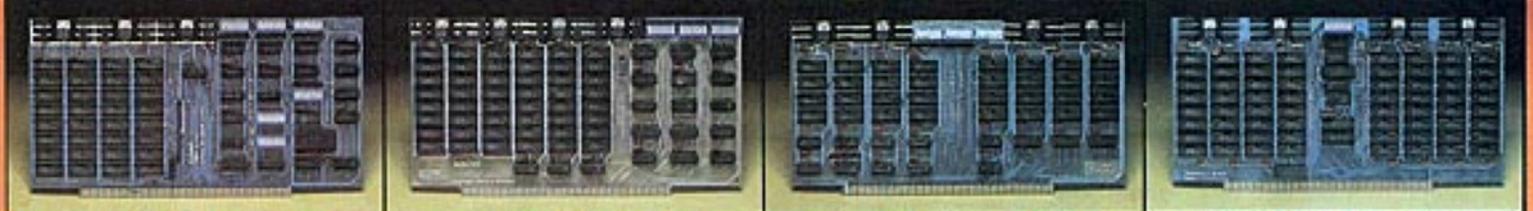
jay.castillo@wap.org
– Jay Castillo

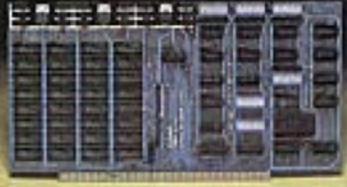
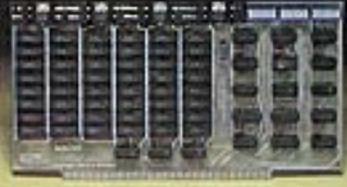
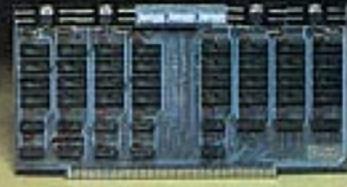
jason.woo@wap.org
– Jason Woo

jon.bernstein@wap.org
– Jonathan Bernstein

nora.korc@wap.org
– Nora Korc





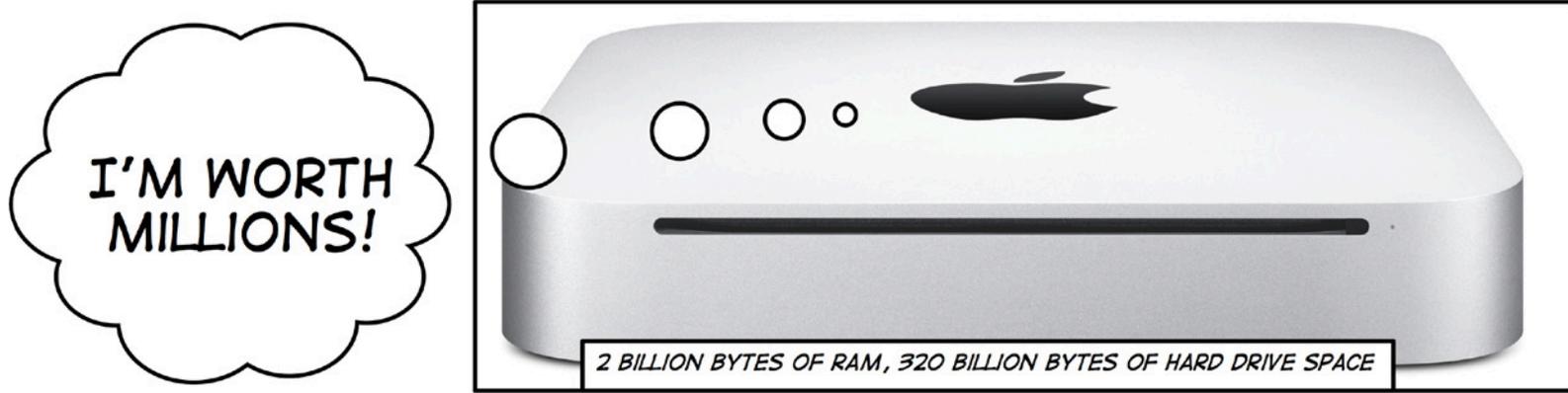
			
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Members Helping Members

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 typing in 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.**

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.

Featured Position – *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 a particular issue. 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.

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.

Washington Apple Pi Meetings



Top 10 Photo Enhancements Using *iPhoto* **July 24, 9:30 a.m. at George Mason University**

With the Pi's latest Photo Contest in full swing, July's meeting is a good occasion to brush up on your photo editing skills. Because nearly every Mac user has some version of *iPhoto*, this how-to presentation should be just what you need to dress up your intended contest submissions and helpful for anyone else interested in polishing up their photos. Travis Good, an avid photographer and capable presenter, will show the audience several techniques and tips for cleaning up photos and bringing the content to life. The presentation will center on using *iPhoto '09*, with some references to *Aperture 3*, Apple's premier photo management software.

And as a bonus, we will have several past contest winners on hand to pass along some of their favorite tips and tricks for taking their winning shots. Come pick their brains and bring some of your images on a suitable medium to be critiqued.

The meeting will be held on the GMU campus in the Science and Technology I building, Room 131, which is at ground level. 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/july2010/>

As always, check the [Pi Web site](#) for additional, updated details on these meetings.



Web Browsers, Plug-Ins, and Extensions: Oh, My! **August 28, 9:30 a.m. at George Mason University**

Apple recently introduced a new version of Safari with expanded capabilities. At the August meeting, we will investigate some of the latest improvements and the more useful extensions that are becoming available. Other Web browsers have some neat features as well, and we will briefly look at a few of those.

The main presenters will be a tag team of Larry Kerschberg and Lawrence Charters, with a cameo appearance by Jonathan Bernstein. Watch as they demonstrate some of the coolest new features to be incorporated into the latest Web browsers. Lawrence has a particular slant on the topic. Come and be wowed.

This meeting will also be held at the GMU campus in Fairfax, VA. Enterprise Hall, Room 178. Go to the Pi Web site link below for details and any updates.

<http://www.wap.org/events/aug2010/>

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

Washington Apple Pi

the
pi
Members
helping
Members