



Washington Apple Pi

Journal

YOUR DIGITAL WORLD

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Editor's Column

By Jay Castillo

Digitize your data. Organize your important documents and memorabilia. Save the trees!

In this edition of the *Journal*, we feature a couple of articles on your digital life, and how you can take advantage of the software and storage capacity available to your Apple devices. These articles are about going paperless, and scanning and organizing your slide collection. We will also focus on your digital life over the next couple of general meetings.

Also included in this issue is a review of the ZAGGMate iPad case with attached Bluetooth keyboard, an article about troubleshooting with plist files, and a note on spam keywords. We have the usual Tips & Tricks, and important information for you about Pi activities and benefits.

How about some culture and art? Some years ago I collected a list of humorous computer error messages composed as *haiku*. This is a form of Japanese poetry originating in the early 17th century. Traditionally, it is a poem of three lines, with 5, 7, and 5 syllables each, for a total of 17 syllables. We selected a few of our favorites for one of our humor pages in this issue. Take a look, and perhaps compose some of your own, that we can publish in a future issue.



Now is the Time...

By Jay Castillo

To Join the Pi BOD

We will soon hold elections for new members for the Pi Board of Directors. The Board consists of fifteen members, each serving a three-year term. Each year, one third of the members' terms expire. As a result we will have at least five vacancies to fill. Any member whose term has ended can serve on the Board longer, but they will have to run for re-election. Any Pi member in good standing (that's anybody whose membership is paid in full) is eligible to run for election to the Board. A member may nominate himself or herself, or someone else. Nominations close at midnight on March 31. The election starts on May 1 and ends May 30, in order that the new Board can be constituted in June.

To Do What?

The bylaws provide that "The business and affairs of WAP shall be managed by its Board of Directors, which may exercise all powers of the Corporation and perform all lawful acts and things which are not by law, the Articles of Incorporation, or these Bylaws directed or required to be exercised or performed by or are conferred upon or reserved to the members." (<http://www.wap.org/about/pibylaws0401.html>) Simply put, the Board of Directors ensures that the legal, financial, and practical obligations of the Pi are properly executed. The Board also provides oversight for the provision of benefits and services to the Pi members.

It's Not Rocket Science

You need not be a lawyer, accountant, or hedge fund manager to carry out the Board's responsibilities. The willingness to work as part of a team, and to have your colleagues' best interests in mind, gets most things done. As Woody Allen said, "Ninety per cent of life is just showing up." So if you are interested in joining the Pi Board, send a brief statement of your interest and background to president@wap.org. The sooner, the better.



PRESIDENTIAL OVERSIGHT

IS HE STILL WATCHING?

YUP, STILL THERE!



GULP! HE'S STILL WATCHING... WHAT WAS I SAYING?

THE PI PRESIDENT RIDES HERD OVER GENERAL MEETING ACTIVITIES.

Email Server Behavior*

Recently on the TCS* a Pi member sought advice about Apple *Mail* acting up. It seemed that *Mail* was marking some random messages that the user had read as unread, on its own initiative. The forum response concisely pointed out the distinctions between IMAP and POP email accounts and the importance of knowing which account type you are dealing with when things go awry.

TCS Forum quote

The most significant of many moving parts in this story would be the server to which you're connecting and the protocol with which you're doing so. If you're dealing with an IMAP server, for instance, the concept of read-or-not is the responsibility of the server. If you're using POP, it becomes the responsibility of the client — but remains susceptible to relatively minor adjustments from within the server should it choose to calculate message IDs at all differently on a given day. There are interesting pitfalls in either case worth pursuing, but you'd need to start with those details known.

**Source: TCS item #13894 "Unread"*

Geek Speak

For the more advanced computer user, see if the quote below about Open DNS* makes any sense. The Domain Name System (DNS) serves as the phone book for the Internet by translating human-friendly computer hostnames into IP addresses.

Recent technical articles have suggested the benefits of using Open DNS and Google DNS in place of whatever your ISP provides. And both have benefit: both are refreshed more often, so tend to be more likely to detect changes on the Internet. BUT — you need to talk to your ISP, first, before you can even reach these other DNS sources, and ditching your ISP's DNS settings could put you on the dark side of the moon, without even Pink Floyd to rescue you. Using something other than your ISP's DNS, for example, may cut you off from E-mail, if you are using your ISP's E-mail service. Or may cut you off from everything, if you use dynamic IP service (which you do) and something goes wrong.

. . . There are some obscure privacy risks with using Open DNS and Google's DNS service. "Obscure" as in "yes, in a laboratory environment someone can prove that there may be issues since you are sending DNS requests clear across the open Internet instead of locally to your ISP," but in practice, unless you are very wealthy or engaged in some kind of terrorist activity, you probably aren't worth the effort for someone to spy on you.

* A full discussion of the Open DNS topic can be found on the TCS Forums. Just do a search for the topic using the recently updated search feature. Searching the TCS Forums for any topic is much improved and quick too.





Preserving Memories: My Adventure in Digitizing Family Slides

By Diana King

Call me crazy. Ever since my father died in 1996 and I inherited his collection of slides, I have been thinking about ways to digitize them. There is more than family heritage at stake, for among his slides are pictures of the damage on Long Beach Island, New Jersey, from the March Nor'easter of 1962. These images may have historical significance. The deaths of my mother's older sister and her husband gave me possession of their collection as well, and they also had slides of this event.

I know, I know, there are commercial services that will convert old slides to digital images, but even after I found out about them I hesitated to go that route. One reason was my reluctance, as a believer in Murphy's Law, to let the slides out of my possession for any amount of time. Another was uncertainty about cost and the thought of paying to create digital files from slides of unknown, and possibly poor, quality. My father and uncle, who mostly handled the cameras, were far from professional photographers, and the cameras of the 1950s and '60s were far from the advanced point-and-shoot

models we amateurs enjoy today. Besides, I wanted the pleasure of viewing the images myself and trying to identify the people and locations in them.

The whole project was daunting, however. There were hundreds of slides covering about 15 years, and when I first tried scanning one on an ordinary scanner, the result was disappointing. I realized that I would need a different kind of scanner, not only more powerful but able to handle more than one or two slides at a time, unless I wanted to spend the whole of my remaining time on earth doing this. I also wanted a Mac faster than my strawberry iMac and a larger Firewire external drive for storage.

Getting Ready

After doing some research about scanners, I settled on the Epson Perfection V700 Photo, which has a rack that takes 12 slides at a time. So I bought one online. I also bought the new large-screen iMac and a new external drive. The project then went on hold for quite a while because of my job, my husband's declining health, and various other matters. Eventually I retired, my husband passed away, and finally last summer I found time to get started on the project in earnest.

First I had to give some thought to the way I intended to use the images after they were preserved. Who would ever want to look at them? How would they access them? Would they want to use software to enhance them? Would they want to print or share?

Since many of these pictures are of family members, the answer to the first question was obvious: my sons and grandchildren,

Figure 1. 12-slide rack that comes with Epson V700 Photo scanner



my brother and his kids, all the surviving aunts (no uncles left, unfortunately) and cousins in my mother's family, my husband's niece, and a couple of dear friends. But the question of access was trickier. I assumed that living relatives had some degree of computer skill, but which kinds of computers and which operating systems and what ability to manipulate images they have are much harder to guess.

I pondered these questions while experimenting with the Epson scanner software and came to the conclusion that I would scan the slides at 600 dpi and save them as TIFF files in a 4x6 size. These choices were in line with what the scanner manual recommended. I knew that JPEGs are more likely to open on just

about any computer, even older Windows ones. On the other hand, TIFFs are not compressed, and they would give a better result if the recipient wanted to enlarge them or play with any photo enhancement software. Additionally, newer versions of Windows do recognize the TIFF format.

Diving In

I began with my uncle's four carousels of slides. That's about 400 slides, for those of you who don't remember slide projectors and their carousels. In the interest of saving time, I also decided that I would not do any enhancements myself during the scanning process. Immediately I had to make more decisions about how to organize the files on the hard drive (chronologically? by subject matter? by location?) and how to name them. The program assigns numbers automatically, but numbers aren't much help to the person who wants to view the photos years from now. Fortunately my uncle had diligently filled in the indexes on the carousel boxes with information about the slides. Unfortunately, he hadn't really grouped the slides themselves in a logical way, so a picture of a nephew in the surf was liable to be followed by a group shot of Thanksgiving dinner. So after the images were on the hard drive in a folder, I had to sort them into subfolders by decades or holiday parties or something.

All of this actually took less time than I had expected — a few hours a day spread over a couple of weeks last July when it was too hot to work in the garden. My goal was to create some CDs of my uncle's slides and send them to one aunt in time for her 81st birthday in early August. Last time I visited her in New Jersey, she was using a 2002 model iMac (the kind with the half-soccer-ball base) to check her stock investments, so I thought she could probably view TIFF files. Also, her son Paul, who lives with her, has a degree in finance, so I thought it likely that he uses a computer. They would be my beta testers, I decided. I emailed him and told him to expect the CDs and to let me know whether they were able to open the files.

Figure 2. An aerial shot of Long Beach Island, NJ, during the March storm of 1962. Original slide taken by G. Maynard Watkins (the author's uncle), scanned as TIFF, sharpened in *iPhoto*.



Complications

It took three CDs to hold all the TIFF versions of my uncle's slides. I sent them off, and waited to find out how my aunt and cousin would react to this first batch. It was disappointing—although not really surprising—to hear from Paul after a week or two that he could not open the files on his Windows PC. “What about the iMac?” I asked. Well, that machine wasn't currently hooked up; they couldn't find the power cord. Inquiring further, I learned that his PC was still running XP and he was clueless about what .tif and .jpg meant. So — back to the drawing board. I asked Paul to be patient until I could convert the files to a format that his PC would understand (even if he didn't).

I thought about possible ways of doing batch conversions of TIFFs to JPEGs and ultimately decided that *Graphic Converter* was the way to go. The download is only around \$40. In November (life had intervened again) I did the batch conversions, burned a new CD, and mailed it off. I was able to get all the files onto a single CD because of their smaller size. Just after Thanksgiving my aunt phoned me herself to tell me how thrilled she was with the pictures and how impressed she was with their clarity. She was planning to print some and send them to other family members.

Feeling good about that success, I hauled out my father's and my husband's slides. I thought maybe I could do some other compilations in time for Christmas. Well, that didn't happen. There were just too many slides and too many other holiday events. But there was one other key decision to make anyway. Briefly second-guessing my choice of format, I tried scanning a few of Dad's slides as JPEGs. The quality was so much worse, though, that I went back to TIFF.

Rewards

Between Christmas and New Year's I finally finished all the TIFF scanning and made backups. I am now engaged in making collections tailored to different recipients. For instance, my college roommate received a CD with pictures from our graduation and her wedding. My husband's niece (his sister's daughter) got pictures

of his side of the family, but not my relatives. I was able to send my “oldest” friend — we met in seventh grade — pictures from the cruise we took to Nassau in 1963. She was so delighted that she wrote to say she had put them in a special album.

I could, of course, use other methods of sharing these pictures, including putting some online. But there are so many that it doesn't seem practical. The Epson software's numbers go to 999 and start over — and they did, on my father's and husband's slides.

Another thing I'll have to figure out is which, if any, images I want to import into *iPhoto* or *Photoshop Elements* and try to improve through cropping or whatever. There are many that could use some help, especially in Dad's group. But all that is for later.

Can my experience be of help to anyone who might still have old slides stored in a closet and wonders whether to pitch them in the trash or spend time and/or money digitizing? I know I am glad I finally did the work on mine. It wasn't as hard as I had feared it might be, and I found a great deal of pleasure in reminiscing as I viewed the slides. The biggest expense was the Epson scanner (around \$600), but it did a great job of speeding up the process, and I am glad I bought it. Incidental expenses were the *Graphic Converter* software and the stacks of CDs and cases. The new iMac and hard drive were items I was going to buy anyway, so I don't count them as part of this project's cost.

Besides, it was all worth it when I got a letter last week from my Aunt Jean. When I had mailed her a CD of all the photos in January, I had apologized for not having sent a Christmas card this year. She replied that the CD was worth at least 10 years of Christmas cards.

If you are interested in the Epson scanner, here's a page showing various models: http://www.epson.com/cgi-bin/Store/jsp/ProductCategory.do?BV_UseBVCookie=yes&oid=-16223

Troubleshooting With Plist Files

By Jay Castillo

Preference files, or plist files as they are known, are important for the proper functioning of your Mac computer. They are also useful tools when you are trying to solve problems with applications, both those that are part of the operating system and those you have installed yourself. What are they? Apple defines plist files as follows:

Preference file, also known as a “properties file,” used by Mac OS X applications; formatted in XML and based on Apple’s Core Foundation DTD; contains properties and configuration settings for various programs.

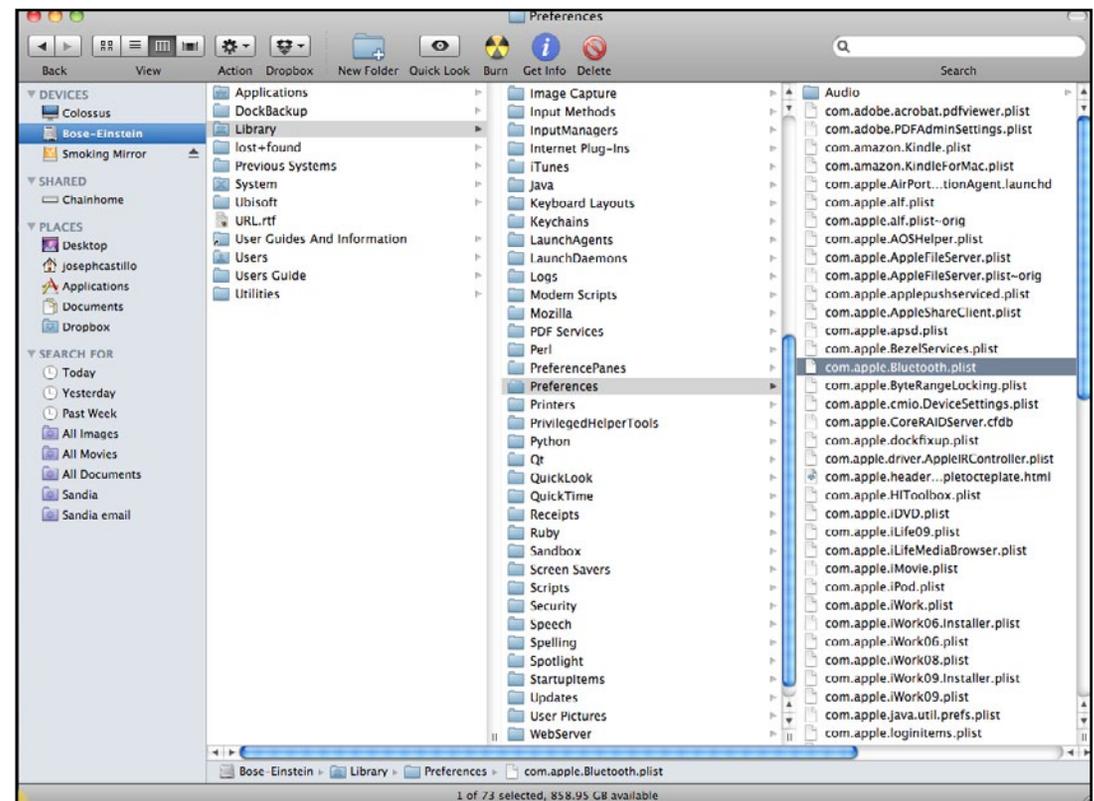
Hence, when you change the *System Preferences*, or any application preferences, the changes you make to the default settings are written to the appropriate plist file.

How to Find Plist Files

Usually, a preference file is named after the application that links to it, and all preference files end in “.plist.” For example, for *Mail*, the preference file is called `com.apple.mail.plist`. The beginning part of the name (“com.apple”) identifies the vendor that created the application. This insures that no two preference files will have the same name. Even if another company creates a program called *Mail*, its plist file will not contain the word “apple,” so there should be no confusion as to which plist file is which.

Plist files are found in two locations. The first is at the system level. Open a *Finder* window and click on your hard drive icon (see Figure 1). Then click on Library>Preferences. You will now see the preferences for system-wide applications, such as *Bluetooth*, that all accounts can use. The second location is your home folder (Figure 2). Again, the path is Library>Preferences. These preferences only apply to your particular choices when using an application.

Figure 1. Where to find system level plist files



Solving A Problem

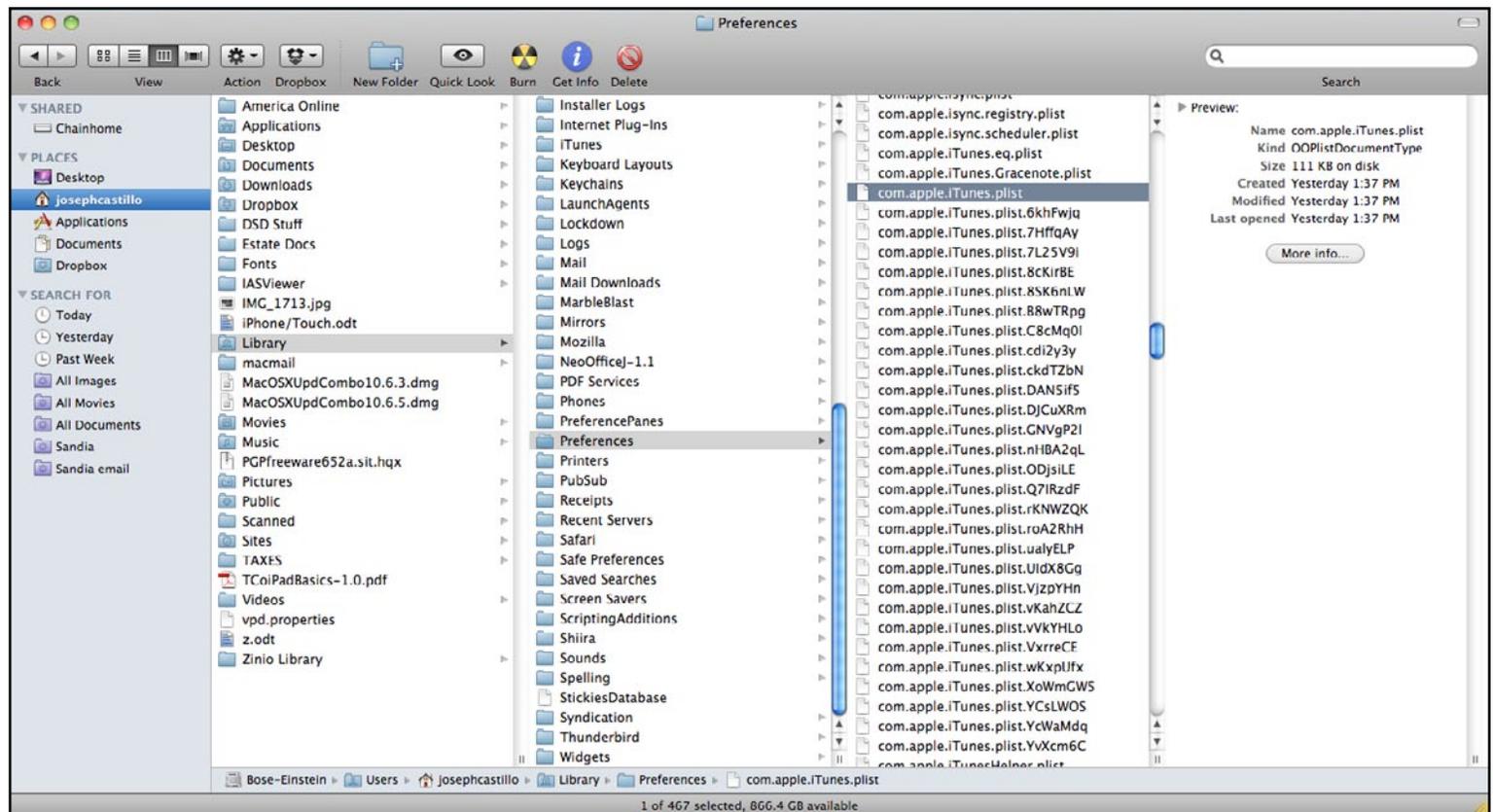
If you have an application that is crashing or otherwise functioning strangely, you may have a corrupted plist file. It's easy to test.

Recently I was trying to import some CDs into *iTunes*. One of the menu choices I needed to use was greyed out, and I didn't think it should have been. I tried the same import procedure using an account I have created and use only for troubleshooting problems. I was able to accomplish my import in this account. I then knew that the problem was specific to my personal account and not a general fault with the operating system. When I went to my account preferences to find the *iTunes* plist file (Figure 2), I was surprised to find almost 30 *iTunes* plist files! At first I was uncertain which to choose. Then I noticed that all the plist filenames but one ended with a random string of letters and numbers. Consulting the Apple Discussions site, I discovered that this was a known issue and that all these files with long names contained zero bits. Only the first *iTunes* plist file contained content — and thus only this plist file was valid.

If you have a problem application you should locate the plist file for that application and...throw it away! Move the file to your Desktop or to the Trash. Restart the application, and the preference file will be reconstituted with default settings. If the problem goes

away, the plist file was the culprit, and the old file can be discarded. If, however, the problem persists, the original plist file can be replaced, reestablishing your custom settings. I followed this step with *iTunes*, and it cured my problem.

Figure 2. Where to find user preference files.





Going Paperless @ Home

By Neil McNamara

A confluence of events resulted in my ending the practice of filing various bits of paper at home. I eased into the process with some trepidation, but after a couple of years I can honestly say, I am a digital junky, and it feels great!

Figure 1. *Finder* is my tool of choice for filing away my digitized records. As you can see, my whole life — at least the last four years of it — is neatly tucked away in just a few folders.

The whole process started when I bought my first Mac in 2007. I took advantage of the \$100 printer rebate offer and also brought home a Canon all-in-one printer/scanner/copier/fax. I figured I wouldn't need the printer, but the other functions would come in handy. I was right. I rarely print with the all-in-one device, but I scan documents with it almost daily. I now have nearly four years of records archived in what I describe as my Magical Filing Cabinet.

My first experience with going paperless involved photographs. I wanted to preserve my old photographs before they deteriorated. I wanted to have them all in one place, on my Mac. I used the scanner function of the Canon all-in-one device, and the machine and process met my expectations. All my photo images are readily available and fully organized in one central location. The seed for similarly scanning paper documents had been planted.

Financial and credit card companies were touting electronic statements and monthly bills as a means to go green. I quickly discovered that it was easier to download and file a PDF document than it was to add another paper statement or invoice to my desk



drawer, which, by the way, was overflowing. I was reassured by the fact that of all of the computers I have ever owned, I have never come close to filling up a hard drive. This was going to be a good move for me and my home office, with its overburdened drawer space.

Today my routine is to bring in the US mail, toss the junk, and scan the important stuff, which then gets tossed or shredded, as appropriate. I have progressed beyond saving just financial data; I have lots of household records archived as well. For example, my garage door has been acting up a lot in the past year. It's 18 years old and showing its age. I have taken to scanning the invoices from the service calls so that I can see what it is costing me. (The result is that my wife and I have decided it is time to replace the door this spring.) I found it was equally useful to scan the invoices from the pesticide guy, our handyman when he comes, and anyone else we do business with. No paper record escapes being digitized in our house.

It is ridiculously easy to scan a document and file the image. In fact, my scanner has a document feeder so I can load several documents in the tray and then have the scanner do its magic with them all at once. This could be an important time saver if a person were to join the paperless ranks and had old records they wanted to scan into electronic files.

As for filing my digital records, I use the simplest of methods. The Mac OS X application *Finder* is more than adequate to build and organize folders to keep digital records. In my case, everything fits under a handful of categories in aptly named folders. As can be seen in Figure 1, fifteen folders pretty much covers all aspects of what we are saving in our household. As a result, my files, which have become a vast archive of my life, are invisible. They rest comfortably inside my Mac, where they take up no physical space in my Magical Filing Cabinet.

As far as insuring that I don't lose any of the files I have created, I have been diligently using the *Time Machine* application coupled with Apple's Time Capsule. This saved my bacon in 2009 when the hard drive in my Mac failed. I took the computer in to the Apple Store, where the helpful guys at the Genius Bar replaced the hard drive, and I was able to restore my files from my last *Time Machine* backup. Because I had AppleCare on the Mac, Apple did the work for free. I lost no data and it cost me exactly zero. Sweet!

As you can see, there isn't much to this story. The whole process is simple and fast, but the results speak volumes when it comes to saving space and having your records readily at hand. With a quick *Spotlight* search, I can find most anything in seconds. Think about it. Maybe you will become a digital fanatic like I am.



Figure 2. My Canon PIXMA MX-310 all-in-one. This bad boy gets a real workout when it comes to scanning. Oh, if I had a nickel for every piece of paper that has passed over the glass on this machine!

Spam Words

By Bob Jarecke

In the article on spam in the last edition of the *Journal*, I mentioned that you should avoid using certain words or phrases in your emails, if you want your message to get through. This is because, when spam filters scrutinize emails, they look for certain words and phrases that they consider suspect. If the suspect content registers a high enough point value, the spam filter will label the email as spam and deal with it according to the spam preferences established.

Below is a list of words, phrases and content that spam filters read as suspect. The highlighted entries are the most notorious as perceived by *SpamAssassin v 2.43*. I got this list off the Internet, although I omitted all of the porn spam words and phrases, to keep this article G-rated,

Look over the list. Are you guilty of using any of this?

4U	Bulk email	Claims to be in accordance with some spam law	Congratulations	Free cell phone	Insurance
Accept credit cards	Buy direct	Claims to be legal	Consolidate debt and credit	Free consultation	Investment decision
Act now! Don't hesitate!	Buying judgments	Claims you are a winner	Copy accurately	Free DVD	It's effective
Additional income	Cable converter	Claims you can be removed from the list	Copy DVDs	Free grant money	Join millions of Americans
Addresses on CD	Call free	Claims you registered with some kind of partner	Credit bureaus	Free hosting	Laser printer
All natural	Call now	Click below	Credit card offers	Free installation	Limited time only
Amazing	Calling creditors	Click here link	Cures baldness	Free investment	Long distance phone offer
Amazing stuff	Cannot be combined with any other offer	Click to remove	Dear email	Free leads	Lose weight spam
Apply Online	Cancel at any time	Click to remove mail to	Dear friend	Free membership	Lower interest rates
As seen on	Can't live without	Collect child support	Dear somebody	Free offer	Lower monthly payment
Billing address	Cash bonus	Compare rates	Different reply to	Free preview	Lowest price
Auto email removal	Cashcashcash	Compete for your business	Dig up dirt on friends	Free priority mail	Luxury car
Avoid bankruptcy	Casino	Confidentially on all orders	Direct email	Free quote	Mail in order form
Be amazed	Cell phone cancer scam		Direct marketing	Free sample	Marketing solutions
Be your own boss	Cents on the dollar		Discusses search engine listings	Free trial	Mass email
Being a member	Check or money order		Do it today	Free website	Meet singles
Big bucks	Claims not to be selling anything		Don't delete	Full refund	Member stuff
Bill 1618			Drastically reduced	Get it now	Message contains disclaimer
Billion dollars			Earn per week	Get paid	Money back
Brand new pager			Easy terms	Get started now	Money making
			Eliminate bad credit	Gift certificate	Month trial offer
			Email harvest	Great offer	More Internet traffic
			Email marketing	Guarantee	Mortgage rates
			Expect to earn	Have you been turned down?	Multi level marketing
			Fantastic deal	Hidden assets	MLM
			Fast Viagra delivery	Home employment	Name brand
			Financial freedom	Human growth hormone	New customers only
			Find out anything	If only it were that easy	New domain extensions
			For free	In accordance with laws	Nigerian
			For instant access	Increase sales	No age restrictions
			For just \$ (some amt)	Increase traffic	No catch
			Free access		

No claim forms
 No cost
 No credit check
 No disappointment
 No experience
 No fees
 No gimmick
 No inventory
No investment
 No medical exams
 No middleman
 No obligation
 No purchase necessary
 No questions asked
 No selling
 No strings attached
 Not intended
 Off shore
 Offer expires
 Offers coupon
 Offers extra cash
 Offers free (often stolen)
 passwords
 Once in lifetime
 One hundred percent free
 One hundred percent
 guaranteed
 One time mailing
 Online biz opportunity
 Online pharmacy
 Only \$
 Opportunity
 Opt in
 Order now
 Order status
 Orders shipped by priority
 mail

Outstanding values
 Pennies a day
 People just leave money
 laying around
 Please read
 Potential earnings
 Print form signature
 Print out and fax
 Produced and sent out
 Profits
Promise you ...!
 Pure profit
 Real thing
 Refinance home
 Removal instructions
 Remove in quotes
 Remove subject
Removes wrinkles
 Reply remove subject
 Requires initial investment
 Reserves the right
Reverses aging
 Risk free
 Round the world
 S 1618
 Safeguard notice
 Satisfaction guaranteed
 Save \$
 Special promotion
 Save big money
 Save up to
 Score with babes
Search engine listings
 Section 301
 See for yourself
 Sent in compliance
Serious cash

Serious only
 Shopping spree
 Sign up free today
 Social security number
 Stainless steel
 Stock alert
**Stock disclaimer
 statement**
 Stock pick
 Strong buy
Stop snoring
 Stuff on sale
 Subject to credit
 Supplies are limited
 Take action now
 Talks about hidden
 charges
 Talks about prizes
Tells you it's an ad
 Terms and conditions
 The best rates
 The following form
 They keep your money —
 no refund!
 They're just giving it away
 This isn't junk
 This isn't spam
 University diplomas
 Unlimited
 Unsecured credit/debt
 Urgent
 US dollars
 Vacation offers
 Viagra and other drugs
 Wants credit card
 We hate spam
 We honor all

Weekend getaway
 What are you waiting for?
 While supplies last
 While you sleep
 Who really wins?
 Why pay more?
 Will not believe your eyes
 Winner
 Winning
 Work at home
 You have been selected
 Your income

For the most part, the words, phrases, and content in this list are geared toward a marketing or newsletter type of email. It would be madness to try and hopscotch around these and other targeted words in your personal email. The list is a reminder, though, that if your email goes unanswered, it may not be because you are being ignored, but rather because the recipient didn't see your email. Spam filters can be such pesky things!

In case you are interested, I found another resource, at http://codex.wordpress.org/Spam_Words, that has a long laundry list of words and phrases pertaining to comments on blog pages. Yes, blog comment sections are subject to spamming too! The list was provided to bloggers to plug in to their blogging software to filter out unwanted ads and other solicitations from within the comments section of their online blogs.

ZAGGmate w/Keyboard

By Kevin W. Parker

When I first bought my iPad, I toed the Apple party line. I bought the functional but drab Apple case, and the Apple iPad keyboard dock. I chose the dockable keyboard over the Bluetooth version because I wanted to be able to type with the iPad at an easily viewable angle rather than flat on a desktop.

Buyer's remorse set in quickly, once the novelty of having an iPad wore off. I soon learned that there were far more elegant options for protecting one's iPad, such as the ColcaSac sleeve (<http://www.colcasac.com/ipad-sleeve>) or the DODOcase (<http://www.dodocase.com/>). I also found that the Apple keyboard dock was ungainly and awkward to pack, since the stand that supports the iPad does not fold (see Figure 1).

I dithered for months but finally settled on the ZAGGmate w/keyboard. The case is compact, and so travels well. In position, the case and iPad combination take



Figure 1. The Apple keyboard doesn't pack well for travelling.

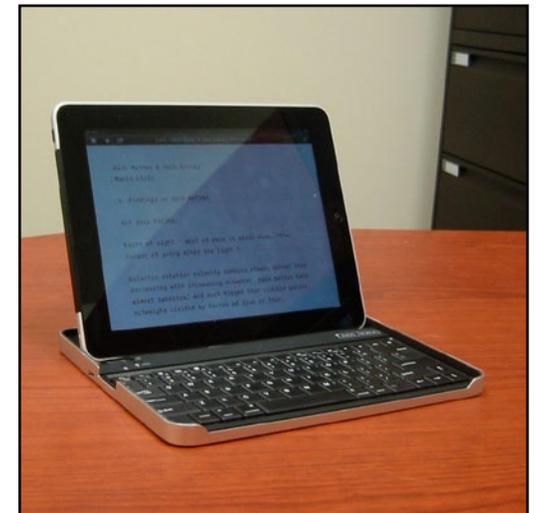
up only a little more space than the iPad alone. The case does a good job of protection as well. The ZAGGmate's aircraft-grade aluminum, which matches the look of the iPad, and its high-density padding provide good protection for the tablet. And it is elegant (see Figure 2).

The ZAGGmate and iPad separate easily. The keyboard uses a Bluetooth interface, so you have the option of either setting the iPad to one side and typing away, or else standing the iPad up in a slot at the back of the keyboard and leaning it against the ZAGGmate's folding hinge. So far, I've always used it in the standing position (see Figure 3).



Figure 2. As you can see, the iPad plus ZAGGmate is only marginally thicker than the iPad alone.

Figure 3. The iPad sits in a slot behind the keyboard, and rests against a folding hinge, so you can type with the iPad standing up at an easily viewable angle.



The primary disadvantage of the ZAGGmate is that the keyboard is small compared with the Apple keyboard. This is an issue for me because I have large hands (Figure 4) I have also been annoyed at how quickly the keyboard's battery runs down when I forget and leave the Bluetooth interface on, which is frequently. It would also be nice if there were some way of stowing the ZAGGmate on the back of the iPad when you don't need the keyboard but don't want to just leave it lying around. On balance, though, the advantages outweigh these disadvantages.



Figure 4. The ZAGGmate keyboard is quite a bit smaller than the Apple keyboard — potentially a problem for those of us with large hands.

I made extensive use of the iPad with the ZAGGmate on a recent visit to my parents. I had to spend several hours keeping up with my job while there, for which I needed Internet access. With dialup as the only alternative available in the house, I used the iPad's cellular connection. The tablet sat in the keyboard on one side of the desk, while my office laptop sat on the other side. For offline activities, I used the laptop. When I needed to check or send emails or do some online research, I just turned to the iPad. This was a very effective approach. The keyboard size was only a minor annoyance, and I prevented the battery rundown problem by just leaving the keyboard plugged in the entire time.

So I am very happy with the ZAGGmate w/keyboard, and would recommend it to anyone looking for a compact, elegant, rugged solution to traveling with an iPad and keyboard.

The ZAGGmate w/ keyboard is available for \$99.99 directly from ZAGG (<http://www.zagg.com/accessories/zaggmate-ipad-case>), from numerous mail-order retailers, or in-store at Best Buy. ZAGG also offers a ZAGGmate iPad case without a keyboard, for \$69.99.

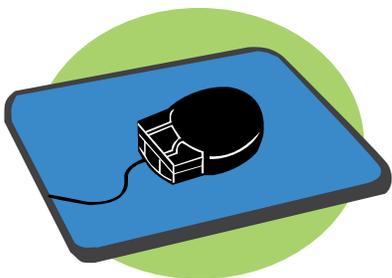
Pi Membership Benefit #3

The Journal

The *Journal* is an informative and educational reader produced by the club's Publications Committee on a bi-monthly basis. This electronic publication is replete with articles from Pi members. There are also notices of club activities and occasional reprints of articles that the editors feel the membership will find enlightening. The average number of pages for the periodical is a bit over 30.

The content for the *Journal* is membership based, and thus the periodical's articles are eclectic. There are recurring features too, such as the Tips & Tricks series, which gives short hints that may enhance the reader's computing knowledge or skills. There is even a comic or two to keep the reading light. A new series has just been added called One More Thing; it occupies the last page. Check it out!





Clicking the Right Button

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I would like to share with you a tiny personal frustration in the hope that by doing so, I can eventually eliminate it. The frustration is that in nearly every Mac-related book and article I write, the Powers That Be require me to add cumbersome extra words - over and over again - to explain how to click one of the buttons on your mouse (or trackball or trackpad).

What I want to be able to say is, “right-click” (followed by whatever it is you should right-click on, and what you should do afterwards), but what my editors invariably make me say is “Control-click (or right-click)” — that is, hold down the Control key while clicking, or alternatively click the right—hand mouse button. Presumably they do this because of a belief that a large percentage of Mac users don’t know what a right click is, don’t have an input device that can perform a right click, or have deliberately chosen not to enable this feature on their input device — meaning the only guaranteed way to get the desired end result is to Control-click. After all, for many years Macs had only one-button mice, and to this day don’t require two-button mice, so to tell someone to right-click — so the thinking goes — is to tell them to do something that may be incomprehensible or even impossible.

Except I don’t buy that. It was true a decade ago, of course, but it is far from true today. But for those few of you who are still scratching your heads over the notion of a right click, I want to not only clear things up once and for all but also persuade you that a second mouse button (or its trackpad equivalent) is a true friend that will, once you get properly acquainted, fill you with

joy for the rest of your days. I also have some other things to say about that extra button that may be of interest to everyone, however comfortable you may already be with a multi-button mouse.

Hot Button Issue — By way of disclosure and background, you should know that I spent five years (1997-2002) managing the development of Kensington’s MouseWorks software for both Mac and Windows, which, among other things, enables users to define the functions of all the buttons on certain Kensington input devices. During my tenure at the company, we released a trackball with 11 buttons and a touchpad device called WebRacer with no fewer than 22 buttons! The software has apparently languished in recent years — I don’t know anything about that, so don’t ask! — but I’m just saying that my professional involvement with multi-button input devices goes way back, and undoubtedly gives me a certain bias.

I should also mention another bias here at the outset: I’m right-handed. As my wife, who’s left-handed, would be quick to point out, the whole notion of a “right click” is a bit discriminatory, as left-handed people tend to use their left index finger to click their primary mouse button (on the right side of the mouse) and their middle finger to click the secondary button (on the left side of the mouse). So the neutral term — and the one Apple uses - is “secondary click,” but the nature of English is such that that expression works well as a noun but less well as a verb. I can tell you to “right-click” something, but it sounds awkward to “secondary-click” something. So, with apologies to the lefties out

I am convinced that the vast majority of people who read what I write about the Mac are sufficiently attuned to modern ways to know exactly what I mean by right-clicking and that no further explanation is necessary, even if they physically lack a second mouse button.

there, I follow the convention (long established in the Windows world) of using “right-click” to mean “click the secondary button,” which is to say the logical right button, even if it happens to be physically located on the left (or top or bottom or elsewhere) on your input device of choice.

A Scroll Down Memory Lane — Let’s zip back in time to 1984. The Mac is brand new, and one of its nifty innovations (although not in fact invented by Apple) is a little box called a mouse. The mouse made the Mac’s unique graphical interface possible, and introduced an entirely new way for people to interact with computers. Instead of having to memorize commands that you must type on a keyboard, you could point at words and pictures on the screen, and by clicking that big button on top of the mouse, tell it to take some action. At the time, some people saw the mouse as superfluous and confusing — everybody already understands keyboards, and they work just fine, don’t they? — but it caught on quickly enough and soon became a normal way to operate a computer.

The original Mac mouse had only one button, because the operating system was designed to need just one. Apple wanted to make the operation of the computer as simple and obvious as possible, and one of their design principles was to make the user interface “discoverable” — that is, it should be as easy as possible to figure out what everything does and how to perform any operation, with minimal dependence on documentation, labels, and other external cues. As history has shown, that approach worked remarkably well, and the single-button mouse was an important contributing factor to the success of the Mac in particular, and of graphical interfaces generally.

Of course, the Mac’s interface didn’t remain unique for long. Microsoft Windows 1.0, released in 1985, supported (but didn’t require) a mouse, as did graphical shells developed for various versions of Unix, as well as a long list of other operating systems that are no longer with us. What was different about the Windows approach, however, was the assumption that your mouse would have (at least) two buttons. (In much of the Unix world, three-button mice were the norm, but I’m going to ignore that in this article.)

So, why the extra button? Microsoft wanted to give users and developers more flexibility. The left mouse button selected or activated what you clicked on (just as on a Mac), whereas the right button was available for developers to use as they saw fit, and in the early years of Windows, the behavior of that button varied quite a bit. Starting with Windows 95 (released in 1995), standard behavior for the right mouse button in Windows was to display a pop-up menu at the pointer location with a list of commands relevant to whatever it was you clicked on. And that’s what most people have come to assume that “right click” means, at least on a PC.

By late 1997, Apple had clearly seen the value of those contextual pop-up menus, which could simplify activities such as copying, pasting, or modifying whatever text, icon, or other object happened to be under the mouse pointer. With the release of Mac OS 8, Mac users finally got the capability that had been standard on Windows for a couple of years, but because Mac mice still had only one button, the way to access this capability was to hold down the Control key while clicking that one button. That was the genesis of the Control-click.

Giving the Finger to the Right Button — Mac users immediately noticed and complained about the fact that it required two hands to do this common activity that Windows users could perform with one finger. But Apple’s position was that Mice Have One Button - period. The company steadfastly refused to complicate the elegant Mac design by adding an extra, potentially confusing button. After all, what is there about that second button to hint at its use? How will people know what it’s for? What if they click the wrong button by mistake and get unexpected results? No, those things aren’t consistent with the smooth, uncluttered design of the Mac. Apple wasn’t merely saying Mac mice shouldn’t have multiple buttons, but implying that Mac users were wrong to want them. It wasn’t the Macintosh way.

Of course, Apple wasn’t the only company building mice and other pointing devices that could work on a Mac, and other developers — including Kensington, Logitech, and even Microsoft — were only too happy to meet users’ demands by selling multi-button Mac mice. These invariably required custom driver software to connect the extra button(s) to some activity, and in order to make the right mouse button produce a contextual menu the same way the right button does in Windows, the software simply emulated a Control-click. Mice with more than two buttons let you assign other activities (such as double-clicking, emulating menu commands, or typing text) to the additional buttons.

It wasn’t until the release of Mac OS X in 2001 that Apple built support for multi-button mice directly into the operating system. You could plug any old 2-button USB mouse into a Mac running Mac OS X 10.0, and that right button would magically pop up a contextual

menu — no extra software or Control-click emulation required! And if your mouse had more than two buttons, Mac OS X understood them and passed them along to the active application for processing in whatever way it deemed fit.

That development was a boon to users and a convenience to companies making multi-button mice, but Apple persisted in its practice — which by this point appeared rather bloody-minded — of selling only single-button mice.

But surely, you might be thinking, Apple had a valid point — two buttons are indeed more complicated than one, right? To understand why having two buttons can reduce complexity rather than increase it, you have only to think of a digital clock. Have you ever tried to set the time on a clock with just one button? You have to hold it down until the right time cycles around — and if you don't release it at the right time, you must wait for another cycle, a real pain. With two buttons you can go at multiple speeds, or forward/backward, depending on the clock's design. With three, maybe you can toggle AM/PM with a single press rather than having to cycle through 24 hours. And if the clock has a full keypad, it's simpler still - just type in the exact time and you're done. So, multiple buttons may look more complicated, but in fact they sometimes make the user interface simpler because they reduce the complexity of the action you must perform to accomplish some task. Multi-button mice are the same way.

(On the other hand, despite the fact that Windows had right-clicking long before the Mac did, Microsoft made what I regard as a poor design choice: they made some actions available only via a right click,

which makes them harder to find. Apple's Human Interface Guidelines, by contrast, stipulate [1]: "Always ensure that contextual menu items are also available as menu commands. A contextual menu is hidden by default and a user might not know it exists, so it should never be the only way to access a command. In particular, you should not use a contextual menu as the only way to access an advanced or power-user feature." Alas, Apple occasionally ignores their own policy, as in the case of iPhoto's Detect Missing Faces and Rescan for Location commands, but at least the principle is sound. One other note: for better or worse, unlike Windows, Mac OS X has never had a concept of right-click-and-drag, as you might do to create a shortcut, for example.)

Apple Gets It Right, Sort Of — Hell finally froze over in August 2005 when Apple introduced the Mighty Mouse (now called the Apple Mouse due to a legal complication over the name). This new rodent had physical sensors on both left and right sides of the top, a switch that activated when you squeezed the mouse, and a sensor that detected when the tiny trackball (for scrolling) was pressed down. This made for a total of four logical buttons, even though the case had no visible physical buttons (you press the entire top of the case to click, and the left or right "button" registers depending on which part of the case your finger is in contact with). Finally, using a genuine Apple mouse, users could right-click properly — and then some!

Interestingly, though, the fact that the Mighty Mouse had the equivalent of four buttons didn't seem to change Apple's official stance. For one thing, the mouse's physical design meant Apple could maintain the illusion that it still wasn't selling a multi-button mouse (or in fact a mouse with any buttons at all).

For another, the default behavior of Mac OS X was to treat both the left and right sensors on top of the mouse the same — as a standard click. That is, out of the box, the Mighty Mouse was still a one-button mouse! Users were now obligated to change a setting in System Preferences explicitly to make the right "button" perform a right click.

Apple's recent release of the Magic Mouse has continued this trend. Now not only have the buttons disappeared but so has the scrolling mechanism, replaced by a more capable, but invisible, multi-touch sensor. Unfortunately, the Magic Mouse has only two logical buttons rather than four, which is a giant step backward in functionality.

Tap Into the Power — The story regarding right-clicking on laptops is a bit more complicated. No Apple laptop has ever had more than one physical trackpad button, and current models have no visible buttons at all — the entire trackpad is a button, and how it behaves depends on the number, position, and motion of fingers touching the pad.

For a long time, the only way users of Mac laptops could display a contextual menu was to hold down the Control key while clicking the single trackpad button (or use an external pointing device). Trackpads on Mac laptops introduced since January 2005 have the option — if you enable it — of producing a right-click response when you hold two fingertips on the trackpad and click the button (on some models) or tap with two fingers at the same time (on others). Even before that, one could use Raging Menace's \$15 Sidetrack [2] software to "right-click" by tapping on the trackpad. And beginning with the MacBook Air introduced in February 2008, Mac laptops began using

multi-touch trackpads that optionally produce a right click response when you tap in a designated (lower left or lower right) corner of the trackpad. With that configuration, it can literally be a right click, but in any case, laptop users have no longer needed both hands to get at contextual menus for several years.

Getting Right to the Point — As far as I can tell, Apple no longer sells single-button mice at all. Your current choices are the Apple Mouse (four logical buttons, wired) or Magic Mouse (two logical buttons, wireless). Every desktop Mac model introduced in October 2005 or later that included a mouse came with a multi-button mouse, and every laptop Mac model introduced in January 2005 or later has a trackpad that can produce a secondary click with one hand. So everyone whose Mac is four years old or newer has the capability to right-click, whether or not it's enabled in System Preferences. Anyone running any version of Mac OS X with a third-party multi-button mouse, trackball, or trackpad can also right-click. And even users of Macs running System 7 can — with a third-party input device and its accompanying software — perform a right click.

In short, Mac users who lack the hardware capability to right-click are increasingly few and far between, and the vast majority of those could remedy that situation, if they choose to do so, with nothing more than a \$5, two-button mouse.

If you are one of those people without an input device that can right-click - or if you have the capability but haven't enabled it - I urge you to join the ranks of multiple clickers at your earliest opportunity! To reiterate, the key advantage is that you'll be able to display a contextual menu with one finger, rather than

two hands. Even if you normally keep both hands on the keyboard, you'll probably find, with a day or two of practice, that right-clicking requires less effort and coordination than Control-clicking — and that it quickly becomes second nature.

And if you don't yet use contextual menus at all, well, you don't know what you're missing. Because that pop-up menu is right at your pointer location, you needn't move the pointer across a (possibly large) screen to access common menu commands such as Paste, Duplicate, Label, and many others - depending, of course, on context. Even if you prefer keyboard shortcuts to menu commands (as I do most of the time), there are often cases in which you must select something (with the mouse) before performing a command. When you can select and perform the command with one click, rather than selecting first, returning your hand(s) to the keyboard, and then pressing some keys, you save all sorts of effort.

If I've persuaded you to give right-clicking a try and you have a pointing device that supports it (which, I believe, should be pretty much everyone reading this), you can turn on the feature somewhere in System Preferences. The exact method depends on which version of Mac OS X you're using, whether you have a wired or Bluetooth pointing device, a trackpad, or some combination of these, and whether or not your device is made by Apple. But in general, do one of the following:

- For older Apple mice and third-party pointing devices without their own software, open the Mouse pane of System Preferences. Choose Secondary Button from the pop-up menu pointing to the button you want to use for right-clicking.

- For the Apple Magic Mouse, open the Mouse pane of System Preferences. Make sure Secondary Click is checked, and choose either Left or Right from the pop-up menu to determine which side you should press for a secondary click.
- For Mac laptops, open the Trackpad pane of System Preferences and check either Tap Trackpad Using Two Fingers for Secondary Click or Place Two Fingers on Trackpad and Click Button for Secondary Click.
- For third-party pointing devices with their own software, follow the documentation included to assign a right (or secondary) click to the button of your choice.

And that's it. Point at something, click your secondary button (typically with your middle finger), and notice what happens. Try it again with other things — text selections in various programs, icons in the Finder, graphics in a drawing application, and so on — and take note of how the commands change. Once you've gotten into the habit of performing common actions this way, you'll never want to go back to a single-button mouse. And you'll know exactly what I mean when I tell you to right-click!

[1]: http://developer.apple.com/mac/library/DOCUMENTATION/UserExperience/Conceptual/ApplesHIGuidelines/XHIGMenus/XHIGMenus.html#//apple_ref/doc/uid/TP30000356-TPXREF113

[2]: <http://www.ragingmenace.com/software/sidetrack/>





Figure 1. Just look at the Snowball microphone and you can tell how it got its name.



Figure 2. On the back of the Snowball you can see the USB connection, and the mode-selector switch.

Coming To Grips With The Snowball Microphone

By Bill Kingsley

I have a Snowball microphone that I use for *iChat* sessions. The Snowball is a USB microphone from Blue Microphones, that is touted as a professional microphone at a consumer-friendly price. The Snowball does not offer important functionality that is common among much more expensive studio units; it provides USB 2.0 connectivity only, and just three sensitivity modes. But it is suitable for capturing both a single voice or musical instrument, and for recording a group of people or instruments — and for doing so with good fidelity.

As the manufacturer describes it:

The Snowball was designed to provide a wide range of applications where a high quality transducer is needed, but so is ease of use and setup. Though most professional sound engineers prefer certain microphones for certain applications, we designed the Snowball for a wide variety of sources. Here are some suggested applications we came up with when we were locked in Blue's patented anechoic think tank: instrument and voice for music production/pre-production/demos, DV-looping/dialog, podcasting, sound effects, audio sampling, interactive programming, video

sweetening/post, internet telephony, internal conferencing, recording lectures, poetry slams, spoken word performances and speeches by your favorite politician—generally anywhere where you need an easy-to-use microphone and you have access to a computer with a USB port. Happy recording!

Presumably the Snowball was also designed to capture market share in a somewhat neglected market niche, namely one where excellent fidelity is desired but the budget does not support studio-quality versatility. It has a list price of only \$100; as of this writing, Amazon is offering it for less than \$65.

What you get

The Snowball, presumably so named because of its design (see Figure 1), has a fixed digital 16-bit output at 44.1 KHz, that the manual describes as “just like a CD.” There is a slide switch on the back of the chassis (see Figure 2), a 3-position mode selector switch, that is used to select omni-directional pickup or directional (cardioid) operation. Omni-directional is appropriate for auditing multiple sound sources that are separated in space; directional is used for recording a solo performance, such as a single-person podcast, while reducing interference from ambient noise. There is a

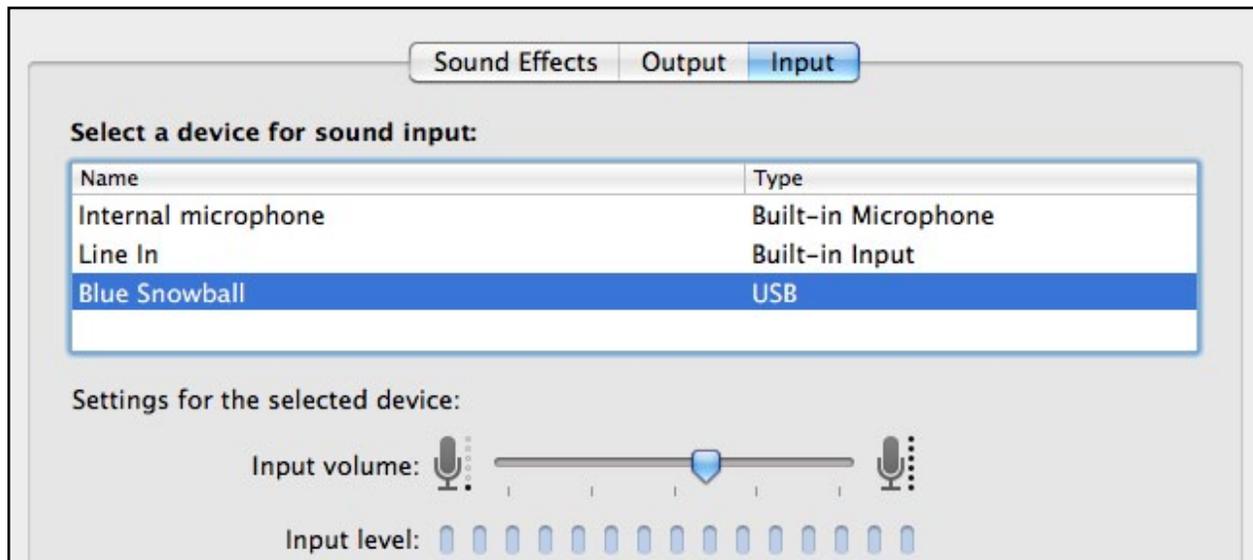


Figure 3 (Top). Here is the Snowball mounted on its tripod, next to a Logitech Webcam.

third mode, which can be selected to attenuate the signal in order to avoid overload and distortion.

There are two microphone cartridges nestled in foam inside the chassis. These are the size of small buttons, circular in shape, about one half inch wide and maybe a quarter inch deep, with several perforations on their front sides for sound entry. One of the cartridges, the one for omni-directional pickup, also has perforations on its back side in order to collect more sound from elsewhere in the room.

Figure 4 (Below). Go to *System Preferences*, to the Sound pane, click on Input, and select the Snowball microphone from the list of available options. That's it.



The microphone comes with a small tripod (see Figure 3), and with the USB cable you need to hook it up to your computer.

The Pros

The Snowball, its tripod and cable, are heavy and solid, well designed to provide simplicity of operation, and are aesthetically pleasing. The chassis is available in four different finishes: textured white, gloss white, gloss black and brushed aluminum. I selected brushed aluminum, but found that it was much more highly reflective than expected — more like Edsel chrome than Apple aluminum. If I were to do it again, I would choose the textured white.

Also on the plus side, installation is incredibly easy. In fact, the most difficult step by far in the installation process is getting the product out of its packaging. It is obvious that considerable time and effort has been expended on the design and creation of the display box. Once tediously opened (or ripped vigorously asunder), the box reveals: (1) a spherical microphone chassis about 4" in diameter; (2) a tripod which can be adjusted from 4½" to 6" high; (3) a 6' heavy-duty shielded USB cable; and (4) a typically small manual written in both French and English. The manual includes abbreviated instructions for use of the Snowball with Apple's *GarageBand* application, as well as with several Windows applications.

Screwing the chassis onto its included tripod does pose a small challenge, because the tripod provides an unobtrusive swivel function, which can permit the chassis to be rotated endlessly without effecting any thread tightening. Once the knurled swivel adjustment is discovered, and mounting completed, connect one end of the USB cable to the chassis and the other end

to a powered USB port on the computer, or to a powered USB hub, to power up the unit for use.

The final step is to designate the Snowball as the audio input source. Go to *System Preferences*, click on Sound, and then on the Input tab. Select Snowball from the list, and you are good to go. (See Figure 4.)

The manual mentions an optional accessory, namely a “ringer,” which provides elastic shock mounting for the Snowball — or for any microphone having a standard thread mount. Since the chassis also meets the thread standard, the microphone can be mounted on any conventional tripod as well as the short one that is shipped with it.

The Cons

According to the manual, the Snowball sample rate and word length are not user-definable. Also, since the Snowball is USB-only, it cannot be used with a typical audio mixer.

In addition, there is no ON/OFF switch, and no indication of the microphone being “live.” The bright LED atop the chassis glows red when the USB cable is attached to a powered socket, but that does not indicate whether or not the microphone is passing data to an application.

And the Verdict is . . .

So far, I have used the Snowball only for *iChat* sessions with a single person at each end of the line, so I am not in a position to evaluate the microphone’s full capabilities. In this application, however, it has done very well. In comparison to the built-in microphone in the MacBook Pro, the sound is fuller with greater dynamic range, and I am able to move about in my chair without the sound level falling off appreciably, even when I am not speaking directly into the computer screen. The cons that I have identified seem minor compared to the benefits of the product.

All in all I am well pleased with the Snowball, and would recommend it.

<http://www.bluemic.com/snowball/>



My Adventures Transcribing Audio Recordings into Meeting Minutes

By Neil Ferguson

I am the recording secretary of an organization for which I prepare minutes of weekly meetings. I have also had the distinct pleasure of recording the minutes of a Washington Apple Pi Board Meeting when the Secretary was absent. (When the WAP President asked for a volunteer to take the minutes, I figured I already do it on a regular basis, so up went my hand.) That experience in turn led to this article about how I transcribe an audio recording of a meeting into a written record. A short disclaimer: there may be better methods for doing this sort of thing, and I, for one, would like to know about them — provided

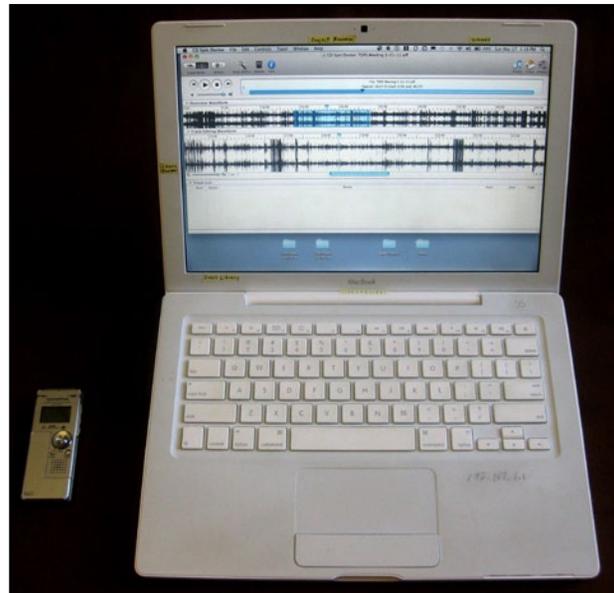
that, like the methods I use, they have little or no cost associated with them. Anyway, here it goes.

I have two options for making a recording (Figure 1). I can use my MacBook, with its internal microphone, to record directly onto my computer, or I can record using my Olympus WS-300M recorder, a small digital voice recorder that fits nicely in my shirt pocket. If I use the Olympus recorder, I have to connect the recorder to the Mac through a USB connection to upload the recorded audio file. When recording with the MacBook, I use one of two applications: the

QuickTime Player application (*QuickTime X* in Mac OS X 10.6), which comes with every Mac; or *CD Spin Doctor*, which I received free with *Toast*, a disc burn program. Now here is the rub: I can end up with three different file types, depending on the device and the software applications I use. *QuickTime* records in *mov* format, *CD Spin Doctor* in *aiff* format, and the Olympus voice recorder in *wma* format. Go figure.

Transcribing the audio requires stopping and repositioning the playback head many, many times while typing up a meeting's minutes. I find that the *aiff* format in *CD Spin Doctor* works best for me. *CD Spin Doctor* presents a graphic waveform of the audio that is helpful, and it also has a time scale that shows fractions of a minute. This allows for fairly precise positioning of the playhead for playing back sections when I have trouble deciphering what was said. Conversely, the *QuickTime* Player interface shows the audio track sans waveform. The playhead in *QuickTime* can easily be manipulated, but repositioning to a precise spot in the soundtrack is not easy. I have been told that I could use the arrow keys to make small movements of the playhead, but as of this writing I have not been successful in getting that to work for me. (Note to self: ask about this feature on the TCS.) Using the *wma* formatted output of the digital recorder requires a third-party application called *VLC*, which is similar to *QuickTime* but not as easy to use.

Figure 1. Two options for recording a meeting: a MacBook or a digital recorder (Olympus WS-300M). The MacBook's internal microphone works quite well but positioning the laptop for the best reception is not as easy as placing a small digital recorder like the Olympus in just the right spot.



Overall, I lean toward using *CD Spin Doctor* because it is very easy to use. When you launch *CD Spin Doctor* you see three buttons. Click the one labeled Start a New Recording, and an Audio Recording screen pops up with a red Ready to Record button. Click it and you are in business. Pretty simple. The other controls are self-explanatory too. Another feature of *CD Spin Doctor* that I like is the ability to set the length of time of the recording. With the other applications, if I forget to stop the recording after the meeting, I can end up with a huge file of mostly meaningless recording. Using the timed recording function in *CD Spin Doctor* avoids this problem. The maximum time you can set for automatically recording is two hours, which is plenty for me; I have never had to go more than 65 minutes. Should you need more time, though, I am guessing you would have to start a second recording session. (Boy, I would hate to have to transcribe that meeting!) There is a help file in *CD Spin Doctor* that explains how you can do many things with the application.

Since *CD Spin Doctor* works with *aiff* formatted files, if I record using *QuickTime* or using the Olympus recorder, I need to convert my audio files. For this I use yet another software program, called *Switch*, by NCH Software, which was free when I started this business. *QuickTime* will also convert *mov* files to *aiff* files

The other tool I use in the transcribing process is over-the-ear headphones. These are much better than the computer's speakers for listening to the playback. One annoyance though when using *CD Spin Doctor*: if I remove the headphone cable from the audio out jack (on purpose or otherwise), the *CD Spin Doctor* program crashes, and I end up losing my position in the editing process. Luckily the application has a time line that I can use to reposition the playhead right back to the previous editing position – or at least within a few words of it.

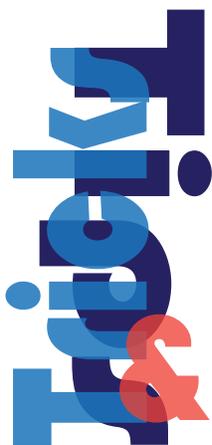
To sum it up, *CD Spin Doctor*, *QuickTime* Player, *VLC*, and even *iTunes* all play back audio recordings quite well, but when it comes to transcribing that audio I find that *CD Spin Doctor* is the best.



Above: The Olympus WS-300M digital recorder mated to a MacBook for uploading the recorded sound file. The recorder easily disassembles and then cleverly attaches via the Mac's USB port.



Left: The small Olympus WS-300M recorder works great for recording meetings. When it comes time to download the file, the battery pack detaches to reveal a USB connector which attaches directly to the computer. No wires, no fuss.



Appearance settings, navigating in *Numbers*, and enlarging images in *Finder*

By Bob Jarecke

Here are more Tips & Tricks for your computing pleasure. We hope you find them helpful.

Do you have some favorite time-saving steps or computing tricks that others might enjoy trying out? Just let a *Journal* editor know via feedback@wap.org and we will make sure it gets published.

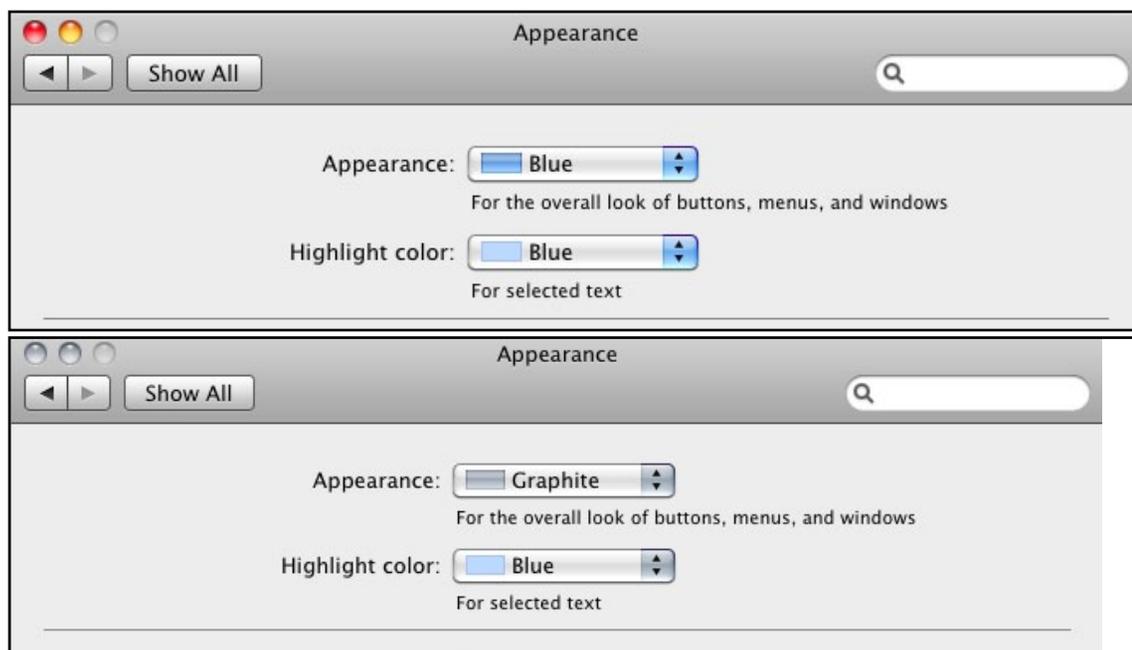


Illustration 1. In System Preferences, changing the Appearance preference from Blue to Graphite can have some far reaching effects, and can eliminate some intuitive clues.

1. Appearance Preferences

Have you ever fully studied all the options available in *System Preferences*? There are loads of settings within this important system utility application. The Appearance preferences (top row, first one) is a case in point. When you open this setting pane, it looks as though there isn't much there, but don't be fooled. Simply changing the Appearance color will have system-wide effects.

After using Mac OS X for years, most of us are familiar with the row of three colored dots located in the upper left corner of most every application window. From left to right, the dots are red, yellow, and green — but if the dots weren't color-coded, would you know what each one does?

It so happens that when the Appearance setting is changed to Graphite, those three dots are no longer color-coded. They all are grey, and the only way to determine a dot's function is to place the cursor over it. Now a symbol appears within the dot; an X (x), dash (—), and plus sign (+) replace the colors. Why did Apple do this? I believe it has to do with a system-wide appearance change that followed Apple switching to the Graphite color theme. Even after Apple moved on to the brushed-chrome look, the Graphite Appearance setting is still around, and selecting it will take away some valuable colored clues.

2. AppleWorks versus Numbers

I have long been an avid user of *AppleWorks*, and the application keeps working well despite new iterations of Mac OS X. (Thank God!). Of course, I was intrigued when Apple introduced *Numbers*,

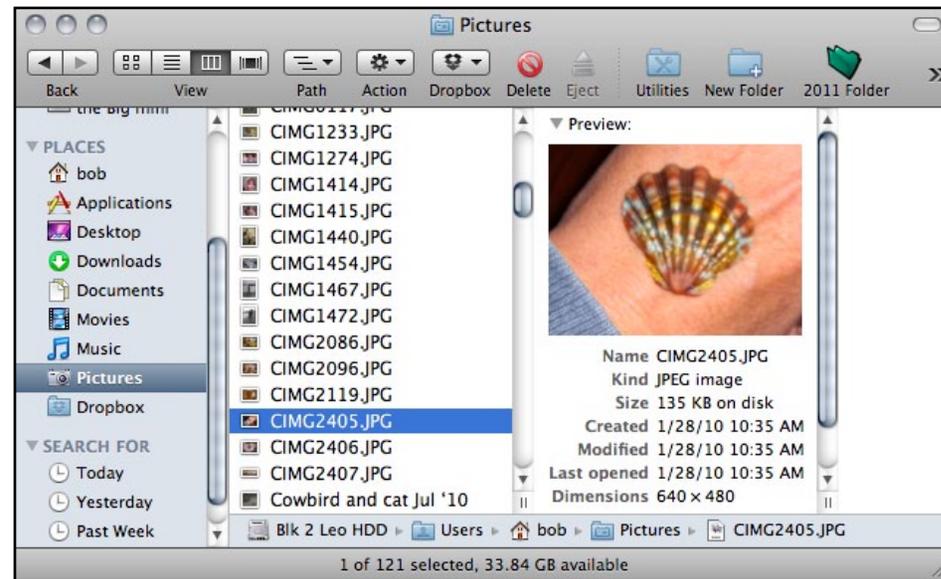
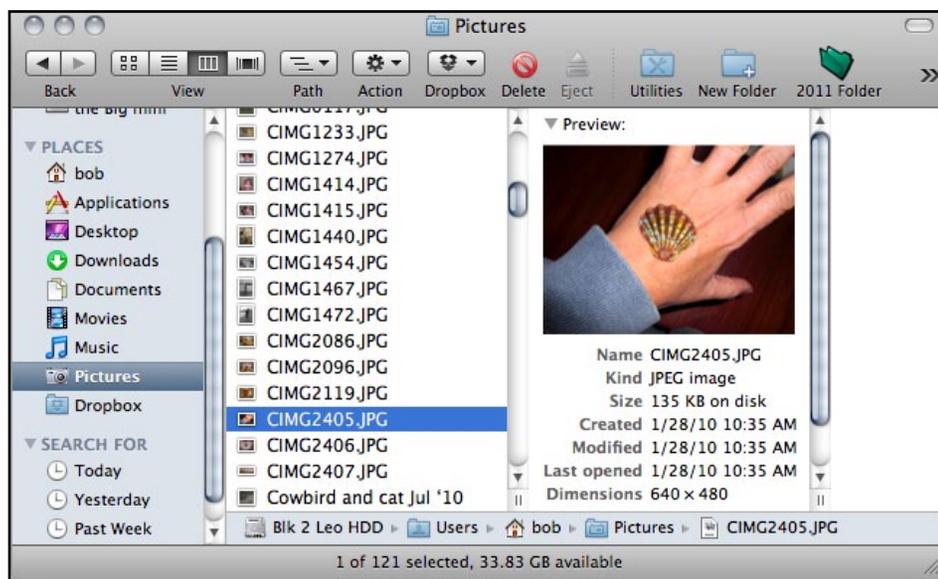


Illustration 2. In Finder, Column view, you can enlarge thumbnail images within the confines of the view. Just hold the Option key and click on the image; to reverse, hold Shift – Option and click.

the spreadsheet program within the *iWorks* suite of applications, but I wanted to be sure that it had the features I most relied on in *AppleWorks*. There were two features that were lacking.

AppleWorks has the capability of adding a hyperlink that can take you directly to another cell within the same spreadsheet. This feature is very handy. It allows me to easily move to other areas of the spreadsheet or go directly to a specific cell. Hyperlinks are available in *Numbers*, but only email addresses or a Web page URL. Okay, I could always scroll to other spreadsheet sections or use the page up or page down keys, but it is not nearly as convenient as the hyperlink feature in *AppleWorks*. Still, it turned out this was not a deal breaker.

I am a predominantly keyboard person, so for me the single most important feature was the ability to edit the contents of a cell without having to use the

trackpad or mouse. In one important respect, *AppleWorks* and *Numbers* work differently. In *AppleWorks*, the Formula Bar is the only place where one can edit a cell's content. The keystroke combination of Option — Left Arrow places a blinking insertion point in the Formula Bar at the start of the cell's content; Option — Right Arrow places it at the end of the entry. This allows me to use the application with my hands locked to the keyboard.

Numbers works differently. You have a couple of choices for editing cell content. While in an active cell, you can use the trackpad or mouse to click or highlight in the Formula Bar where you want to start editing or make input as desired on that cell's content. You can also simply start typing text or numbers — but if you do this, the first keystroke will clear all of the cell's content. You can change the content of the cell this way, but there is no option to edit it. What I needed was a keystroke combination to place a blinking insertion point in the active cell.

Fortunately I found it! Typing Option – Return places an editing cursor (blinking insertion point) at the end of the active cell's entry. Then I use the Left Arrow key to move to another point within the cell, or I use the Command (Apple key) – Left Arrow to move to the beginning of the cell.

This means that I just might be able to migrate more of my spreadsheet work to *Numbers*. That's good to know. Even though I am happy with *AppleWorks*, I have an ominous feeling that Lion (Mac OS X 10.7) is going to break *AppleWorks* big time.

3. Viewing Images in *Finder's* Column View

With recent versions of Mac OS X, there have been notable improvements in *Finder*. Column view was added a couple of iterations back, and in Mac OS X Snow Leopard additional capabilities enhanced the viewing options of the small images of a file.

If the file is graphic in nature, a simple tap on the Space bar will launch the Quick Look feature and an enlarged view of the image will spring up. The Quick Look view will be half screen size; it can be enlarged to full screen by clicking on the Full Screen icon (the opposing arrows) near the bottom of the view window. If you have a whole host of related images that you want to view together, select all (CMD – A) and tap the Space Bar. The first image in the group will be displayed, and you will see the Index Sheet icon (four boxes) at the bottom of the view window. Select this icon, and you will now have the equivalent of a contact sheet of the images in front of you. You can enlarge any image by simply clicking on it in the index sheet.

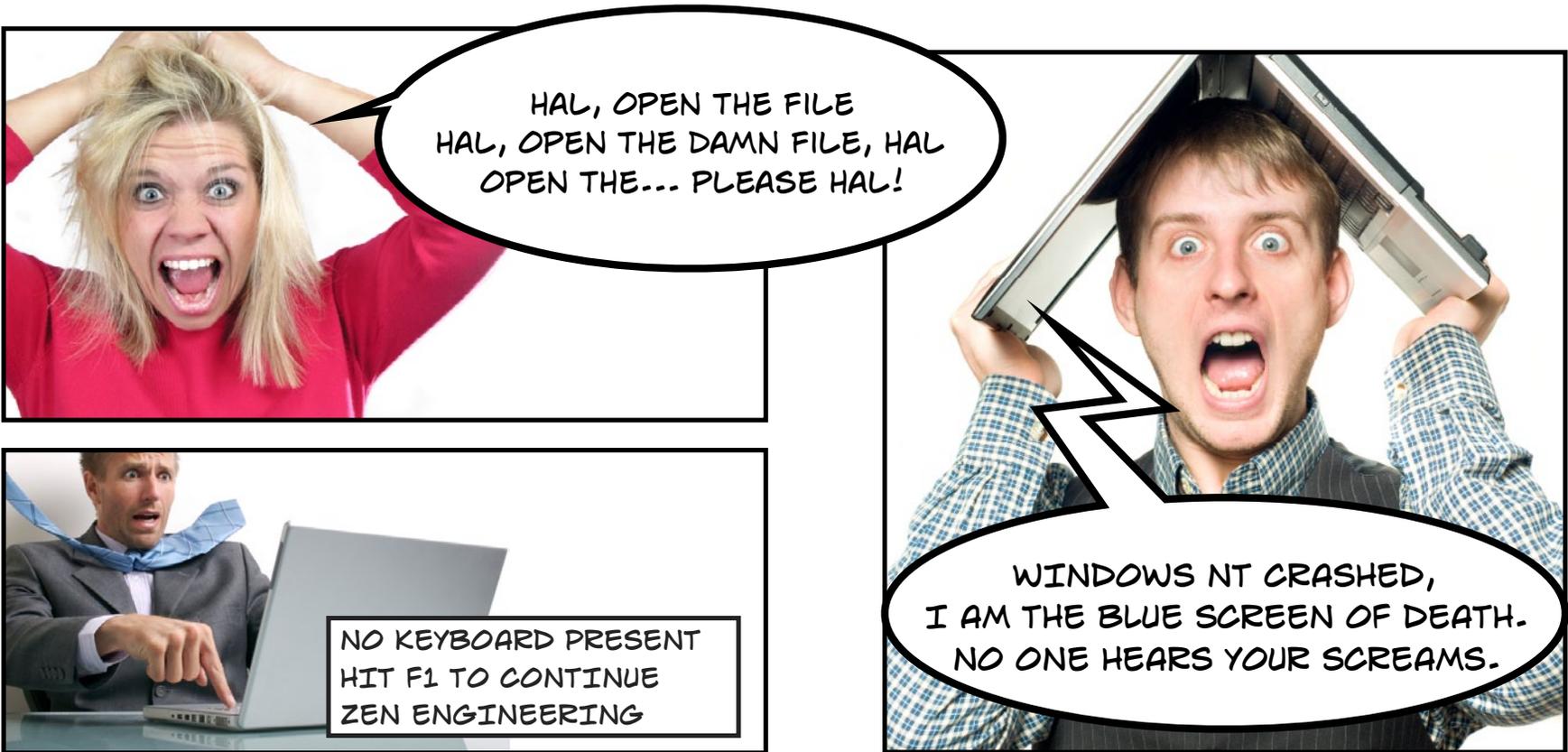
In Mac OS X Snow Leopard, there is another viewing trick for a closer look at an image in Column view. Place your cursor over the image, depress the Option key, and click on the thumbnail image. The cursor changes to an eyeglass and the image enlarges with each successive click. Release the Option key and the cursor changes to a multidirectional arrow; now you can move the image to view other parts of it. Viewing an image in this manner within the small confines of the thumbnail view is not optimum, so open the image first in Quick Look for a larger view, hold the Option key and click. The image is now enlarged, giving a much better presentation. To reverse the enlarging process, use the Shift – Option keys when clicking on the image and the image will step backward toward its original size.

Do you have some tricks of your own? Let us know so we can share them with the other readers; just use the feedback option on the bottom of page 2.



Illustration 3. In *Finder*, when using Quick Look, you can enlarge images by holding the Option key and clicking on the image. To reverse, hold Shift – Option and click.

PC HAIKU ERROR MESSAGES





Washington Apple Pi Meetings

Your Digital Life – A Two-Part Series

How digits can make your life simpler and easier!

This March/April edition of the *Journal* highlights the topic of digitizing your data. From the simple steps of converting household records to electronic files or scanning decades-old photographic slides, this issue introduces an important theme that has far-reaching ramifications for just about everyone.

The March and April General Meetings will expand on the digitizing theme. Presenters will cover the basics as well as more sophisticated means of using digitized data in our everyday life. Attend these meetings and learn how there is more to going paperless than meets the eye!

March 26, 9:30 a.m. at GMU with Larry Kerschberg presenting

The March General Meeting will begin a two-part series that we have termed *Your Digital Life*. Dr. Larry Kerschberg will demonstrate the use of the Fujitsu ScanSnap scanner to archive paper records, and will discuss how to best utilize software products, including cloud-based software and services, to make organizing and finding your data a snap. The options can be simple or complex; you decide how much of this information can enhance your lifestyle. Prepare to be amazed!

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 showing how to get there. Check back closer to the meeting date for any late updates or changes.

<http://www.wap.org/events/march2011/>

April 16, 9:30 a.m. at GMU with Travis Good presenting

Note: This meeting is on the third Saturday because Easter falls on the fourth Sunday of April.

The April General Meeting is the second part of the *Your Digital Life* series and it will take you further into the digital world. Travis Good will offer up a whole host of ideas and methods for using your computer and other Apple devices together to make life more interesting and fun. Using the iPhone, iPad, digital camera, and a MacBook Pro, Travis will wow you with all the options for saving and sharing your life's story with family and friends. This meeting is a must-attend.

The meeting will be held on the GMU campus in the Enterprise building, Room A 178. The Pi Web site has the complete agenda with a map detailing parking and the meeting location. Remember to check the Web site's meeting page to learn of any late changes.

<http://www.wap.org/events/april2011/>

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

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

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 emcees 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.

One more thing ...



FREE!

One copy of *Paperless* Software to be raffled off!

Boy, the Pi has a deal for you!

Available: one, fully licensed copy of *Paperless* by Mariner Software to any Pi member, with one small stipulation. The lucky member will be requested to write a review of the software for publication in the next edition of the *Journal*. To qualify for the drawing, send an email request to editor@wap.org. The email must arrive within 14 days of the publishing date of the *Journal*. After the deadline date, a winner will be selected from the list via a random drawing. Get your bid in now!

So what does this software application do? From the Mariner Software Web site:

Paperless has the ability to keep up and maintain the task of reducing your need for paper. Simply scan your receipts, bills, statements, warranty cards, business cards – any paper document and the OCR function of *Paperless* recognizes the data and adds it to the Details Window. Make more notes; assign categories — all the tools you need for a neat and clean digital filing system is all right there in *Paperless*.”

“*Paperless* will work with just about any scanner through Apple’s Image Capture method or by using a TWAIN-compliant scanner, but we highly recommend that you use the Fujitsu ScanSnap line of scanners (S1500M, S1300 or the S1100)

Minimum System Requirements:

Intel only Mac
Mac OS X 10.5.8 or higher

So what are you waiting for?

Click on the email link to editor@wap.org right now and get your entry recorded.



Washington Apple Pi

