

TCS Users Guide a doorway to the TCS

This guide is a detailed description on how to access the Washington Apple Pi TCS Discussion Forums.

The document should help you find the forum, log on, set preferences, navigate the message boards, and more!

Author: Dick Rucker
eMail: richard.rucker@wap.org
Version Date: March 5, 2009
Other: Questions or comments about the document or content can also be forwarded to office@wap.org

For those who want to get right to it, the first page features a Quick Start Visual Guide to get you logged in and on the discussion boards right away!

Washington Apple Pi TCS Quick Start Guide



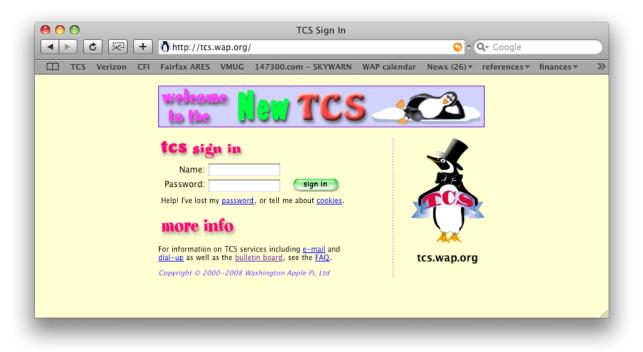
Users Guide for the Washington Apple Pi's TCS Forums

The discussion forum for the Washington Apple Pi is called the "TCS." It is where you can find interesting discussions, get and give advice about a host of Apple related topics, and find Macsavvy technical support. You can also use the message boards to share your experiences and contribute your expertise. These are a just few of the benefits you get as a member of the Washington Apple Pi. This guide was written to help members become happier users of the TCS.

To answer the question "What's the TCS?" please go here: http://www.wap.org/tcs/bbs.html

To reach the TCS sign-in page directly, go to <u>http://tcs.wap.org/</u>. If you're visiting the Pi's public Web site at <u>http://www.wap.org</u> and then wish to visit the "members only" TCS, click on the link labeled **TCS Forums** in the upper button bar. You will be greeted with the following:

The TCS Log On Page



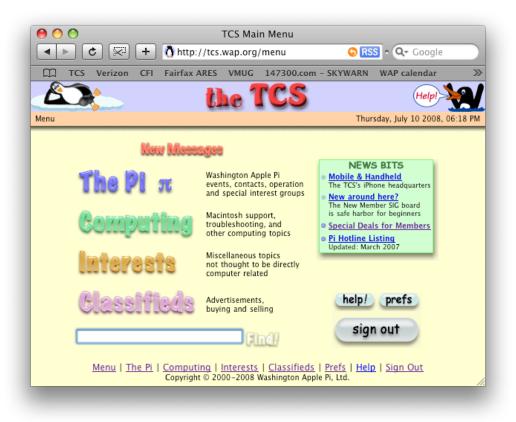
Step 1: "Sign in" to Start a Session on the TCS

You must first enter your account name and password. These important items were passed along to each member either on their membership card or via email. Click in the **Name** field and type your account name, e.g., "**jane.member**," (note the "dot" between the first and second names), then Tab to, or click in, the **Password** block. Type your password in lower case, taking note of the dash as provided in passwords generated by the Pi. When you are ready, either tap the "enter (return)" key or you can click the green "sign in" button.

Your Web browser may offer to save your account name and password for future use. If you're the only user of this computer, the feature is handy because it reduces typing and the need to remember your password. However if you share this computer with others, then relying on this feature is not recommended. If you rely on Apple's "Keychain Access" application to manage your passwords, then you can rely on it here.

If your sign-in attempt is refused after faithfully following the above instructions, call the office phone at (301) 984-0300 and leave a message. Your recorded message will be automatically forwarded to our call tracking system, and a monitoring volunteer will respond. Please leave us an e-mail address — one that does not depend on you having a working WAP password — and a new password will be forwarded to you.

The TCS Menu Page



Step 2: Get familiar with the Menu page

After successful sign-in, you will be presented with the above menu page. It contains four main subject areas, referred to as Conferences. They are prominently displayed on the left in brightly colored, clickable text.

Up to the right on this page is a NEWS BITS box. It contains current items of interest. Newcomers to the TCS are offered a venue (New around here?) where you can ask questions and become acquainted with the basics of TCS messaging. The Special Deals for Members link lists items for sale to members. The final item is a link to the **Pi Hotline**, which is a contact information list for volunteers who are willing to help you in areas of their expertise.

At top left is the **New Messages** alert. If it has turned orange and is flashing, it is telling you there are messages that you have not yet seen. It is clickable, <u>but don't click on it just yet</u>. If this is your very first visit to the TCS, you will be shown ALL messages posted to the TCS for the last seven days. That's likely more than you want, so please complete Step 3 first. After that, you can return to the main menu and click on **New Messages** with a bit more confidence.

Use the "Find" window at the bottom to search for messages containing words or phrases of interest, regardless of the Conference in which they are archived.

Clicking on prefs button will reveal the window below. It is a good place to start.

	TCS Prefere	nces: Member				
🔺 🕨 😴 🕂 🐧 http:/	//tcs.wap.org/prefs		• •	Q - Google		
C TCS Verizon CFI Fairfax A	ARES VMUG 147300.com - S	KYWARN WAP calendar	News (29) v	references 🔻	finances v	>>>
	the	TCS			Help!	Ŋ
Menu >> Preferences				Wednesday, Jul	y 09 2008, 10:4	1 AM
F	Member E-Mail The Pi Co	omputing Interests CI	assifieds			
Name:	Jane Member	Old Password:				
WAP ID:	30000	New Password:				
Account:	jane.member	Confirm Password:				
Service:	: TCS Explorer		Change Password)		
Since:						
Expires:	: March 31, 2009					
🎸 Tip:	: Click on the tabs above to access ac	dditional settings for e-mail ar	nd message board	s.		
Menu	<u>The Pi</u> <u>Computing</u> <u>Interest</u> Copyright © 2000-2008	t <u>s</u> <u>Classifieds</u> <u>Prefs</u> <u>H</u> 8 Washington Apple Pi, Ltd.	<mark>lelp</mark> <u>Sign Out</u>			
	2007, Igit 0 2000 2001					

The TCS Preferences Page

Step 3: Set your Personal Preferences

The Member tab.

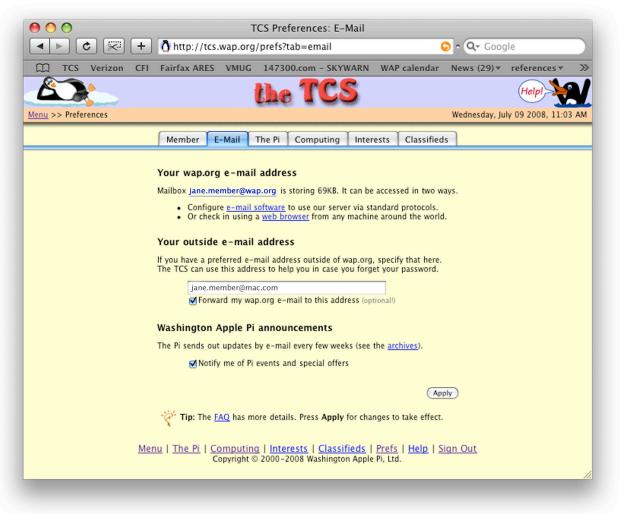
You should change the password initially assigned to you to another, one that only you know and can remember. Since all passwords are stored securely on the TCS server, no one can look up your password. If you forget it, you'll need to request a new one. The best way to do that is explained in the setup instructions that follow.

To change your password, enter the password you used to "sign in" as your Old Password, enter the desired one as your New Password, and repeat the new password in the box labeled Confirm Password.

If sometime later you want to be reminded of your membership number, what kind of membership you hold, or your membership renewal date, just come back to the **Member** tab.

The **E-mail** tab.

There are three preference items that you can set on this tab.



Item 1 - Your wap.org e-mail address:

When you become a member, an e-mail address of the form "first name dot last name @ wap.org" is initially assigned to you. If you would like a more personal e-mail address, send it in an email to <u>office@wap.org</u>, and we'll try to accommodate you.

Item 2 - Your outside e-mail address:

If you have an e-mail address with another provider, you should enter it here. Then if you forget your TCS/e-mail password, you can get a new one right away by doing this:

Go to http://tcs.wap.org and where it reads Help! I've lost my password...

Click on **password**. This will cause a new one to be saved for you, and it will be sent to your outside e-mail address.

Forward my wap.org e-mail...: Check the box to have e-mail received in your "wap.org" account automatically forwarded to your outside e-mail address.

Item 3 - Washington Apple Pi announcements:

The Pi needs to communicate with its members about important happenings, upcoming events, and changes in schedules. Therefore, all Pi members have been added to an announcement email list as indicated by the "Notify me…" box being checked. The associated notifications are used sparingly, so you should generally not receive more than three announcement emails a month.

Before moving to the next tab, click the Apply button (lower right) to save your selections.

The Four Remaining **Conference** Tabs.

The TCS has more than 50 message boards grouped into four Conferences (subject areas): The Pi, Computing, Interests, and Classifieds. These four tabs record your interests.



The Pi Tab. The Pi Conference has 14 message boards – see the list as shown above.

The Computing Tab. This Conference has 19 message boards, among them: Mac OS System Software; Office Productivity; Internet Software; Digital Photography.

The Interests Tab. In this Conference you will find 15 message boards, among them: Open Forum; Jokes & Humor; Movies, Concerts, Shows; D.C. Metro Region.

The Classifieds Tab. Here you will find 11 message boards, among them: Paid Advertisements, More Member Specials, Collectable Items, Employment/Internships.

Click on each Conference tab in turn and decide which message boards may interest you. If you are a newbie, check just a few. As you become more at home on the TCS, you can come back here to adjust your choices. After you check off your interests, but before moving to the next conference tab, click the **Apply** button to the lower right to save your board selections.

Indicating your preference settings causes the following to happen:

• When you click on the blinking **New Messages** alert, you will be provided with a linked list of those messages posted since your last sign-in to the boards of interest.

• All conference and message board directories will list just your preferred boards; any boards you left unchecked are not listed but do remain available via a drop-down menu.

Wrap-up: You have now finished setting your initial preferences. Click on Menu, or click on the reclining penguin image, both in the upper left corner, to return to the main menu.

A comment about Internet browsers: All screen shots in this guide were taken in July 2008 while using Apple's Internet browser, *Safari*. Consequently, the explanations herein describe how things are done in Safari.

Other browsers, such as *Firefox*, *Camino*, and *Internet Explorer*, implement the same Internet protocols as Safari, but they do have their own means of interacting with users. If what is described here doesn't match what you are seeing in the browser you are using, consult the Help files that came with your browser.

Step 4: Getting Acquainted with the Conferences

Click on one, say the **Computing** Conference (see the figure on next page). You will be presented with its directory. The directory provides the following information in column format:

- Board: This is the list of boards that you selected in the Confernece preference.
- New Msgs: How many new messages have been added to each board since you last reviewed them.
- Most Recent: The date/time of the most recent message posted on that board.
- Raison d'Être: The synopsis of topics this message board covers.

The TCS Computing Conference Page

TCS Verizon CFI Fai	irfax	ARES VM	UG 147300.com - SKYWARN WAP calend
		the	TCS (Help)
			Thursday, July 10, 2008.
>> Computing			Thursday, July 10 2008, 0
mouting Conference			read all new mess
mputing Conference	8		read all new mess
Board	New Msgs	Most Recent	Raison d'Être
Mac OS System Software	1 1	08:37AM	System-wide Mac issues & questions
Office Productivity	1	08:54AM	
Shareware/Freeware	-		Member experiences with downloadable software
Games			Discuss your favorite games, tips, sites, or stores
Internet Software	1		Applications you use interactively over the Internet
Digital Music	-		Get it, create it, save it, play it
Digital Video			Movie production and editing
Digital Photography			Still photography and editing
Graphics & Design		05:42PM	
Upgrade Advice		05:00PM	Should I?
Repair & Maintenance		07/07/2008	Keeping it humming
Home Networking			Home Internet service, file and printer sharing
Network Administration			Professional scale network management
Mac Union		07:09AM	All other topics in the Mac community
Mac Programming		06/27/2008	Software development and scripting
Propellerhead Zoo		07/03/2008	Geeky topics discussed among experts
Mobile & Handheld	1	08:46AM	
PC & Other Computers		06/15/2008	The Dark Side (Unix too)
Apple Legacy Machines		07/05/2008	I, II, III, and Lisa! Older Macs too.
Reset	new r	nessage cou	nt to 7 🛟 days Gol
Boards not select	ed in	vour prefere	nces: Board Preferences
bounds not server		Juan preserve	
Find on this con	feren	ce	Gol
rind on this con	reren	ce	00

You will also find the following options on this page:

- Reset new message count to...: The default value is all messages posted within the last 7 days, but you can clear the deck by selecting Now or go back as far as 90 days.
- Boards not selected in your <u>preferences</u>...: Click on the drop-down menu to see and select one of these. Alternatively, click on the underlined preferences link to make changes.

• Find on this conference....: Use this to find all messages within this Conference that contain the words you type into the white field. Conducting a search within a single conference is usually faster than doing one from the main Menu page because the latter searches four conferences. A similar comment applies to searches conducted from a message board directory – see below.

Step 5: Getting Acquainted with the Message Boards

			CARES	VMUG	147300.com - S	NT WAR	N WAP calend	lar
<u>lenu</u> >> <u>Co</u>	mputing >> Interne	t Software	ACCOUNT OF		CS	Thursda	Help!	8:15 F
Comp	iting Confere	DCO				In	ternet Soft	wara
compe	ing conten	snee				and a	ternet Sort	wart
opics of di	scussion						<u>Begin a r</u>	new to
	Subject		D	ate	From	Msas	Latest	
Scar	n alert		07/09/0	8 09:50PM	Lawrence Charter	s 3	07/10/08 08:39AM	i
Curi	osity question		07/04/0	8 05:24PM	Joseph Belotte	2	07/04/08 05:49PM	
Can	t SAVE in MAIL Prefe	rences	06/29/0	8 08:50PM	Ann Aiken	4	07/04/08 04:30PM	i
Firef	fox 3 is not here yet		05/09/0	8 05:38PM	Jon Thomason	32	07/02/08 06:22PM	
Anti	-virus s/w for OSX		06/29/0	8 07:59PM	Bryan Brown	8	06/30/08 03:05PM	i
my1	Password credible?		06/29/0	8 12:10PM	Robert Jarecke	4	06/30/08 12:08PM	
Anti	-virus Test File		06/27/0	8 01:28PM	Bill Kingsley	1	06/27/08 01:28PM	i
Two	browsers vs one		06/26/0	8 10:24AM	David Harris	3	06/27/08 08:46AM	1
Cyb	erDuck and the iDisl	<u>(</u>	05/16/0	8 04:42PM	Paul Schlosser	14	06/26/08 03:38PM	Í
Prob	lems with .mac		06/23/0	8 10:50PM	Lawrence Charter	s 10	06/24/08 02:32PM	1
Sub	rosaSoft review?		06/23/0	8 11:23AM	Doug Mcneill	7	06/24/08 09:23AM	i –
Clar	nXav in Leopard 10.	5.2	06/23/0	8 10:04AM	Bill Kingsley	1	06/23/08 10:04AM	1
NoS	cript add-on in Fire	fox 3	06/23/0	8 09:56AM	Bill Kingsley	1	06/23/08 09:56AM	i
Boo	kmarks in Firefox 3		06/21/0	8 03:48PM	Bill Kingsley	4	06/23/08 09:51AM	1
Exp	orting Bookmarks in	Firefox 3	06/21/0	8 09:36PM	Ray Cook	4	06/22/08 11:27AM	i
Fire	fox .pdf & .xls won't	open	05/14/0	8 03:24PM	Lawrence Simon	6	06/21/08 01:40AM	1
Pust	n Flash plugin?		05/28/0	8 04:57PM	Paul Schlosser	12	06/17/08 07:26AM	ĺ.
Micr	osoft Internet Explo	rer	06/10/0	8 08:37PM	Richard Sternberg	2	06/10/08 08:55PM	(
Seco	nd Life crashes		06/09/0	8 12:20PM	Richard Rucker	12	06/10/08 04:01PM	(
<u>iCha</u>	it webcam			8 12:30PM	Bill Kingsley	1	06/09/08 12:30PM	(
		Reset new	message	count to (Now 🛟 days Go	5		
						-		
	Find on	this board	t			Go		
112131	4 5 6 7 8 9	10 11 1	<u>2 13 1</u>	4 15 16	<u>17 18 19 20 </u> 34 <u>35 36 37 38</u>	21 22	<u>23</u> <u>24</u> <u>25</u> <u>26</u>	27

Select one of the subjects from your directory of preferred boards, in the case above it is "Internet Software," the fifth item down the Computing Conference list. This will open to a message board, listing all posted messages on the subject. The messages are arranged by column headings of <u>Subject, Date, From, Msgs</u>, and <u>Latest</u>. Each heading has a <u>blue-underline</u> indicating the entire board can be sorted by that column heading. Further definition of each heading follows.

- <u>Subject</u>: topic name assigned by the author of the first message
- <u>Date</u>: date & time of posting of the first message
- From: name of the author of the first message in the thread
- <u>Msgs</u>: number of messages in the thread
- Latest: date & time of the last message added to the thread

Step 6: Message Numbering, Threading, & Reply Histories

There are two types of messages associated with the message board: one starts a new topic for discussion, the other is a reply to an already established topic.

A. Click on <u>Begin a new topic</u> at the upper right of the <u>message board directory</u>. Now, you have established a new topic and your comment will be the first in a new message thread to which others can contribute their comments. See Step 7 below.

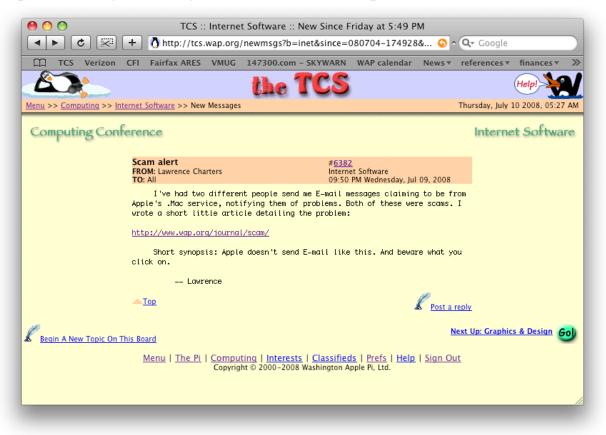
B. Select a topic from the message board; in the example it is a topic of Scam Alert. Click on the title to open it. If you wish to reply with your own message, click on the underlined text <u>Post a</u> <u>reply</u> found to the lower right. See Step 8 below.

Every new message added to the thread of messages is assigned a unique number. Suppose you were to reply to a message numbered #2449. When your reply is posted, its header will contain something like this:

"<u>#2450</u> in reply to <u>#2449</u>; 1 reply"

Note that the numbers are in blue and underlined, meaning they are *clickable links*. If you click on a number, your browser will display the message within the context of other replies; i.e., its *reply history*.

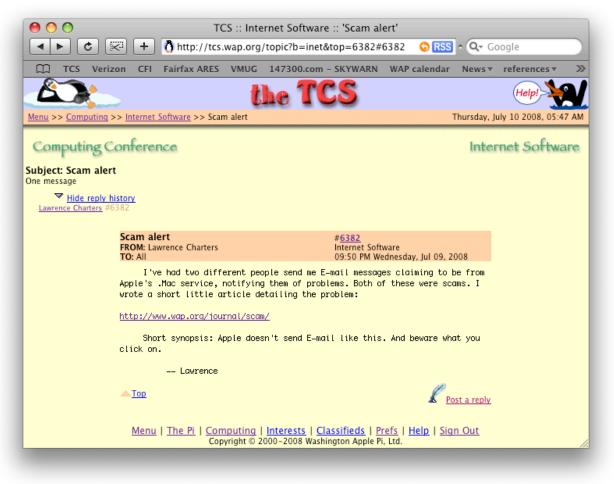
Step 7: Starting a Message Thread on a New Topic



The above example message was posted on the **Internet Software** message board of the **Computing** Conference. The path under the reclining penguin on the upper left side of the orange menu bar indicates where you are in the series of steps you can take to get to this screen. On the right are the date & time the message was posted. Message #6382 begins a new topic, **Scam alert**.

Look at the above screen shot and check the gray area of the browser's window: the *Uniform Resource Locator (URL)* for the page appears in the middle field with the white background, called the *URL bar*. It says this copy of the message was obtained from the newmsgs directory of the server at tcs.wap.org. That is, it was one of the linked messages presented by the New Messages feature upon login.

Contrast that with the page or screen shot below, obtained by clicking on link #6382 in the message header:



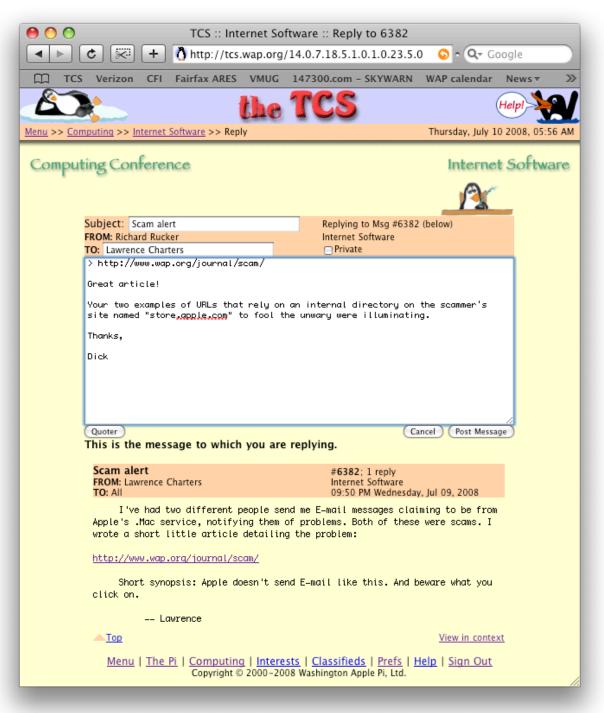
The URL bar has changed to tcs.wap.org/topic... indicating this copy of message 6382 appears in the context of its topical thread, a topic within inet, the board for Internet Software.

A reply history for this topic appears upper left underlined and reads "Hide reply history." Only the initial message appears so far.

A blue RSS button now appears at the extreme right of the URL bar. See Step 9 to learn about "RSS news feeds."

Step 8: Replying to Messages

If you read a message to which you'd like to reply, click on <u>Post a reply</u> at the lower right of the message you are reading. You'll be presented with a message entry screen such as the one below.

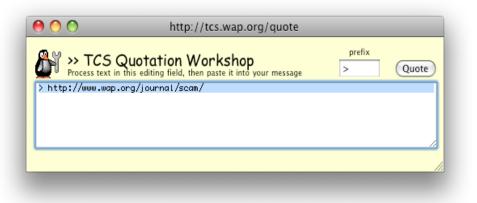


When you're through typing your reply, click on **Post Message** in the box at the lower right of the message box. Or you can change your mind and exit without posting anything by clicking the adjacent **Cancel**.

When replying to a message and you wish to quote some of the message text, it is a TCS custom to precede each quoted line by a "greater than (>)" character. In the example above, the URL in the first message is quoted. You could simply type "> (space)" at the beginning of each quoted line, but there is a feature, called "Quoter," that will automate this step for you.

You start by clicking on the **Quoter** button, located at the bottom left of the message box, as shown above, This brings up a small text editing window into which you will place the copied text. Be aware that its behavior is browser-dependent:

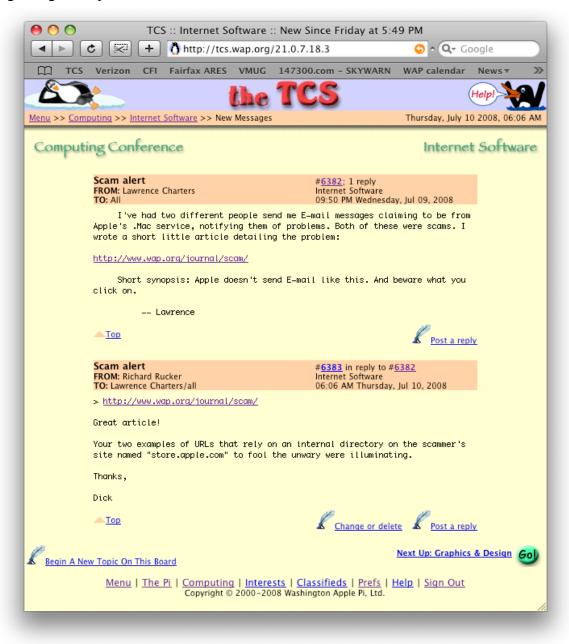
In Safari, select the text to be quoted in the message to which you are replying. Copy it (key combo \mathcal{K} -C), then click the **Quoter** button to open the window shown below. Click once in the little "workshop" window and Paste (key combo \mathcal{K} -P). Now click the **Quote** button at top-right. You should see your text to be quoted now preceded by ">" and already selected, ready for pasting back into your reply:



Click once in the main editing window where you want to paste the quoted text and Paste (key combo \mathcal{H} -P).

In Camino or Firefox, select the words to be quoted and click the **Quoter** button. Your selection will be automatically copied and pasted, the leading prefix and space character added, and the resulting text selected in the little "workshop" window. Simply Copy and Paste the result into the main reply window.

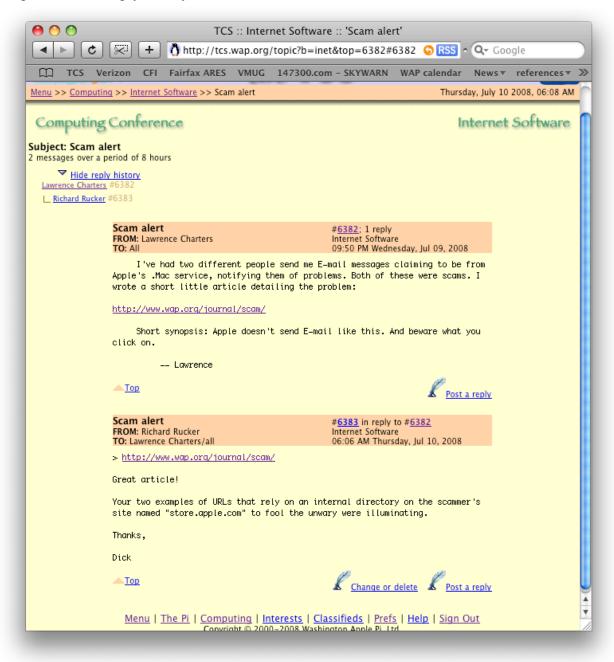
Here's what was displayed after clicking on **Post Message** on the reply form as seen in the beginning of Step 8.



Note in that the reply history and blue RSS (see explanation under Step 9) button are missing. Also, there's a strange directory name in the URL bar. This means that we are not yet looking at these messages in the context of their message thread.

Note also that the reply was posted on the TCS early (6:06 AM) on the morning after #6382 was posted. That suggests why the reply message was assigned the next consecutive number, #6383. One should not expect to see consecutive numbers in any one thread because sequential numbering is applied to all new messages as they are entered.

Clicking on number $\frac{\#6382}{10}$ in the header causes the entire message thread to now be displayed, complete with its reply history and blue RSS button.



Step 9: Receiving Automatic Updates on Topics of Interest to You

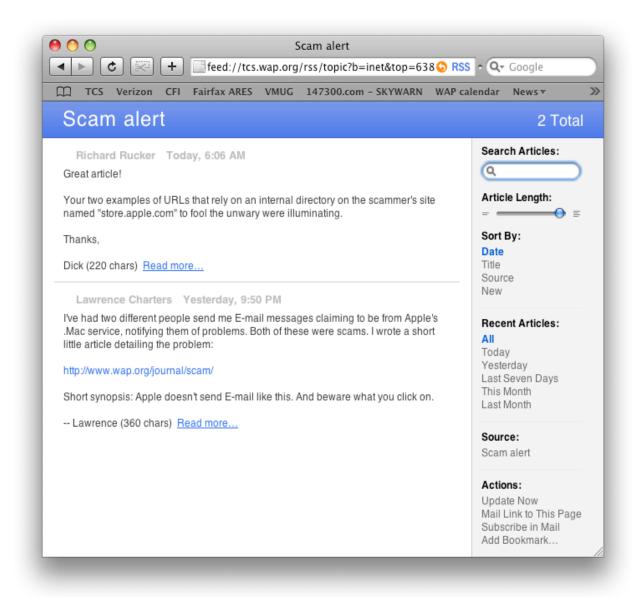
Would you like be notified whenever new messages are added to your specific topics of interest and without waiting until you log into the TCS? Most Internet browsers now support the *Really Simple Syndication (RSS)* protocol which is used to implement "Hit and Run TCS." A brief explanation follows for how you can subscribe to RSS feeds offered on the TCS message boards when using your Mac's Safari browser.

As we now know, the blue RSS button appears only when reading messages in the context of a particular message thread. When you click on the RSS button for a particular thread, Safari will show you a list of TCS items in "news feed" format; i.e., a listing of the most recent items with the message title followed by a couple of lines of associated text with a "Read more..." link at the end. But it will do no more unless you first tell Safari in its **Preferences**... panel (see below) to automatically check for updates and, if any are found, where to put them.

For the details on these options, consult the Help files of Safari or other Web browser that you may be are using.

00	RSS
General Appearance Bookmarks Tabs	RSS AutoFill Security Advanced
Default RSS reader:	Safari (3.1.2)
Automatically update articles in:	☐ Bookmarks bar ✓ Bookmarks menu
Check for updates:	Every 30 minutes
Mark articles as read:	After viewing the RSS page 🗘
Remove articles:	After two weeks
	Remove Now ?

Returning to our previous example, the "Scam alert" thread, clicking on its RSS button will take you to a another page. In Safari, that page is shown below.



Note that the URL bar information has changed to feed://... . Clicking on Add Bookmark... in the bottom right-hand corner of the sidebar returns this dialog box:

RSS Bookmark Name:
Scam alert
Add Bookmark To:
🗹 Safari 📄 Bookmarks Menu 🔷
Mail
Cancel Add

Please consult Safari's Help files for the rest of the story.

Step 10: Oops! Let me rephrase that...

If you decide later to change something you typed, but after you have posted the message, there's a **Change or delete** link just to the left of the **Post a reply** link at the bottom of the message reply screen.

Step 11: Asking Questions on the Message Boards

Pick the **Conference** and message **Board** on which your question best belongs, realizing that —

- those who might answer it may only be watching those boards of interest to them.
- your choice can make it easier for others later to find the answers given to your question.

Example: a question about the new "Leopard Operating System" should be posed on the Mac OS System Software message board of the Computing conference.

Click on the appropriate conference title (link) at the bottom of the page you are viewing, and then click on the message board title (link) in the list of boards presented to you. This will give you the directory of topics discussed so far on that board. You have two options now:

- you can search for the topic using Find on this board, or
- you can click on the Begin a new topic link at the top right of the page.

Be descriptive, both in subject name and in what you write in the message box.

Step 12: Finding stuff later

For any message thread you might want to return to on another day, do any one of the following:

- Copy and save the <u>thread's</u> URL. When you want to return to this message, log into the TCS, paste its address back into the URL bar of your browser, press the *Return* key, and your browser will download and display the thread.
- Copy and save the manually-clickable *path* to this message thread; e.g.,

Menu >> The Pi Conference >> Pi TCS Support >> latest security updates Copy the path from top of the page and Paste it, say, in a "Sticky note."

• Print out and save the message; it will have the path to the message printed on it.

Searching the TCS for messages with certain key words or phrases:

Use the Find function that appears on the Menu page to search the entire database, or the Find function that appears on every directory page to search that particular directory.

Dick Rucker, WAP member 20480 richard.rucker@wap.org