



The GAB'er

The Newsletter of the Greater Albany Apple Byters

Volume 25, Number 3 - November 2008

New 12-inch MacBook

Precision aluminum unibody enclosure.
From one solid piece of aluminum comes a MacBook that's thin and light, beautifully streamlined, and durable.



Ultrathin 13.3-inch LED-backlit display.
Seamless glass and instant full screen brightness make everything you see flat-out spectacular. Including the display itself.

Up to 5x faster NVIDIA graphics performance.
Advanced NVIDIA integrated graphics provide more responsive gameplay and more realistic 3D environments.

All-new, smooth glass Multi-Touch trackpad.
It's redesigned with even more room for even more gestures. Now the entire glass trackpad is also the button, so it's clickable everywhere.

Coordinator's Corner

by John Buckley



Our October meeting turned into more of a discussion group when our web connection failed. The meeting lacked a lot of the web interaction but was productive. This month we will look at the new products from Mac and some of the discontinued model bargains that are available at different vendors.



This month we will quickly reexamine web browsing using Safari and Firefox. Then we will do the scheduled demo of Photoshop Elements 6.0 for Mac.

To find out what's happening, GAAB is the place to be. So be sure to be at our October meeting and every meeting to find out the best information about the Mac.

The November meeting will be held at Troy High School in room 212 on Wednesday, November 12, 2008. The meeting will begin at 7 p.m. Troy High School is located at 1950 Burdett Avenue two blocks south of Samaritan Hospital. From the Northway, take exit 7 to Alternate Route 7. Follow Alternate Route 7 to Troy. Route 7 becomes Hoosick Street in Troy. Travel east on Hoosick Street to

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Next GAAB Meeting
November 12, 2008
Web Browsers and
PhotoShop Elements 6
7:00 p.m.
Room 212
Troy High School

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Serving the Apple Computer User Community Since May 1984

The Greater Albany Apple Byters is an Apple Computer User Group. Meetings are held the second Wednesday of each month (except July and August) in Room 212 of Troy High School, located on Burdett Avenue, Troy, NY.

Annual membership fee is \$10.00. Membership privileges include this newsletter, access to a large public domain software and video/audio tape library, local vendor discounts, special interest groups, and other special offers.

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Apple Ambassador

by John Buckley

The following two articles show the direction technology is moving at the high end and will probably filter down to all computers as prices drop. This has already happened with flash drives and memory cards for cameras and telephones. Now music is being sold on small memory cards. This slot music may someday replace CD's and DVD's.

Chips Ahoy

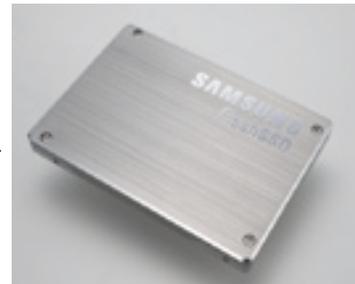
Apple's Secret Weapon

Brian Caulfield, 11.04.08, 12:10 AM ET

Forbes.com

(http://www.forbes.com/technology/2008/11/04/flash-memory-apple-tech-enter-cx_bc_1104flash.html)

Apple has had a lot of things going its way lately. The iPhone is a hit. Microsoft's Windows Vista operating system is stumbling. And Chief Executive Steve Jobs continues to carry the company's flag at public events, despite rumors of ill-health.



But the Cupertino, Calif.-based computer and gizmo maker's least-heralded break may be the fast-falling price of the NAND-flash memory that lets it add ever more storage capacity to its iPod digital music players at ever-falling prices. It's one of several factors that has helped Apple beat earnings expectations quarter after quarter.

The good news for Apple is there's no sign that trend is going to abate anytime soon.

The bad news, of course, is for Intel, Samsung and other flash memory makers, which are going to continue to bloody each other as the economic downturn threatens to exacerbate the ongoing slump in flash memory prices even as sales rise. Tech tracker iSuppli released a report last week predicting that the dollar value of flash memory sales will decline this year and next, even as unit sales pick up.

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What would you lose if your e-mail were hacked? Your personal messages and contacts would be compromised. And your messages could include personal photos or financial details.

Recently, vice presidential candidate Sara Palin's e-mail account was hacked. The contents were posted on the Internet for the world to see.

Apparently, a complete stranger did the hacking. That's how easy it is to hack an e-mail account. Let this be a lesson.

The problem with Webmail

With Webmail, your user ID is generally a part of your e-mail address. Anyone who receives an e-mail from you knows your user ID. An investigation into Palin's e-mail usage made her address public knowledge. So, the hacker only needed her password.

Did the hacker guess her password? No. The hacker created a new one using Yahoo's password reset feature. It's actually pretty easy to do.

To reset the password, the hacker answered a security question. That, too, was gleaned from public information.

Dealing with password reset

Your personal information may not be on the Web. But you could still be hacked. Odds are, you specified a security question and answer when you created your account. Friends and family probably know the answer to the question. Or, it could be found with a Google search.

The password reset is critical. If you answer it truthfully when setting up your account, you're at risk. So don't. Use a nonsensical answer that only you know.

For example, select "What is your father's middle name." Answer it my@name@is@kim. Or, use "my+dog's+name+is+Boo-Boo."

It is unlikely that a hacker could supply the correct response. The system doesn't care that your response makes no sense.

Protecting existing accounts

You probably want to keep your existing e-mail account. You probably also supplied correct information when you created it.

Depending on your provider, you can change the answers to your security questions. Yahoo users are out of luck. But Hotmail and Gmail users aren't.

In Hotmail, click your account name and select "View your account." Under Password reset information, click Change beside Question. Change your security question and answer.

Gmail is more difficult to hack. Your account must be inactive for five days before you can reset the password. You can also select your own security question.

Click Settings and open the Accounts tab. Select "Google Account settings." Click "Change security question." Alter your security question and response.

Use a strong password

You still need a strong password. Your password may be easier to guess than you think. Your dog's name or phone number are easily guessed.

Maybe you thought about this and picked a random word instead. Careful! Hackers can crack it easily with

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Education SIG

Web 2.0 in the Classroom

In the past 41 years that I have been involved in education, I have seen a number of changes in the use of technology. When I first started teaching, electronic calculators were just starting to appear. Personal computers were non-existent. Communication was mainly based on the use of the simple telephone. Our approach in the classroom to the development of these new devices in many cases has not kept pace with the innovations that are available and being used by the very students we are facing in our classrooms.



data management. They also afford new patterns of Internet use. In particular, the familiar web browser has become more versatile. It has allowed a wider range of user interactions, with such interactions being pursued within just this single desktop application.

All of these circumstances have led to a more participatory experience of Internet use. Thus, Web 2.0 has provided a version of Internet experience that encourages individual users to upload:

that is, to offer up their own contributions to a vast and interleaving exchange. This is implicitly contrasted with the former (Web 1.0) experience of the Internet, which was more a matter of downloading: that is, accessing the contributions of a much smaller set of information providers. In sum, the barriers to production and distribution have been loosened: an invitation for widespread participation is in place.

I remember as a kid, the most innovative thing that we did with technology was to listen in to our neighbors on the party line. No, this has nothing to do with politics. It has to do with the fact that many homes shared telephone lines with other homes and people would listen in to their neighbors' conversations and then gossip about what they had heard. Today, instead of listening in on the party line, we have people hacking into our computers and stealing information for profit. In order to prepare our students for the 21st century, educators have to provide a greater understanding of today's technology and how to use it in a productive manner.

The consequence of this increased participation is that the Internet has become a much larger enterprise of knowledge building, involving a larger constituency of participants. However, that building of knowledge has not been simply a matter of individual users making their isolated contributions. The communication and data management resources of the Internet have encouraged new forms of collaboration and coordination. These, in turn, have made possible novel, less planned forms of knowledge building. Such developments have created a demand for new tools to manipulate digital formats (especially images and video), and new tools to navigate this increasingly rich network of knowledge and experience.

When the web started in the early 1990's it was simply a way of gaining information by going out and finding what was available. In many ways, it was like a television with many, many channels. Today it has become a two way street where everyone cannot only find information and experience many types of media, but can also present their ideas in many different forms. The web has become a two way medium that presents many opportunities and challenges for everyone including our students.



New technological developments have come together to create new ways of using the Web. To some extent, these changes are a matter of simply scaling up user involvement. Web services are less expensive, they are faster, and wireless technology allows more widespread access. All of these factors have delivered a larger constituency of Internet users. At some point, the size of that constituency seems to have made possible new forms of coordination, new forms of web activity. Moreover, these changes in access and speed have been accompanied by developments in software and



The learner-centred discourse of Web 2.0 may be welcome, but learner-centredness should not imply that there are no significant new demands on teachers. Many will be hesitant to invest in acquiring the new competencies required by Web 2.0. The resources are largely generic rather than content-based and so teachers may find hidden calls on their time to orchestrate the relevant activities. In addition, institutions need to decide whether to contain Web 2.0 activities within the local areas of their learning platform, rather than risk learners publishing in the open Internet. That decision is closely linked to the widespread anxiety felt regarding the threats to safety that arise from unconstrained Internet interactions. It is also closely linked to the duty schools feel to restrict pupils' access to certain more playful (or morally suspect) sites that extensive Web 2.0 activity might indirectly make available.

Teachers also will have to manage the consequences of a strongly collaborative form of working that Web 2.0 activity invites. This raises issues for managing individual assessment, as well as personalisation tensions when dealing with learners who may want to learn and express themselves more privately. Teachers may also have reservations about the forms of study and research that Web 2.0 encourages. This applies in particular to the ease with which digital media and a large arena of informal knowledge encourages cut-and-paste solutions to personal research. Managing a mature approach to how learners study is a significant challenge for teachers. They must guide students into recognizing the basis of authority for internet-published work – over and above simply helping them to do the necessary navigation and exploration in this environment. Teachers may also have reservations about the multi-tasking modes of working that a rich Web 2.0 desktop environment may cultivate.

The variety of actual activity that is embraced by Web 2.0 is summarised below. The following overarching themes tend to be what is current now, but is subject to constant change.

- First, Web 2.0 is about a scaling up of user participation that creates new possibilities for sharing and 'network effects' that are emergent from this new scale. Thus, many categories in the table refer to technologies that put users into contact with others: letting them enjoy an exchange of opinion, digital products, or conversation. The greater the number of people participating, the greater the value derived.
- Second, such sharing can evolve into more organised forms of joint knowledge building. Thus, Web 2.0 is about creating arenas for user collaboration.
- Third, Web 2.0 is about exploring a wide range of expressive formats. This is because digital media create new opportunities for manipulating more than the conventional texts of communication: in

particular, they encourage exploration of images, sound and video. Moreover, these opportunities have now become widely available.

The rich and democratic patterns of exchange and publishing that Web 2.0 affords mean that the Internet offers novel frameworks and resources for research and inquiry. The following types of current activities show a vast and continuing growth of activities.

Trading: Buying, selling or exchanging through user transactions mediated by Internet communications.

Media sharing: Uploading and downloading media files for purposes of audience or exchange.

Media manipulation: Using web-accessible tools to design and edit digital media files.

Data/web mashups: Combining data from multiple sources to create a new application, tool or service.

Conversational arenas: One-to-one or one-to-many conversations between Internet users.

Online games and virtual worlds: Rule-governed games or themed environments that invite live interaction with other Internet users.

Social networking: Websites that structure social interaction between members who form subgroups of 'friends'.

Blogging: An internet-based journal or diary in which a user can post text and digital material while others can comment.

Social bookmarking: Users submit their bookmarked web pages to a central site where they can be tagged and found by other users.

Recommender systems: Websites aggregate and tag user preferences for items in some domain and thereby make novel recommendations.

Collaborative editing: Web tools are used collaboratively to design, construct and distribute some digital product.

Wikis: A web-based service allowing users unrestricted access to create, edit and link pages.

Syndication: Users can 'subscribe' to RSS feed enabled websites so that they are automatically notified of any changes or updates in content via an aggregator.

Many of these activities as mentioned earlier are limited or completely block in many if not most school districts. In order for our students to meet the challenges of the future educators will have to change their approaches to provide the opportunity for learning as well as provide for a secure educational environment.



Apple Ambassador

Continued from page 2.

To be sure, the economics of flash memory have always been daunting as flash vendors have raced to crank out products that could store ever more music, more video, and more images, even as the cost per unit of storage plummeted. However, strong consumer demand for digital gizmos of all kinds resulted in soaring sales, with the market expanding by triple-digit percentages in the late 1990s and early 2000s.

Falling consumer demand for personal media players, USB drives, and digital cameras, however, threatens to make the twisted economics of flash memory even more demanding. iSuppli is now predicting the dollar value of worldwide NAND flash memory sales will fall by 14% to \$12 billion in 2008 from \$13.9 billion in 2007, and another 15% in 2009. That's worse than its earlier forecast of a 3% decline in 2008 and a 12% growth in 2009.

And yet, flash is set to become more ubiquitous than ever over the next few years. iSuppli predicts unit shipments of 1gigabyte NAND chips will rise by 126% this year and 71% in 2009.

How is that possible? Plummeting prices. iSuppli predicts the average selling price of that 1 gigabyte of memory will fall by 62% this year and by 50% next year.

Longer term, that will mean that flash storage makers will have to cut their spending on equipment. Until then, however, the feverish pace at which they've added capacity will give Apple, which depends more heavily on flash prices for its success than any other PC maker, an edge.

Short term, the decline in flash prices could accelerate the push by computer companies such as Dell and Asus to put flash-based hard drives into low-end netbooks. It could mean a price-break on super-thin, high-end laptops such as the 2.93-pound Thinkpad x300 from Lenovo (see "Thin Laptop Wars"). And innovation may get a boost, too: Sun Microsystems is even planning to put flash-memory into its industrial strength servers (See "Sun Jumps Into Flash"), slashing power-consumption and increasing its server's response times.

CNET News
Nanotech - The Circuits Blog
November 2, 2008
Is the MacBook Air overpriced?

(http://news.cnet.com/8301-13924_3-10080658-64.html)

Is the MacBook Air overpriced? Competitive offerings from Dell and Toshiba reveal that the MacBook Air may not be so extortionately expensive. Of course, it all depends on your perspective: \$2,499 for a laptop is a lot of money. But put the Air into the context of its product category--ultraportable laptop--and you see that, by comparison, it's not necessarily overpriced. (Note: Here we're talking about the **just-announced update to the MacBook Air**.)



Let's start with Dell's recently announced ultraportable laptop (or 'subnotebook,' choose your nomenclature). The 12.1-inch **Latitude E4200** is priced at \$2,495 configured with a 128GB solid state drive, 2GB of memory, an Intel Core 2 Duo ULV SU9400 processor running at 1.4GHz, the Intel Graphics Media Accelerator 4500MHD, and a 6-cell battery. (Note: I am not going to draw a comparison with the Dell Latitude E4300 as it does not fall into the category of an ultrathin--less than 0.8 inch thick--laptop the way the E4200 and Air do.)

How do the Air's features fare by comparison? Pretty well. The \$2,499 Air also includes a 128GB solid state drive and 2GB of memory. That's where the apples- to-apples comparison ends (pun not intended). It bests the Dell in two significant areas. Despite being less than 0.8 inch thick like the E4200, it uses a more-powerful 1.86GHz Intel processor and **Nvidia GeForce 9400M** graphics. This is a crucial difference for some users who want the portability but need more horsepower. That said, let me state the obvious: heat will always be an issue when a relatively high-speed processor is squeezed into a very small space.



That's why, presumably, Dell, Toshiba (below) and Lenovo (X301 ThinkPad) have all opted for more power- frugal ULV (ultra-low-voltage) Intel processors. The Air does not use a ULV processor.

Form factors: The Air uses a larger 13.3-inch display and is slightly wider than the Dell overall. The bigger screen and wider keyboard can be an advantage or disadvantage. Apple may strike a better balance of weight and keyboard/screen size, but you get more portability (based on specified weight) with the Dell.

Apple does not bundle, as standard; an external media drive with the Air, however. Dell does. That weighs in Dell's favor.

The E4200 also beats the Air on ports. Packing in 1394, VGA, RJ-45, USB, and eSATA/USB Combo ports. And a docking connector. (No docking station for the Air.) Toshiba's new ultraportable, the **Portege R600**, is also a close rival (based on a feature comparison only) to both the Air and the E4200. Like the Dell, this comes with a 12-inch screen, the Intel Graphics Media Accelerator 4500MHD, and a 1.4GHz Intel Core 2 Duo ULV SU9400 processor (lower performance than the Air's).

Like the E4200 and Air, it can be configured with a 128GB solid state drive. Unlike the E4200 and the Air, it squeezes in an optical drive into a form factor less than 0.8 inch thick--in its favor. And offers 3GB of memory as standard, more than the E4200 and the Air.

The R600 also beats the Air on ports. With VGA, 3 USB ports, and an eSATA/USB combo port, in addition to a docking connector. And the price: \$2,999 for the version of the Portege R600 with a 128GB SSD. That's about \$500 more than the Air and E4200, so you pay for the extra functionality in that ultraslim form factor.

Program Coordinator

Continued from page 1.

the first light past a liquor store. This is Burdett Avenue. Turn right and travel past Samaritan Hospital for about two blocks. Troy High School will be the second school on your left. The name is on the front of the building. You can park in the front lot. Come in the main entrance, go up the main stairway to the second floor, turn left and go to room 212. There is an elevator in the main lobby if needed. Usually, a custodian will provide access.

Internet SIG

Continued from page 3.

a dictionary attack. Software tries every word in the dictionary as the password.

You need to use a complex password containing both letters and numbers. If your provider allows it, add a symbol. Use at least 8 characters.

I recommend creating a sentence that is easy to remember. For example, "My daughter was born in 2005" is relatively simple.

Take the first letter from each word and keep the year. You get "mdwbi2005." It's easily remembered, but difficult to guess.

Remembering your passwords

You'll have trouble if you forget your password. But don't write it on a slip of paper. This defeats the purpose of securing your account. Co-workers or family members could find the paper.

Instead, use a password-management program like KeePass or LastPass. Your passwords are encrypted; a master password opens the database.

Or, try Pageonce. It is a Web-based password-management tool.

You should also change your password regularly. And clean out your browser's saved data regularly. This includes the cache, saved forms, cookies and passwords.

Finally, don't check "Remember Me" on the sign in page. That's an open invitation to snoop. Sign out from your account once you've read your e-mail.



"...and you spent 5.73 years of your life deleting spam from your e-mail."



Mac Tips

Make Your Mac Speak

Did you know that your Mac can read aloud to you? Mac OS X Leopard includes a cool Text to Speech function that makes the Mac speak selected text in text-based files — including web pages, email messages, spreadsheets, calendar entries, PDFs, text documents, Finder windows, and even iTunes.

To start, open the System Preferences panel under the Apple icon and click on Speech. Select the Text to Speech tab, check the option “Speak selected text when the key is pressed,” and click the Set Key option. Choose one modifier key — Command, Control, Option, or Shift — plus one other key of your choice, then click OK. Now each time you type this key combination, your Mac will read aloud any text you have selected. To stop the speech, type the same key combination again. You can even choose your Mac’s voice. Mac OS X includes 24 human-sounding and novelty voices, from the suave Alex to the robotic Zarvox. (To see the complete list, click the “Show More Voices” option at the bottom of the pull-down System Voice menu.) You can also ask your Mac to speak more slowly or quickly by adjusting the Speaking Rate slider. Whichever you choose, listening to your text can be a surprisingly useful tool for editing and proofreading.

In addition to speaking selected text aloud, you can configure Text to Speech to announce when an application needs attention or to summon you if you ignore an onscreen alert. This function includes an adjustable delay between the text alert and the spoken announcement, which gives you a chance to tend to the alert before being verbally prompted. You can also have your Mac announce the time on the hour, half-hour, or quarter-hour. To set this up, choose the Clock tab under Date & Time in System Preferences and check Announce the Time. Note that Text to Speech differs from VoiceOver, which provides more comprehensive control of speech and enables the blind or those with low vision to use a Mac. Also, some applications that come with Mac OS X Leopard — including Mail, Calculator, and Chess — and some other Mac programs, such as FileMaker Pro, are “self-speaking” and provide speech capabilities that you can configure independently of the Text to Speech System Preference.

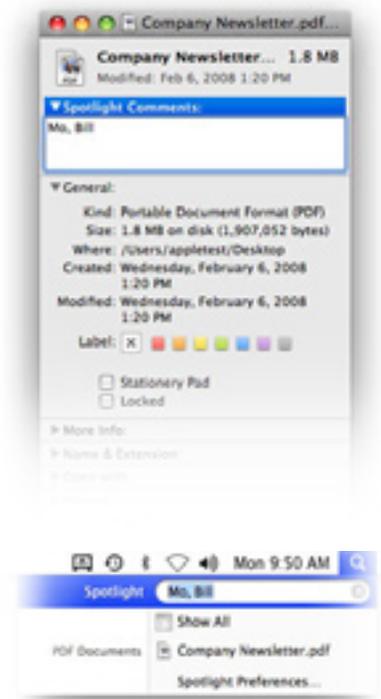
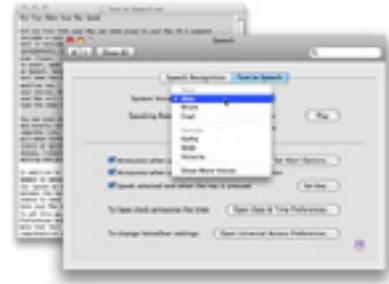
Find Files Faster with Keywords

Savvy web surfers know that web pages, blog entries, and images posted online are often tagged with keywords: terms that help identify and locate relevant content via web searches. These keywords might not even appear in the text or file names—they’re simply attached as metadata, so search engines can “see” them. In a similar sense, you can use keywords on your Mac to help you find any file when conducting searches via Spotlight. In Mac OS X Leopard, you can add your own keywords to text documents, audio files, images, or any other type of file.

For example, let’s say you’ve received a PDF of the latest company newsletter, which features an amusing photo of your boss, Mo, and the CEO, Bill. You’ve saved the newsletter on your computer, and you’d like to be able to locate this document in future using a Spotlight search. But the names Mo and Bill don’t appear anywhere in the newsletter—instead, the two men are identified in the photo as Mauricio and William.

Fortunately, you can easily add the keywords “Mo” and “Bill” to the document yourself. Select the document in the Finder and choose Get Info from the File menu, or just type Command-I. At the top of the Get Info window that appears, there’s a blank field titled Spotlight Comments. (Click the disclosure triangle to reveal the data field if it’s not already visible.) Simply type your desired keywords here, separating the terms with commas, then close the Get Info window.

Now when you search for these keywords in Spotlight, your newly tagged file will appear.



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