



The *GAB'er*

The Newsletter of the Greater Albany Apple Byters

Volume 24, Number 3 - November 2007

Top Ten Tips for Upgrading to the New Mac OS X Leopard

by Guy Kawasaki

Here are the top-ten Leopard tips from my friends, Adam Engst et al, at Take Control Books. They've already released five ebooks to help people upgrade to Leopard. Take Control publishes minor updates for free, so the authors can revise their books on the fly. These guys are the experts, but I have two Leopard tips as well, more about them later.

1. Back up first! Time Machine may or may not turn out to be everything you ever wanted in a backup program. But even if you're going to have a full Time Machine backup after you upgrade to Leopard, don't forget to back up your Mac first. Your best bet is a bootable duplicate to an external hard drive, using a program like SuperDuper.

Not only does this provide insurance in case something goes wrong with your upgrade, it lets you use the cleaner and safer Erase and Install upgrade method, at the end of which the Leopard installer can migrate your user data, applications, and other files from your duplicate. From Take Control of Upgrading to Leopard.

2. Update third-party software first. Some of your favorite third-party applications and utilities may already have been updated for Leopard compatibility. It's worth going through

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Coordinator's Corner

by John Buckley

We anxiously awaited the introduction of the latest, greatest operating system from Apple. From all reports now that Leopard is out of the cage, its introduction appears have been a success. I have installed it on one computer and so far, no problems. I have started a discussion forum on Plain Vanilla for those who have taken the leap. If you are wondering what Plain Vanilla is, you haven't visited our website lately.

At the October meeting we looked at Numbers, the spreadsheet part of iWork. This month, Linda Rackliffe will be presenting what is new in the word processing part of iWork, Pages. Because the program now has both a



word processing side as well as a desktop publishing side, this should be of interest to many of us.

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Next GAAB Meeting
November 14, 2007

iWork Pages
7:00 p.m.

Troy High School
1950 Burdett Avenue, Troy

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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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Officers & Special Interest Group Leaders

Program Coordinator
John Buckley
272-7128

Membership Director
Cecilia MacDonald
872-0823

Treasurer
Cecilia MacDonald
872-0823

Public Domain Librarian
Bill Shuff
393-9753

Newsletter Editor
Roger Mazula
466-7492

Education SIG
John Buckley
272-7128

Internet SIG
Lou Wozniak
465-2873



Apple Ambassador

The following are some interesting stories and rumors from the world of Apple.

The Way It Woz: Steve Wozniak on All Things Apple
Apple co-founder Steve Wozniak talks to LAPTOP about Leopard, the iPhone, and the future of computing.
by Joanna Stern, Laptop Magazine
10/26/2007

It's been more than three decades since Steve Wozniak and Steve Jobs formed Apple Computer, where "the Woz" brought the Apple I and II to life, and where he played a critical role in bringing the original Macintosh to market. He's considered one of the most influential people in the history of personal computing, and his passion for producing easy-to-use software is still very much a part of Apple's DNA. On the eve of the Leopard launch, we asked Wozniak whether Apple was staying true to its roots and what innovations he'd like to see become a reality.



LAPTOP: How are you keeping busy these days?
Steve Wozniak: I've been doing various levels of volunteer work on local nonprofit boards. I also do regular speaking engagements around the world about my experience. I started a financial type company with a couple Apple executives, and we acquired a chip maker in Southern California. And we are called Jazz Technologies. At this point I haven't taken a role yet and am trying to figure out what part I will play.

L: Will you be switching to Leopard? Have you tried Vista?
Steve Wozniak: Yes, I will [switch to Leopard], the first day it comes out. I really don't know anything about it; I like to be surprised when I first play around with it. No, I haven't tried Vista. I bought Parallels, but I didn't install it. I don't have any desire to try out Vista and haven't seen the need to yet.

LAPTOP: You were recently quoted as saying that a lot of the intuitiveness had gone away from Apple's programs.

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Lately, more people are declaring bankruptcy. No, they're not financially insolvent. They just can't keep up with e-mail. They empty their inbox, announce e-mail bankruptcy and start over from scratch. Don't let it happen to you. Get a grip on the problem before it is too late.

Reduce messages

Your goal is to reduce the amount of incoming e-mail. So cancel subscriptions to unwanted mailing lists. The messages become a nuisance if you don't have time to read them.

A good spam filter reduces the amount of spam reaching your inbox. But don't expect to eliminate spam completely. Some will still get through.

Do your friends send jokes or chain messages? Explain your situation and ask that they stop. Hopefully they'll oblige.

Respond appropriately

Not all e-mail requires a response. If you receive an e-mail addressed to several people, you may not need to respond. If a response is required, it may not need to go to everybody.

Be succinct; restrict your messages to a few sentences. If you can't, pick up the phone or talk in person.

If an e-mail contains several different points, respond to each in separate messages. This may take longer at first. But, it will be easier to deal with each e-mail thread.

Take advantage of subject lines

Subject lines should relate to the body of the e-mail. So be as descriptive as possible. Subjects like "question" or "hello" should be avoided. Recipients won't know what the message is about. And it will be difficult for you to categorize responses.

If you have a one-line e-mail, put it in the subject line. This will save you and the recipient valuable time.

If possible, create a set of codes with your coworkers. Placed in the subject line, codes help you process and prioritize messages.

For example, use "FYI" for informational messages. Use "AR" for action required and "URG" for urgent messages.

Forwarding and copying

Be courteous when forwarding an e-mail. Summarize the message and say why you're forwarding it. This is particularly helpful if the e-mail contains several messages.

Recipients will appreciate your thoughtfulness. They won't need to read through several messages to guess your thoughts. This will cut down on questions from recipients.

Don't copy someone on a message unless it is necessary. And explain why you're copying them. Recipients won't need to guess your intentions. This means less back and forth messages.

Be disciplined

Avoid the temptation to check your e-mail every few minutes. Check it every hour on the hour for important messages. If you can go longer, do. Of course, this might not be feasible in some work environments.

Set time aside each morning and evening to process your inbox. When you're done, it should be completely empty. File messages you need to keep. Set reminders for messages that require you to follow up.

Respond to messages immediately, so you only read them once. There is an exception to this rule. If emotions might govern your response, give yourself a cooling-down period.

Use your program's tools

Explore the tools your e-mail program offers. I already mentioned setting follow-up reminders. Filters and folders can help you file and prioritize mail. Auto-responders can alert business associates when you're out of town. You won't come back to a full inbox.





Education SIG

Online Testing



The following article describes a study involving computerized testing. This should be of interest to educators and parents in New York State because it is a process that has been discussed both in New York and other states to help meet the needs of the No Child Left Behind requirements for assessment.

Feds Tout Computerized Tests for Key Skills

Study suggests that computerized exams hold promise as problem-solving assessment tools
 by Meris Stansbury, Assistant Editor, eSchool News

Computer-based testing can be an effective way to measure so-called “21st-century skills” such as the ability to solve problems and synthesize information, according to a recent federal report.

Funded by the National Center for Education Statistics, a division of the U.S. Department of Education, the study looks at two different computer-based scenarios for measuring students’ scientific skills on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP), commonly known as the Nation’s Report Card.

The study concludes that computer-based testing holds promise for measuring higher-order thinking skills that cannot be measured easily via traditional pencil-and-paper exams—a finding that is sure to resonate with advocates of teaching 21st-century skills in classrooms.

However, one of the researchers who wrote the report concedes the United States is probably at least five years away from adopting computer-based testing on a more widespread basis in schools.

The report, called “Problem Solving in Technology-Rich Environments (TREs): A Report from the NAEP Technology-Based Assessment Project,” is based on a study of how more than 2,000 eighth-grade students from U.S. public schools performed in one of two computer-based testing scenarios administered in 2003: a search scenario and a simulation scenario.

Eighth-graders were chosen to participate with the assumption that they would have basic computer skills; basic exposure to scientific inquiry and concepts; and the ability to read scientifically oriented material at a sixth-grade level or higher.

The search scenario required students to locate and synthesize information about scientific helium balloons from a simulated World Wide Web environment, and it was designed to measure students’ scientific inquiry and computer skills. The simulation scenario required students to conduct experiments of increasing complexity about relationships among buoyancy, mass, and volume, and it was designed to assess their scientific exploration, scientific synthesis, and computer skills.

According to Randy Bennett, one of the authors of the report and a Distinguished Scientist in the Research and Development Division of Princeton, N.J.-based Educational Testing Service, these scenarios aimed to measure some of the key skills needed for success in college and the workplace.

“To be successful in a knowledge-based economy, individuals must be able to use computers to perform cognitive tasks—among other things, to search for and synthesize information from the internet, use simulations and modeling tools to answer what-if questions, and craft meaningful communications with text-editing and presentation tools,” Bennett explained.

He added: “The scenarios were engaging, highly interactive, and open-ended so as to capture skills not tapped by multiple-choice tests.”

The exams were delivered on school computers or on laptops taken into the schools, and the results suggest that the computer-based scenarios “functioned well as assessment devices.” Of particular significance, there was an “absence of gender differences” in the results, the report says, which was encouraging in light of the common



stereotype that girls are less technologically proficient than boys.

Yet some “substantial differences” in the results did emerge among different racial or ethnic groups, socioeconomic groups, and groups with varying levels of parental education. The differences that appeared in these various groups could be “very worrisome if they exist beyond the two problem-solving scenarios used in the study,” Bennett said.

Still, he said, the most important result of the study was that 21st-century, higher-order learning skills can, indeed, be tested, and tested well—all within a computer-based test.

To Bennett and the other researchers, tests that involve problem-solving tasks such as these should be incorporated into federally mandated state testing under No Child Left Behind.

However, when asked whether educators can integrate this kind of 21st-century, computer-based testing in their schools, Bennett had this to say: “We are probably five to 10 years away from having online assessments

substantially comprised of such tasks. We don’t yet have the development tools to make their production efficient; we don’t have all of the psychometric methods required for the analysis of student performance; and the schools don’t have the infrastructure to allow their widespread use.”

Still, Bennett offered hope, noting that the study was conducted in 2003, and the test was administered successfully to a wide representation of eighth-graders, meaning some schools, at least, had the necessary infrastructure to deliver it—infrastructure that likely has improved by now.

“Some states are moving faster than others, of course,” he said. “Oregon and Virginia are states that have large, well-established computer-based testing programs. We are not that far off.”

The TRE study is the last of three federal studies that explore the feasibility of delivering NAEP exams via computer. The previous two studies, Mathematics Online (MOL) and Writing Online (WOL), compared online and paper testing in terms of measurement, equity, efficiency, and operations.

Top Ten Tips for Upgrading to the New Mac OS X Leopard

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your software and checking for any such updates before running the Leopard installer - especially for things like plug-ins for Safari and Mail, and any other system enhancements that may hack into your system in ways Apple doesn’t officially sanction. Many such programs will may break under Leopard, but if you upgrade them to compatible versions beforehand, you’ll have a better chance of smooth sailing once Leopard is installed. From Take Control of Upgrading to Leopard.

3. Opt out (not in) for additional fonts. In Tiger, if you wanted the forty or so additional foreign-language fonts installed, you had to ask for them specially during the installation process, or try and find them later. (Why would you care if your foreign language skills don’t include Chinese, Thai, or Tibetan? Many of the Asian fonts have wonderful Roman-based characters, such as numbers up to 100 and letters inside circles, squares, and rounded rectangles, both white-on-black and black-and-white.)

Leopard, however, includes all the fonts by default, so if you don’t want your Font menus cluttered or the chore of removing the extras manually, decline the fonts during the installation process: Choose your installation method, and

then on the Install Summary screen, click Customize. In the Custom Install pane that appears, uncheck Additional Fonts in the list of options. From Take Control of Fonts in Leopard.

4. Reconsider Spotlight. In Tiger, many users found Spotlight a disappointment: it failed to find files; finding invisible files didn’t work; and the interface for dealing with the found files was just plain weird. Leopard fixes all this.

There are only two Spotlight interfaces: the Spotlight menu, and the Finder search window. To use the Finder search window, choose Show All in the Spotlight menu, or press Command-Option-Space, or just start typing in a Finder window’s search field. You can work with the found results just as in any Finder window. Even better, you can refine the search as much as you like. Click the + button at the right side to summon a “criteria bar.” Click it again to summon another.

If the criterion you want doesn’t appear in the leftmost pop-up menu, choose Other; especially useful “Other” options include “System Files” (which makes Spotlight search everywhere) and “Spotlight items” (which makes the results include non-file things like iCal events). Option-click the + button to make a criteria bar that can modify addition criteria using Any, All, or Not. Oh, and finding invisible files works. From Take Control of Customizing Leopard.



5. Welcome guests to your Mac. When your friends or family want to use your Mac “just for a minute,” to check email, to surf the Web, or to play a game, you can do so more safely now by letting them log into the new Guest Account in Leopard. This account, which recreates a virgin home folder each time its activated, gives them standard user’s rights, and keeps them from prying into your personal files. From Take Control of Users & Accounts in Leopard.

6. Capitalize on the Finder font previews. You don’t have to open Font Book, or the font manager of your choice, to see what a font looks like. With Icon Preview turned on as an option for any Fonts folder window, a font icon appears as a tiny, two-letter sample of its font. In a Column view window, the Preview column shows a small, but full alphanumeric sample of a selected font file. But, for a quick, big Finder font sample, just select a font file and take a Quick Look: choose File > Quick Look (Command-Y), or simply hit the spacebar. From Take Control of Fonts in Leopard.

7. Share and share alike. Like a scent on a breeze that reminds us of older days, File Sharing in Leopard brings back a feature missing since Mac OS 9: folders that can be shared as network volumes. While third-party software could add back this behavior in Tiger, it’s not the same as having it built in. Sharing folders lets you choose which projects or parts of a hard drive to expose to others. This limits risk and makes file sharing simpler, too.

Leopard provides a neat interface (in the Sharing preference pane, under the File Sharing service) to choose which folders or volumes to share, and to set which users may access and modify files. But it can be even simpler. In the Finder, select any folder or volume, choose Get Info, and check the Shared Folder box to share that item; it’s automatically added to the Shared Folders list in File Sharing. From Take Control of Sharing Files in Leopard.

8. Control your kids! A great way to keep your kids from using their Macs too much is to set time limits with Leopard’s significantly enhanced Parental Controls. You can set limits for school nights and weekends, and this prevents them from logging in between the morning and evening hours you set, or playing games or chatting after bedtime. From Take Control of Users & Accounts in Leopard.

9. Lock down FTP. Apple is still hiding its secure FTP (SFTP) light under a bushel. FTP as a protocol is insecure: passwords and data pass in the clear, visible to anyone on a Wi-Fi hotspot or other untrusted network at a college or elsewhere. SFTP protects you by encrypting the entire FTP connection. You won’t find the option connected with FTP in the File Sharing preferences though.

The trick is that Leopard enables SFTP when you turn on Remote Access in the Sharing preferences pane. Unfortunately SFTP can’t be limited in scope as to what files a user with a Mac OS X account can see, so SFTP is a better tool for a computer owner’s remote access. All well-known Mac OS X FTP clients support SFTP. From Take Control of Sharing Files in Leopard.

10. Become a Spaces cadet. You’ll get the hang of using Spaces right away (and you should definitely use it, as it is a really easy and very cool way to handle window clutter), but one or two major features might escape your notice. An important thing to be able to do is to move an already open window from one space to another. Since you are always in just one space, how can you possibly do that? If you’re in All Spaces mode (which you get to by clicking the Spaces icon in the Dock, or by pressing F8), you can drag a miniaturized window directly from one space to another!

Otherwise, hold the mouse down on a window’s title bar and switch directly to another space with a keyboard shortcut (such as Control-Right arrow); the window will travel with you to the new space. Or, drag the window to the edge of the screen and pause with the mouse still down and at the screen’s edge; you’ll switch spaces automatically, bringing the window with you.

And here’s another tip: When you’re in All Spaces mode, you can use Exposé triggers. It’s particularly useful if you enter All Spaces mode and then activate your All Windows Exposé trigger. The result is quite spectacular: you can now see all your windows in all your spaces, simultaneously! Click a window to switch to that space and bring that window frontmost, all in one amazing move. From Take Control of Customizing Leopard.

These guys are the experts, but I have two Leopard tips too. First, switch to Safari. I swear it renders pages faster than any browser that I’ve used. This means sacrificing some Firefox plug-ins, but the tradeoff is worth it even if Safari didn’t enable you to create widgets (see next).

Second, roll your own widgets. My favorite feature of Leopard is the ability to create widgets with Safari. I made widgets out of the site traffic reports that I track. Now I just go to Dashboard and see four widgets instead of going to four web pages. Here’s how: Safari—>File menu—>Open in Dashboard. I’ve used Dashboard more in the first twenty-four hours since upgrading to Leopard than during all the years Dashboard was available prior to Leopard.

This piece was originally published on Guy’s blog [How to Change the World](#).



Apple Ambassador

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L: Do you think Leopard might change that?

SW: Early on with the first Apples, we had these dreams that the computer would let you know what you wanted to do. The idea was that little icons or words would suggest what you wanted to do, but now I have to find my way around to odd little icons that aren't positioned in the prominent places. When conducting a common task, I have to go searching around in folders or the bottom of the screen. I don't think any of it will be solved with Leopard because I don't think there is incentive to. They want to make things easy, and if it seems easy and it can be demonstrated quickly then it's okay. The real dreams of how it will work for someone who knows nothing about the computer have been lost and don't get addressed anymore.

L: What about the aesthetic appeal of the OS?

SW: I don't think it makes it easier or harder. I think it's just more fun.

L: Do you think Linux has a lot of potential?

SW: I don't think it's going to make a big mark. The masses of users aren't going to be going that way. You have to be in a geeky crowd to take advantage of that. You have to be an expert, and not everyone is an expert. In my mind, it's very idealistic people, but most people want to take it easy.

L: Mac's notebook market share has climbed as high as 8.8 percent in the U.S. How much higher do you think it can go?

SW: I think Macintosh has a lot higher market share than it's ever credited for. I think normal people who buy and use computers on their own choose Macs. It's close to a 50/50 split in my mind. It's businesses that are buying thousands of Microsoft PCs, and there are tons of countries where Apple isn't sold at all.

L: Do you think Leopard will provide a boost?

SW: I don't think any operating system, despite all its promises, is what sells a computer nowadays. I think OS changes are just done to keep your loyal people happy. Learning an entirely new operating system is something no one wants to do. You get stuck on a platform, and you don't want to start learning a whole new computer system.

L: Now that the browser itself is a computing platform, do you think operating systems are starting to become less relevant?

SW: I think that's exactly where we are headed, if not already there. Even Apple is looking forward to where computers are, after the operating system isn't important. Apple has already taken its way into the living room and entertainment system. They have a huge advantage in this space. They have the OS, the hardware, the applications, and the online services, and they get them to all work together. A company like Hewlett-Packard, on the other hand, can make a computer and have great ideas, but it boils down to the software element, and they're restricted by what Microsoft provides as an operating system.

L: Does innovation mean the same thing today as it did ten years ago?

SW: A long time ago when we started Apple, there was an incredible focus on the single person. Without anyone helping them, one person could have the skills and how-to to manage the technical details and the design. There were a lot of build-it-yourselfers. And that led to a lot of innovation. But today in all things electronics and technology, everything is so complicated, and there are various levels of expertise. Innovation changed in that sense. I think innovation occurs in lots of other areas now. The Internet brought about a whole new round of innovation for applications and Web sites. Ten years ago, who could have said what the Internet could have spurred on in terms of innovation?

L: What about hardware?

SW: As for hardware innovation, these days the market is so big and there is so much money in it that it's usually the purview of people with big money, and very few of them take big risks and do something very new and different. Apple is one of the exceptions. It really comes down to packaging technologies with hardware now. For instance, you can buy little camera media cards. What people don't realize is that a 4GB card has four chips linked together. Take the iPhone: How can you get something as thin as a credit card with so much functionality?

L: Is there anything you would change about the iPhone?

SW: I think it could be more like a computer. It should be open like a computer. Anyone should be able to develop their own games and programs on it. And keep the phone and the phone services off guard so it's protected.

L: So you're in favor of the unlocking and jailbreaking for third-party applications?

SW: From a business point of view, Apple owns what they have done. They have a right to lock it. But I am really for the unlockers, the rebels trying to make it free. I'd really like it to be open to new applications. I'd like to install some nice games. Why in the world can I not install a



ringtone that I've made? How would that hurt AT&T's network? Here is Steve Jobs sending letters to the record companies saying [they] should provide music that's unprotected, but here he is taking the opposite approach with the iPhone. I don't know to what extent AT&T is involved in the thinking and direction.

L: Does carrying one phone cut it for you?

SW: I really like to be a technology buff and offer advice to people on devices and be in the know. I'm enamored with different features in different phones. For some of the phones it's the style that I like, for example, Bang & Olufsen's device. The iPhone is just a "got to have" because everyone knows what it is. I like my little BlackBerry Pearl because I like the size for what it does. It's a creditable smart phone but not very pleasing for Internet surfing. I like my RAZR because it has better voice quality than the iPhone; it's a bit louder. Someday I will switch to the iPhone for voice.

L: Beyond touch, how would you like to see user interfaces evolve?

SW: I don't think anything revolutionary is close on the horizon, but I guess you never know. I didn't think the iPhone would be as pleasing. I was really surprised. Eventually, I would love a little computer with a camera that recognizes me, and I can throw a lot of little gestures at it, and it responds to what I say and do. It will be very hard to create a computer that can understand our voice and our rhythm.

From MacRumors

Apple has quietly updated the MacBook tonight to the Santa Rosa architecture with mild speed bumps and the GMA X3100 integrated video.

White 13.3"

\$1099.00 2.0GHz/1GB RAM/80GB/Combo/GMA X3100
\$1299.00 2.2GHz/1GB RAM/120GB/SD-DL/GMA X3100

Black 13.3"

\$1499.00 2.2GHz/1GB RAM/160GB/SD-DL/GMA X3100

Despite comparable clock speeds (2.0 -> 2.0GHz, 2.16 -> 2.2GHz) to the old models, the new MacBooks use the Santa Rosa chipset which boasts a faster 800MHz front side bus over the previous MacBook models. The introduction of the GMA X3100 video card also provides significant benefits over the previous models. The new specs can be seen at the Apple Store.

has sweetened the deal for imminent Office for Mac buyers that don't want to be left behind come the January launch of Mac Office 2008.

From now on, a purchase of ANY version of Mac Office 2004 product (Student and Teacher, Standard, or Professional Edition) will be eligible for an upgrade to the top of the line Mac Office 2008 Special Media Edition for only the price of shipping and handling.

While Microsoft had previously had a technology guarantee in place after announcing the Office 2008 packages, the update applied only to the comparable updated version (Standard Edition 2004 would be updated to Standard Edition 2008).

A report from AppleInsider points to a release of iTunes 7.5 as early as next week. The release will contain a host of small improvements and bug fixes according to the site, though no radical changes should be expected.

Better management of duplicate video and song entries will be included as well as a more stable experience for users upgrading their songs to iTunes Plus purchases.

Currently in late-beta, the site expects that the software could be released within the week, however notes that such high-impact releases such as iTunes can occasionally see unforeseen setbacks. Nonetheless, the release should be out by mid-November at the latest.

Program Coordinator

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

The October meeting will be held at Troy High School in room 212 on Wednesday, November 14, 2007. 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 the first light past a liquor store on your right. 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. If needed there is a new elevator in the lobby, which is open to the public and requires no key.



Leopard Upgrade Helps Polish Any Apple Its 300 Features Give New Life to Computer

by Eric Benderoff

Reviewing computer operating systems is the most challenging task a person with a cool job like this handles. The reason: Everyone uses a computer in a different way.

The programs I like to use on my computer, someone else may not care for. Likewise, I never had much affinity for certain tasks — let's call them spreadsheets — while other folks become simply giddy when they learn a new way to sort cells on Excel.

So keep that in mind as I write why Apple's new operating system upgrade, called Leopard, continues to make Mac computers the easiest and most enjoyable to use.

If you own a Mac, you'll want Leopard. If you're thinking of giving Apple computers a try, Leopard is further proof that personal computing needn't be filled with stress.

I've been using Leopard — also known as version 10.5 of Apple's OS X operating system — on two computers, my own 3-year-old iBook G4 and on a sparkling MacBook Pro laptop on loan from Apple. Needless to say, the MacBook is a screaming fast and beautiful machine that anyone would be inclined to like.

And, boy, do I like this one. But it's a \$2,800 laptop that is a tad too rich and powerful for my modest home needs.

So to me, and millions of other Mac users, the real question is whether upgrading to Leopard will make my humble little iBook better. The answer: Yes.

(Note: my iBook barely met the minimum requirements needed for the upgrade. Check Apple's Web site for details if you're unsure your computer meets those needs.)

In the past, some Mac OS upgrades could be skipped. The last one, dubbed Tiger, had nice touches, including Dashboard. (That's a platform for little programs, dubbed widgets, that make computing a bit more entertaining.) But overall, the Tiger upgrade, by itself, wasn't the primary reason to get a Mac.

Leopard is and here's one example why: Apple included the excellent "cover flow" feature it introduced on the new iPods. On a computer, cover flow allows you to flip through

a visual display of the programs, documents, photos or utilities you have on your computer.

This is far more useful than I imagined. After 3-plus years using the same computer, one forgets what they have. Using cover flow to skim through my applications, I found games, children's software and perhaps a hundred other things I forgot or simply didn't know I had. (Did I have Activity Monitor before Leopard?)

When you combine cover flow with the upgrade to "spotlight," Mac's built-in search tool for the files on your computer, the results are great. Spotlight is so fast that search results pop up as soon as you strike keys, so by the time you reach the end of a search term, tons of relevant files — and now images of those files — have already been located.

When I searched for Kanye West, for instance, up popped two albums' worth of mp3 files from the Chicago musician's own albums, mp3s from artists he produced, a video I downloaded and a digital booklet I didn't know I owned that came bundled with an iTunes album purchase.

Another new feature is "spaces." It divides your computer screen into quadrants you can use to organize and maneuver around your desktop. In each space, you can see what files or applications you have open. Click on a space and that becomes the dominant element on your screen.

It took a little time to learn how to navigate with spaces — I'm still not sure I have it optimized — but I like using this tool to quickly switch between tasks, such as checking e-mail. The real plus is that spaces helps maintain a clutter-free desktop. You are not distracted by what else might be open on your screen, a common issue with computing today that has made multitasking (multidistracting, if you prefer) so easy.

Using spaces, if I want to see if I have new e-mail messages while working on a document — such as this review — I hit F8 to open all my spaces. Then I move the cursor into the space where I put my e-mail program and click it open. When done, I hit F8 again and click on the space housing this document.



Another tool Leopard uses to keep your desktop clear is called “stacks.”

(Apple apparently requires its software designers to be neat freaks. Leopard is filled with tools to keep you orderly and organized.)

With stacks, your documents and downloads are organized into a stack of content. In my download stack, for example, I have a bunch of videos of my kids that relatives have sent me. When I first downloaded them, the videos sat on my desktop.

Now, with Leopard, I just open my download stack and click on a video there. This actually adds a click to find content in a stack, but the benefit is a clean desktop that doesn’t obscure any cute photos I may use it as a screensaver. It also looks pretty cool when the stack springs open to display its various content.

Now there are many, many things I haven’t covered here — including all the cool stuff I can do on that MacBook that I can’t on my iBook. But I plan on posting occasional mini-reviews and other Leopard insights on the Eric 2.0 blog (chicagotri.bune.com/eric).

After all, Leopard offers 300-plus new features, so pardon me if I didn’t cover what interests you. But I can tell you this: for \$129, Leopard breathes new life into an aging Mac.

Apple Macintoshes Targeted by Porn-Based Computer Virus

SAN FRANCISCO — In a backhanded compliment to Apple Inc., online criminals are apparently so impressed with its scorching sales they are sending Macintosh computers an attack typically aimed at machines running Microsoft Corp.’s dominant Windows operating system.

Symantec Corp. researchers said the Web sites serving up the new attack also deploy a Windows version.

“For a while Mac users have enjoyed the benefits of being a small enough population that hackers didn’t go after them directly — that’s obviously now changing,” said Ben Greenbaum, senior research manager at Symantec Security Response.

Lynn Fox, an Apple spokeswoman, said the Cupertino-based company knows about the threat and urges Mac users to be careful about where they download things from.

“Apple has a great track record for keeping Mac OS X users secure, and as always, we encourage people to install software only from trusted sources,” she said in a statement.

Online porn-hunters are the intended victim of the latest ploy, in which visitors to certain explicit Web sites are led to believe they’re downloading a free video player when in fact they’re installing malicious code onto their Macs.

Once the user authorizes the transaction, the fraudsters can redirect his future browsing to fraudulent Web sites and possibly to steal his information or passwords or simply send ads for other pornographic Web sites and rake in advertising dollars.

For example, a person using an infected computer may think he is going to online auctioneer eBay Inc. or its PayPal electronic payment division but actually be directed to a site that looks legitimate but exists to purloin personal information.

The attack does not target a vulnerability in the Macintosh operating system.

Instead, it requires a user to approve the download, then enter his computer’s administrator’s password to continue, operations that raise red flags among sophisticated computer users.

Symantec researchers said the Trojan used in the attack is a rejiggered version of one that’s been around for a couple years and requires that victims fall for a social engineering trick to work.

Security researchers at Intego, which makes Macintosh antivirus software and discovered the scheme this week, said it underscores the mounting threats to Mac users as the machines grow in popularity.

Windows machines still dominate the PC market, but Apple, which for years commanded just 2 to 3 percent of the U.S. market, has now grown to command an 8 percent chunk, according to market researcher Gartner Inc.

“This is the first really malicious criminal malware [for Macs],” said Intego spokesman Peter James. “We’ve seen some proof-of-concept malware, we’ve seen some worms, but this is different.”



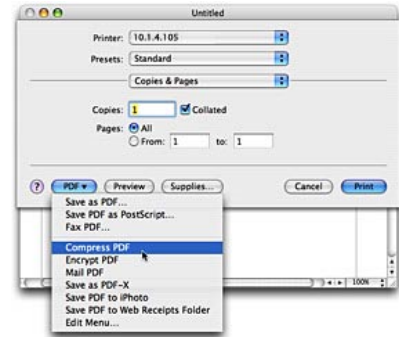
Mac Tips

PDF: The Smaller PDF Secret Control

This is another one of those “secret, buried-in-a-vault” killer tips that addresses something Mac OS X users have complained about: The file sizes of PDFs that Mac OS X creates are sometimes too big (vs. Adobe’s Acrobat PDFs). believe it or not, there’s a way to get smaller PDFs. Here’s how: launch TextEdit, then choose Print from the File menu. From the PDF pop-up menu in the bottom-left corner of the dialog, choose Compress PDF. That’s it. It’ll compress the PDF and call it a day.

However, if you’re charging by the hour, and let’s pretend you are, you have a wonderful time-consuming option: Choose Print from the File menu, and from the second Presets pop-up menu choose ColorSync. From the Quartz Filter menu that appears, choose Add Filters. Click on the three-oval icon in the top-left corner of the dialog that appears, click on the filter named Reduce File Size, and then click-and-hold on the arrow button to the right of the filter and choose Duplicate Filter. This creates an unlocked filter you can edit.

Now click on the triangle to the left of the duplicate filter to show its options; this is where you choose what you want. I recommend clicking on the arrow to the left of Image Compression and dragging the magic slider that lets you control the amount of JPEG compression your PDF images receive. For smaller file sizes, drag the Quality Slider toward Minimum. Now go back to TextEdit and in the Print dialog, choose Colorsync from the second Presets pop-up menu, choose your new filter from the Quartz Filter pop-up menu and click Print. That’s it. (Whew!)



Knowing When to (Force) Quit

With the Force Quit command in OS X, you can escape from “frozen” applications on your Mac without shutting down the whole computer or disrupting work in other programs. If an application hasn’t responded for a while to mouse clicks, trackpad scrolling, or other persuasive actions, click on the Apple menu and select Force Quit.

A pop-up window lists all the applications you currently have open. Stalled applications are listed in red and say (not responding) after the application name. Scroll up and down through the list with the arrow keys, or just click on an application name to select — then click Force Quit to exit only that program. You can restart the application from your Dock or Applications menu, but any unsaved changes may be lost.

But there’s an even easier Force Quit trick: Simultaneously press Command-Option-Esc and the Force Quit pop-up appears — an especially useful trick if your Finder has frozen and you can’t select the pull-down Apple menu.



Can’t Remember the Password?

If you can’t remember a password for a website (or anything else for that matter), all your passwords are saved in the Keychain Access utility (which probably isn’t news to you), but the cool thing is you can do a Spotlight search from right within Keychain to quickly find the password you’re looking for.

Start by looking inside your Applications folder for the Utilities folder, and inside of that double-click on Keychain Access. When it opens you’ll see a search field in the upper-right corner. Type the name of the site you’re looking for, and it will appear. Double-click on the result and an info dialog will appear, and to see your password, turn on the show Password checkbox.



GAAB Internet Addresses

Gary Blizzard	gmbizzard@aol.com
Mark Bogossian	mark@castlecomp.com
Steve Bradley	ssbradley@adelphia.net
John Buckley	jbuckley@applebyters.com
Anthony Eldering	tonye11@verizon.net
Harold Flax	hflax1@nycap.rr.com
Lilajane Frascarelli	afrascar@nycap.rr.com
Les Goldstein	lgoldst1@nycap.rr.com
Richard Hester	hesterFP@capital.net
Bruce Hodson	bhodson@nycap.rr.com
George Johnsen	gjohnsen@sprynet.com
Judy and David Kiskel	jak@nycap.rr.com
Cecilia MacDonald	cecilia@midtel.net
Stella Zuris Mallon	SunnyStela@adelphia.net
Mike Mannarino	rfd230@nycap.rr.com
Roger Mazula	aluzam@aol.com
	aluzam@yahoo.com
Brendan O'Hara	bohara1@nycap.rr.com
Linda Rackliffe	revmutt@mac.com
Jen Rice	jrice001@nycap.rr.com
Eric/Lee Rieker	Erieker@aol.com
Judith Schwartz	jfschwartz2@earthlink.net
Bill Shuff	wjs206@earthlink.net
Roy Stevens	roystevens@aol.com
Ernie Tetrault	ernie@global2000.net
Edward Walsh	ewalsh@nycap.rr.com
Shelly Weiner	olliedawg@yahoo.com
Lou Wozniak	louw@nycap.rr.com

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