Automator

Robots Don't Grumble

Accomplish all of your time-consuming, repetitive manual tasks quickly, efficiently and effortlessly with Automator Workflows. It's simple to create custom Workflows just by dragging items, pointing and clicking. Perform the task once using your Automator Workflow or many times — even share Workflows with friends.

You can easily automate tasks such as renaming a large group of files, resizing dozens of images to fit an iPhoto slideshow or creating iCal birthday events using Address Book contacts, then repeat those tasks again and again. Simple and easy-to-understand application Actions are the building blocks, so you don't have to write any code. Each Action has all of the options and settings you need. You don't have to work hard to figure out how to make it work.

You can even incorporate Tiger's new Spotlight search into Workflows to identify items automatically. Simply drag the Finder Action into your Workflow, click "Run" and powerful Spotlight search technology takes over to find files, disks, folders or items that match whatever criteria you choose.

Coordinator's Corner

by John Buckley

As part of our Green Apple Sessions, we will take a look at Automator, which enables you to have the computer do a lot of tasks on its own. We will look at Automator, how to use it and how to use what others have created using the program.

As with the last meeting, we will have a good Open Question period during the first hour.

This meeting is for all those new Mac owners out there who are not exactly sure how things are supposed to work. Those of us who have had a Mac for a while will also most likely learn something new.

So bring your questions and get ready to get your hands clicking a mouse and hitting the keys.

Also be aware that our website is available at http://www.applebyters.com as well as at http://homepage.mac.com/applebyters.

The December meeting will be held at Troy High School in room 212 on Wednesday, December 13, 2006. The meeting will begin at 7:00 p.m.

Next GAAB Meeting
December 13, 2006

Automator

7:00 p.m.
Troy High School
Room 212

Featured in this Issue

Serving the Apple Computer User Community Since May 1984

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

Hot News User Groups

The following are taken from Apple eNews and other Mac user Group resources. These are short brief stories with links to a more detailed story. So if you are reading the GAB'er on your computer, just click on the link for more information.

Which desktop and laptop systems does Computer World recommend in its 2006 Holday Gift Guide? The iMac — "a space-saving, multimedia-savvy, user-friendly computer that offers the best out-of-box experience of any consumer system on the market." — and the MacBook Pro — "Why buy one laptop when you can get two for virtually the same price?"

Kyle Monson offers this suggestion for PC Magazine's "Daily Gift Idea": "The new iPod shuffle is a clip-on MP3 player that's a perfect fit for a morning jog, a short commute, or a Christmas stocking. It's got a sturdy aluminum case, comes with 1GB of storage, and costs $79 if you order it online from www.apple.com."

"And then there's the design of the thing," notes technology pundit and recent switcher Thomas Hawk. "I never in a million years would have thought that the design of a laptop would even matter to me at all. It's not about the aesthetics of a machine. It's what it does for you right? Well, maybe. But this machine is damn sexy. I love the way that the keyboard is lit at night so that I can work in the dark. I love that glassy screen. There is something about the feel of the polished aluminum as I hold, no caress, the thing in my hands. ... And yes, I even love that glowing little Apple logo on the back of the case that I've scoffed at in the past at the various conferences and tech meetups that I've gone to."

MacAddict Magazine to become Mac|Life

New Format To Reflect Apple's Growing, Evolving Market

South San Francisco, CA (October 18, 2006) - *MacAddict*, Future US Inc.'s leading independent magazine devoted

Five Ways to Shop Safely and Smartly Online

by Kim Komando

Each year, more people do their holiday shopping online. Nothing beats that convenience. But before you buy anything online, make sure you're staying safe – and getting the best deal.

1. Think credit, not debit

A credit card is the safest way to pay for items online. With credit cards, you'll get security protection from your card's issuer. Visa, MasterCard and American Express all have a zero liability policy. If you notify the bank of unauthorized transactions, you pay nothing.

Also, with credit cards, you can assign password challenges for purchases. When you purchase something, you're prompted for a password. This offers another layer of protection. MasterCard offers SecureCode and Visa offers Verified by Visa.

These programs only work at participating sites. To learn more, visit MasterCard.com and Visa.com.

Many credit card companies offer one-time-use numbers for purchases. Visit your card issuer's site to check availability. You may even be able to designate which online store can accept the card number.

As with credit cards, many debit cards have fraud protections. You can dispute charges to your account. But with a debit card, your money is tied up while you dispute charges.

2. Use coupons

Some online stores provide regular customers with promotional codes. You enter these when you check out. And they'll save you money.

With promo codes, you may get free shipping or a price reduction. Stores may have multiple codes, so pick the best one.

If you're not a regular customer, you can still find promo codes. Coupon Cabin, RetailMeNot, Current Codes and Naughty Codes have them. Other sites also offer them.

3. Use price-comparison sites

Many sites aggregate prices from other sites. Enter a product name and sort through the results. You can sort the results by the lowest price or highest-rated store. Most allow you to enter your ZIP code so shipping is included.

PriceGrabber.com, Shopping.com, PriceSCAN.com and Froogle all offer price comparison searches.

When searching these sites, be specific. Otherwise, you could get hundreds of results.

So, if you're searching for a CompactFlash card, don't just enter "CompactFlash." A better search would be "CompactFlash 1 gigabyte."

4. Buy from a trusted source

When you buy online, there's the chance that your items won't arrive. Protect yourself by sticking with trusted merchants.

An established site such as Amazon is less likely to give you problems. But if you use a price-comparison site, smaller sites may have better prices. So you may opt to give them your business.

Before you do, though, do some research. Read reviews left by other shoppers. And look at their ratings. But don't take the ratings at face value. If one site has a lower rating than another, find out why. Maybe it is simply slow to ship items.

5. Don't use your regular e-mail address

When you buy online, you must provide an e-mail address. The store will contact you with tracking information and order confirmations. You could also get spam.

So create a new e-mail address via a free provider. Hotmail, Yahoo! and Gmail all offer free accounts. Use this when registering and buying at online stores.

When your purchases are complete, you won't need to worry about more e-mail from the merchant.

Ruling: Schools Must Archive E-Mail
by John Buckley

The following article from *eSchool News online* at http://www.eschoolnews.com. It has some serious implications for schools who might be treating electronic communications lightly. There are serious needs for a strong backup system and policy setting requirements that all educators should be aware of starting this month.

New rules make eMail, instant messages subject to legal review
by Corey Murray, Senior Editor, eSchool News
December 8, 2006

According to new federal rules that went into effect December 1, schools, businesses, and other organizations are required to keep tabs on all eMail, instant messages (IM), and other digital communications produced by their employees.

The rules, first approved by the U.S. Supreme Court in April, have been widely reported as important for businesses and other for-profit enterprises. But, according to legal experts familiar with the case, the High Court's ruling also applies to public schools and other nonprofit organizations. The ruling—which states that any entity involved in litigation must be able to produce "electronically stored information" during the discovery process—the process in which opposing sides of a legal dispute must share evidence before trial—could have significant implications for school technology departments, especially in places where technicians routinely copy over backup discs and other information housed on school servers.

In an interview with *eSchool News*, Alvin A. Lindsay, a partner with Hogan & Hartson LLP, said that while the law has always required schools, corporations, and other entities to produce certain kinds of documentation as evidence in the discovery process, the latest ruling is an affirmation that eMail messages and electronic documents are part of that mix.

An expert on issues concerning technology and the law, Lindsay has called prematurely deleting or copying over eMail documents a matter of "virtual shredding." Lindsay says the rules will require schools and other organizations to think about how and where they store digital information in advance of potential legal skirmishes. Schools, for example, might want to conduct technology inventories to better understand what types of eMail storage and data backup systems they have in place; establish guidelines for the kinds of information that must be saved and for those that can be deleted; and decide where to store critical data, so the information is easily accessible in the event of a problem, he said.

The new regulations don't constitute any major changes to the law per se, Lindsay said, but by noting that electronic communications should be preserved with the same care and diligence as other business-related documents, the High Court ruling forces managers "to recognize this distinction up front," giving schools, businesses, and even individual users an opportunity to be proactive in efforts to secure relevant computer-based information.

Many districts already are working with their staff members to help them understand they should expect limited privacy when using school-owned technology. "We have a policy that employees need to sign indicating they have no right to consider anything that they do on our network—including our [voice-over-IP system]—as confidential," wrote Marc Liebman, superintendent of the Berryessa Union School District in San Jose, Calif.

But even that isn't enough, explained Lindsay—not anymore. Though it's important for educators and other school stakeholders to recognize how information that is sent and received on school computers and other devices might be used in litigation, the new rules represent a call to action for schools and other entities to understand how and where personal communications between employees are stored on the network, he said.

To do that, several corporations—and even some schools—have begun turning to companies that offer solutions for tracking, storing, and searching for eMail communication and other electronic data. Roger Matus, chief executive officer of Concord, Mass.-based inBoxer Inc., recently told the Associated Press (AP) his company has received a five-fold increase in requests for solutions that streamline the

search and retrieval of eMail messages and other electronic information, compared with six months ago. "Companies used to focus on how they store information," Matus told AP. "Now, they're focusing on how to retrieve it."

For schools and other entities that often require the assistance of legal counsel, the rules also could translate into higher costs, experts say. Not only will organizations need to find a method of cataloging and searching through eMail and IM in the event of a lawsuit; they also might consider investing in technology that helps them filter through digital photos stored on employees' phones and information tucked away on removable memory sticks, among other portable devices.

The ruling no doubt will force some school leaders to reevaluate their digital storage techniques, but it isn't likely to send administrators into a panic, said Mary Kusler, assistant director of government relations for the American Association of School Administrators (AASA). "This isn't all that new for school districts," said Kusler, who added: "Most schools already operate this way."

Still, it's important for schools to maintain compliance. To do that, Kusler said, the AASA recommends that administrators verify their systems and servers are robust enough to handle the increase in stored information. Schools also should check with their respective state and local governments and legal counsel to ensure they meet all pre-established requirements for document retention, she said.

John Q. Porter, deputy superintendent of information systems for the Montgomery County Public Schools in Maryland, said his district has long had a policy for storing electronic communications such as eMail in the event of a lawsuit.
"It happens to us frequently, and we do have a process in place," said Porter, whose district keeps all employee-generated eMail messages for at least 10 weeks. Montgomery County also has a software program that enables district IT staff to search through and cull information archived on the network for review in the event of a legal dispute.

To be fair, he said, the district includes disclaimers that appear on every machine and remote eMail interface reminding employees that any information produced by them and distributed over the district's network is the property of the school system. "Our understanding is that, as long as you have a process in place so this type of information is discoverable in the event of a lawsuit, then that is fine," said Porter.

Where schools are more likely to get burned is if they don't have a policy for saving electronic information and, in the event of a lawsuit, decide suddenly to erase eMail messages or other documents to avoid detection, noted Porter.

"If you were involved in some type of litigation and decided tomorrow to delete eMail," he explained, "now, that would be a problem." Despite its existing safeguards, Porter said, Montgomery County officials will look closely at the new rules to decide if any upgrades or changes to the school system's policies are necessary.

"I don't think it's going to change anything, but we certainly are going to have our lawyers take a look at it," he said of the ruling. Unlike Montgomery County, some districts have learned the importance of archiving and saving electronic communications the hard way. In late 2002, members of the Oshkosh Area School District in Oshkosh, Wis., found themselves thick in controversy after a local newspaper discovered that school board members had been routinely erasing eMail messages sent to them by constituents. The *Oshkosh Northwestern*, which requested the messages as part of an open records request for a story it planned to run on district boundary and consolidations plans, said the eMail correspondence should have been archived- -and that deleting it violated the state's open-records laws.

At the time of the controversy, former state Attorney General Jim Doyle, who is now governor of Wisconsin, agreed that the decision by school board members to delete constituents' eMail messages did, in fact, violate state law. For their part, members of the Oshkosh school board at the time told *eSchool News* they were unaware that eMail messages were public records.
(see story: http://www.eschoolnews.com/news/showStory.cfm?ArticleID=4161).

The Supreme Court ruling that went into effect Dec. 1 confirms this policy for
all entities subject to a lawsuit.

Apple Ambassador

to today's passionate Mac users, will become *Mac\Life* beginning with the February 2007 issue. The change is a result of the market's evolution from a niche community of Mac "addicts" to one that includes all Apple technology users.

Written for both new and veteran users, *Mac\Life* will continue providing exclusive, authoritative information and advice for readers who want to get the most out of their Macs, iPods and third-party hardware, software and services. The magazine will also deliver informative feature articles showcasing the latest hardware and software, an expanded "how-to" section and candid reviews of the latest gear.

With the transition to *Mac\Life*, the magazine will also be the sole publication whose mission, voice and aesthetics communicate and celebrate what Apple represents: breathtaking design and productivity in harmony with creativity. The redesigned *Mac\Life* will offer an increased page count, larger trim size and heavier, high-quality paper stock.

Energizing MacLife.com will be former *MacAddict* Editor-in-Chief **Rik Myslewski**, who moves into a new role as *Mac\Life* media producer. Rik will help make the Web site the preferred online destination for Mac enthusiasts looking for news, buying advice and more. **Leslie Ayers** will join the staff as Editor-in-Chief, bringing 10 years of technology publishing experience from positions at *PC Computing*, *Ziff-Davis Smart Business* and *Wired News*.

"Future US is investing heavily in *Mac\Life*," says *Mac\Life* Associate Publisher Stacey Levy. "We expect *Mac\Life* to bridge the gap between those who have championed Apple technology from the beginning and the growing number of new users who rally behind the sharp looks and easy usability of the Mac."

Mac\Life will be distributed through the country's top newsstands including Barnes & Noble, Borders Books and at most major airports.

More info about *Mac\Life* can be found at http://www.maclife.com/.

Automator

Go With the Flow

Automator comes complete with a library of hundreds of Actions. Each Action is designed to perform a single task, such as finding linked images in a web page, renaming a group of files or creating a new event in an iCal calendar. Actions from the Automator library are added in sequence to a Workflow document. Each Action in the Workflow corresponds to an individual step that you would normally do to accomplish your task. The results of one action are seamlessly passed to the next action.

For example, you can rename a group of image files so they all share the same base name but are numbered sequentially (ProductShot001.jpg, ProductShot002.jpg, etc.) in seconds. Once they're renamed, Automator can automatically scale every image, create an archive and then attach it to a new email message and send the message. After you create a Workflow, you execute it by clicking the Run button in the Workflow document window. Automator performs each step in the Workflow in order until your work is done.

Play it Again… and Again

Save and reuse Automator Workflows using the same items as the last time it was run, with new items you select or with the items found using Tiger's new system-wide Spotlight search. You can even share your favorite Workflows with others.

With Automator, you'll never find yourself at a loss for Workflow Actions. Developers are extending the reach of Automator by creating new Actions for their applications. Expand your library by downloading new Actions from third-party developers or create your own using AppleScript.

Mac Tips

Changing the Order of the Results

Let's say you realize that most of the time you find yourself searching for music, movies, and photos (you're a creative type). Well, by default those result categories appear farther down the list (with stuff like documents and email and contacts appearing near the top of the list). And because of that, you've been spending a lot of time scrolling. It doesn't have to be that way.

Go to the Spotlight Preferences (found at the bottom of the Spotlight menu), and when it appears, all the categories are listed in the order they will appear. To change their order, just click-and-drag them into the order you want (in this case, you'd drag Music, Movies, and Images to the top).

Converting to TIFF, JPG, or Photoshop

Want to change most any graphic into a Photoshop file? Just open the file in Preview, go under the File menu, and choose Save As…, where you can export your graphic in Photoshop format. But you're not limited to Photoshop format — Preview will also export your file as a JPEG, PICT, BMP (for sharing files with PC users), PICT, Targa (for video), and more. If the format you're saving in has options (such as quality and compression settings for JPEG and TIFF images), they will appear near the bottom of the dialog.
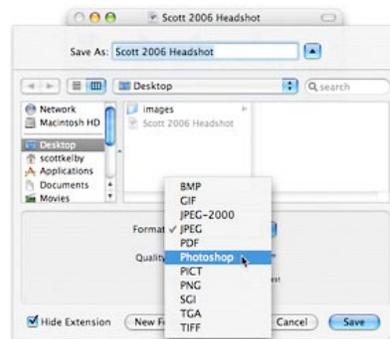
Where Did That Download Come From?

If you download a file from the web, you can usually find out exactly where that downloaded file came from (including the exact web address) by pressing Command-I when you have the file selected. Once the info dialog appears, click on the right-facing arrow beside More Info to expand that panel and it will display a Where from header, and to the right of that it will show the exact web address from which the file was originally downloaded.
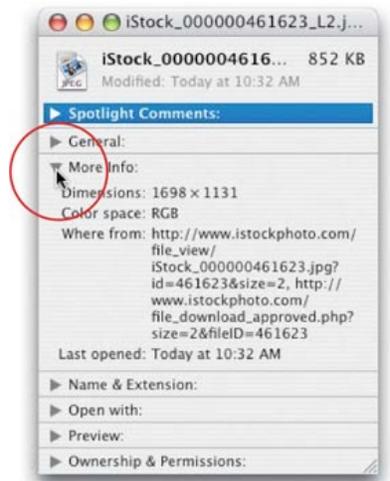
The One-Click Trick to Moving the Dock

Okay, so you're working in a program like Final Cut Pro or iMovie, which takes up every vertical inch of the screen, and when you go to adjust something near the bottom, the Dock keeps popping up. Oh sure, you could move the Dock to where it's anchored on the left or right side of the screen, but that just feels weird. But what if you could move it temporarily to the left or right, and then get it back to the bottom when you close Final Cut Pro, in just one click?

Here's how: Hold the shift key, click directly on the Dock's divider line (on the far right side of the Dock), and drag the Dock to the left or right side of your screen. Bam! It moves over to the side. Then, once you quit Final Cut Pro, just shift-click on that divider line and slam it back to the bottom (okay, drag it back to the bottom). A draggable Dock — is that cool or what!

GAAB Internet Addresses

Gary Blizzard .... gmblizzard@aol.com
Steve Bradley .... ssbradley@adelphia.net
John Buckley .... jbuckley@nycap.rr.com
Betty Drach .... drach@local.net
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 Hodsoll .... bhodsoll@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
                                            rmazula1@nycap.rr.com
Brendan O'Hara .... bohara1@nycap.rr.com
Robert/Rose Ostrander .... theostranders@earthlink.net
Linda Rackliffe .... revmutt@mac.com
Jen Rice .... jrice001@nycap.rr.com
Eric/Lee Rieker .... Erieker@aol.com
Bill Shuff .... wjs206@earthlink.net
Ellie Smith .... eas715@aol.com
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

To start or renew your GAAB membership, see Cecilia MacDonald or send your fees payable to her at the following address:

Cecilia MacDonald
260 Sever Road
Delanson, NY 12053

Visit GAAB on the Internet at http://homepage.mac.com/applebyters