

The South Bay Mug

MAGINTOSH

A Monthly Cupful For South Bay Apple Mac User Group Members, Mar. 2006

MACHinations

A personal view from Bob

Passwords

I've got hundreds of them. Everyone on the web wants me to sign in with a user name and password. Their importance ranges from the benign to critical.

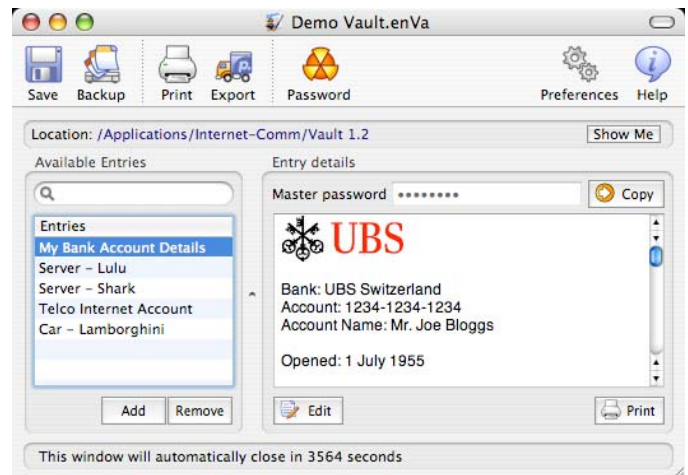
- Benign: These are nuisance passwords required to read the NY Times, etc. Use something simple.
- Medium strength: These are for shopping sites where any damage would be minimal. Use a simple, but different, password for each.
- Critical: These include banking, credit card, ebay and financial sites where damage could be serious. For each site I use a different, strong password, like !->w`l~&cAzxcZ[T. It's also a good idea to change the password every now and then.

Now the fun begins. How do you keep track of all these and enter them without making mistakes. For years I've used an excellent program called Web Confidential (\$20), a specialized database for all my account information. Open it using a password or pass phrase you've memorized. Do not write it down. Once open, all your stored passwords are displayed. It offers different categories such as www sites, ftp servers, login, newsgroups, email, banking, credit cards, etc. For each you can enter the URL, user name, password and notes. It can automatically open the log-in web

Name: top secret
URL: http://www.web-confidential.com/bond/
User ID: james
Password:
Open with: Safari (default) in a new window
Copy Password Cancel OK

page and paste in your user name and password. It can also create passwords of different strengths.

I like finding good, FREE stuff, and uncovered a little gem called Vault, similar to Web Confidential, but without the categories and auto login. You can use it for more than passwords. It stores text and photos.



Your new Macintosh

When you get a new Mac, the first thing you do is walk through some screens to set up your user account with your name, a short name and a password. If you are Reginald Edgerton Arbuckle III, Ph.D., don't use that for your name. Use something shorter and something really short, such as reg or reggie, for your short name. The strength of your password depends on where your Mac is used. In the home it isn't too critical, but DON'T FORGET IT, because you need it each time you install software that accesses the System. In System Preferences>Accounts you can select to log in automatically or manually. I log in automatically at home, but manually "on the road" where there's a risk of theft or compromise.

Bob Brooks
Helping Beginners
310-545-8060
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Welcome to **SOUTH BAY APPLE MACINTOSH USER GROUP**

You and your friends are invited to attend our next meeting. Our membership dues are only \$35 per year, entitling you to this newsletter each month and many more benefits.

If you would like to become a member or get more info on SBAMUG, feel free to check out our web site at:
www.sbamug.com

P. O. Box 432
Redondo Beach, CA
90277-0432

310-644-3315
Email: info@sbamug.com

Meetings are held at the

Redondo Beach Community Center
320 Knob Hill, Redondo Beach
(see map & directions on page 11)

Officers & Volunteers:

President.....Glen Terry
Vice President.....LJ Palmer
Secretary.....Wayne Inman
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Directors at Large: Dave Nathanson, CW Mitchell,
Jim Pernal, Dorothy Weeks,
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PD Disk Editor.....Jim Pernal
Program Director.....George Kiefer
Newsletter Editor.....John Bernardo
Raffle Chairman.....George Griffiths
Refreshment Crew.....The Apple Blossoms

Membership Report:

*(You may notice your name is in larger letters on your card.
That is so it can be used as a name tag at the meetings.)*

Current Membership - 185

Welcome New Members -

Marvin Elenbogen

Thank You Member Renewals -

George Huling, Hank Folsom, Henry James,
Burt Belzer, Michael O'Kane, Philip Gruskin,
Patricia Yee & Sherman Nathanson .

Your Membership cards are in the mail!

MONTHLY CALENDAR

1st Wed - SBAMUG Core Group Mtg @ announced locations, 7:30 pm
1st Thur - LB Mug @ Emerson School, Palo Verde & Willow, Long Beach, 7 pm
1st Sat - Orange Apple UG, Orange Coast College, Chem Bldg, Costa Mesa, 8am-1pm
3rd Sat - Adobe Tech Exchange Toyota Bldg on Grammercy near 190th, 9 am; \$10
Last Wed - SBAMUG Monthly Meeting
Last Tues - WOCMUG @ Emerson School, Palo Verde & Willow, Long Beach, 7 pm
Last Sat - TRW / Northrop Ham Radio & Computer Swap Meet, 7 am - 11:30 am

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Members are invited and encouraged to submit articles and original artwork for publication. Newsletter deadline is the last Wednesday of the month. Articles may be edited to fit in available space.

Please send to: john@sbamug.com

SBAMUG MARCH 2006 PD CD

Tight deadline this month. Six programs. Yes more universal binary ones for both PPC and the new Intel Macs.

AviationWeather.wdgt-

A widget (so for Tiger 10.4 only) that looks up aviation weather for airports. Built in database or use the four letter ICAO codes.

Calorie Tracker

Demo 1.1.wdgt-

Another widget to look up the USDA database for over 75,000 products and foods. Requirements state 10.4.4.



FileJuicer-4.0.2.dmg-

This utility program lets you extract Jpeg, Tiff, PDF, BMP, PICT and other image types from files. Just drag file onto application. Saves images to desktop, or a specified folder.

gc58xub.dmg-

GraphicConverter is now universal binary. On top of that the usual addition file types to handle, feature upgrades, and bug fixes. Open, Convert, manipulate, and save pictures. Slide show. Will likely be covered in our upcoming shareware meeting.

iBackup 5.0.2.dmg-

This is another universal binary program. Does user backups for Address book, Dock, system settings, Mail, iTunes, Iphoto and more. For 10.3.9 or better. Generally good reviews, it is not an enterprise level program.

iRatchet.dmg-

Final program this month is a Invoice and Billing program. Handles clients, and projects. Has start stop timer for timed charging, or go with fixed charges. Handles mileage calculations. Thirty-day trial, so try it out. Many folks have extremely specific needs for this type of program, so this may or may not work for you.

CD for this month will be at the April meeting as the March-April 2006 CD.

Catch you at the March meeting.

Jim Pernal PD Editor

MALLORY SURFS THE NET: ROADSIDE ATTRACTIONS ON THE INFORMATION SUPER HIGHWAY

MLMUG February 2006

1) A Critical History of Computer Graphics and Animation:

<http://accad.osu.edu/~waynec/history/lessons.html>

2) clik-clak

A short animated film about two robots who communicate using sound effects. Entertaining and well done:

http://clik.clak.free.fr/film_small.htm

3) The Mad Scientist Network

Meet mad scientists, ask them questions. Plenty of fun experiments and random facts:

<http://www.madsci.org/>

4) International Children's Digital Library

Many award winning international books with kid reviews and drawings. Many are available in foreign languages. It is so much fun you may want to receive a new book every day using Google book of the day:

<http://www.icdlbooks.org/>

5) Computer Parts Art Project

Sculptures made of old computer parts:

<http://babel.massart.edu/~dsvinis/Pages/Photos.html>

6) Blast off to Planet Origami

Some cool origami! Perfect for Marc (hope he gets the hint and makes me one.) This website has music you listen to while you fold, so take time to relax and make something fun:

<http://www.geocities.com/foldingca/>

7) Junk to Art

Kind of like the Computer Parts Art Project, but with any junk available:

<http://junktoart.net/Junk/Junk.html>

"Tomorrow is a mystery. Today is a gift. That is why it is called the present."

-Eleanor Roosevelt

SELL IT ON EBAY

By Terry White ~ MacGroup Detroit

“Sell it on eBay” has become a common phrase over the last four years. What some consider to be junk, others find valuable. eBay allows you to reach a global market of buyers and sellers. When I’m in the market for a new piece of hardware or electronic gadget I look to eBay just as quickly as I would Best Buy, Circuit City or the Apple Store. I have literally saved thousands of dollars on BRAND NEW electronics over the years. For example, every LCD projector that MacGroup has owned (three to date) has come from eBay. My last two video cameras came from eBay. The phone system I now use at home was the result of an eBay purchase from a local vendor. I love eBay! Don’t get me wrong, I’m not just an eBay shopper, I also use eBay as a way to do house cleaning. I have sold dozens of items on eBay. When I wanted a better video camera (Sony DCR-VX2000) I wanted to sell my existing camera first (Sony TVR-900). I sold it on eBay for almost as much as I paid for it and I got almost two years use out of it.

New eBayers beware!

Although I have never been burned by an eBay purchase, there are tons of scams out there and you have to beware just like you do in your brick and mortar purchases and other dealings with strangers. You have to do your research. You have to check up the seller’s past performance. Also keep in mind, like everything else, if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is. When you keep common sense principles in mind, eBay can be an AWESOME tool for selling and buying. Like I said, I’ve never been burned, I did have a couple of hiccups. On one occasion I won a bid on a used discontinued answering system for my office phone. The reason I bid on it in the first place was that I thought it was the exact model of the one that I already had and I simply wanted a backup unit in case the one I was using died. When the answering system arrived I immediately realized that it was not the same model. I went back to look at the auction and it was then I realized that the answering system described in the auction was the exact same one that I received. It was I who made the mistake. I didn’t check the model number closely enough. I went by the brand name and glanced at the picture and thought, “that’s the one”. Obviously it was not the seller’s fault and I was stuck with it. Although I could have put it back up on eBay and sold it again, I just never got around to it. Maybe I will now that I’m thinking about it. The only other incident that I had was that I bought an

extra memory card for a digital camera and decided I didn’t need it and to sell it on eBay. It was new in the box and not opened. I posted it on eBay and I was quite pleased that it sold for \$5 more than I paid for it! However, two weeks went by and no response from the winning bidder. I ended up having to relist it and it sold the following week for a little less money, but the buyer came through and paid immediately. That’s it! Those are my only “horror” stories in selling on eBay since 1998.

Recipe for a successful auction

Whether you’re a buyer or seller, the same rules apply. Do your homework! If you are a seller, take good pictures of your item from multiple angles. Sometimes sellers take the lazy route and post pictures from the manufacturer’s website. I’m leery of those auctions. I want to see the actual item that I’m buying even if it’s boxed up and factory sealed, show me a picture of the box.

When writing your description, be as descriptive as possible. Give all the details you can. Give the purchase date and warranty information if you can. Also it makes potential buyers feel a little more in touch with the seller if you put the reason down that you’re selling it. If you upgraded to a newer model, let the bidders know. That lets the buyers know that you’re probably not dumping the item because there was something wrong with it. Think of yourself as the buyer and all the questions you would have. Try to put all those answers in your description.

Now for the price, what do you really want for that item? There are two tactics for getting the price that you want. One is setting a reserve price. So let’s say you’re selling your old 5GB iPod and you want at least \$100 for it. Well you can start the bidding at \$5 and have a reserve price of \$100. The reserve price is hidden from the bidders. They won’t know what it is while bidding. Once the bidding hits \$100 your auction will say “Reserve price met.” While this guarantees that you will not have to sell your item for less money than you wanted, it is often a turn off to bidders. After placing a couple of bids and still being told that the reserve price has not been met usually translates into “no bargain here”. Another way to get your price is to start the bidding at your minimum price. You start the bidding at any price you want. However, the higher the opening bid the less likely you have people jumping in to bid. I never set a Reserve Price. Instead I do my homework and find out how much similar items are going for.

(Continued on following page)

That usually sets my expectations as to what I can expect to get and I take the chance by setting a reasonable opening bid and I have always gotten what I wanted for my items. If your item is unique and you have to have a certain amount, consider setting a reserve price to protect yourself, but then putting that reserve price in the description so that bidders know how much you really want minimally. Charge a reasonable shipping charge. Some eBayers charge outrageous shipping fees to try to make an extra buck. I get turned off by this and look for the same item elsewhere on eBay with a more reasonable shipping cost.

Build a good reputation

When you complete a successful transaction on eBay as either the buyer or the seller it's customary to leave "positive feedback" to the buyer and the seller. For each positive feedback rating you get from a unique eBayer your rating number increases. Think of your eBay rating as your "Credit Score." No one wants to deal with someone with bad credit. For each negative feedback rating you get, your number obviously decreases. The higher your rating and having no negative feedback, the more comfortable buyers and sellers will be with doing business with you. Currently my eBay rating is 53. There are some eBayers out there that have ratings in the thousands. The problem with starting out on eBay is that you have no rating. Having a zero rating can be a showstopper for some eBayers. You are new! You may be a scammer. You may not be who you say you are. The only way around this is to make some purchases and get some positive feedback. You may also consider selling some of your smaller items lower priced to build a reputation first. Pay on time and ship your items in a timely manner. One sure fire way of getting negative feedback is lack of communication. Respond to emails immediately. Let the buyer/seller know exactly what's going on. Keep your buyer updated as to the status of the item they bought. When will it ship? It has shipped and here is your tracking number.



Paying and being paid

One word comes to mind, "PayPal"! PayPal used to be an independent service for paying people online. They were so successful and popular with eBay, that eBay recently acquired them. Think of PayPal as an online checking account. It's very easy to set up a PayPal (www.paypal.com) account and you can tie it

to your bank account(s) and/or credit cards for funding. Now PayPal even offers an ATM Debit Master Card making it extremely convenient to access your funds. The biggest advantage to PayPal is that it allows individuals to accept credit card payments. That's right! You can sell something on eBay and the buyer can pay you via a credit card. You get this benefit without the typical credit card merchant hassles. It's also secure in that you never actually get the person's credit card number. PayPal handles the transaction completely and deposits the funds (minus their fee) into your account. From there you can either transfer the money to your bank account for free, let it sit in your PayPal account (it can even collect interest), or you can withdraw it via the ATM card. If you make a purchase via PayPal and you don't have enough funds to cover the transaction PayPal will automatically transfer the money from the bank account or credit card of your choice. It's pretty slick! You can use PayPal for more than just eBay auctions. MacGroup has a business account with PayPal and we use their technology on our website to allow members to join/renew their memberships as well as buy our Meeting DVDs.

Shipping

When you have sold something on eBay, ship it as fast as you can once you've been paid. Use a method of shipping that can be tracked and insured. I usually prefer to ship via the US Postal service. They are pretty easy to work with. Rates are reasonable. They can deliver to any address including PO Boxes and your shipments can be insured.

My secret to saving thousands via eBay

Like I said earlier, I have saved thousands of dollars on eBay when buying consumer electronics. There are some items I buy on eBay in a heartbeat and others that I would probably never buy on eBay. For example, there have been numerous scams concerning PowerBooks on eBay. Therefore, I would probably never think to shop on eBay for a PowerBook. However, Bill Carver bought one on eBay with no problem. What I look for are items described as "NEW in the box" or "Factory Sealed." If it's new then I'm less likely to be buying someone else's problem. In many cases regular resellers who simply want to clear out inventory are selling the items. For example, two the last three Epson projectors we use at MacGroup were eBay purchases from Epson resellers.

(Continued on following page)

The first one was a demo unit that had only been used once. The last two were new in the box and never used. In all three cases the projectors were purchased for at least \$1,000 less than the going rate. I have found that the bigger the item is price wise, the more money there is to save. Of course this also means the greater the financial risk. In these kinds of purchases I look for a high number of positive feedback and for a seller to have been selling on eBay for a while (years). I read the feedback posted by others and look for any negatives. I look to see what kinds of items this seller has sold in the past. If it is a regular storefront merchant I verify the phone number and address. I also ask at least one question via email to make sure the email address is legit and to see if they respond. Again, there is no perfect way to find out if something is legit or not. These tips can make it a little safer though. I would probably not feel comfortable buying a used computer on eBay. The reason is that computers are so complex that if it had a intermittent problem, you may not discover it till weeks or months after the purchase has been made. I did once buy a used Apple monitor. It was very OLD and it was only \$100. Two problems with this one: one was that it was so heavy that the shipping cost was very high. The other problem was that since it was so old (bought it to be compatible with an old Mac), that most of its life had gone out of it and it was very dim. It did work, so there was nothing that I could really complain about. It just taught me a lesson about what kinds of items to buy or not buy on eBay or any other way without being able to see them first. One of my best eBay purchases was for a Siemens multi-handset Phone system. I wanted the newer model of the one I already had. I didn't want to pay full price for it again. I found one on eBay and as it turns out it was being sold by an ABC Warehouse located in Utica MI. After I won the bid, I was able to drive over and pick the item up. I even ended up buying a couple of additional handsets at a great price. Once again this was NEW in the Box and they were discounting selling phones and used eBay as a way of closing them out. I saved hundreds on this purchase and made a new friend. Another great purchase was for a Bluetooth headset for my Sony Ericsson cell phone. I wanted a specific model and locally they were going for about \$180. On eBay they were going for \$90-\$100 all day long. Lastly, I wanted to upgrade to the newer model of my Sony Universal Remote. I needed two of these and again, didn't want to pay the list price of \$199 each. Let's go to eBay! I found a merchant in NY that had 5 of these NEW in the Box for \$99 each. SOLD! In this last example the Seller had used a fairly new feature of eBay called "Buy it Now!" Buy it Now enables a seller to set a price for an item so that a buyer doesn't

have to go through the bidding process or wait for the auction to end. Basically it turned his auction into a classified ad. Instead of waiting a week to possibly be outbid, I was happy with the "buy it now" price of \$99.85 and I was able to buy two on the spot.

Whether you have something to sell or buy today or not, I encourage you to set up both your eBay and PayPal accounts today! There is no cost in setting them up and when you are ready to make a transaction you'll be all set. Also as far as eBay is concerned it shows your member date. In other words "John Smith member since Dec 2002." The older your date, the more stable it makes you look.

The best resource that I have found for learning the ends and outs of eBay is: Sell it on eBay: TechTV's Guide to Creating Successful eBay Auctions by Jim Heid, Toby Malina. This PeachPit Press book is available at Amazon.com as well as traditional bookstores.

MAC NEWS EDITOR WANTED

It's the New Year and it is time to cook up some new ideas. SBAMUG is looking for someone willing to summarize each month's Mac news in a regular column for the newsletter. This means the ideal candidate will visit five or six Mac news sites several times a week, and distill four weeks worth of news into a short synopsis for our newsletter. The ideal candidate will know how to type and how to write a sentence, possess AppleWorks or Microsoft Word software, and frequent the major web sites that distill Mac industry news.

Columns will be due on the last Wednesday of the month and no long-term commitment is required. You should have enough editorial judgment to pick out the key points for reprinting in the newsletter, and be able to condense marketing jargon to two or three sentences for each news item. Graphics or PR photos may be included if the writer wants to spend the time to put them together.

If you would like to take this on, please contact John Bernardo via email: john@sbamug.com

"Make the most of yourself, for that is all there is of you."

-Ralph Waldo Emerson

CLAMXAV 1.0.1 - FREE VIRUS SCANNER FOR MAC OS X

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett ~ MacCompanion

ClamXav is what other paid-for virus software packages (i.e. Norton AntiVirus 10, Sophos, VirusBarrier, & Virex) for Mac OS X are competing against. Mark Allan has done an incredible job and continues to improve this product in anticipation of finding, quarantining and eradicating malware that may try to make Mac OS X its home.



I had a few rootkit apps I'd grabbed off BitTorrent as part of a security package I had discussed in our Blog much earlier as part of my research into Security on the Mac. *ClamXav* not only found the rootkits, but I let it remove them. They are not technically "viruses", however, *ClamXav* isn't apparently "just" an anti-virus app.

It requires the Clam Anti-Virus scanning engine to run.

I also use Virtual PC 7 every once in a while. (Hey, I'm masochistic, okay?) Sure enough, *ClamXav* finds and kills off PC malware on the Mac. I love it. Mark Allan, you do great work! In fact, *ClamXav* seems to even do a better job than the remaining paid-for anti-malware apps out there and it may be one of the reasons (besides the unembarrassing fact that no malware has been discovered so far that directly

affects Mac OS X if you continue keeping up with the latest versions from Apple) more of those companies are backing off further development of anti-malware apps for the Mac.

When macros are enabled in Microsoft Office, *ClamXav* finds and kills those too.

If one wants to give Mark Allan a standing ovation for a job well done! It pays to be on guard and maybe just a little paranoid about keeping the Mac pristine, while the non-Mac environments continue to be hammered with malware of all kinds. Mark Allan continues to improve *ClamXav*, but he could use some coin to help him keep it up.

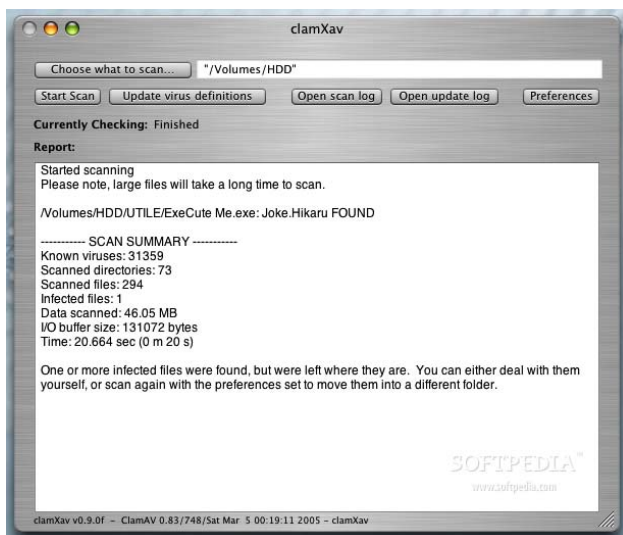
What needs some improvement is how to handle Mail.app bad-nasties, once found. And the documentation needs a little help with uninstalling the scan engine, if you so choose to want to uninstall all of the app, if it doesn't meet your particular needs, so here it is from VersionTracker; "To remove the clamav engine, double-click the REMOVE_engine.command file located on the image file in the Documentation & Extras folder."

This is a Try-Before-You-Donate app that is a no-brainer, especially if you want to protect your Mac from possible compromise or violation. Just keep updating Virus Definitions to keep the guardrails in good working condition. You never know, one of these days...there really could be a direct hit on Mac OS X. Some day, so this app keeps on guard and stays out of the way while doing so.

Strengths: Free open-source, stable, unobtrusive virus scanner.

Weaknesses: Could use some Mail.app tweaks.

Test Rig: iMac G5 with Mac OS X Tiger.



Developer: Mark John Allan

<http://www.markallan.co.uk/>

<http://www.clamxav.com/>

Released: Version 1.0.1, September 2005.

Requirements: Mac OS X; Clamav Scanning Engine.

Donationware: After using it, send a donation to Mark Allan!

Documentation: <http://www.clamxav.com/>

"The trouble with a rat race is that even when you win, you're still a rat."

-Lily Tomlin

REVIEW: CASHBOX- WHAT, ME IN THE RED? AGAIN?

By Frank Petrie

Numbers. I'm good with them. And yet I hate 'em. Particularly when it comes to money. To me, there's nothing more mind numbing than balancing a checkbook.

When it's bill-paying time and I'm not sure of how much I have in my account, I launch Safari, browse my bookmarks for my bank's website, click on the link, make three attempts at getting the password correct, finally log into my account and then check and see if I have enough funds to cover my bills. Way more effort than I care to expend!

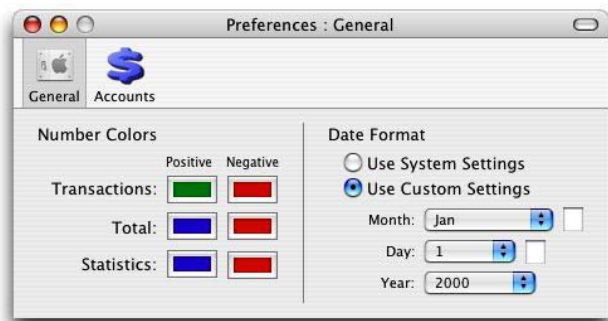


"Cashbox was designed from day one to be a quick and simple to use application for managing personal finances. As it has evolved, it has become more feature packed while keeping with the original goal of simplicity"

So, in other words, all I have to do is fill in the Pay-To-Order, and the amount of the deposit (not likely) or the withdrawal (all too likely) and I'm done?

'Drag-n-drop to install.' The interface is as plain as it is intuitive. You can set up as many accounts as you like and in the drawer keep any information about such as the accounts number. Checking accounts and saving accounts go hand in hand. Some month's you have to rob Peter to pay Paul, right? Cashbox keeps track of transfers between two accounts for you. And if you're looking for specific transactions, you can easily search for them. Would you like a hard copy? That can be done with this little wonder.

If you're coming from one of those free copies of Quicken that came installed on your Mac, but you find that it's overkill for your needs, no problem.



Cashbox imports files in the Quicken Interchange Format so you can easily import information from online bank accounts or other sources. And should you require a graphical report, it can be generated in many different ways so you can track where your money comes from and where it goes.

And, of course, the real pain is when you have to reconcile. Cashbox's built in reconciling system will save you time and headaches.

Cashbox is another one of those perfect one-trick ponies. If you don't need all the portfolio managing (I receive monthly hard copies from my various funds) and have no interest in planning your retirement or whatever, but just balancing your checkbook, look no further. This is all that you need. No fuss, no muss.

And, of course, as it is donationware, if you use it for a while and decide to make it part of your software arsenal, please donate some money to keep the coding community alive.

RATING: 10 out of 10

Product: Cashbox v0.49

Company: MaxUpgrades

<wbyoung.ambitiouslemon.com/cashbox/>

Requirements: Mac OS X 10.3 or higher

Price: Donationware

Test Rig: G4 DP 1.42 / 1.5MB RAM / X.4.4

Review Date: 16 January 2006

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News contributing editor, Curmudgeon

----- WHAT IS INTERNET TELEPHONY?

Seems like everybody, and everything, is getting connected to the Internet. Have you heard about Internet Telephony? If you have high-speed Internet service, you may be able to save on telephone charges by connecting the phone to your Cable or DSL modem instead of the phone company's wall jack.

And depending on your affinity for wires and gadgets, you may even be able to make free long-distance calls all over the world. Read on to learn more about using the Internet to make phone calls.

http://askbobrankin.com/what_is_internet_telephony.html

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WHEN GRANNY GOT ON LSD

By Phil Shapiro

The whole extended family was gathered around the Thanksgiving table with delicious crumbs of dessert still on our plates. Minutes earlier we had gone around the table giving thanks, when granny, age 83, sighed happily and declared, "And I've been telling all my friends that I'm getting on LSD for Thanksgiving."

"Mom, you're getting DSL," I whispered across the table. "Oh, is it called DSL?" she asked, a touch embarrassed.

My mom's experience getting on LSD was a trip, so I ought to share some of it here. Mom has an Indigo iMac from circa 2001. She has been using dial-up Internet access since getting her first Mac in 1995. She uses Mac OS 9 and is not about to move to Mac OS X unless absolutely necessary. I support her in that choice.

When she told me she wanted to get onto LSD, I told her she could count on me for support. Living a few hundred miles away, I can only do so much to help. Thankfully she has an outstanding Mac consultant, Andrew Falco, who is only a phone call away. Andrew treats my mom as I would-gently, patiently and with a lot of listening to what she wants.



My mom opted for Verizon's \$15/month LSD package, which is easily purchased in any dark alley. In New York, Verizon doesn't support Mac OS 9 with PPPoE (Point to Point Protocol over Ethernet.) That's okay. I know there are ways of making Verizon LSD work with Mac OS 9. Andrew Falco suggested buying a Linksys Router with PPPoE. That sounded like a fine idea. And it works like a charm. Since my mom is new to web surfing, I wanted to make sure she has the most modern browser possible on her Mac OS 9 iMac. So during the Christmas vacation, while visiting her, I went to Microsoft's web page to download Internet Explorer 5.1.7. Microsoft has discontinued support for Internet Explorer 5.1.7 and is even removing it as a download from their web site. It's clear to me that Microsoft doesn't care whether my mom is on LSD or not. But I do. So I downloaded and installed IE 5.1.7.

Then it occurred to me that mom ought to have an alternate browser. So I went to the Netscape web site to download Netscape 7.02. Wouldn't you know it; Netscape has no links on their web site to older browsers. It's clear to me that Netscape doesn't care if my mom is on LSD or not. But I do. So I searched the good god Google for "Netscape Archive," and found a nice web site with downloads of all older versions of Netscape. I threw an alias of Internet Explorer 5.1.7 and Netscape 7.0.2 in the Apple Menu of mom's iMac. I told her she now has a choice of browsers, because in life it's always better to have options available. She concurred, having taught me that lesson about 40 years ago, when I was 5.

Next, I decided to install QuickTime 6.x for Mac OS 9. If you're on LSD, you really want to have QuickTime 6.x, because Quicktime 5.x is a bummer. So I went to Apple's QuickTime download page and could find no link to it. It's clear to me that Apple Computer doesn't care whether granny is on LSD or not. But I do. So I searched <http://www.apple.com/support/downloads/> for QuickTime 6.x for Mac OS and found the download. (QuickTime 6.0.3)

I then ran into a small hitch on another issue-and figured out a good workaround. My brother regularly posts photos of the grandkids on Shutterfly.com. The links he sends to my mom are not active hyperlinks in AOL 5.0, the highest version of AOL for Mac OS 9. Copying-and-pasting long hyperlinks is not granny's favorite activity. So I set up a free Yahoo Mail account for her and told my brother to courtesy-copy her Yahoo Mail address when sending her links to family photos.

Mom is now able to easily access family photos via the slideshow in Shutterfly. She tells me that surfing the web is like seeing the world in millions of hues of color. Yes, mom. That's what getting on LSD is like. My last task was to web site to switch my mom's AOL price plan from unlimited dial-up to bring-your-own access. AOL has removed the capability of doing this online in AOL 5.0 for the Mac. So we had to call AOL's billing department. The happy news is that by bringing her own Internet access she now pays \$8.95 per month for her AOL account. Adding that to her \$15/month LSD account from Verizon, and the total adds up to the same as what she was paying for AOL dial-up alone. That's like getting free LSD. Can you dig it? Free LSD. The next step is to tell all her nieces, nephews and grandkids that granny is on LSD. Knowing that, they'll be able to send her audio and video clips to support her habit. You know what? She's going to love that. And all the effort of getting granny on LSD will have been worthwhile.

TIPS AND TRICKS

By Phyllis Evans ~ MacGroup Detroit

Sooner or later, we all end up dealing with tech support. What follows are my hints to make it a less painful process. It's never painless, but you can lessen the pain with a little careful planning.

The main rule is to keep detailed records. Yes, it's a pain in the patoot, but trust me, it's worth it. Keep a simple text file, or use blogging software, even if you don't publish it to the web and only keep it in your documents folder. Keep it in a spreadsheet if that's your preference, but write it down! Note dates, what happened, how you resolved it. If it was a repair, note what was replaced or repaired. Don't count on finding that receipt at a later date.

If you've used repair software, whether it was DiskWarrior, TechTool Pro or just a command line instruction, note it. Note what worked, as well as what didn't. If you zapped the PRAM or reset the NVRAM, trashed preferences or reinstalled, write it down! These things are important.

When all else fails and you must call tech support, have those notes in front of you. Tech support's first "cure" is generally to tell you to reinstall whatever is not functioning. If you start by telling them what you've already done, they get the picture that they are not dealing with Joe Schmoe who is easily snowed. They tend to pay attention to what you are saying. The first tier techs who are reading from a predetermined script and really don't know what they are doing will generally pass you on to the next support level where, if you are lucky, you'll find someone who might have a clue as to what is going on. And believe me, you'll accomplish your task in much less time.

If you have hardware that must be repaired, those notes will be important. In the case of a lemon of any sort, computer, hard drive, TV, auto, whatever — if you can call and say "It was repaired on June 5th, October 22nd and January 25th. How about a replacement?" they will be more inclined to agree with you. If you call and just say it's not working again without giving them details or what you've done to try to fix it, their first reaction will be to schedule you for more repairs. It's faster and easier than the paperwork involved with replacing your ailing hardware. And if you are having the same problem for the third time, don't be afraid to ask for a replacement. The worst that can happen is that they will push for yet another repair. Just remind them of your loss of productivity with each breakdown, and the time and trouble it is causing.

Finally, be nice to the person on the other end of the phone. Getting mad won't help. If you do find yourself starting to lose your cool, stop and apologize. Tell the person that you know they are doing everything they can, but you are just frustrated. If you are lucky, they will imagine being in your position and go the extra distance to resolve the problem. As I write this, I am awaiting delivery of a new Intel iMac to replace a G5 iMac that had problems. My detailed notes made the replacement easier.

COOL WEB SITES

By Victoria Maciulski ~ CVMUG

Quickly share home video via iChat

Use your video camera and iChat to stream video directly to another iChat user. Find out how at:

<http://www.macworld.com/weblogs/macosexhints/005/09/ichatvideoshare/>

Secrets: Make your own widget

Sure, you can download a widget that finds the nearest Pizza Hut or that flips a virtual coin. But what if you simply want to keep track of the days until your next vacation? You don't have to settle for downloaded widgets when it's so easy to make your own. Go to:

<http://www.macworld.com/005/09/secrets/octgeekfactor/index.php?lsrc=mwrss>

Automatically download and convert tv for your ipod

Here's how:

http://www.hackaday.com/entry/1_34000100064041/

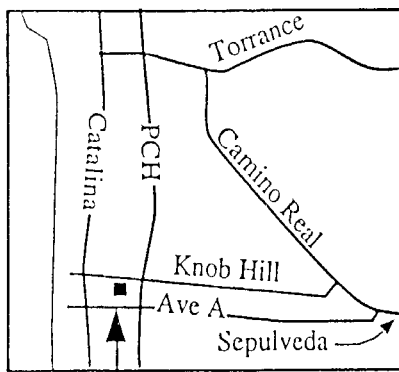
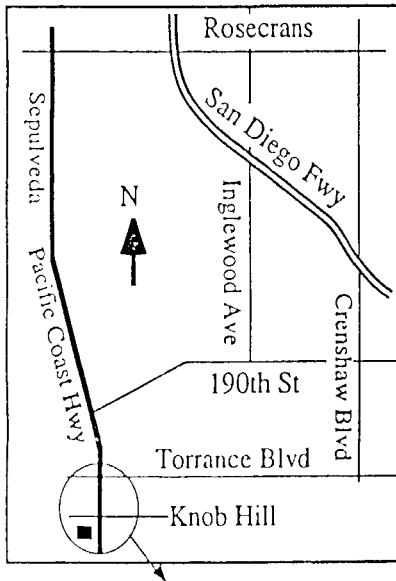
Convert an iTunes Podcast file into a standard MP3 file iTunes organizes the podcast files in the Podcasts folder. That's a problem for podcasts that post individual MP3 music files, and not radio shows. If you want to change them so you can move them out of the Podcasts folder and you can save them, go to:

<http://www.macosexhints.com/article.php?story=0051014133654579&lsrc=osxh>

Photoshop Madness

Lots of cool links to cool stuff, idea starters, creative inspiration and useful online resources. Check it out at:

http://www.graphicdesign.com/Photoshop/photoshop_madness.html



We're at 320 Knob Hill at
PCH • Free Parking

THIS MONTH'S MEETING

Wednesday March 29th, 2006 7:30PM
320 Knob Hill, Redondo Beach
(see map at left for directions)

*Come early (6:30) for Beginners Classes!
We now have two. One for basic questions
(in the kitchen area hosted by LJ Palmer)
and one for more advanced users (in the
main hall hosted by
Bob Brooks & Jim Pernal).*

This Month's Topic:

Pat Carnahan will discuss eBay!
(details below)



Next Meeting April 26th:

Freeware & Shareware Programs.
Glen Terry and LJ Palmer will show us
their favorite programs that are either
free or inexpensive.

GREAT RAFFLE PRIZES TOO. TICKETS ONLY \$1 EACH!

Note from the Editor

Is your newsletter arriving late?

You are not alone.

Recent articles (Daily Breeze etc.) point to the Postal Service's cutbacks, consolidation efforts and closure of a Marina Del Rey processing center in delaying the mail.

In order to compensate (to get you the newsletter prior to the monthly meeting) the newsletter will now be done a week earlier. This will mean the deadline for articles & ads will now be the last Wednesday of the month, the same day as the meeting.

Of course you can always download the latest newsletter from our web site:
www.sbamug.com

Meeting Details:

A layman's view of eBay and lessons learned. Hear some simple ad construction ideas as well as simple picture taking techniques. Learn about creative packaging ideas with little to no cost at all. List your items with a theme in mind. Enjoy eBay as a part time hobby.

Don't forget we have internet access at our meetings. Bring your wifi capable laptop with you when you show up for our next meeting!

SBAMUG Membership Application

South Bay Apple Macintosh User Group provides Mac owners and users with a local source of shared knowledge and experience through monthly meetings, training seminars and our monthly newsletter.

Individual and family membership is \$35 per year payable to SBAMUG.

New Member Member Renewal

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____ Email Address: _____

Special Computer Interest: _____

Model of Macintosh You Use Most: _____

How did you hear about SBAMUG?: _____

Comments: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Bring Application & Fees to Meetings or Mail to:

SBAMUG

P.O. Box 432

Redondo Beach, CA 90277

PERIODICALS

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