



# South Bay Apple MUG Macintosh

July/August 2013

Monthly CUPFUL for South Bay Apple Mac User Group Members

## 8 Recognition Apps Work Almost Like Magic

*Let your smartphone decode the world for you*

*By David Pogue, Scientific American, July 7, 2013*

In my Scientific American column this month, I noted that in consumer electronics the promises of magic sells. And one of the most important areas for magic simulation these days is recognition. That's when your phone or computer recognizes human speech, motion, visual cues and audio.

You've probably heard of some speech-recognition efforts, like Apple's Siri and the dictation program Dragon NaturallySpeaking. But the world is teeming with apps that recognize other sights, sounds and stimuli. Here's a taste.

**Evernote** (free; Android, iOS, Mac, Windows): Evernote is the popular notepad-of-all-trades app that keeps your notes synchronized across all of your gadgets. If you snap a photo of something that includes writing (or paste in such an image), even handwriting, its behind-the-scenes optical character-recognition algorithms decipher the writing as text. The accuracy isn't quite good enough to convert the writing into typed text, but it's good enough to let you perform searches on handwritten notes. That is, you can pull up the image of your scanned or photographed handwriting by typing a keyword into the search box.

**Shazam** (free; all smartphones): This app recognizes recorded songs—popular or not. You're sitting in some restaurant, bar, office or elevator; you let the app listen to the music for a few seconds and marvel as it tells you the song title, singer, album and so on. With another couple of taps, you're buying the song on iTunes or watching the music video on YouTube.

**SoundHound** (free; iOS and Android): This one is just like Shazam, but with one delicious added feature: you can also hum or sing into it. This is the app to use when something's running through your head and you wish you could remember the name of the song. Uncanny.

**Bird Song ID** (£3, about \$4.60; iOS): It's Shazam for birdsong. Record a bird's warble—the cleaner the recording, the better the luck you'll have—and let the app tell you what species you're hearing. No Internet connection required for this task.

**Leafsnap** (free; iOS): Take a photo of a leaf (against a white background) and let the app's visual-recognition feature identify the plant it came from. An ingenious field guide, although it requires an Internet connection to perform its magic.

**LookTel** (\$10; Mac, iOS): This company makes a pair of apps (\$10 each) for people with vision impairments. Hold your phone over a bill—dollar, pound, euro, doesn't matter—and the app speaks: "20 dollars," for example. There's also LookTel Recognizer, which can identify and speak the name of precisely the kinds of things a blind person might have trouble differentiating: cans of food or soda, packages of food, money, videos and so on. The catch is that you first have to train it. You have to take a picture of each item and speak its name in your own voice: "Sprite Zero," for example, presumably with the help of a sighted person. Thereafter, the app briskly and confidently speaks the name of each item it's learned when the phone's camera sees it. *Continued on page 3.*

Next SBAMUG Meeting:  
**July 31 – Home Automation**  
presented by George Wilde

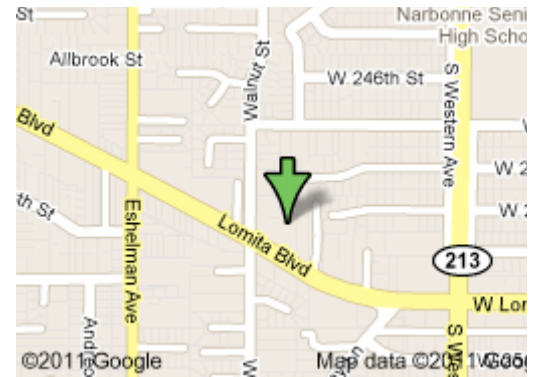
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## Welcome to the SBAMUG South Bay Apple Mac User Group

Members, friends and colleagues are invited to attend our monthly meetings. The \$35 annual membership dues entitle you to receive this monthly newsletter by mail or online, plus many more benefits (page 8). To become a member or get more info please check our website.



Lomita Veteran's Hall,  
1865 Lomita Blvd, Lomita

Meetings: Lomita Veteran's Hall,  
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### SBAMUG Monthly Calendar

**July 31: Home Automation presented by George Wilde**  
**August 28: TechTools – Computer Fitness presented by Joan King**

\*\*\*Read this newsletter online (active hyperlinks!) at <http://www.sbamug.com/newsletter.html>\*\*\*

#### SBAMUG Meeting Format:

**6:30—7:30 p.m.** Questions & Answers and Sharing:  
*Everyone* is welcome, beginners encouraged  
**7:30—7:45 p.m.** 'iSocial' – shoot the Mac breeze  
with others over a cookie  
**7:50—9:00 p.m.** Announcements and Program

*\*\*Refreshments provided; donations appreciated!*

Submit suggestions for topics or speakers, or articles,  
ideas & original artwork for this newsletter by the last  
Wednesday of each month. Articles may be edited to fit  
space. Submit to: [ptownsend@sbamug.com](mailto:ptownsend@sbamug.com)

#### Other Meetings:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Sat. each month – SBAMUG Core Group, 10 a.m.  
Join Google+ SBAMUG community, or email:  
[info@sbamug.com](mailto:info@sbamug.com).
- Special interest groups (SIGs): Ask at the meetings or  
email: [info@sbamug.com](mailto:info@sbamug.com)
- Last Sat. each month - Northrop Grumman-Ham Radio  
& Computer Swap Meet, 7--11:30 a.m. Meet at SE  
corner of Marine/Aviation Blvd, Redondo Beach
- Los Angeles Portable Users Group: Mac OS X, iPhone,  
iPod, MacBook, etc., <http://www.lapug.org/>

#### Officers & Volunteers:

President: Arnold Silver      VP: Vacant  
Secretary: Wayne Inman      Treasurer: CW Mitchell  
Directors at Large: Dave Nathanson, Margaret Wehbi,  
Pam Townsend, LJ Palmer  
PD Disk Editor: Jim Pernal      Membership: CW Mitchell  
Programming: Bob Goodman      Greeter: Vacant  
Server Director: Dave Nathanson  
Newsletter: Pam Townsend, Pete Myers, Bill Berks  
USPS Liaison: Don Myers  
Refreshments: Member contributions

#### Membership Report – 123 members

*Please wear membership card as your name tag*

**Welcome new members:** Geri Hess  
**Thank You Member Renewals:** Glen Scoble, Jody  
Nathanson, Andrew Paroczai, George Wilde, Wayne  
Miyoshi, Michael Maiuri, Rus Neglia, Bob  
Freeman, Barry Henson, E.N. Hondrick, Gene Knell,  
Jack Pearson, Richard Rodgers, Wayne Inman

Contact [cwmitchell@sbamug.com](mailto:cwmitchell@sbamug.com) if your name is not  
spelled right or your expiration date is wrong. When  
you receive your renewal notice, please sign & date it,  
then return it with your payment. If it comes in the mail  
it will have a self-addressed envelope for return.

THE SOUTH BAY MUG (ISSN 1058-7810) is published monthly for \$35 per year by South Bay Apple Mac User Group, 2550 Via Tejon, Suite 3J, Palos Verdes Estates, CA 90274. Periodicals postage paid at Palos Verdes Peninsula, CA and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to THE SOUTH BAY MUG, P.O. Box 432, Redondo Beach, CA 90277-0432.

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# PD-CD JIM PERNAL

## JULY 2013 - PUBLIC DOMAIN CD

Nine items this month. There are a couple of different text editors this month.

**FindAWord.zip** Free word game program. You have 30,60, or 90 seconds to find words. Intel OS X 10.6 or higher.

**gc8\_build1254.dmg** Version 8.7 of this all purpose image editor. Has new options and Webe support. This program has been around for decades. Interface was updated several versions ago. Intel 10.6. Shareware \$39.95

**LittleSnitch-3.1.1.dmg** Alerts you to outgoing network connections. While many programs will just check for updates, which is fine, there may be other programs that should not be connecting to the outside. You can choose to allow or deny. Intel OSX 10.6 Shareware \$34.95

**OnyX-2.dmg** Freeware maintenance and optimization program. Configure hidden settings, delete caches, verify startup disc, and the like. OSX 10.8 only

**SpeakNSpell.zip** For you and the grandkids. Practice spelling. Has 48,000 words built in. Four levels of difficulty. OS X10.6 or higher Intel Free

**tex-edit-plus-X.dmg** A text editor with more power than OSx's built in TextEdit program. This version offers improved Icons for the latest OS's. OSX 10.6 Intel 64 bit. Shareware \$15.00

**TextWrangler\_4.5.2.dmg** The freeware version of BBEdit pro. Text editor, mostly aimed at programmers, but can be used by anyone. Intel OS X 10.6.8 or higher.

**vlc-2.0.7.dmg** Free multimedia player. Play formats that the OS itself can't handle. Bug fixes in this version. Intel OSX 10.6 or higher.

**Yate.dmg** Tag and organize audio files. Handles MP3's MP4a, AIFF and Flac types. Intel OS X 10.6 or higher. Shareware \$20.00

CD for this month will be at the August 2013 meeting, labeled as the July-August CD. See you at the July meeting. Jim Pernal PD Editor

# App of the Month

## TuneIn Radio

TuneIn lets you listen to the world's radio with music, sports, news, talk, and comedy streaming from every continent. Enjoy 70,000 live radio stations and 2 million podcasts, concerts or shows on your iOS and android devices all for free. TuneIn Radio Pro also lets you record what you're listening to for a low, one-time price. It also has great online reviews. <http://tunein.com/mobile/>

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## July 31st Meeting Preview

Gain more control over what happens at home when you're not there. Club member George Wilde will talk about "Home Automation" including home security and remote device management. Attend the meeting to get discount coupons on various services/products. (Thanks George for the legwork!)

\*\*\*\*\*

## Choices

At the June SBAMUG meeting, there was a question about whether a smartphone would suffice for computing. LJ answered that you could connect a smartphone at home to a digital TV and set-top box, but most people would be happier with two devices: a phone and a computer or tablet. So how many phone/computer choices are there? Here is a list of device types with Internet connectivity for each:

Desktop computer with Wi-Fi  
Laptop computer with Wi-Fi  
Tablet with Wi-Fi or Wi-Fi plus 4G  
Smartphone with Wi-Fi plus 4G (data plan or no data plan)  
Regular phone with 4G

The total number of choices then is 12 (4 for computer/tablet, 3 phones). Some of these may not make sense, for example a desktop plus regular phone would leave you with no mobile computing capability. And of course there are many choices within each device type, but that's another story. Paraphrasing Peggy on the latest episode of *Mad Men* "Aren't you lucky to have choices?"

*Pete Myers, SBAMUG Member*

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*8 Recognition Apps, continued from page 1*

**Color Identifier** (\$2; iOS), **Color Reader** (free; Android): Apps like this one (there are several) perform one simple, obvious function: they identify by name any color. Color Identifier lets you switch between simple color names ("pale green") and more exotic ones ("lavender rose"). If you're color-blind, this sort of app is great help when you're trying to pick matching clothes in your closet. Or you can aim the phone's camera at, say, a shirt, and find out by name its color before you make an embarrassing fashion faux pas. [http://www.scientificamerican.com/article.cfm?id=pogue-8-recognition-apps-work-almost-like-magic&WT.mc\\_id=SA\\_WR\\_20130710](http://www.scientificamerican.com/article.cfm?id=pogue-8-recognition-apps-work-almost-like-magic&WT.mc_id=SA_WR_20130710)

## Tips on Archiving Family History

*From a series of articles by Bertram Lyons in The New York Times*

*We have kept the sounds our family makes in a variety of media — reel-to-reel tapes, cassette tapes and even those mini-tapes that used to fit into telephone answering machines. We can't even play some of them, because the machines are long gone. Is there a service where we can send all these old analog media and get back a nice digital file?*

The Association for Recorded Sound Collections (<http://www.arsc-audio.org/index.php>) is a trustworthy resource for information about preserving physical sound recordings, digitizing these recordings, and managing the subsequent digital files. When dealing with vendors here are a few important questions that you could ask:

- For a preservation file (a digital file of a high enough quality that it could take the place of the original if the original were lost or destroyed) it is important that the vendor create an uncompressed file, e.g., WAV, instead of a compressed file, e.g., MP3.
- Do you use any tools that clean up the sound (remove hiss or pops)?
- How do you return the files to me when the process is finished?

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*How do I preserve my digital photo library, with the photos at full resolution? Is an online database better than on the computer's hard drive?*

I cannot imagine there will be one all-purpose method that will solve your problem. You may need to employ multiple methods. For instance, there is the need to preserve the actual bits of your photos. If you have them stored on your computer's hard drive then that is a good start. You will want to consider having multiple copies of the photos stored on external hard drives. You may want to use software that helps you copy the photos to hard drives and that aids in your ability to mirror the drives as you add new photos to your library. You may also consider the use of online storage services as an additional back up for your library. I do not recommend online storage as the only backup or as the only version, but I think it can be useful as part of an overall storage strategy. These kinds of strategies will help you preserve the bits into the future.

I imagine you also will want to preserve information about your photos so future generations can decipher them. In such cases you may have a database that connects descriptive information to the photos themselves. You'll need a strategy for preserving this descriptive information as well. Many proprietary databases tie up the information in formats that are difficult to export or share with other systems. But these systems do help you visualize your library and provide useful options for accessing and annotating photos. In my opinion, the simpler the method the better chance it has to survive into the future.

If you develop a preservation storage strategy for your digital photographs and keep an inventory of each photograph in a simple spreadsheet, you'll be doing a lot of good for anyone who comes across your library in the future.

*I scanned family photos onto a 10-year-old Mac G4 in jpeg. How can I transfer them onto a disc to give to family members? Or do I need a newer Mac?*

If the Mac G4 still works, you should be able to copy the files from the Mac to a USB thumb drive (solid state), an external hard drive (spinning discs) or to an optical drive (CD, DVD). Depending on the size of the files (and the number of files you have), you could also think about sending the images to family members via an Internet option (email, dropbox, file sharing service).

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*Last year I archived several hundred 19th-century family photos as TIFFs using Adobe Elements and Adobe's cloud storage. Adobe recently announced that they are moving to a new storage platform which will only support jpegs, so all TIFFS must be downloaded by June 18 or disappear. More than 24 hours of downloading so far and still not done! But it raises the question: if your master archive is kept as a jpeg, but all editing work is done on a copy, is a non-jpeg format for archiving really that important?*

The problem with JPEGs is that the codec, the program that is used to encode the digital stream of data, systematically discards some data to compress the file. This is known as lossy compression. A large amount of image information is actually discarded from the original TIFF in order to produce a smaller image file for sharing and Web viewing. This information can never be regained once it is lost. If your goal is to have digital files that can serve as long-term surrogates for the original photographs, then the TIFFs are extremely important to keep. You'll also find that if you have the desire to print anything from the JPEGs, it will be difficult to produce a large, high-quality print.

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*We hold a growing community archive of recorded and filmed oral histories. For archival purposes, we've been using digital video tape for filming, as well as CF cards for audio. Is there any reason not to switch completely to nontape video recording? What format or quality setting is most universal (HD/Standard)?*

For long-term preservation purposes, the trend is to move toward file-based digital formats instead of carrier-dependent formats. This trend assumes an underlying strategy for maintaining the integrity of digital files and for keeping the files alive and redundant. Unfortunately, for video, there are many choices when it comes to codecs (the way the bits are encoded/decoded to represent the visual data, e.g., ffv1, H.264, Apple ProRes) and wrappers (the way the elements of the video — video, audio, metadata, etc. — are packaged together into a single file, e.g., Quicktime, AVI, MXF).

And then there are more choices for matters such as resolution, color space and frame rate. I serve on a working group for **audiovisual guidelines** as part of the Federal Agencies Digitization Guidelines Initiative. We are working on a comparison chart for digital video codecs and wrappers. *Continued on page 7.*

## The war for mobile messaging is on

*Start-up mobile messaging apps have surged, displacing traditional SMS texts. Silicon Valley titans such as Google and Facebook want in on the action.*

*By Jessica Guynn, Los Angeles Times, 5/11/13*

SAN FRANCISCO — WhatsApp is one of Silicon Valley's most buzzed-about companies, yet it actively avoids the spotlight, operating out of a small office in Mountain View, Calif., with no sign on the building entrance or on the office door.

Unlike most start-ups eager for media attention, WhatsApp Inc. says it doesn't want or need it. Its popular mobile messaging app has spread so quickly by word of mouth that in just four years it has amassed hundreds of millions of users who collectively send as many as 18 billion messages a day.

WhatsApp belongs to a new generation of messaging services that are revolutionizing 20-year-old text messaging technology and escalating the mobile messaging wars.

"In many countries, consumers have decided they prefer these mobile messaging apps," said Tero Kuitinen, an analyst with mobile diagnostics firm Alekstra.

Now they are taking the U.S. by storm. That's particularly worrisome to wireless carriers that have already lost billions in revenue from customers shifting from text to so-called instant messages such as Apple Inc.'s iMessage service, which each day delivers 2 billion messages free of charge.

But the growing popularity of these mobile apps is not good news for the Silicon Valley tech giants either. Analysts say people use the apps to connect with their closest friends and relatives, creating a new more intimate social network that could rival Facebook Inc. and Google Inc. for the attention of hundreds of millions of users and, eventually, advertising dollars.

Messages sent using the mobile apps, which are offered by third-party developers and downloaded to smartphones, are not limited to 160 characters the way text messages are. They also enable users to be more creative with scribbled notes, doodles and emoji pictograms that express thoughts and emotions that the typed word sometimes cannot. Some apps are adding games and other distractions to hold people's attention even longer.

Many of the apps are free or charge a small subscription fee — WhatsApp charges \$1 a year.

When Nick Meyer, a 22-year-old graduate student at North Carolina State University, is on his iPhone 4, he's mostly using an app called Kik to chat with friends. Each day he sends a few hundred messages, yet never messages friends on Facebook unless he's sitting at his computer.

"Mobile is going to be the main form of communication. In some ways, it already is," Meyer said.

With the explosion in worldwide sales of smartphones, these apps are already the go-to messaging tool in Europe and Asia, where they have taken a big bite out of texting traffic and profits that text messages generate for wireless carriers. Wireless carriers lost a total of \$23 billion in texting revenue as of the end of 2012, research firm Ovum estimates.

Research firm Informa says people are now sending more messages over mobile apps such as WhatsApp than they are text messages — and the trend is accelerating. By the end of this year, traffic from mobile messaging is expected to be more than double that of traditional SMS texts. CTIA — The Wireless Assn., a wireless communications industry group, recently found that Americans sent 2.2 trillion SMS text messages last year, down 5% from 2011.

The trillions of messages from around the globe that run through WhatsApp alone each year surpass the texting volume of all top four U.S. wireless carriers combined, telecommunications consultant Chetan Sharma said.

MessageMe, a free app, launched in March. A week later it had 1 million users. Its most active users send 30,000 messages a day, the San Francisco company said.

"I didn't know that was physically possible," MessageMe co-founder Arjun Sethi said.

In mobile, messaging has emerged as the "killer" app, said Ted Livingston, chief executive of Kik Interactive Inc., a Canadian start-up that last month announced it had raised an additional \$19.5 million in funding. Kik has 50 million users and adds 200,000 users each day, Livingston said.

Popular apps in the U.S. include WhatsApp, Kik and MessageMe. Kakao Inc.'s KakaoTalk and Tencent Holdings Ltd.'s WeChat are hot in Asian markets.

One popular Asian app is making aggressive moves into the North American market. Line, an app with which users can play games and send virtual "stickers," reached 100 million users in 19 months. Facebook took about three times as long to reach that level.

Both Facebook and Google reportedly approached WhatsApp about a possible buyout. WhatsApp declined to comment on that but said it plans to remain independent.

Mobile messaging apps work like this: Users download the app to their smartphone and set up a personal profile. They invite friends and family members to download the app to their devices. Then they send one another elaborate messages, which travel over Internet data networks, not over cellular networks the way standard text messages do.

<http://www.latimes.com/business/la-fi-mobile-messaging-20130512.0,528934.story>

# Self-Charging Cell Phone Screens Coming Soon

By Tekla Perry, posted 6/12/13, IEEE Spectrum

Today's mobile devices are constantly in use—so constantly that battery life is a huge problem. I recently hosted an afternoon barbecue at a community pool; over in one corner, folks jockeyed for a turn to charge their mobile devices at the one available outlet. Meanwhile, the sun shone down brightly on mobile phones scattered across the picnic tables, as the batteries on those idle devices quietly drained.

The SunPartner Group, a 30-employee startup in Aix-en-Provence, France, thinks that's a real waste. Folks sitting in restaurants, in outdoor cafes, or at their desks typically pull out their phones and put them face up in front of them; put solar cells on the phones and there'd be a lot less scrambling to find a wall outlet. And they've built a low-cost transparent panel that does just that. They're now testing it with a number of manufacturers and expect to see it built into mobile devices early next year.

Sunpartner isn't the first to think mobile phones should use solar power to charge themselves. A few years ago, several cell phone manufacturers tried putting solar cells on the back of phones—like the Samsung Crest and the Sharp Solar Hybrid. Turns out, though, that people weren't inclined to put phones face down on the table—they missed alerts, and were worried about scratching the screen. And solar cells on the back of cell phones never caught on widely.

Putting solar cells on the front of a mobile phone is harder, because today phone fronts are virtually all display. Startup Ubiquitous Energy, a spin off from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, is developing a technology that makes the solar cells themselves transparent by using materials that only absorb infrared and ultraviolet light and let visible light pass through. Researchers at the University of California Los Angeles (UCLA) are taking a similar approach, while researchers at University of Cambridge are weaving solar cells into organic light emitting diode (OLED)

displays where they can capture light leaked from the edges of the OLED elements as well as from outside the phone.

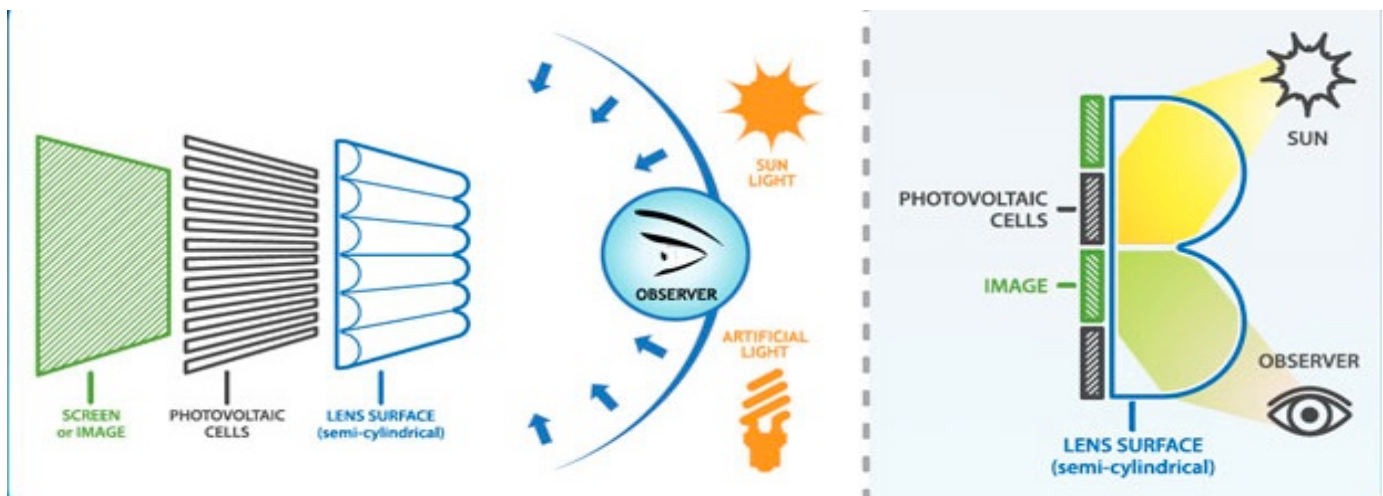
These technologies still appear to have a ways to go. SunPartner is taking a lower tech approach it believes will get to the mass market much sooner. The company is using stripes of standard thin-film solar cells alternating with transparent film. It then adds a layer of tiny lenses that spread the image coming from the screen to make the opaque stripes disappear as well as to concentrate the rays coming in from the sun.

SunPartner's Matthieu De Broca, visiting Silicon Valley as part of the French Tech Tour, says that the company's current prototypes are 82 percent transparent; future versions should hit 90 percent transparency. The company has 30 patents on its technology so far. Putting the panel and related electronics needed to convert the voltage from the display costs adds about US \$2.30 to the cost of each phone, De Broca said.

The technology doesn't replace the wall charger; mobile device users can still count on plugging their phone in at night. It does, De Broca said, extend the battery life about 20 percent in normal use. And it can infinitely keep up with the phone's modest power drain when it is idling in normal daylight. The SunPartner Group, founded by optician Joel Gilbert and businessman Ludovic Deblois, is currently working with three mobile device manufacturers to develop prototypes and expects the first models integrating the technology to be on the market in early 2014. Nokia is reportedly one of those companies.

*Photo top: SunPartner's invisible solar cells with a prototype phone. Credit: Tekla Perry Illustration credit: SunPartner*

<http://spectrum.ieee.org/tech-talk/green-tech/solar/selfcharging-cell-phone-screens-coming-soon>



## Free eBook: 154 Brilliant iPhone (and iPad) Tips. Too Cool Not to Share

By K. Walsh, *EmergingEdTech.com*, 2/6/13

Did you know you can add your own keyboard shortcuts on the iPad or iPhone? How about some faster ways to reject suggested auto-corrections as you type, or write contractions, or a single-tap method to magnify and select text? This free eBook – 154 Brilliant iPhone (and iPad) Tips – from Michele Ballard and available at the iBooks store is jammed full of handy, cool techniques like these. Tips are organized into sections like “Keyboard and Writing Tips”, “Mail and Calendar”, etc.

Here’s a few tips to whet your appetite for this freebie:

- **Format text in e-mails:** You can bold, underline, or italicize text in emails by highlighting a section of text and then clicking the right arrow in the menu that pops up, where you will see a “**B / U**” option.
- **Mark an email as Unread:** This can help you remember to go back to an email and follow up on it later. Click on Details and select the ‘Mark as Unread’ option that appears below (on the iPad, click the ‘Mark’ option, which will give the choice to Mark as Unread).
- **Focus on a point when recording:** If you tap on a point on the screen while recording, the camera will make that the focal point while recording. Try it!

Get the free iBook here. Some techniques may only work with iOS 5 and later: <https://itunes.apple.com/ie/app/154-brilliant-iphone-tips/id540225948?mt=8>.

*Kelly Walsh is CIO at The College of Westchester in White Plains, NY and founder/author of EmergingEdTech.com.*

<http://www.emergingedtech.com/2013/02/free-ebook-154-brilliant-iphone-and-ipad-tips/>

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## Create An Endless Playlist Of Documentary Films To Watch With These 8 Sites

*Nancy Messieh, makeuseof, 3/19/13 (Condensed)*

**Viewster:** Documentary section includes Zeitgeist.  
**Hulu:** Has a pretty impressive list that you can watch for free. **DocumentaryTube:** Serves as a directory for documentaries from all over the web. See the site’s Top 100 in a variety of genres. **YouTube:** Search for specific documentaries, or search for the word ‘documentary’ and see what comes up. **Vimeo:** Find documentaries in the midst of all other kinds of content or check out the Vimeo documentary channel for a more curated experience, with almost 700 videos. **PBS Video:** Full-length documentary shows, but most of the videos are part of a series. **Crackle:** Includes behind-the-scenes looks at the musical process of bands like U2, Radiohead and Queen. **Documentary Guide:** Similar to DocumentaryTube it acts as a search engine linking to a huge variety of documentary sites from all over the web. The site is curated, so the films that are available through it were handpicked.  
<http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/create-endless-playlist-documentary-films-watch-8-sites/>

*Archiving, continued from page 4*

*What is the role of metadata in the personal/ family archive. Should an independent archivist have a metadata strategy when preserving digital historical material?*

Metadata, at its most basic, is information about the what, who, when, how, why and where regarding any given object, idea or event. Therefore, in my opinion, metadata plays an essential role in the personal/family archive. The beautiful thing about family history is that we often pass it orally from generation to generation. Humans also have a long history of writing things down in memoirs or letters or on things in order to send information about the past into the future. I think people will continue to do such things.

The harder question, however, is in what format will humans share information about digital collections as we pass it down from generation to generation. You cannot write on the back of a digital file. But you can write in the digital file. And you can keep supplemental information about the digital file in spreadsheets and databases and other electronic forms. I think it is important that we all independently think about the methods through which we will share essential information about our digital collections with future generations. I’ve found that simpler methods of description prove more sustainable than complex methods. If you can develop a consistent strategy for describing your digital historical materials, you will be doing a service to those who come after you. This assumes you also develop a long-term storage strategy for your collections and documentation about your collections.

*What’s safer: an external hard drive or online storage? What are the best online storage sites? What is the life expectancy for an external hard drive? Will my backups last forever? Is “the cloud” really safe in the long term?*

As part of a website about personal archiving (<http://www.digitalpreservation.gov/personalarchiving/index.html>) the Library of Congress recently put together videos about digital archiving. The takeaway, in my opinion, is that no storage medium lasts forever. With digital information, active migration is essential. You will need to be prepared to develop a storage strategy for your digital files that includes multiple storage formats (hard drives and online storage services, among others), multiple locations (home, online, friends, family) and active monitoring and migration to new storage in regular intervals. At this point, no single storage format or service is enough to ensure the health and integrity of your files.

The NY Times 3-part series, archiving family history:  
<http://www.nytimes.com/2013/05/29/booming/tips-on-archiving-family-history-part-1.html>  
<http://www.nytimes.com/2013/06/05/booming/tips-on-preserving-family-films-and-photos.html>  
<http://www.nytimes.com/2013/06/12/booming/tips-on-archiving-family-history-part-3.html>

# PERIODICALS

**SOUTH BAY APPLE MAC USER GROUP  
P.O. BOX 432  
REDONDO BEACH  
CA 90277-0432**



## **Join, Renew or Give a Gift of a SBAMUG Membership!**

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\_\_\_\_\_

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**Bring your Application and Fee to our General Meeting  
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