

The South Bay Mug

MAGINTOSH

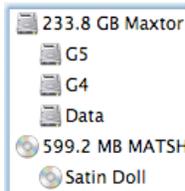
A Monthly Cupful For South Bay Apple Mac User Group Members, Nov. 2006

MACHinations

A personal view from Bob

Disk Utility

A versatile and essential program that comes with Mac OS X is Disk Utility. It's in the Applications/Utilities folder and also on your bootable install CD/DVD. What I describe below pertains to OS 10.4 (Tiger). Other versions of the OS (operating system) vary slightly. Disk Utility shows all mounted volumes — disks, CDs and partitions, their capacity and available space. The utility's functions are organized using different tabs and menus.

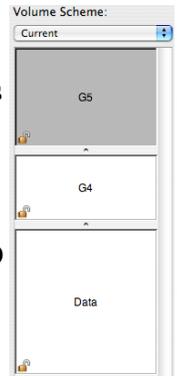


First Aid: Select the volume containing the OS to Verify/Repair disk permissions. It's recommended you repair permissions before and after backing up your System or a major update. If you're having problems, verify and repair your drive. Disk repair requires you to boot from the install CD/DVD or another bootable drive (e.g. an external FireWire drive). The install disk also has a utility for recovering your password.

Erasing disks: Erasing a disk or volume removes the information needed to access the files, but doesn't actually remove the files. If you want to erase the actual files, click Security Options.

Partitioning disks: You can use Disk Utility to divide a drive into partitions or "volumes" so it looks like more than one drive. Partitioning a drive erases everything, so be sure to back up any important files first. If you buy a large external drive for backup, and they are all big these days, you can partition it to match the various volumes you want to back up. You CANNOT back up more than one system to a volume. When I recently bought a new computer I first partitioned the

drive, shown at the right, and used Apple's Restore DVD to reinstall Apple's software on the first partition. This makes backing up the OS much easier.



RAID: For critical application that requires high-speed data access or data redundancy, Disk Utility can set up a RAID scheme. This uses several hard disks instead of one to store files (the reverse of partitioning) and is probably something only more demanding users will want to use.

Disk Images: Use Disk Utility to create a "disk image," a virtual volume that stores other files or folders of files. You can create it using a folder or disk, or create an empty image and add files later. Use a disk image to move files from one computer to another, to send in emails, or for encrypted storage (see: Aug 2006). Burn a disk image on a CD or DVD disc as a backup copy of your files. I prefer to use a "sparse image" which, like a balloon, expands to fit my data.

Restore: If you back up your files using a disk image or another disk, you can use Disk Utility to restore your files.. To start, click Restore then specify the source and destination for the files. This is similar to using SuperDuper or Carbon Copy Cloner to backup/restore.

Burn a CD/DVD: Use Disk Utility to burn data onto a blank disc, or erase and reuse a rewriteable disc. You can also perform multisession burning: burning items to a recordable disc in multiple sessions until it's full. Disk Utility will also unmount and eject stubborn CDs. Get familiar with Disk Utility; it's very useful.



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