South Bay Apple MUG
Macintosh

February/March 2013

Three wishes for a better App Store

Marco Tabini @mtabini, MacWorld, 2/8/2013

I love the App Store. In the nearly five years since its launch, it has brought me apps and games of all kinds at a fraction of the price—and many more times the convenience—of anything that was available before it. As a developer, I found that the App Store opened up a truly egalitarian distribution channel: There's no need to fight for shelf space against deep-pocketed competitors, or to wrangle with the vagaries of setting up an online store of your own.

But times are changing, and, as the iOS and Mac App Stores approach 1 million apps combined, it seems as if some of the infrastructure that Apple has built around them is struggling to keep pace, with the result that buying apps is not as convenient as it once was. Of course, there is always room for improvement. In that spirit, here are three ways in which Apple could make some positive changes to its App Stores.

Better clients

In a sense, the App Store client apps are nothing short of phenomenal: They put hundreds of thousands of software products at your fingertips, eliminating the need to drive to a physical retail location, pull out your wallet, and wait in line for checkout every time you want to buy one.

Still, the client apps that people use to access the App Store on Macs and iOS devices are becoming a little long in the tooth, despite a major face-lift that coincided with the launch of iOS 6.

On my third-generation iPad, for example, the App Store app is painfully slow; it takes several seconds from the moment I tap its icon to the moment I can start doing anything, and the app sometimes freezes while I wait for a particular screen to render. Admittedly, things are a bit faster on my iPhone 5, but this is hardly the kind of

experience that I have come to expect from an operating system that places so much emphasis on responsiveness and focus.

All too often, even on a fast Wi-Fi connection, this is what the App Store app looks like on my third-generation iPad for a seemingly endless amount of time.

Speed is less of a problem on the Mac, but navigating the desktop version of the App Store app is still frustrating. For example, the lack of a tabbed interface—a feature that would feel perfectly at home on OS X, where many other apps implement it—makes comparison-shopping among multiple products difficult to pull off.

With a single man now in charge of ensuring that all of the company's software follows sound design principles, Apple has an opportunity to revise these apps and improve the way they interact with their users.

Better search

Of course, speed and UI issues wouldn't be so problematic if getting to the right app were easy; unfortunately, Apple's search functionality works well only when you already know exactly what you're looking for, and is often tripped up by anything that isn't strictly a keyword. *Continued on page 7*

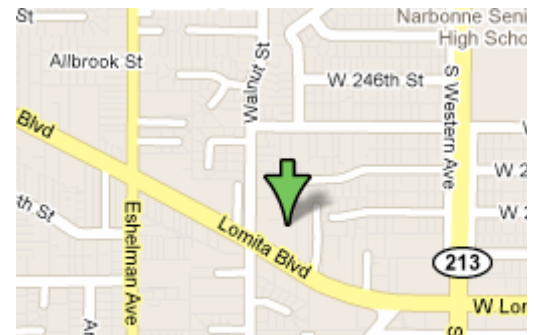## Next SBAMUG Meeting
Feb. 27: Printers, Inks & More

IN THIS ISSUE

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.

Meetings: Lomita Veteran's Hall,
1865 Lomita Blvd, Lomita
Mail: PO Box 432, Redondo Beach, CA
90277-0432
Phone: (310) 644-3315
Email: info@sbamug.com
Website: http://www.sbamug.com

Lomita Veteran's Hall,
1865 Lomita Blvd, Lomita

SBAMUG Monthly Calendar
February 27: Don Baker, Klassic Specialties: Printers, Inks & More
March 27: The ins and outs of Mt. Lion
***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

Other Meetings:

- 1st Sat. each month – SBAMUG Core Group, 10 a.m. Join Google+ SBAMUG community, or email: info@sbamug.com.

- Special interest groups (SIGs): Ask at the meetings or email: 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:

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Server Director: Dave Nathanson
Newsletter: Pam Townsend, Pete Myers, Bill Berks
USPS Liaison: Don Myers
Refreshments: Member contributions

Membership Report – 124 members
Please wear membership card as your name tag

Welcome new members: Fred Wohlman, Harry Squires.
Thank You Member Renewals: Douglas Baker, Ray Chikahisa, Erik Nilsson, George Florman, Bill Berks, Don Burt, John Kells, C. D. Knauer, Joan Kraus, Toni Lubofsky, David Moorhead, Louise Polsky, Bob Lay, Dr. Allan Boodnick, CW Mitchell**.**

Contact Membership Chair CW Mitchell for any corrections: cwmitchell@sbamug.com. Renew at the meetings or by mail.

PD-CD JIM PERNAL
FEB. 2013 PUBLIC DOMAIN CD

Eight items this month. The trend for programs for only the Intel based Mac's continues, and I don't see it reversing.

BatteryGuru.zip A utility program to display advanced information on your laptop's battery. Has items like current capacity, date of manufacture, use of current, and number of charges. Free. Intel only OSX 10.7 or better.

darktable-1.1.2.dmg Edit digital negatives. (Camera RAW files) Has non-destructive editing, and can crop, adjust exposure, and adjust white balance. Claimed to be an Adobe Lightroom alternative. Free. OSX 10.6 or better.

DropDMG-3.2.1.dmg This program might be a bit expensive for making .DMG image files, which OSX's built in Disc Utility can do. If you need advanced features such as encrypted or segmented images, custom icons and backgrounds, then you might want this one. OSX 10.5.8 or better Intel/PPC. Shareware $24.00

FileJuicer-4.32.zip Updated version of a program I have featured in the past. Extracts videos, sounds, and images from files or folders. Saves in the original format if possible. Shareware $17.95 OSX 10.5.8 or higher, Intel only.

gc8_build1116.dmg GraphiConverter Another updated program that I have been featuring for years. Imports over 200 graphic formats and can export 80. Batch conversions and slide shows are additional features. OSX 10.6.8 or higher Intel. $39.95 Shareware

HideSwitch.zip A free "one trick pony" utility to unhide or hide hidden systems files. Unhiding system files is not recommended for beginners. OSX 10.6 or higher Intel.

MacFamilyTree 6.3.5.dmg For those in our group who are in to Genealogy. This program is updated again. It has charts and Gedcom import and export. OSX 10.5 Intel Shareware $59.95.

MercuryMover.dmg Utility to resize and move windows with just the keyboard. Has optional menubar icon. Shareware $20.00. Intel OSX 10.7 or better.

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

App of the Month
Google+

The Core Group and a few club members gathered for its first Hang Out on February 2nd. The next hang out will be March 3rd at 10:00 a.m.

Immediately following the hang out, there was a flurry of emails titled 'Frustrated and Confused.' So there were a few issues as a group of people tried to set up accounts, get the community, and hang out.

Why Google+? One reason to use Google+ -- rather than Facetime (or iChat) – is that up to 10 people can be active in at one time, and more can listen. And, you don't have to be an Apple user to join in.

Go to Google+ on your Mac
https://plus.google.com/

Google+ on the iPad and iPhone
https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/google+/id447119634?mt=8

After creating an account, click on the 'Communities' icon along the left side of the page. Search and click on 'SBAMUG Core.' If you have not already joined, you will need to ask permission and wait for approval. So do this well in advance of the next Core Group meeting.

Now, go back to SBAMUG Core under Communities, and look under the SBAMUG Logo. You should see 'Events.' If there are any events scheduled, chick on them and indicate 'Yes' you are going.

One of our upcoming meetings will focus on 'using Google in an Apple world.'

Automatically add files to Dropbox

*By Christopher Breen @BodyofBreen,
MacWorld, 12/17/12*

Reader Daniel Gilbert seeks to make better use of Dropbox. He writes:

> *Because I travel fairly often, I'm trying to make my Mac's important documents available to me regardless of where I am. And I think I've settled on Dropbox being the way to do that. The problem is that I often forget to save these files to my Dropbox folder. Can you suggest any ways to make saving files to Dropbox easier?*

I'd be happy to. Let's start with files from the Finder.

Launch Automator and in the workflow template chooser that appears select Service and click Choose. Configure the top of the workflow to read *Service receives no input in any application*. From Automator's Library pane choose Files & Folders and then drag the *Get Selected Finder Items* and *Copy Finder Items* actions into the workflow area. Open your Dropbox folder (found, by default, in your user folder), and create a folder for your important files (*Important Files*, seems like an appropriate name). Drag this folder to the *Copy Finder Items* action. Now choose *File > Save*, name the workflow something like *Copy To Dropbox*, and click the Save button.

Use this workflow to quickly copy files to Dropbox

Lauch System Preferences, select the Keyboard preference, click the Keyboard Shortcuts tab, select the Services entry in the left side of the window, and scroll down the list to the right until you locate the *Copy to Dropbox* service you created. Click on the Add Shortcut button and press a keyboard shortcut that you'd like to use to trigger the service.

Now, when you want to copy files to your Dropbox folder, just select them in the Finder and press this keyboard shortcut.

That's convenient when you want to move files after you've saved them, but what about saving files to such a Dropbox folder directly from within an application? Here's how.

Within the Finder drag your Important Files folder into a Finder window's sidebar so that it appears under the Favorites heading. Launch an application, create a new document, and save it. Within the Save sheet that appears, click on the Where pop-up menu and select your Important Files folder (which appears under Favorites) in the resulting menu. Your file will be saved and synced with Dropbox.

Mactracker

Mactracker provides detailed information on every Apple Macintosh computer ever made, including items such as processor speed, memory, optical drives, graphic cards, supported Mac OS versions, and expansion options. Also included is information on Apple mice, keyboards, displays, printers, scanners, digital cameras, iPod, Apple TV, iPhone, iPad, Wi-Fi Cards/Base Stations, Newton, and Mac OS versions. Mac and IOS
http://www.mactracker.ca/

If there's a small fly in this ointment it's that any time you save a new file you have to click on that Where menu and navigate to your Important Files folder as you can't choose it as a default save location nor assign a keyboard shortcut to it so that you can move to it quickly. Of course that can be addressed with the correct utility.

Use Default Folder X to assign your Dropbox folder as the default save location

And that utility is St. Clair Software's $35 Default Folder X. Using Default Folder you can assign a hotkey to a particular folder and easily navigate to it by pressing that key combination while in a Save or Open sheet. You can also set any folder you like as an application's default save location.

Anticipating comments, no, it's not worth $35 to gain these couple of features. But Default Folder X does far, far more, as explained by our own Dan Frakes:

> *"This systemwide utility adds much-needed improvements to OS X's Open and Save dialog boxes. As the name implies, it lets you assign a default folder for each application, but it also makes it easy to access recently used and favorite files and folders, as well as open Finder windows, from within Open and Save dialogs."*

http://www.macworld.com/article/2020699/automatically-add-files-to-dropbox.html

Adobe Technology Xchange

Looking for fun? The Adobe Technology Xchange is "The Premier User Group in Los Angeles for Continuing Education in Adobe Technology." It is a not-for-proft educational forum for graphic designers, photographers, fine artists, multmedia creators, and television and film artists. ATX meets at The Burns Community Center, 5510 Clark Avenue, Lakewood, CA 90712. Check the schedule: http://www.atxsocal.org/index.html

SoundCloud rains down a wild world of sounds

By Randall Roberts, Los Angeles Times Pop Music Critic, 1/19/13

The music- and sound-sharing website has become indispensable to musicians and fans. An explorer can expect to hear anything and everything.

Spend an evening wandering the sonic fun house that is SoundCloud, an online music- and sound-sharing site that contains some of the world's most active virtual music scenes, and you're likely to land in some strange realms.

Roam through the millions of hours and you'll find, for example, the new single "Millions" by Def Jam Records and Kanye West-affiliated rapper Pusha T; a brief recording of an Estonian thunderstorm; an analog synth improv by Boston composer Keith Fullerton Whitman; a group of the DJ mix that got DJ Shadow booted off the decks at a Miami dance club; and a new hip-hop track recorded in the "trap" subgenre featuring a sampled Homer Simpson barking "d'oh!" in rhythm.

Click a few times and tunnel through aural mazes: Fans of your favorite bands share classic mixes and other hidden sources. Birdwatchers document the tweets and twitters of joy in flight. Hikers record footsteps up the mountain. If the world emits a sound wave, there's a chance it's documented on SoundCloud, a kaleidoscopic mess of mixes, music, nature sounds, experiments, audio documentation and singer-songwriter confessions. If legendary field recorder and ethnomusicologist Alan Lomax were researching today, he'd never have to leave his couch — and the stream of sounds flowing through his speakers would arrive from points across the globe endlessly.

Born in Berlin in 2007 as an easy way for electronic musicians to share new tracks with peers, SoundCloud has positively exploded in the last year. It's now not only a ubiquitous presence on most websites that embed music — last week hot rapper Azealia Banks, for example, released her new single "BBD" via the site, and the available SoundCloud embed planted it on hundreds of blogs all over the world — but has evolved into an essential audio hub, a YouTube-esque clearinghouse that on any given day offers a by-the-second update on the earth's utterances.

The site has become an indispensable bridge among artists, peers and fans, the de facto interface that makes sharing new sounds quick and easy. Chances are, if you recently clicked on the image of a sound wave on a Web page to hear a clip, you interacted with SoundCloud. The site has become an essential resource for discovering wildly divergent sounds, way more so than the comparatively tame and major-label-dominated corporate worlds of iTunes and Amazon. The bounty is overwhelming.

The other morning, for example, when I checked my SoundCloud feed, which resembles Instagram's but features waveforms rather than snapshots, I had instant access to President Obama's weekly radio address (via the White House's new official account), a new mixtape of African beats called "Africa in Your Earbuds," and an archival hourlong recording of a 1988 DJ set at the mythic Hacienda club in Manchester, England. I follow tastemakers such as A&R reps and superstar DJs, record labels like Fullerton cassette-punk upstarts Burger and hundreds of others; when any of them upload a track, I know and can listen instantly.

Last month the company pushed toward greater ubiquity with "SoundCloud Next," a new interface that seeks to further disrupt the online sound world. By rebuilding its iPhone and iPad apps from scratch, the platform designed its audio files to be even more sociable — portable, potentially viral and immediately accessible via smartphone, tablet and desktop. The applications also allow a user to record any sound on the fly and immediately upload it. Rap along to the radio and beam it to your account; record Radiohead in concert, beam the set to your account and into your followers' news feeds in minutes.

The aim: to do with online sound what Instagram has done with online sight and Twitter has done with witty link-bait. So far, so good. In December the company's co-founder, Alexander Ljung, announced that SoundCloud files are accessed by 180 million users a month — about 8% of the world's Internet population. A well-crafted, intuitive new interface allows account holders to share new releases directly to fans, who in turn can share and embed. The site is morphing and evolving with every upload.

This evolution has been fascinating to watch. While in the early days SoundCloud felt like a gaggle of producers constructing the framework of a new building, as it progressed the portal built an ahead-of-the-curve business model: the so-called freemium idea in which free participation is available, but a better and more expansive experience can be had for a price. (This approach has become common across the Web.) In SoundCloud's case, it offered producers a limited amount of server space gratis but more as well as data on listenership and better marketing tools with a premium membership, with rates ranging from 29 to 500 euros a year (about $38-$665).

Artists can link to their for-sale music, but SoundCloud's model is more focused on sharing streams than profiting from downloads. This is one reason why it's become popular with artists and labels, which use the site to tease new music before releasing it to download services such as iTunes and Amazon. SoundCloud pays its bills by selling server space, monetizing the egos and ambition of music makers, labels and would-be tastemakers, who must pay to house their compositions. The more they want to share, the more money they must pay. Users not interested in sharing their music or mixes can browse and listen with a free membership.

Mac/iOS Combo Apps: Maximize Wi-Fi Productivity

a review by Tom Piper (abbreviated)

For the last two years, I've wanted (but have not been able) to record my iPad or iPhone screen to do training videos without using a video camera to capture it. It also seemed to me that we should be able to live broadcast my video camera to my iPad. And, when will I be able to touch-control my Mac screen (without using a Wacom tablet)? The power of AirPlay has helped to now make all of this possible.

AirPlay wireless streaming (originally called AirTunes 2004-2010) was designed to make it easy to tap into your iTunes library through Apple TV. You just open iTunes on your laptop or Apple portable device, and select Apple TV in the AirPlay menu.

Apple TV gives you a virtually unlimited selection of high-definition movies, TV shows, video, and photos to explore. This wireless digital media receiver can play music from your computer, show photos from your iPhone, even access your media collection stored online in the iCloud, all for only $99.99.

But, if you have an iPad 2, the new iPad or iPhone 4S, you're not just limited to audio. Your device also has **AirPlay Mirroring** functionality (introduced in 2011 as part of iOS 5) which means you can wirelessly stream what's on its screen to your TV screen through the Apple TV. This concept has been adapted into some really cool apps, four of which I'm describing here.

AirBeam turns your iPhones, iPod touchs or iPads into a realtime audio and video surveillance system. It streams live video and audio from the cameras and microphones of any number of iPhones, iPod touchs or iPads. This universal app display for your Mac (or Windows) computer. You can use your iPad, iPhone, or iPod touch as a wireless display, to extend your computer desktop. This program is available at the Mac App Store for $9.99.

Air Display can satisfy your wish for an extra display for your Mac (or Windows) computer. You can use your iPad, iPhone, or iPod touch as a wireless display, to extend your computer desktop. This program is available at the Mac App Store for $9.99.

Reflection allows you to use AirPlay to mirror your iPhone 4S, iPad 2 or new iPad to any Mac running OS X 10.6+, wirelessly. I can now easily demo iOS apps on any Mac running OS X Lion using AirPlay Mirroring on iOS 5, and record it using QuickTime, ScreenFlow or other screen recorders. A free trial version (fully-function for 10 minutes) is available at www.reflectionapp.com, and the full purchase price is $14.99.

AirParrot will place our Mac's screen on your Apple TV. You can choose the display the AirPlay device will mirror to in order to enjoy your video and audio. A free trial version (fully-function for 10 minutes) is available at www.airparrot.com, and the full purchase price is $9.99.

These are amazing Mac and iOS apps which fully utilize the power of Wi-Fi through Airplay and Apple TV to achieve a new level of productivity. And, they are FUN to boot!

http://ugab.typepad.com/ugresources/
(for the full review, go to applejac.typepad.com)
http://ugab.typepad.com/ugresources/2012/04/macios-combo-apps-maximize-wi-fi-productivity.html

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Special Offer – TechTool Deluxe 3.1.4 update now available free

If you ordered an AppleCare Protection Plan with your Mac between 1999 and March of 2011, you also received TechTool Deluxe as part of your protection plan. TechTool Deluxe checks the major computer components covered under your AppleCare Protection Plan, and was available only by purchasing an AppleCare Protection Plan for a Mac. TechTool Deluxe was based on Micromat's powerful TechTool Pro diagnostic and repair utility.

This new TechTool Deluxe update is free to users of the above previous versions. Users should update their current version software to download the new update. TechTool Deluxe 3.1.4 works on more Macs and is also compatible with Lion.

More information is available at:
http://www.micromat.com/techtool-deluxe-3-1-4-now-available   For upgrades from TechTool Deluxe AppleCare to TechTool Pro 6:
http://www.micromat.com/techtool-deluxe
http://appleusergroupresources.com/special-offer-techtool-deluxe-3-1-4-update-now-available-free/

For example, searching for "password" correctly brings up a variety of credential-management apps, while searching for "apps for managing my passwords" returns no results. Considering the level of sophistication that Web search has attained in recent years, the ability to understand a query written in simple English seems like a must-have feature.

But things get even weirder: Recently I was looking for Black Pixel's excellent Kaleidoscope app, and, because I couldn't remember its name offhand, I searched for it using the query "diffs"—a fairly common term that developers use for a data format that describes the difference between two documents. The App Store didn't return any results until I changed my query to "diff," at which point Kaleidoscope came up first in the results. One could argue that *diffs* is a somewhat specialized term—and, in all fairness, the result screen included a 'Did you mean…' note that pointed me in the right direction—but Google has no trouble identifying a plural word and directing me to pages that contain its singular form. Had I not been persistent, the folks at Black Pixel would have been out a sale through no fault of their own.

Natural-language searches, which Google has long understood, simply don't work in the App Store.

Better curation

Given the sheer volume of apps on the App Stores, Apple's role in curating them is becoming more and more important. The company's notoriously tight grip on its distribution channels is often the source of much controversy, but there's no denying that, by and large, it promotes all apps on an even field: In any given week, the latest release from a giant like, say, Electronic Arts could share the "Editor's Pick" spot with an app written by an equally talented—but much more wallet-impaired—team of independent developers.

From a user's perspective, Apple's recommendations are, quite simply, too impersonal. The nature of a review is such that it is inevitably colored by its author's personal background and preferences; knowing who writes an App Store recommendation, therefore, is an important part of deciding whether you are likely to agree with it.

Alas, there is no knowing who the mysterious "editors" of the App Store are, or how and why they make their weekly picks. To be clear, I'm not suggesting that the App Store should take the place that rightfully belongs to trade publications (did it just get chilly in here all of a sudden?), but putting a human face on its editorial process would make it more relevant to everyone who uses it.

Along the same lines, the App Store's discoverability could benefit from more social interaction; with so many apps to choose from, I greatly value the ideas that I get from my friends and colleagues.

But, short of specifically asking them for advice and opinions, I have no easy way to learn about the hidden gems they may have found.

Although Apple's previous effort in this regard didn't quite pan out, that doesn't mean that the company should abandon its efforts altogether—particularly given that digging through social networks like Facebook or Twitter for app recommendations is not an easy task.

Here's to a million more

The App Store remains one of my favorite Apple products of the past ten years. The service has breathed new life into the independent developer community, bringing it to the forefront of the largest revolution in computing since the 1970s, and has allowed millions of people to enjoy high-quality software at modest prices.
http://www.macworld.com/article/2027485/three-wishes-for-a-better-app-store.html

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Most fascinating has been the evolution of groups within SoundCloud, where fans and purveyors of genre music gather in hubs that resemble real-life music scenes. But where in the latter, networking happens in clubs and bars before and after shows, on SoundCloud, this interaction and sharing of ideas occurs online.

A group called "Pickers and Grinners" features "people recording music on their back porch, at the campground, around a campfire, at an open mic, etc." Start streaming the group and vanish into a realm sound tracked with crickets and the breeze. The thriving "Worldwide Electronic Music" group has 16,422 members who have shared more than 50,000 works; the more exclusive "Minimal/Techno, Tech-house, Deep Ambient, Glitch Producers from Brazil" is self-explanatory: Its 20,000 members have uploaded another 50,000. The "Beck Song Reader" group features artists offering their versions of songs from the artist's new sheet music project.

Such unbridled chaos — hours and hours of streams at your fingertips — can be overwhelming, and SoundCloud's weakness is organization. Random browsing is difficult, and if all you want to do is hear the new Justin Timberlake track or find something that sounds like Springsteen, iTunes, Pandora and Spotify still reign. But for those whose affinity is for discovery, what vinyl hunters call "digging in the crates" to uncover gems, SoundCloud offers a similar opportunity to flip through an ever-expanding, virtual crate.
randall.roberts@latimes.com
http://www.latimes.com/entertainment/music/posts/la-et-ms-soundcloud-pusha-t-berlin-20130120,0,5516272.story

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South Bay Apple Macintosh User Group provides you with a local source of shared knowledge & experience through monthly meetings, trainings & monthly newsletter.

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Model of Macintosh you use most:_____

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Comments:_____

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Date: _____

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