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SAFARI 5: 11 tips for better web surfing, **p45**

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FEATURES

COVER STORY

TURN iTUNES UP TO 11

DEPARTMENTS

10

74

64

CREATE

APPS 50

REVIEWS 56

REVIEWS (CONTINUED)

PLAY 77

18

68

78

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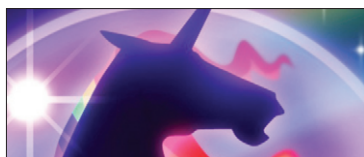
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COMING IN THE OCTOBER ISSUE

Movie and TV streaming lets you cut cable companies and satellite providers out of the equation, sending free video from your Mac to your home-entertainment center. We'll show you the latest ways to get it all up and running.

A NEW ERA FOR MAC|LIFE

I've been wanting to write this editor's letter since January. That was when I used an iPad for the first time, and my initial reaction was an inarticulate garble of "I must own that gadget" greed. And then my second thought was, "We *have* to make a *Mac|Life* iPad app." That day is finally here...or it will be soon. Like all app developers, we don't know precisely what awaits us in the approval process, but we're hopeful that by early to mid August, you'll find our baby in the App Store.

So let me tell you a bit about what we're aiming for. Instead of hustling to produce one of the first magazine apps for iPad, we've taken the time to do something different and more interesting. We wanted an app that was more than just iBooks for magazines. We wanted something that recognizes that the iPad both grabs and sends information. We wanted an app that mixes the strengths of our print magazine with what modern internet media does best: interactivity, participation, and immediacy.

We've bundled all these goals into what I like to call "Issue Zero" of our iPad app. As far as its magazine pages go, it's all content you've seen from us before, and that's why the app is free. That said, you've never been able to interact with our "print content" like this before. You can tweet, Facebook Like, and send emails about the stories you're reading and the products they cover, all without leaving the app. You can also provide your own personal ratings for the products we cover, check out the live-updated @maclife Twitter feed, and enjoy some spiffy videos and animations.

Coming next: in-app commenting and...well, that's where you come in. The goal with this 1.0 version (and truly, it's more like an 0.3 version) is to gather feedback from you, our readers, on where we're going. Something not working how you'd like it to? Have an idea for something else our app should do? Please tell us. You can ping us from in-app or dash off an email to app@maclife.com. We'll definitely be listening, and your feedback and ideas will be vital in shaping this app. We have big plans, but they'll be bigger and better with your participation. Thanks for joining us on this ride, and we'd also like to shout out a big thank-you to our developer, Balthaser, for the huge amount of work, inspiration, and late nights they put into this project.

> **Instead of hustling to produce one of the first magazine apps for iPad, we've taken the time to do something different and more interesting.**

Separately, I'm thrilled to welcome Nic Vargus to our staff as our new associate editor. You may recognize his name as one of our regular contributors, and it's great to have him onboard to head up our coverage of iOS apps and more. You can welcome—and haze!—him yourself on Twitter at @nicvargus.

Paul Curthoys, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

>>>OVERHEARD AT MAC|LIFE THIS MONTH...

"If you get a message that my magic cauliflower is ready to harvest, you can just ignore it."
—*Susie, warning of We Rule push notifications when loaning her iPad to a colleague.*

"How many times do I have to tell iTunes I'm over 17? You want to cut off my arm and count the rings, iTunes? Is that what you want?"
—*Robbie, on how updating apps can be a chore.*

"I can't find my Yeti!"
—*Robin, in a statement that makes more sense once you read the review on p62.*

"Using a 3G running iOS 4 is the worst iPhone experience I've ever had. It was like a long, slow commercial for reasons to upgrade."—*Ray, on the pain of waiting for the white iPhone to finally arrive.*

"I used to rock Boyz II Men mix tapes like it was my job."
—*New-guy Nic, talking with Susie and Ray about first favorite bands and how he listened to them.*

"My air freshener bled all over me this morning."
—*Flo, telling the harrowing tale of how her Glade Plug-in exploded.*

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LETTER OF THE MONTH

Dumpin' on Dashboard

I just read the article on Dashboard ("Are Widgets Dead?" Jul/10, p14) and wanted to chime in. When Dashboard debuted in 2005, I used it for a bit, then realized I didn't have much use for its functionality when I could set up different Mac and web apps to do the same things. An article in *MacAddict* said it could be quite a memory hog, so I downloaded TinkerTool and disabled the Dashboard. I don't think I've used it since late 2005 or early 2006. Since I edit video on Final Cut Pro, I need all the memory allocation I can get! Also, I wanted to say "Welcome back, Rik Myslewski! It's great to see you in *Mac|Life* dispensing geeky advice and thoughts. —— *Heath McKnight*

We're also thrilled to have Rik taking up residence on our back page. Unlike the Dashboard, some things never go out of style... like knowledgeable and geeky friends.—*Susie*
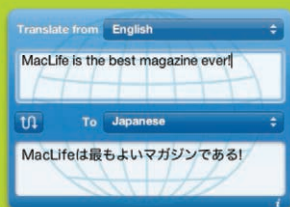
iTunes Intervention

In July's "Consider" (p6), you talked about some of the problems with iTunes. One of the biggest is that it must exist on some form of hardware, rather than staying in a cloud and syncing over the air. Which brings me to the biggest problem of the iPad. The iPad should not have to sync with iTunes—it should have a full version of iTunes on it so that I can sync my iPhone or iPod with the iPad, making it the only computer I would need!

Since getting my iPhone, I basically use my computer for two things: First, creating certain print-ready documents and spreadsheets that are a pain to create on

the iPhone. And second, syncing my iPhone. That's it!

If the iPad became the holder of my iTunes and could support an external hard drive, my need for a laptop or PC would finally be over. This is what I've been waiting for since watching *Star Trek* as a kid, and sadly, I'm still waiting!—*Stephen Mitchell*

I noticed you said your iPhone was slow to sync. I had the same issue, and it was because I had too many photos on the phone. After I backed up the photos and deleted them from the phone, it was able to sync much faster. Hope this helps.—*Greg Helfand*

I think iTunes is pretty much okay as is with an exception or two. In 2007, I ripped my 1,700-plus CD collection into one of my Macs, but I find one thing missing. My previous multi-CD changer would let me double-click a song or album to add it, in order, to its playlist. iTunes makes you drag and drop songs to a playlist, which isn't as intuitive. I also don't like Apple's methodology for library organization and use my own instead.—*David Valentine*

My biggest pet peeve is that it's still called "iTunes." Tunes are only a small percentage of what the app now does for me.—*Jeff Truitt*

I agree with your article, mostly with No. 3 (weak browsing options in the iTunes Store). I used to be able to browse new music by the week it was released for the previous month or so. The new iTunes Store is more about looking cool than helping me find or explore content, so I stopped buying music there.

iTunes is also starting to run extremely slowly on older computers. Apple should offer a smaller, feature-limited core installation for people that just want to use it for a few simple functions, and iDevice functionality should be

automatically added when a device is plugged in for the first time.—*Martin Magaña*

Wow! This is just a small sampling of the feedback we got from Paul's column, "Hey, iTunes? This Is an Intervention!" and we thank everyone for writing. iTunes handles a ton of functions, and virtually everybody uses it—which leads us to that old saying about how you can't please everybody. Check out our feature "Turn iTunes Up to 11" on p32 to read about some tweaks and tuning that'll make iTunes 9 work much better for you.—*Ray*

More Thoughts on Flash

After reading "Is Adobe a Flash Point?" (Aug/10, p6) and Steve Jobs' "Thoughts on Flash," I have a few of my own. As a PC user for 16 years, I know all too well about third-party apps and programs causing instability on the original platform. How many times do you download a program that requires a plug-in to run on your system? How many times has a new program or plug-in been the fly in the ointment of your OS?

Our house has been 100 percent Apple since 2008: iPods, MacBooks, iMacs, and iPhones. I cannot express the level of gratitude I feel toward Apple for developing devices that just work. Turn it on, it works. End of story. So if Steve Jobs is telling us the truth and Flash will destabilize the iPhone and the iPod touch, then I say kick it to the curb. If Adobe wants to occupy the Apple mobile platform, then Adobe should step up and write something stable that does not use a lion's share of power! Why should Apple allow an unstable piece of software on a system that just works?—*Shawn Barnhart*

I think Apple is making a mistake with its pi**ing contest with Adobe Flash. Apple does so many things right, and so many of them work right the first time! I can, as a graphic design student, say the same about Adobe. My Mac came with the Adobe Master Collection, and it's all I'll ever need. I think it'd serve both Adobe and Apple to get along.—*Keith Coleman*

Those of us old and grizzled enough remember how it felt to be second-class citizens and largely at the mercy of big players like Adobe and Microsoft. Back then, the thinking was that the Mac would simply die

out, so why write software for it? Adobe has an abysmal record of supporting the Apple product line, and yet Paul even speaks of Steve Jobs' ''ban'' on Flash on the iOS platform. At the time you wrote those words, there was no Flash for any mobile platform, yet somehow it is Apple that is banning Flash!

Flash is not the future. It is largely unneeded now except for the ugly, intrusive Flash ads! The most useful addition to my Mac software is Click2Flash, and I hardly ever click. I've never missed the mobile Flash that Adobe promised more than two years ago on my iPhone, and I certainly do not miss it on my iPad.—*Rick Pettys*

I agree that Apple should tread very carefully on how they tackle the Flash debate. I am a budding web developer, but I am not yet competent in Flash design. Still, I'm conversant with the principles of web design, and I fully appreciate what Steve Jobs is saying. I personally believe that with the further development of HTML5, CSS, and JavaScript, eventually we will see a World Wide Web with minimal Flash components.

In my experience, currently there are only a small number of sites that will show the

infamous ''Flash Player required'' graphics and messages. The Flash elements also generally don't form the integral part of the site (or shouldn't), with the exception of video players. And most major sites, I believe, are converting their video formats to cater to Apple's devices anyway. With the development of the video tag in HTML5, we could see the total removal of the need for a Flash video player altogether.

In short, I'm excited by the prospects of using fewer ''add-on'' programs to develop websites, which in the long term will be accepted by more browsers and more

computers, regardless of their individual specs.—*Rod Murphy*

We heard a lot about this topic, and the majority of writers supported Apple's decision. Rick's comment above is especially on point; Flash just isn't ready for prime time on mobile devices yet. And to be clear, Paul's editorial was entirely concerned with how Apple is publicly handling this matter; he agrees that Apple made a good decision on Flash and iOS. Besides, now that Farmville is in the App Store, the debate should be over, right? Isn't farming virtual crops what Flash was made for?—*Robbie*

Brothers In Arms

Brothers In Arms: Double Time (Jul/10, p76) is the latest game in the Feral Legends series. Feral Interactive created the Legends label to release older games that were critically and commercially popular, but have not yet had a chance to shine on the Mac. We tried to provide Mac gamers with extraordinary value by combining two games—Double Time includes two separate episodes of the Brothers In Arms series, Road to Hill 30 and Earned in Blood. Consistent with other Feral Legends releases, the retail price is $29.95, below many other new commercial games. As such, we think your reviewer misunderstood the positioning of the game. He compounds his conceptual error with ill-considered criticisms of the game's graphics and preferences.

Feral worked in partnership with Gearbox Software and Ubisoft, the game's original developer and publisher, respectively, to make sure that Double Time for the Mac offers an authentic Brothers In Arms experience. As a matter of course, we must use the art assets that we've been licensed to make the game. Regarding preferences, while the two episodes may look superficially similar, they're actually quite different under the hood. Sharing preferences between them was simply not technically feasible.

We feel the game offers an equal balance of price, performance, and entertainment value often overlooked in higher-priced games. Feral has earned a reputation for bringing AAA games to the Mac with first-class ports. We spend a great deal of time, care, and money in that process. We are lucky in that hitherto we have been able to rely on

a similar level of professionalism from the magazines that review those games. In this case, we feel that went missing, and that your readers have been ill-served by an inaccurate and misleading review.—*David Stephen, managing director, Feral Interactive*

We have huge amounts of respect for the hard work that companies like Feral put into making their products. Unfortunately, we don't agree that Double Time represents a good value. A quick check of Amazon shows that the two games it bundles can be bought as separate PC versions for a total of under $20 new or under $4 used. Price quibbles aside, as someone who's reviewed videogames for 15 years before coming to *Mac|Life*, I'm a huge fan of the Brothers In Arms series and have played every second of it on other platforms, so I was rooting for this game to make a big splash on Macs, too. As our review already explained, I'm disappointed with this version, and I stand by the reasons for those criticisms. Giving bad reviews is never fun, but we do it because our readers deserve our honest,

considered opinions, whether the product's creator agrees with them or not.—*Paul*

Correction

In our review of Adobe Premiere Pro CS5 (Jul/10, p61), we mistakenly stated that the Mercury Playback Engine is only available with Nvidia cards. While hardware acceleration only works with Nvidia cards, software acceleration will work with any video card.

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MIXING MUSIC WITH THE iPAD

Rana Sobhany, the world's first iPad DJ, discusses her new favorite hobby and how it will pave the way for the next generation of electronic music makers. **BY FLORENCE ION**

It's an uncharacteristically rainy spring day in San Francisco, and Rana Sobhany is at the Hotel Kabuki preparing to go on stage at the SF Music Tech Summit with her iPad. But this time, the iPad DJ isn't on stage to rile up a Saturday night crowd looking to get their groove on. Instead, she's demonstrating the benefits—and limitations—of making music with the iPad to a room full of music and tech geeks.

Sobhany has become an iPad evangelist of sorts, and her goal is simple: To show the world what this beefy, full-featured tablet can do with a bit of investment in the App Store and plenty of practice. "Music and technology have found this beautiful point of intersection where I can do both of the things I love," she says. "You add in the mix of mobile [technology], and it's a wonderful time to be where I am right now."

The revelatory idea of using iPads as a substitution for turntables came to Sobhany while in line for the Wi-Fi iPad back in April—a time when Apple fans all over the internet were discussing the potential capabilities of the long-anticipated tablet device, including its ability to substitute for musical instruments. "The first things I did were to buy these iPads, hook them up, become a ninja with [the music-making] apps,

and learn what the restrictions are. And then, I figured out a way to resolve them." Sobhany has also figured out how to use the Camera Connection Kit to power USB switches to connect things like drum pads and a keyboard, which enables her to create music organically while mixing it in with iPad apps. "It's only been a month since I've been doing this, and I don't think people realize how hard it is."

Sobhany's YouTube videos make iPad DJing look easy because the apps she uses are available to anyone. But it's really more than just dragging and dropping beats in the Korg iElectribe app, or matching beats per minute. Sobhany also uses hardware to synchronize both iPad devices and record them through her MacBook Pro, including a Numark M3 mixer and three RCA-to-minijack cables to connect the iPads to the mixer and provide audio ouput.

While she's not suffering back strain from carrying equipment up the stairs, she stresses that mastering the art of iPad DJing still takes a lot of hard work. "You have to practice as if it's a real instrument. You can't just wake up and buy turntables and say, 'I'm a DJ.'"

Sobhany creates music samples on

Rana's setup is light, versatile, and did we mention light?

her Mac with a Roland Fantom G7 electronic keyboard and the music production software Logic. She imports them to her iPad via Wi-Fi or Bluetooth with apps like Looptastic, though limitations with the transfer rate between the iPad and her computer limit how quickly and frequently she can upload samples. Sobhany has also utilized her savvy tech skills to work on implementing organic sounds into her music with the app AmpliTube (see Aug/10, p54) and her electric guitar. This is one dexterous techie who's furiously testing every possible way to make music with the iPad. "When the first person realized that you could scratch on vinyl, they weren't great, they just figured it out. And then, this art form developed around it. With practice, with time, with better apps, with better peripherals, there's going to be this great ability to use iPads in music production."

Sobhany also managed to figure out the iPad's inabilities by trial and error, as well as ingeniously trolling through the iPhone OS 3.2 SDK. "When you look at the SDK, you can see that the capabilities exist, they're just not activated yet." She recalls the frustrations with her iPad, like the frequent crashes caused by the Camera Connection Kit, as well as the device's inability to record multitrack recordings.

> **"When the first person realized that you could scratch on vinyl, they weren't great, they just figured it out. And then, this art form developed around it."**

Still, there is so much more to making music than simply piecing together samples in a $10 app. Sobhany wants aspiring DJs to realize that they have a cheaper alternative to figuring out if this kind of music making is really their thing. "I couldn't afford turntables just to figure out I didn't even like it. If that's going to be somebody's entrance point, it's very important that the iPad is presented as an alternative."

Sobhany believes the iPad's real beauty is how it can inspire others to make music by taking advantage of the device's versatility. "I truly, from every ounce of my being, believe that this is the future of music," she says. "I think it's going to be mobile, portable, compact, all-inclusive, and have everything on it." Because of the iPad, Sobhany has actually invested in a real pair of turntables. "I look at it as an additional element in my arsenal," she says. "If I know what it's like on the turntables, it helps me understand how I can make it work better on the pad."

In June, Sobhany returned to San Francisco for a WWDC party. This time, she was on stage with her entire iPad DJ setup performing for hardcore Apple nerds and electronic music lovers. However, Sobhany knew that it was going to be a challenge getting the crowd to follow her beat, and wasn't surprised that they met her with uncertainty at first. "I know that it's not the same as when I'm making music using my computer. It's an experiment for that exact reason. I know that it's something that has a long way to go."
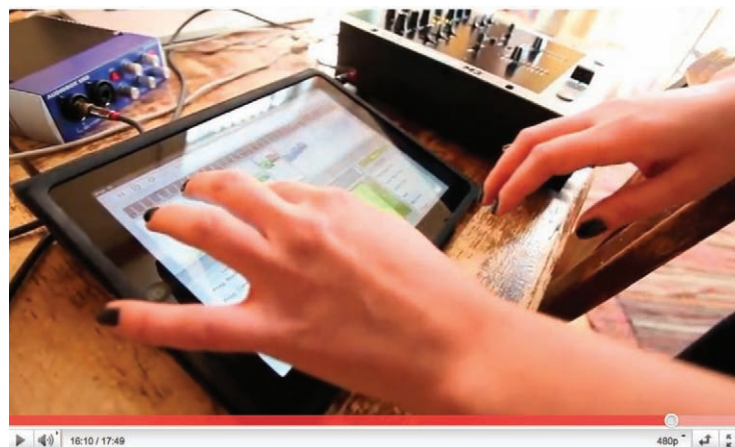
GET THE PARTY STARTED

Interested in creating your own music with your trusty iPad? Rana Sobhany shows you how in five easy steps.

1. BUY TWO IPADS
Two "turntables" are standard in any DJ setup, so be sure to purchase a pair. It will cost you $1,000.

2. BUY A MIXER
Choose a mixer. I really like Numark mixers, and I use a Numark M3 in my current setup.

3. GET CONNECTED
My setup consists of three RCA-to-minijack cables. Two of the minijack inputs go into the iPads, and the RCA cables get plugged into the back of the mixer. The third cable is for audio-out, and I always keep a 1/8 inch–to–1/4 inch adapter handy in case the speaker system requires a different-sized cable.

4. PICK YOUR POISON
Decide what kind of music you want to make and download some apps that correspond to it. Fortunately, approximately 5,000 apps are available for download on the iPad store, and most iPhone apps work on the iPad as well, so the possibilities are endless. If you're into hip-hop, for instance, download the IK Multimedia Groovemaker Hip-Hop app and start from there. You can always download and install new apps, so get creative with your arsenal of sounds and loops.

5. PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE!
If you're already a DJ, practice using the touchscreen and adjust to the lack of hardware controls on the apps. If you're a beginner, learn timing and matching beats per minute between the iPads. Becoming familiar with the sound libraries is paramount to controlling the sounds you're creating. Spend the time incorporating various elements and testing out different apps. Then you're ready to flex your iPad DJ muscles!

The Korg iElectribe app ($9.99) is one of Rana's favorites.

FUTURE STARS:
E3'S BEST MAC & iOS GAMES

This year's gaming über-expo had plenty for the Apple crowd to get excited about too. **BY SUSIE OCHS**

The Electronic Entertainment Expo (E3) is a gamer's paradise—it's the annual trade show extravaganza where all the big companies trot out their coolest games and newest, most innovative hardware. Problem is, the vast majority of it is for Nintendo Wii and DS, Xbox 360, PlayStation 3, and our old friend the PC. Most—but not all. For two foot-punishing days, I scoured the show floor and the maze of meeting rooms in search of the best Mac, iPad, and iPhone games E3 had to offer. And this year, the getting was good.

PORTAL 2

Valve pulled lucky journalists into a tiny, dark room to show off new gameplay videos of puzzle-action sequel Portal 2 (thinkwithportals .com), just days after announcing its delay until 2011. Even so, the footage made me salivate. Valve has dreamed up tons of new portal types, gameplay mechanics, Escher-esque puzzles, and even a two-player co-op mode from the perspective of a pair of robots. Valve's Erik Johnson explained, "People were already playing Portal as an unofficial co-op," just in the you-play-I-watch sense; the new mode will give each player their own set of portals, and you can travel through all of them. Portal 2 will land on Mac and PC simultaneously next year via Steam.

Portal 2

LEGO UNIVERSE

This MMO (universe.lego.com) should appeal to anybody who's ever stuck two Lego bricks together, especially if you also dreamed up elaborate backstories and adventures for your Lego friends. Lego Universe combines all the questing of a huge MMO with the unlimited creative potential of constructing your own Lego planet using the bricks you find throughout the lush game world. Your friends can come visit your creation, and you can even use a basic programming language to bring Lego creatures to life. The polish, creativity, and completeness (every Lego brick ever made?!) simply blew me away, and I can't wait for its October 26 release on Mac and PC.
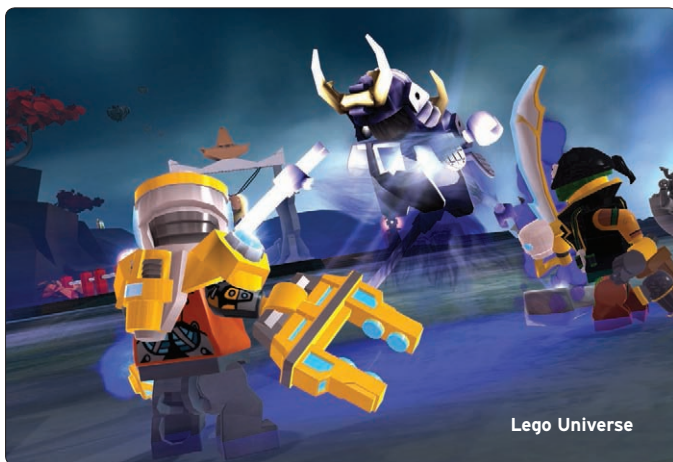
Lego Universe

ONLIVE

OnLive's "games on demand" service had a big presence at the show with hands-on demos running on MacBooks and PC laptops, streaming games from a data center 400 miles away. But sure enough, they played as well as if they were installed on the Mac in front of us, delivering smooth controls and no noticeable lag. Xbox-style gamepads worked flawlessly, and OnLive's extra services, like game spectating and video "brag clips," were up and running. The launch details announced at E3—free service for two years, not including game rentals or purchases; see onlive.com for details—and the service's initial lineup sweeten the deal. We'll have a full review in the October issue, and you can follow OnLive coverage at maclife.com/tags/onlive.

Spectating a game of Mirror's Edge in OnLive
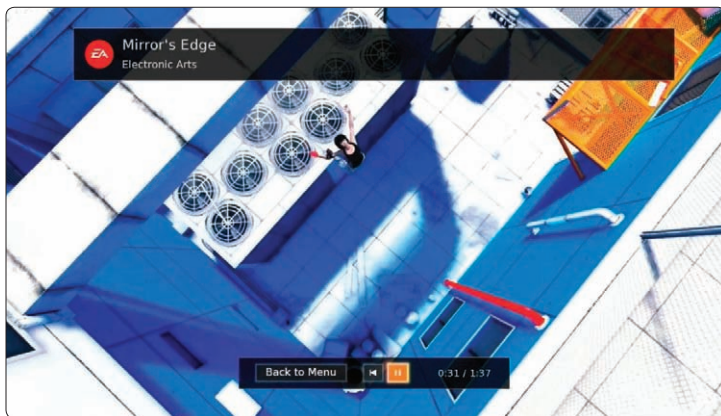
TELLTALE GAMES

Indie publisher/developer Telltale showed off its new puzzle-based point-and-click adventure Puzzle Agent (puzzleagent.com), a collaboration with cartoonist Graham Annable. The unique hand-drawn style and delightful voice acting pulled me into the dark, mysterious story of agent Nelson Tethers of the U.S. Department of Puzzle Research, on assignment in frozen Minnesota. Released in June, Puzzle Agent is $9.95 for Mac, but planned iPad and iPhone versions weren't yet live in the App Store at press time. Telltale also giddily unveiled a new deal with Universal to create games based on *Back to the Future* and *Jurassic Park*, planned as multi-game, episodic "seasons" in true Telltale style, starting with *Back to the Future* this winter.

Puzzle Agent

iOS GAMES

Disney Interactive's **Jelly Car 2** was incredibly hard to tear myself away from—its bright and cheery hand-drawn style belied a deep, physics-based puzzler that even lets you create your own levels. It's $2.99 for

the iPad and 99 cents for iPhone and iPod touch. Capcom's **Street Fighter IV** ($9.99) for iPhone and iPod touch is great as ever, especially with a new update that adds Cammy and Zangief. And Venan Entertainment showed off its addictive iPhone climbing adventure **Ninjatown: Trees of Doom!** ($1.99), as well as an in-development iPad-native version.

Ninjatown: Trees of Doom!

Kid Icarus: Uprising for the Nintendo 3DS

NINTENDO'S 3DS: AN iPOD TOUCH KILLER?

Nintendo's press event was a flashy, Steve Jobs–caliber show featuring lavish trailers, impressive gameplay demos, and videogame superstars like Shigeru Miyamoto (the creator of Mario and Zelda) and Nintendo president Satoru Iwata. But the showstopper was the Nintendo 3DS, a new two-screened handheld gaming system that boasts a glasses-free 3D screen on top and a touchscreen on the bottom. Two outer cameras let it take 3D photographs, and it has an accelerometer and gyroscope for motion-based game controls, as well as an analog stick, four buttons, and a D-pad. Wireless connectivity lets it download game updates and exchange data with other 3DS units, even while asleep. With features like that, the subtext was clear: Sony's PSP is in the handheld gaming's rearview mirror, and the 3DS is targeting iOS devices as its main competition. So how does it measure up?

The addition of the motion controls open iPod touch–like gameplay possibilities not possible in older Nintendo handhelds, and the no-glasses-required 3D screen is no gimmick. Jaw-droppingly crisp, it even has a slider that lets you dial down the effect or turn it off entirely. "The moment you approach the machine, it's like peering into a window, not so much a screen," wrote our colleagues at GamesRadar.com. "There's genuine depth with objects and backgrounds, yet there's next to no eye strain even on the highest 3D setting."

The 3DS, set to launch in March 2011, already has robust publisher support, including Electronic Arts, Capcom, Konami, Namco Bandai, Sega, Square Enix, Ubisoft, and tons more—and Nintendo hits like Animal Crossing, Nintendogs + Cats, Mario Kart, Kid Icarus: Uprising, and others will only lure in more gamers. Apple boasts that the App Store features vastly more "game and entertainment" titles than the Nintendo DS line and Sony PSP can play, but that "entertainment" category pads the total with fart apps, horoscopes, and other non-game nonsense. Still, downloading iPod touch games for 99 cents, $3, or even $10 a pop is still a cheaper and easier way to play than buying $20 to $30, physical-object Game Cards for your 3DS.

Ever-polite Nintendo declined to utter the words "Apple," "App Store," or "iPod touch" in its whiz-bang presentation. But the unofficial battle for handheld gaming supremacy is definitely on, and it'll be nearly as exciting as a new Zelda game.

MAKE CHEAP iPHONE RINGTONES

Pick the best way to create your own ringtones from our list of nine favorites.
BY ZACK STERN

With every new iPhone, a chorus of familiar questions arises: "How do I get more ringtones? How much do they cost?" Put your wallet away. We know not one, not two, but *nine* great ways to make ringtones on the cheap. Most are free or use software you already own. When finished, just drag the file to iTunes to prepare it for sync.

One purchased ringtone (what were we thinking?) and dozens of customs. No boring rings for us!
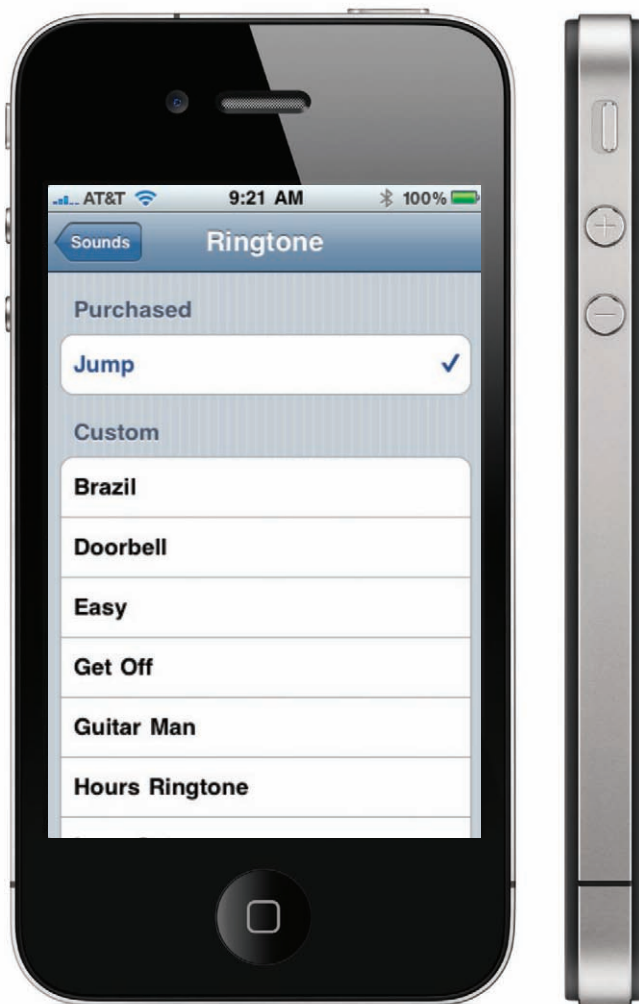
CHANGE THE EXTENSION

The iPhone uses the .m4r ringtone format. Ringtone files are so similar to the standard AAC (.m4a) files already in your library, you can just change the three-letter extension to .m4r to make them work. We recommend that you first trim the songs to your perfect ringtone length within iTunes. Check out bit.ly/byArAO for more details.
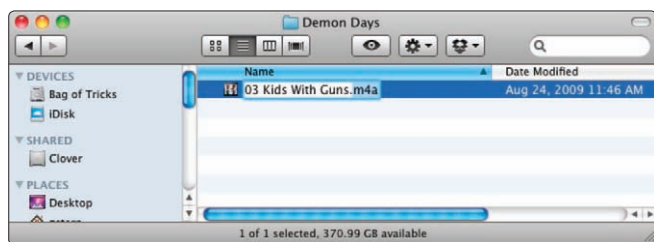
Just swap in .m4r to rock the ringtone.

TAP INTO ANY AUDIO

Capture audio from any program on your Mac and use the other methods here to make the ringtone. Audio Hijack Pro ($32, rogueamoeba.com) and WireTap Studio ($69, ambrosiasw.com) record any sound, such as a streaming Hulu show—and they come in handy for non-ringtone recording too.

RECYCLE AN iTUNES STORE PREVIEW

You can turn any 30-second song sample within the iTunes Store into a ringtone. Right-click the headline in an album's iTunes Store page, and pick Copy Link. Paste the link into a web browser. iTunes will reopen the page; ignore it and return to the browser. Select View > Page Source, and search for ".m4a". Look to the right of the highlighted text; if that's the name of the song you want, copy the full URL attached to .m4a, such as http://a1.phobos.apple.com/us/r1000/028/Music/05/c2/24/mzi .mtwarvhw.aac.p.m4a. (If the first .m4a result isn't the right song, keep searching.) Open the URL in a new webpage. Click the down triangle all the way to the right of the play bar, and pick Save As Source. You now have the 30-second preview clip as an AAC; turn the .m4a extension into .m4r to make it a ringtone.
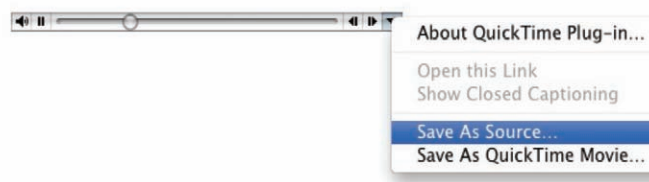
Once you isolate the preview on a webpage, you can save it to your hard drive.

FIND SONGS ONLINE

You can find countless songs and ringtone files online. To speed up your search, visit Google, and use the term "filetype" to narrow down hits. For example, try "Black Eyed Peas filetype:m4r" or "Black Eyed Peas filetype:m4a". The former will come up with premade ringtone files, and the latter will show songs you can convert. And yes, ringtones should use the most obnoxious, bombastic bands possible.

USE A YOUTUBE CLIP

Find a great YouTube clip—we recommend *Auto-Tune the News*, as usual—and convert it into a ringtone. Many utilities download YouTube clips, but the free service Tube2Tone.com automatically converts your selection into the ringtone in your browser.

Every ringtone sounds better Auto-Tuned.

CONVERT IN YOUR BROWSER

Upload your favorite song in any format to Audiko (audiko.net) to convert online. You'll even trim the length and set fades. As an alternative, download one of the many premade ringtones already available at the site. You'll find other similar websites, but we like Audiko because you can complete the process without entering any personal information.
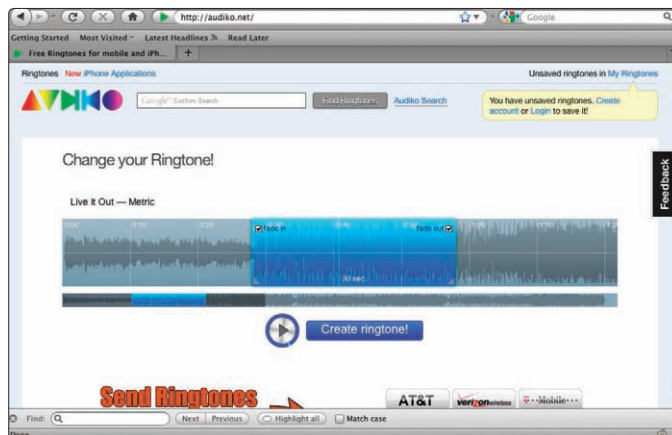
Click "Create ringtone" after making the selection.

GO QUICKTIME PRO

QuickTime 7 Pro ($29.99, apple.com) makes simple edits and can convert files to .m4r ringtones. It's a great option, especially if you own it already. Visit the MacLife.com article found at bit.ly/b6nrGb for more details.

TURN TO AN AUDIO EDITOR

An audio editor can craft precise edits that will loop smoothly, and you can just export as an .m4r when you're ready. Turn to iLife's GarageBand ($79, apple.com), Sound Studio ($79.99, freeverse.com), or Fission ($32, rogueamoeba.com). For instructions on creating ringtones with GarageBand, visit the MacLife.com article at bit.ly/b6nrGb.

DOWNLOAD FREE OR CHEAP SOFTWARE

Freeware and shareware ringtone utilities are ideal if you want to make a lot of files. Try MakeiPhoneRingtone (free, rogueamoeba.com/freebies/), iFuntastic (free, ifuntastic.com), Ringer ($15, pixelresearchlabs.com), iToner 2 ($15, ambrosiasw.com), or iPhone Ringtone Maker ($19, iskysoft.com).
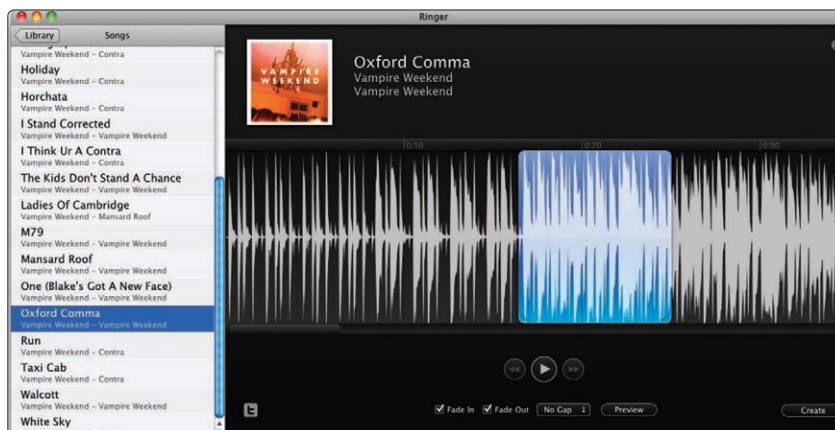
Editors care about an Oxford comma. That's who.

SHAREWARE PICKS

BACK TO SCHOOL
Look at the big brain on Mac!

▶ Study for Mac 1.2
bloo7, bloo7.com
Price: $29.95 ($14.95 for teachers and students)

Master tricky subjects with Study's customizable flashcards. Smart sorting will prioritize any flashcards you missed the last time. And the desktop app syncs with Study Flashcards HD for iPad ($2.99) and Study Flashcards for iPhone and iPod touch ($2.99)—how intelligent.

Mutter the answer to yourself, then click Show Answer and score yourself with Right and Wrong buttons
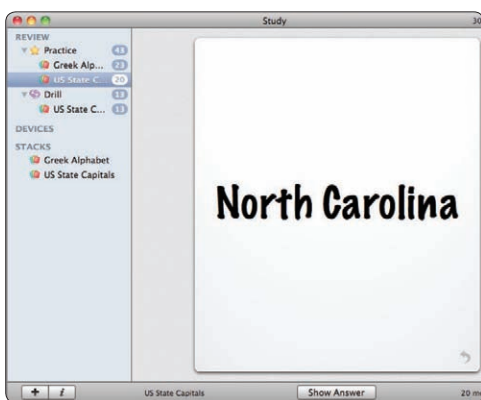
▶ Mental Case
The Mental Faculty, macflashcards.com
Price: $29.99 ($19.99 for teachers and students)

Mental Case can import flashcards from online source Flashcard Exchange (flashcardexchange.com) or from comma-separated, tab-separated, and Study Archive files. You can also sync cards wirelessly to Mental Case Flashcards for iPad ($7.99) or Mental Case Flashcards for iPhone and iPod touch ($4.99), or easily create new cards on your device.

Study at your Mac or on the go, thanks to companion apps for the iPad and iPhone.
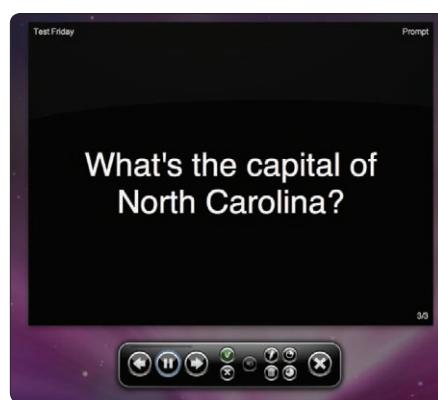
WIN You Rise to the Challenge
We Reward You with Cool Prizes

PowerPoint and Laugh
When we snapped this shot of the PowerPoint logo dancing at Macworld Expo, we couldn't resist having a little fun. So we asked you guys to write a caption for it. After wading through the entries—some of which we definitely couldn't print in the pages of this family-friendly magazine—our favorite was this entry from Andrew Schroeder:
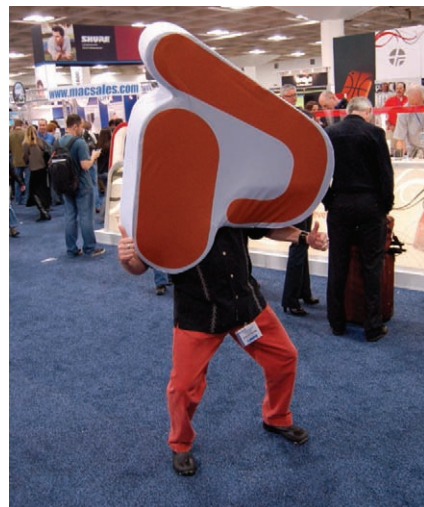
Who's got two thumbs and wishes he was Keynote? This guy!

Andrew's prize is the **i1166 multimedia player from iLuv** ($299.99, i-luv.com), which he can use to play content from an iPod, DVDs, USB flash drives, or SD cards on the 8.9-inch widescreen display.

OUR CONTESTS HAVE MOVED!
For details on this month's contest, visit **www.maclife.com/ Sep_10_Win**. This month, we're giving away a pair of **Beats by Dr. Dre Solo from Monster** ($199.95, beatsbydre.com), direct from the *Mac|Life* test lab. We liked them so much, Ray gave them four stars back in June (p58).

Crave

THE GEAR WE'RE LUSTING AFTER...THIS MONTH

ROBERTO

iCRYSTAL DOCKING STATION
speakal.com
$79.99

>>>When I want to listen to music in the kitchen, I usually just turn up my iPhone and throw it in a bowl. It works okay, but it's hardly high fidelity. The iCrystal promises (much) better sound than my DIY bowl speaker, and it looks a lot classier, too.

GoFlex Desk
seagate.com
$249.99

>>>You can never have enough storage. Seagate's new 3TB GoFlex Desk offers the massive storage I need. Plus, the swappable adapters mean I can use it to share files between my USB 3.0-equipped PC and my Mac with minimal fuss.

6150
kodak.com
$229.99

>>>It prints, scans, faxes, and copies. And at up to 32 pages per minute, the 6150 makes a great home office machine. Plus, the free Kodak Pic Flick app can print photos directly from your iOS device. Sweet!

i4
idaptweb.com
$59.99

>>>iPhone, iPad, digital camera...and all of those require their own separate charger. The i4 from iDapt can charge four devices at once and sports interchangeable adapters, making it future-proof. And hopefully, it'll also put an end to those constant searches for power cables at home.

HF3
etymotic.com
$179

>>>In-ear headphones usually don't work for me because they just don't stay in my ears. Etymotic's new hf3 headset promises great sound, and for an extra 100 bucks, the new Custom•Fit earmold program makes a personal fit affordable for average Joes with picky ears.

DREAM
MACHINE

THE iPHONE 4 IS A QUANTUM LEAP FORWARD—A TRULY NEXT-LEVEL DEVICE. TO HELP YOU GET THE MOST OUT OF APPLE'S LATEST INNOVATION, WE'VE PACKED THIS GUIDE TO iPHONE 4, iOS 4, AND MOBILE iMOVIE WITH SUREFIRE TIPS AND TRICKS GUARANTEED TO MAKE YOU A POWER USER IN NO TIME. **BY THE MAC|LIFE STAFF**

L ining up for the new iPhone has become part of the rhythm of our summers. As the days grow longer and shorts weather settles in, we all check our upgrade status and decide whether Apple's latest smartphone is in our near future or perhaps a bit farther off. But this summer, the iPhone 4 changed all that. As our definitive review on the next page reveals, the iPhone 4 is not the minor upgrade we saw last year. It's a massively improved smartphone that's also a top-shelf pocket camera and camcorder with slick features like FaceTime, which opens up new frontiers in communication. Even the new iOS 4 delivers critical upgrades that pay off in big ways.

That's why we focused the rest of this story on getting the most out of the iPhone 4. We'll show you the best new hardware features and delve deeply into iOS 4 to make sure you maximize the power lurking in its nooks and crannies. And since those spiffy HD videos are our favorite part of using the iPhone 4, we wrap up with an expert guide to shooting and editing great footage so you can capture and enjoy all the good times that summer—and the rest of the year—bring.

The iPhone 4 Review

The hype swirling around the iPhone 4 has been unmissable. But is Apple's newest smartphone really that great? To find out, we put three of them through an extensive regimen of testing, tapping, taking pictures, and much more.

The iPhone 4 isn't particularly well-named. That's because one of the things you'll use this ingenious little device for least is making boring old phone calls. Between the terrific dual cameras, the zippy performance, and the luscious Retina Display, we were quickly absorbed in photography, games, web-browsing, and loads more. It's truly a dramatic leap forward from the not-shabby-at-all iPhone 3GS.

POINT-N-SHOOT STAR

With so many meaty new features, it's hard to play favorites, but after a couple weeks of use, the dual cameras emerged as the iPhone 4's biggest upgrade. The rear camera gives you 5-megapixel still photos and 720p video, and our test shots produced impressive results. That's in part because Apple began using a back-illuminated sensor in the iPhone 4's camera, which is techno-jargon for a more sensitive, er, sensor that lets you capture remarkably crisp, detailed shots in even low-light settings. In fact, the new LED flash really only trips for fairly dark scenes—and you'll want to do your best to avoid using it because its harshness often washes out a lot of detail. When shooting video, the main thing to remember is there's no stabilizer, so if you get jiggly with it, you're in for some seriously shaky footage. But the overall quality of photos and video is fantastic—so much so that I stopped carrying around my now-redundant point-n-shoot.

But that's just half the story. The front camera is 640x480 VGA quality (or roughly 0.3 megapixels), so it works decently for those casual self-portrait moments. But where it really struts its stuff is during FaceTime calls. Once you enable these video phone calls in the Settings menu, they "just work" in that effortless Apple way. True, FaceTime calls are only possible over Wi-Fi, but that wasn't a problem as we mostly used this feature at home with family (where Wi-Fi is always available). In that setting, we particularly loved the ability to switch to using the rear camera to show off, for example, the antics of our kids for the loved ones on the other end of the line. We did make a few business calls with FaceTime, including one cross-country conversation to New York, and video calls always performed smoothly for us, though the picture sometimes gets blurry. Still, it's downright awkward to stare at a colleague or someone you've never met before during a call. But that's not Apple's fault—it's just a cultural truth of the moment.

POWERHOUSE PERFORMER

When it comes to horsepower, the iPhone 4's A4 processor and 512MB RAM make it feel speedy and agile. That impression was backed up in our lab, where it sailed through our tests, posting performance gains of 164 percent over a 3G running iOS 4 and 34 percent over a 3GS running iOS 4 in the benchmarking app Geekbench 2. That power is put to excellent use with iOS 4, which delivers great new features like multitasking, folders, a unified email inbox, Bluetooth keyboard support, and loads more. (Turn to p24 for our in-depth guide to all that iOS 4 has to offer.)

Moving through the other key specs, our battery rundown (playing video at 50 percent brightness and 50 percent volume) clocked in at 10.67 hours on a brand-new device, and while that'll decline over time as battery capacity diminishes, this battery sure comes out of the gate with a bang.

Better yet, the new Retina Display is one of the sharpest-looking we've ever seen, and at 326 pixels per inch, it should be. The 3.5-inch screen is the same size as the 3GS's but packs in four times as many pixels. While its superpowers don't extend to defeating bright sunlight (which washes it out, as the sun's glare does to every display we've taken outside), it's noticeably more clear, detailed,

Holding the phone at the proper angle for a FaceTime call can get kinda awkward...

The front camera is perfect for self-portraits (above left), while the rear lens shoots vivid, detailed stills (above right) that rival many point-n-shoots.

and just plain pretty than anything you've seen on a mobile device before. All told, that's a lot of pep in a fairly small box.

RAISE YOUR ANTENNA

Speaking of which, our biggest complaint about the iPhone 4 is that its boxy shape just doesn't sit as comfortably in the hand as the beveled edges of its predecessors did. Don't get us wrong— the iPhone 4's design is gorgeous, and we love the look of its steel band and the crisp action of the new volume buttons. But between that boxiness and the oleophobic coating on the aluminosilicate glass, the iPhone 4 feels slippery and harder to grip than its predecessors, especially when taking photos. Still, that's a fairly small downside, and on the whole, the elegant design quietly convinces you that you've got a high-quality, carefully constructed device in your hands.

And yes, that means the widely publicized "death grip"—where gripping the iPhone around the black band in the lower-left corner of its steel siding seems to disrupt its 3G connection—is not our biggest complaint. At the end of the day, the iPhone 4 absolutely must function as a phone, and in our testing, we detected a noticeable improvement in call performance. Unfortunately, Apple removed the field-test mode from this model of phone,

so we had to make day-to-day observations of its phone-calling prowess rather than crunching hard numbers. I spent a week using an iPhone 4 with one of Apple's Bumpers (which, like other cases, blocks the "death grip" effect) and another using it without one in a remote-ish area with definite patches in AT&T's coverage, and found no difference. At the same time, I dropped fewer calls than I did in the same area with my old 3G. So while it hardly added up to a gigantic improvement in AT&T's generally poor service in the San Francisco Bay Area, the iPhone 4 kept me talking a little more reliably.

At press time, Apple held a press conference to address snowballing concerns

Folders are the iOS 4 feature we gravitated to first, but once you learn the ins and outs of the multitasking bar, it's pretty handy too.

about the "death grip." While Steve Jobs staunchly defended the iPhone 4's hardware and its antenna, Apple also announced that anyone buying an iPhone 4 before September 30 could get a free case at apple.com, and anyone who'd already bought an Apple Bumper would get a refund. Also, iPhone 4s can now be returned within 30 days with no restocking fee. While that's a mixed message, we understand that Apple's trying to quell consumer concerns while working on a fix for what we'd guess is a software issue. So we're giving the iPhone 4's calling performance the benefit of the doubt for now, but we'll update this review and score if needed as this unfolds.

The bottom line. The iPhone 4's impressive leaps in performance, its hefty roster of new features, and that lovely screen cement its position as a powerful pocket computer and camera that also makes phone calls. Whether you just bought a 3GS last year or you're considering your first iPhone purchase, it's the kind of essential, must-own device that you'll delight in using every day.—*Paul Curthoys*

iPHONE 4

Apple
apple.com/iphone
Price: $199 for 16GB model; $299 for 32GB model
Requirements: Two-year AT&T contract with monthly plan starting at $64.99. Mac OS 10.5.8 or later, iTunes 9.2 or later.

➕ Fantastic new dual camera with flash enables 5MP stills, HD video, and FaceTime calls. Gorgeous screen. Significant battery-life improvements. Zippy A4 processor runs iOS 4 smoothly. Better, faster 3G and Wi-Fi connectivity. Lovely design.

➖ AT&T is sole U.S. carrier. Doesn't sit in hand as comfortably as older iPhones. Glass finish is slippery and smudgy. Must be docked to upload HD video to YouTube.
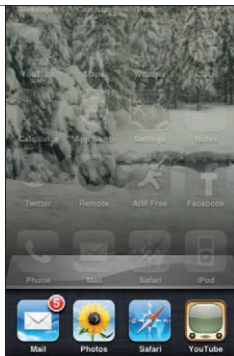
Mac|Life Editors' Choice

Mac|Life RATED AWESOME

Tap the Power of iOS 4

Apple tells us that iOS 4 adds more than 100 new features, which means you've got a lot to learn! Fortunately, we've done all the work for you—just check out our in-depth guide to getting the best features of the new iOS up and running on your iDevice. BY ROBERTO BALDWIN

MULTITASKING

The biggest new toy in iOS 4 is multitasking, which means you can have more than one app running at a time. Want to listen to Pandora while checking your email? iOS 4 can do that. To see which apps are running and quickly switch between them, double-tap the Home button, then tap your app of choice and it'll load. Magical! But...each app's developer must update their app to specify how it behaves when multitasking, and until that's done, apps just relaunch from scratch. So the fully glory of this feature will take time and lots of app-updating to emerge.

iPOD CONTROLS

Prior to iOS 4, when you double-tapped the Home button, you were presented with the iPod controls. Now that multitasking has taken over the Home button double-tap, it's done differently. To reach the iPod controls, double-tap the Home button, and when the multitasking drawer pops up, slide to the far left—wham, there they are. Bonus #1: You can control audio apps like Pandora from the iPod controls in the drawer. Bonus #2: If your iPhone is locked, the double-tap still brings up the iPod controls.

PICK A SEARCH ENGINE

Tired of Google? You can switch to Yahoo or Bing for all your search needs. Navigate to Settings > Safari > Search Engine, pick your search engine of choice, and have a nice day.

PUSH MESSAGES

If you receive more than one push message, they'll stack up in front of each other. Close one, and an earlier one will appear.

QUIT AN APPLICATION

Multitasking is great, but sometimes you want to quit a program. First, enter the multitasking drawer by double-tapping the Home button. Tap and hold on an app icon. The apps will begin jiggling, and a red circle with a minus sign will appear in the top-left corner. Tap on that red circle to close that app.

PORTRAIT-ORIENTATION LOCK

Tired of your iPhone switching to landscape in your favorite apps? You can now lock the orientation of your iPhone so it stays in portrait mode. Double-tap the Home button to bring up the multitasking drawer, swipe to the far left, and you'll see the orientation lock to the left of the iPod controls. Tap it to lock in portrait mode, and note that you can now see the orientation-lock status in the menu bar.

MORE SEARCH

Instead of launching Safari to search the internet or Wikipedia, you can do it from Mobile Spotlight. Navigate to the Search screen from the main Home screen by swiping your finger to the right across the whole screen. Type in what you're looking for, and you'll be given the option to choose the web or Wikipedia. Mobile Safari will launch and take care of biz from there.

YOUTUBE VIDEOS IN PORTRAIT MODE

Widescreen too wide for you? Now you can watch YouTube videos in portrait mode—just hold your phone that way.

Unbeatable power protection now beats energy costs, too.

APC
Back-UPS
Pro 700

APC Legendary Reliability®

Only APC Back-UPS delivers unsurpassed power protection *and* real energy savings.

Today's cost-saving Back-UPS

For years you've relied on APC Back-UPS™ to protect your business from expensive downtime caused by power problems. Today, the reinvented Back-UPS does even more. Its highly efficient design noticeably reduces energy use, so you start saving money the minute you plug it in. Only APC Back-UPS guarantees to keep your electronics up and your energy use down!

Unique energy-efficient features

Power-saving outlets automatically shut off power to unused devices when your computer and peripherals are turned off or on standby. Automatic voltage regulation (AVR) adjusts the undervoltages and overvoltages without using the battery. With our patent-pending AVR bypass, the transformer kicks in only when needed and automatically deactivates when power is stable. Plus, APC's highly efficient designs reduce power consumption when power is good and extend runtimes when the lights go out. Together, these power-saving features eliminate wasteful electricity drains, saving you about $40-50 a year. And managing today's Back-UPS couldn't be easier thanks to an integrated LCD that provides diagnostic information at your fingertips.

Trusted insurance for all your business needs

The award-winning Back-UPS provides reliable power protection for a range of applications: from desktops and notebook computers to wired and wireless networks to external storage. The reinvented APC Back-UPS is the trusted insurance you need to stay up and running and reliably protected from both unpredictable power and energy waste!

Keep your electronics up and your energy use down!

Back-UPS models are available with the features and runtime capacity that best suit your application, and many models have been designed with power-saving features to reduce costs.

The high-performance Back-UPS Pro series

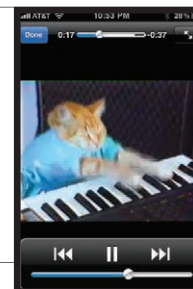High-performance Back-UPS Pro units deliver cost-cutting, energy-efficient features. Power-saving outlets automatically shut off power to unused devices when your computer and peripherals are turned off or on standby, eliminating costly electricity drains. *(BR700G shown above)*

The energy-efficient ES 750G

The ES 750G boasts innovative power-saving outlets, which automatically shut off power to controlled outlets when the computer plugged into the host outlet is deemed asleep, eliminating wasteful electricity drains.
- 10 Outlets • 450 Watts / 750 VA
- 70 Minutes Maximum Runtime
- Coax and Telephone/Network Protection

The best-value ES 550G

The ES 550G uses an ultra-efficient design that consumes less power during normal operation than any other battery backup in its class, saving you money on your electricity bill.
- 8 Outlets • 330 Watts / 550 VA
- 43 Minutes Maximum Runtime
- Telephone Protection

Enter to win one of seven Back-UPS BR 700G units (a $130 value)!
Visit **www.apc.com/promo** Key Code **t211w** • Call 888-289-APCC **x8319** • Fax 401-788-2797

APC™
by Schneider Electric

FOLDERS

If you're running out of home screens for all your apps or if maybe you just want a better way to organize your apps, folders are a great feature. Tap and hold on an app to start your apps jiggling.

Drag two apps together to create a folder. While your iPhone will create a folder and automatically give the folder a name based on the category of the apps inside it, you can also change the name to something more appropriate. You can then drag up to 12 apps into your folder. To remove an app from a folder, open the folder, tap and hold on the app you want to remove, and drag it out of the folder.

FOLDERS IN iTUNES

If the idea of creating folders and moving apps around on your iPhone's small screen gives you cold sweats, don't worry. You can also create and edit folders within iTunes on your Mac. Plug your iPhone in, click on the Apps tab in iTunes, and drag your apps in and out of folders until you're satisfied with your app placement. Don't forget to hit the Apply button when you're done!

HOME SCREEN WALLPAPER

To place a background image on your home screens, navigate to Settings > Wallpaper. Click on the wallpaper and choose either the iPhone's wallpaper choices or an image from your Photo library.

Once you've chosen an image, click Set. From there, you can choose to place it as a lock screen, a home screen, or both. You can also choose an image from your Photo app and click the Share button. Then just choose Use as Wallpaper.

SPELL CHECK

In addition to auto-correct and its ability to take your anger and transform it into "he'll," iOS 4 now tells you when a word is spelled incorrectly by placing a red scribble line underneath misspelled words. To change the spelling of your misspelled word, tap it once, and the iPhone will give you one or more options. Tap on the correct word, and your tweets and emails will suffer from fewer mistakes.

COPY VS. SHARE IMAGES

With iOS 3, you could copy as many photos as your iPhone's RAM could handle into an email, but with iOS 4, Apple closed that loophole. Now you can only copy five images into an email and nine into an MMS. Before sending the email, you're given the choice of image size. If you're still interested in sending more than five images in an email, you work around these limits by copy-pasting five images at a time into an email. In other words, copy five images, paste them into an email, then copy-paste five more and repeat until done.

A BETTER, STRONGER INBOX

If you have multiple email accounts, you know what a pain it is to check the inbox of one account, then back out of that account and check the inbox of another account. Thankfully, Apple recognized this and created a unified inbox for the Mail app, which neatly lumps all your inboxes into one mega-inbox. If you prefer more separation, your life will still improve with iOS 4 thanks to the fast-inbox access, which lets you go directly to the inbox of a specific email address. These options appear at the top of Mail's main screen.

THREADED EMAIL MESSAGES

If you're a fan of threaded messages in OS X's Mail client or in Entourage, you'll be happy to hear that threaded messages are available in iOS 4 Mail. To turn the feature on, navigate to Settings > Mail, Contacts, Calendars, scroll about halfway down, and turn on Organize By Thread.

VOICE CONTROL OF...TIME!

Listening to music but need to know the time without pulling your iPhone out of your pocket? Click and hold down on the center button on your headset, or click and hold down on the Home button on the iPhone, then ask "What time is it?" Your iPhone will tell you the time in its creepy girl-robot voice.
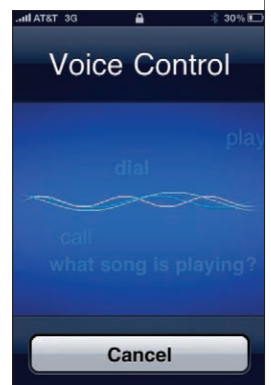
BLUETOOTH KEYBOARD SUPPORT

Next time someone tells you that the iPhone doesn't have a physical keyboard, bust out a full-size Bluetooth keyboard and compose an email to them in record time. You can sync a Bluetooth keyboard the same way you sync a Bluetooth headset. Navigate to Settings > General > Bluetooth. Make sure your keyboard is on and discoverable. You'll probably have to type in a "secret number" on your keyboard to finish the sync. Sync and start typing. Bonus: You can control the iPod app with some keyboards.

MESSAGING CHARACTER COUNT

If you're concerned about how many characters you're sending via MMS/SMS, you can use Character Count by navigating to Settings > Messages and turning on Character Count. Once you go over 30 characters, the count will pop up while you're composing a message. If you go over 160 characters, some carriers will split your message in two.

HIDE CALENDARS

If you sync calendars you need to see on multiple computers but you really don't need them on your iPhone, you can now hide those unwanted calendars. Launch the Calendar app. Tap on the Calendar button in the upper-right corner. Tap on a calendar's checkmark to remove the checkmark and hide the calendar.

FOCUS WHILE SHOOTING VIDEO

While shooting video, you can now tap the screen to focus on a certain area. Just remember to lightly tap an object on the screen to focus—a hard tap will jar your video.

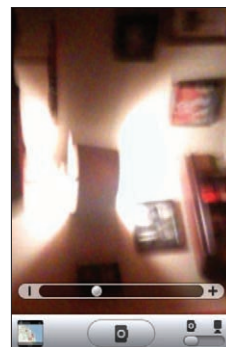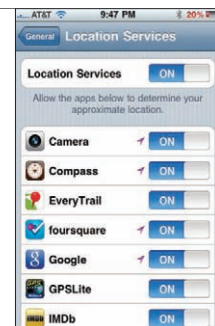## SEARCH YOUR SMS MESSAGES

Now you can search your text messages via a search box at the top of your message list. Yup, it's that simple.

DIGITAL ZOOM

The Camera app now has the ability to zoom in photo mode. The 5x digital zoom can be enabled by tapping once on the screen, which brings up the zoom slider. Slide toward the plus sign to zoom in and toward the minus sign to zoom out. But remember that this is digital zoom, so the more you zoom in, the more digital noise will appear in your photos.

LOCATION SERVICES

Location Services got an upgrade that lets users see when an app is utilizing Location Services by displaying a tiny arrow in the upper-right corner. If you no longer want an app to track your movement, you can turn Location Services off on a per-app basis. Navigate to Settings > General > Location Services and make your selections.

MORE SECURE PASSCODE

If numbers as a passcode aren't secure enough for you, you can now create an alphanumeric passcode. Navigate to Settings > Passcode Lock. Turn off Simple Passcode. Go to Turn Passcode On and foil the KGB by setting your new super-long alphanumeric passcode.

TURN OFF CELLULAR DATA

If you're cruising with the new 200MB AT&T data plan, turning off data could be a money-saver. Navigate to Settings > General > Network to turn off cellular data when it's time to scrimp and save.
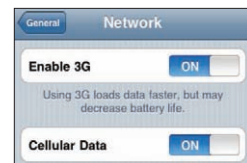
PHOTO PLACES

Some of the nifty features in iPhoto '09 have been transferred to the Photos app, and photos with geo-location data will now be added to the Places feature. A Google map drops pins to all the locations at which you've taken pictures, including the ones shot on your phone.

WIGGLE ROOM

We know you're excited to load up your new phone, but don't completely fill your iPhone. Leave at least 500MB of unused space, which the iPhone uses for loading apps and saving documents. If you fill it to the rim with media, chances are you're going to have a very slow-running iPhone.
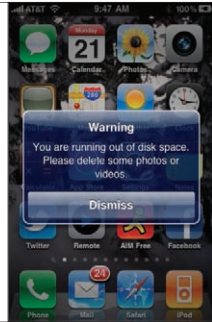
TURN OFF LYRICS AND PODCAST INFO

If a podcast file or song has lyrics or other metadata, you may have noticed that when that file plays in iTunes, the metadata shows up over the art. Up until now, there was no way to turn that off. Now you can in Settings > iPod— just turn off the Lyrics & Podcast Info toggle.
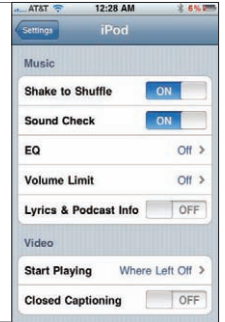
CREATE A REAL PLAYLIST

Sure, On-the-Go playlists were nice. But they all ended up with that lame name when you synced your iPhone back to iTunes. Now you can create a custom playlist from your iPhone with a custom name that'll sync with iTunes. First, navigate to the Playlist option at the bottom of the iPod app. Tap on Add Playlist, and you'll be prompted to give the playlist a name; then you can add artists, songs, albums, and other playlists.
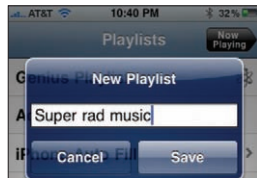
PHOTO FACES

While your iPhone won't be looking at all your photos and determining if your face is in the photo, it will grab Faces information from iPhoto '09 as it imports photos during a sync. Set this up in iTunes on the Photos tab after you plug in your iPhone. Scroll down to see the Faces you've set up in iPhoto. Click to sync the people you'd like to see on your iPhone. Click Apply in iTunes. Voilà!
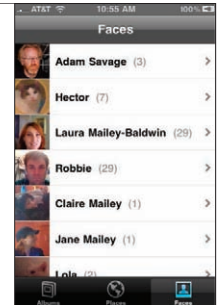
WHAT iOS 4 FEATURES WORK WITH WHICH iDEVICES?

Wondering how to get iOS 4 in your life? Make sure iTunes is updated to the 9.2 version and sync your iDevice to iTunes, which will create one last backup. Select your iDevice in the iTunes sidebar and click Check for Updates in the Summary tab. While you wait for the update to finish, check out our nifty chart to see what features do and don't work on your iDevice.

FEATURE	iPhone 4	iPhone 3GS	iPhone 3G	iPod touch 3rd Gen.	iPod touch 2nd Gen.
Email improvements (unified inbox, threaded messages & more)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
iBooks	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Creating playlists	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Spellchecking	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Exchange 2010 support	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
5x digital zoom	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗
Tap-to-focus during video recording	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗
Searchable SMS/MMS messages	✓	✓	✓	✗	✗
Multitasking	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗
Home screen wallpaper	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗
Bluetooth keyboard support	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗
Rotation lock	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗
Passcode as encryption key	✓	✓	✗	✗	✗
Accessibility enhancements	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗
Audio-playback controls (via multitasking)	✓	✓	✗	✓	✗

iPhone 4 Powers...Activate!

After all the hype and the hours of waiting, you've finally landed a new iPhone. Thanks to its new technology, your iPhone 4's substantially different from any model that's come before, so this quick crash course will help you reap all the benefits of your new hardware. BY ADAM BERENSTAIN

THE RETINA DISPLAY

The most obvious new hardware in the iPhone 4 has to be the Retina Display, but you won't see its full benefits right away. Developers must update each app with higher-resolution artwork and textures, so for now, many of your apps are in standard-def. While you're waiting for Apple's approval process, make sure "Prefer standard definition videos" isn't checked in the iTunes Summary tab when you sync your iPhone 4 to your Mac. This will ensure that the HD versions of your iTunes Store movies and TV shows will sync to your phone. Not only will you get a better picture on your phone, but you'll also be able to take your HD files with you to watch on a big screen if you connect it with an Apple Component AV Cable.

THE FRONT AND MAIN CAMERAS

Twice the cameras means twice the complexity, right? Not so fast. Camera options are right where they've always been—onscreen in the built-in Camera app—and controls for iPhone 4's new camera flash are no exception. Just tap the flash icon in the upper-right or left corner of your screen (depending on your phone's orientation) to call up a trio of options: On, Off, and Auto.

It's just as easy to switch between the front and rear cameras. Tapping the "spin the camera" icon flips you from one to the other, and just like flash controls, this works in video and still modes. Of course, both these controls are also available from other apps, like Contacts and Facebook, that have always been able to access the iPhone's camera. And yes, we're happy to report that the iPhone 4's flash fires off a redeye-reducing pulse before a picture is taken. Huzzah!
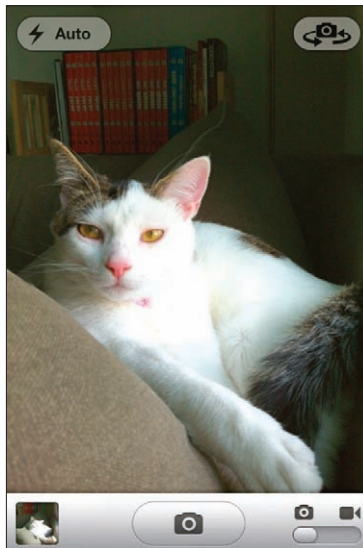
FACETIME

Wi-Fi hiccups aside, FaceTime sure looked easy to use during its debut at WWDC. But it's not quite as magical as Steve made it seem. Before you can make a FaceTime call, you need to manually activate the feature by navigating to Settings > iPhone. Just switch on FaceTime. Then you're good to go. Now make a call as you normally would, tapping the FaceTime icon in the middle of your screen to show grandma what you're up to. One question...how did she get her iPhone 4 so quickly?

THE HOME BUTTON

It's nice to know some iPhone hardware, like the trusty old Home button, has stayed the same. Unfortunately its new iOS 4 feature—double-click to call up the multitasking drawer—wipes out old favorites like double-tapping to access the iPhone's camera, iPod controls, or Phone Favorites. Bummer. As of today, the only other tricks your Home button can perform are toggling VoiceOver or inverted screen colors after a trip to the Accessibility section of your General settings. Welcome as those features are, here's hoping future software updates teach the Home button some of its old tricks.
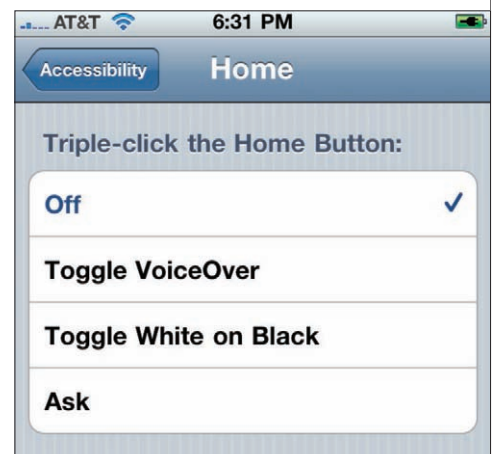
Become an iPhone Video Star!

Apple's latest dynamic duo—iPhone 4 and iMovie—makes shooting and editing videos easier than you'd guess, and our expert guide to the process will remove any lingering doubts you might have.

I f you think the idea of editing video on a cell phone is crazy, you probably haven't tried it yet. When you pair an iPhone 4 with the $4.99 iMovie app, almost anyone can capture footage, assemble the best bits, and share the finished results in minutes—all from the palm of their hand. But we understand that even the phrase "video editing" scares off many of you. So we've put together a guide to quickly making great videos that'll help both newcomers and old pros get the most out of this powerful combo of hardware and software. **BY J.R. BOOKWALTER**

LET THERE BE LIGHT

More than a simple camera flash, the LED light on the back of the device can also act as a lamp that lights your movies. Just tap the lightning bolt icon in the upper-left corner to toggle between Auto (where the light comes on only when necessary), Off, or On. We recommend using it sparingly, however—and not just because it'll drain your batt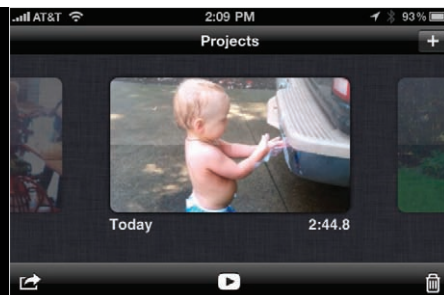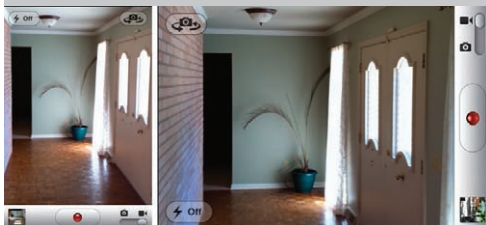ery faster. In many settings with at least a little bit of light, a grainy video is often preferable to a gaudy blast of LED light...complete with your subjects having glowing retinas right out of *Village of the Damned*.

FRAME SHOTS FOR TV

Last year's video-enabled iPhone 3GS brought with it a new phenomenon: the vertically lensed movie (or what many have dubbed "tallscreen"). While they get the job done, vertical movies (shot by holding the iPhone in portrait orientation) aren't very TV-friendly, so if you plan to eventually present your creations that way, do yourself a favor now and remember to hold your iPhone 4 in landscape orientation while shooting to keep your video properly horizontal. This is particularly important now that the rear camera is working in the wider 16:9 aspect ratio inherent with 720p HD video—you'll get results that completely fill the frame of your HDTV, rather than displaying a thin vertical image with mostly black at the sides.

INCLUDE YOURSELF IN THE FUN

The best part of a handset with two cameras is that the front-facing camera is always just a tap away. Using the front camera, not only can you see exactly what the device is capturing, you can also include yourself in the fun. The results won't be in HD (the front camera only records 640x480 video, similar to the 3GS's camera). In a pinch, it's better than nothing, and the resulting video can also be added to iMovie projects. Such footage will have those black bars on the sides, and we cover dealing with those on the next page.

BE WIDESCREEN

720p HD video is wider than the iPhone 4 can display, so by default, the screen shows you a cropped version of what you're shooting. To see the whole widescreen view, open the Camera app, switch to movie mode, and double-tap in the center of the screen. Now you'll see a wider image with black bars filling the rest of the frame—this is the full image area you're recording. While you're at it, don't forget to tap on your key subject to focus the camera. In our tests, the iPhone 4 does quite a nice job of keeping things in focus when the subject is moving. But in general, the closer the subject, the more you'll need to tap to focus.

RESPECT THOSE COPYRIGHTS

Just because Apple allows you to use music from your iPod app in iMovie doesn't mean that the copyright holder will be happy about it. You're free to use commercial music in your iMovie projects for fun or to show off to loved ones, but be careful about posting movies containing such music on sites such as Facebook or YouTube. If a particular copyright holder doesn't want you to use their work, YouTube's Content ID service (bit.ly/16fbCo) may flag it and have it removed. You're better off sticking to Apple's supplied theme music or creating something of your own using GarageBand, syncing it to your iPhone 4, and using that for the soundtrack on your original movies.

EDITING INSIGHTS

When it's time for the nitty-gritty work of editing, know that Mobile iMovie has its limits. Clips can only be trimmed at the head or tail, and you can only insert a new clip before or after another one, rather than in the middle of an existing clip. There's no splitting of clips, although you can awkwardly get the same end result by importing the same clip twice. Here's how: On the first clip, trim the out point ("out points" are the ending points of an edit). On the second clip, trim the duplicate's in point (or the starting point of the edit). It's kludgey, but it's the only way to get it done.
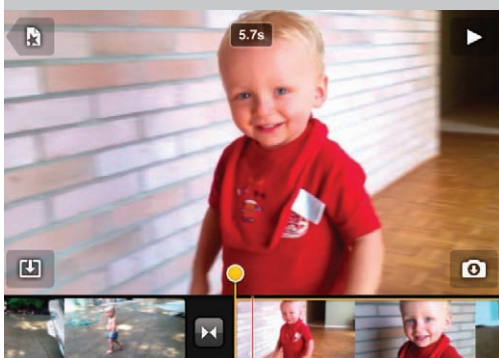
To quickly make adjustments with long clips, tap a clip to select it, then tap on the handle, hold and swipe it—right for in points or left for out points. The handle will then snap back to the center, ready for another swipe so you can find the edit point you're looking for with less effort. Move the handle slower for finer control over your selection. For even faster editing within Mobile iMovie, keep your iPhone 4 videos short—maybe 30 seconds or less—and try to capture the action from a few different angles, which will make your edited project more interesting.
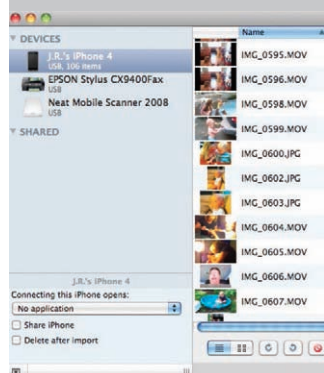
DON'T FORGET THOSE iPHONE 3GS VIDEOS

If you upgraded to the iPhone 4 from the 3GS, any Camera Roll videos from your last phone came along for the ride when you set up the new handset in iTunes. The good news is that videos shot with the 3GS will import into iMovie just fine, and you can even mix and match them with new video shot on the iPhone 4—3GS videos will be automatically "pillarboxed" with black at the sides to fill out the wider 16:9 aspect ratio of the 720p HD frame. If you're editing a Mobile iMovie project composed entirely of 3GS video, we recommend using the Medium (640x360) export option, which is the least likely to degrade your original footage. (The others will enlarge it.)

COPY MOVIES TO YOUR COMPUTER...

iMovie for iPhone 4 is strictly limited to exporting at one of three sizes—Medium (360p), Large (540p), and HD (720p). These files (as well as any photos you've taken with the device) are available for importing into iPhoto or the desktop version of iMovie, but you can also copy them straight to your computer via the Image Capture application included with Mac OS X. Just open the app with your iPhone 4 docked, select the files you want to import, and either drag and drop them to the folder of your choice, or use the Import button.

Thanks to Apple's $29 Camera Connection Kit, you can also copy movies straight onto your iPad and enjoy them on the larger screen. Plug the USB dock adapter into the iPad and use a standard dock cable to connect it to your iPhone 4, then select the files you want to import (or import them all), and watch the magic unfold on a bigger display.

...OR SHARE WITH THE WORLD

Thankfully, Apple has built additional sharing methods into iOS 4 via the Camera Roll, which includes emailing, MMS, or sending directly to MobileMe or YouTube. While these methods are fine for quick sharing with family or friends, one big disadvantage is that your beautiful 720p HD video will get reduced to a smaller file size when going this route, even if you're using a Wi-Fi connection. (The same also applies when uploading via apps such as Dropbox—it's an iOS 4 limitation.) If you want to share your work with the world in glorious HD, export it to your computer first and then upload it to the service of your choice. <<<

TURN

iTUNES UP TO 11
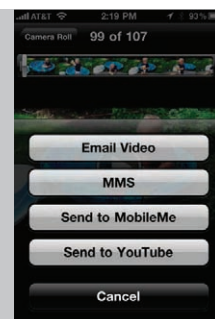
BY CRAIG GRANNELL

IT MIGHT BE THE **HARDEST-WORKING APP IN SHOW BUSINESS**, BUT iTUNES CAN ROCK A LOT HARDER WHEN YOU TUNE IT UP WITH ADD-ONS AND APPLESCRIPTS—AND LEARN HOW SMART PLAYLISTS BRING MORE OF YOUR FAVORITE SONGS TO CENTER STAGE.

iTunes started out as a smart, simple music player, but over the years, it's evolved into one of Apple's most important applications. Although it's still used for managing and playing your music collection, iTunes now also stores apps, films, TV shows, podcasts, ringtones, and books—maybe "iStuff" would be a better name?—and of course, it's the sole Apple-approved method for syncing content with iPods, iPhones, iPads, and Apple TVs.

But that doesn't mean you should take it at face value. Like many of Apple's applications, iTunes is multilayered. Underneath its simple, straightforward hood, it's surprisingly feature-rich, offering many powerful configuration options. And it's time to make that power work for you with our guide to tapping into iTunes' lesser-known but highly useful features. We also delve into the add-ons that expand the iTunes experience, including the very best third-party applications and highly useful scripts. So fire up iTunes 9.1 or later (it's currently at 9.2), and get ready to rock!

iTUNES 9.2's GREATEST HITS

If iTunes were a rock band, it'd only play stadiums. Besides storing and managing your music, the application has to deal with video, books, apps, ringtones, and more. To Apple's credit, iTunes remains pretty usable, and much of its complexity is kept hidden under the hood. **But don't forget about these useful features.**
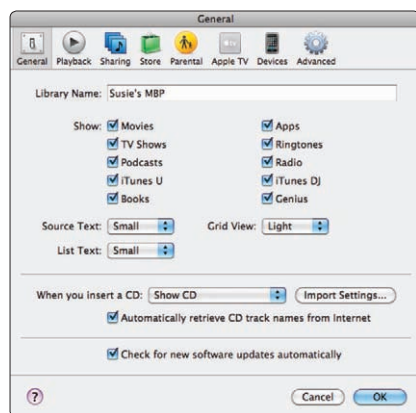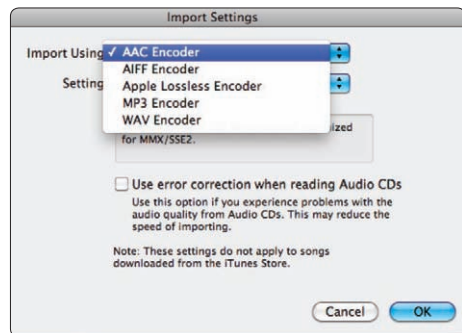

LIBRARY SOURCES
To change the default media types shown in the Library section of the sidebar, use the checkboxes in iTunes > Preferences > General. If any sources are grayed out in that menu, they're probably disabled via parental controls. Those settings can be adjusted in the Parental section of the Preferences window.

Uncheck any media types you don't want cluttering up your sidebar.

IMPORT SETTINGS
By default, iTunes imports audio using the AAC Encoder set to 256kbps, which is how iTunes Store music is sold. AAC is fine for iPods, but if you use a non-Apple

player, you might prefer MP3—head to iTunes > Preferences > General, and click Import Settings. If you've got tons of storage, Apple Lossless is the best encoder, and iTunes 9.1 and later can automatically convert songs to space-saving 128kbps AAC when you sync an iDevice (in the device's settings pane).

Set the import format here.

MULTIPLE WINDOWS
Although primarily designed as a single-window app, iTunes lets you open most sidebar components (Music and Connected Devices being exceptions) in their own windows by Control- or right-clicking and selecting "Open in New Window." If you've got a large monitor, it can be handy, for example, to view your music library and the iTunes Store simultaneously.

Open sesame.

SOUND ENHANCEMENT
The often-overlooked Equalizer (Window > Equalizer, or Command-Option-2) has sliders you can fiddle with to adjust the sound, along with presets in the drop-down menu. iTunes can save your custom settings if you choose
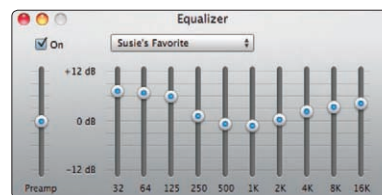
Make Preset from the drop-down menu.

Pump up the bass, yo!

KEYBOARD SHORTCUTS

VIEW MENU
As List	Command-Option-3
As Grid	Command-Option-4
As Cover Flow	Command-Option-5
Show/Hide Column Browser	Command-B
Show Artwork Column	Command-G
Show Genius Sidebar	Command-Shift-G
Switch to/from Mini Player	Command-Shift-M

CONTROLS MENU
Pause	[Space]
Next	Command-right arrow
Previous	Command-left arrow
Eject	Command-E

STORE MENU
Back	Command-[
Forward	Command-]
Home	Command-Shift-H

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SMARTER iTUNES PLAYLISTS

Power up your iTunes playlists **with minimal effort**

Technology moves pretty fast. People used to spend entire Saturdays happily compiling a "mix tape" by carefully recording favorite tracks on a cheap cassette deck, but once digital music hit its stride, such endeavors were seen as a startling waste of time. With a music

Control-click and select Start Genius). iTunes will create a 25-item playlist containing that track and similar songs. By using the controls above the playlist, you can extend it to 50, 75, or 100 items; refresh it; or save it. Saved Genius playlists appear in the sidebar's Genius section, but Genius Mixes

those days when even starting up a Genius playlist seems a bit too much like hard work.

SMART PLAYLISTS

Introduced in iTunes 3, smart playlists are dynamic; they're based on user-defined criteria. This same idea is used elsewhere on your Mac—smart folders in the Finder, smart mailboxes in Mail—although the iTunes implementation is the most advanced and flexible at the time of this writing.

To create a new smart playlist, go to File > New Smart Playlist or use the keyboard shortcut Command-Option-N. This brings up the Smart Playlist dialog. To create a basic smart playlist, leave all the settings alone, but add your favorite artist to the empty field, and then click OK. Your new playlist will be added to the sidebar and highlighted. In the main iTunes view area, you should see a list of tracks from your specified artist.

Since they're dynamic, smart playlists can be updated with new settings. Select your playlist and go to File > Edit Smart Playlist (or Control- or right-click it and select Edit Smart Playlist). Click the Plus button to add a new rule. The left-most menu includes many criteria you can pick from. Add as many rules as you like, and define specific values for them. The Match menu lets you choose whether the playlist includes tracks determined by all of the rules or any of them. The former could be used to create a playlist
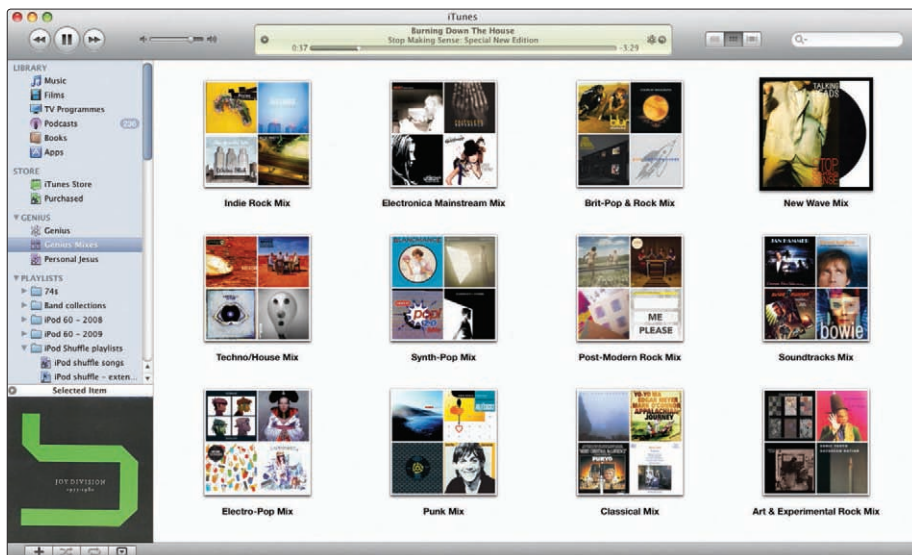
Select any track in your library, click the Start Genius button, and presto, you have a unique playlist!

collection sitting on your hard drive, mixes could be made quickly thanks to the magic of drag and drop.

iTunes easily creates static playlists, and always has. Click the invitingly large Plus button at the lower left of the main iTunes window (or go to File > New Playlist), name your playlist, and then drag in tracks from your library. Tracks can be reordered, and you can also drag songs from one playlist to another; note that the track also remains in the playlist it was dragged from—it isn't removed. It's also worth noting, in case you're concerned, that playlists contain "shortcuts" to the original tracks. Delete a playlist or an item from a playlist, and the original track remains in your library.

AN AUTOMATED APPROACH

With iTunes 8, Apple introduced its Genius technology, which tries to predict listening habits based on the collections of millions of iTunes users. This lets you create a playlist of tracks based on a favorite song. Select a track in your library, then click Start Genius at the bottom right of the iTunes window (or

are included by default. Select this to access mixes that are genre-based, randomized, and sealed. You can't access Genius Mixes to see which tracks are up next, nor can you view a full list of albums and artists, but they're still a handy "personalized radio" for
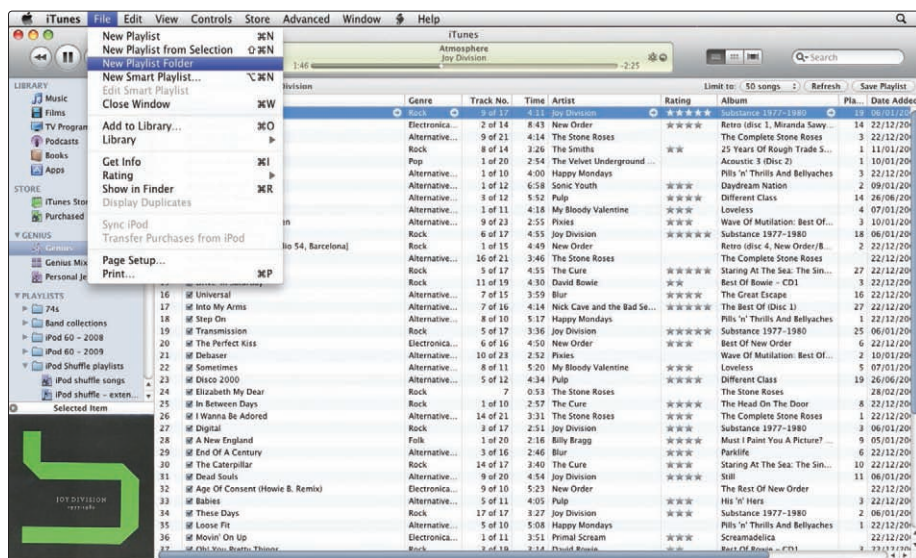
File > New Playlist Folder adds a handy folder to the sidebar, into which you can drop static and smart playlists for easy access.

An example of a nested playlist—these can be as simple or as complex as you like, so go crazy!

of tracks by your favorite band, not including that one lame album (Album > is not > [album name]), and only from the 1990s onwards (Year > is greater than > 1989). To remove a rule, click the adjacent Minus button, although be aware there's no undo.

ADVANCED RULES
The Smart Playlist dialog has a few options that can further refine your playlists. The Limit checkbox enables you to set a specific track count and also a selection criterion (random, recently played, and so on). If the Live Updating box is checked, relevant tracks subsequently added to iTunes will be added to the playlist without you having to do anything.

With iTunes 9, Apple finally added a change that smart-playlist gurus had demanded for years: nested playlists. Before iTunes 9, complex playlists of the form "A and (B or C)" required you to make the "B or C" playlist first and then a second playlist to work with its output. Now, however, you can use the "..." (ellipses) button to create nested rule groups and therefore playlists with complex logic.

If this concept sounds tricky in the abstract, here's a practical application for nested smart playlists. Say you want to create a playlist comprising tracks from 10 of your favorite bands, only using songs rated above four stars and that have not been played in over a month. Previously, this would have required two playlists, because the bands are an "any" match, whereas the other rules are an "all" match. With iTunes 9, you set up a single match-all smart playlist with the time and ratings rules, and nest a match-any set that deals with the band names. An example is shown above, but the sky really is the limit with smart playlists, and once you've set a few up, you can let iTunes do all the hard work of adding tracks. It's a long way from waiting for a cassette to run out of tape!

TARGET YOUR iPODS
Unless you have a 120GB iPod classic, your Apple music player has a relatively limited capacity. That's fine if your music collection is small, but if it isn't, you can always create a playlist with nested rules to fill it full of favorite tracks.

In the example below, the Time rule dispenses with very short (under 40 seconds) and very long tracks (over 5 minutes), classical music, and anything with a very high bit rate (although you can automatically "downsample" audio during syncing in iTunes 9.1). The Media Kind rule restricts the playlist to music, filtering out spoken audio and the like.

Our nested rules follow this logic: Tracks are only added to the playlist if they're rated over 3—unless they've been added within the previous 14 days and don't have a rating of 1. This means that you always get recent tracks (including all unrated ones) unless you've already decided to mark them as rubbish, but older tracks are filtered by your rating.

BASE YOUR PLAYLISTS ON RATINGS
The best smart playlists are often the simple ones: If you rate your tracks, create a smart playlist where track ratings are greater than 3 and call it "4+ tracks." For your very best tracks, create a smart playlist with tracks rated 5. If you're always forgetting what music you've added over the past couple of months, create a smart playlist with the rule: Date Added > is in the last > 60 days, and where Media Kind is Music. Create a similar playlist, but change 60 days to 12 months to include songs you've added over the past year. Or if you'd like to unearth lost favorites, create a playlist called "4+ neglecteds" and set rules based around track ratings (Rating > is greater than > ***) and when the tracks were last played (Last Played > is not in the last > 30 days).

This simple smart playlist finds favorite tracks you haven't heard recently.

If you've got an iPod shuffle, fill it with highly rated, short-ish tracks.

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THE BEST iTUNES ADD-ONS

iTunes **gets even better** with one (or all) of these apps as its backup singers

Once you set the preferences, the app stays in your menu bar.

Tinker with these additional settings when iTunes isn't running.

iTunesMenu stays out of your way.

I LOVE STARS
Price: Free
potionfactory.com/free

Even if your library is modest, rating all your tracks can seem daunting. But a rated collection gives you more possibilities for smart playlists, and I Love Stars lets you rate as you go. The app sits in the menu bar and shows the currently playing track's rating. To change the rating, click on the relevant star. Control-click to access the preferences and define systemwide keyboard shortcuts for rating tracks. I Love Stars can even alert you (optionally) when an unrated song is almost done playing.
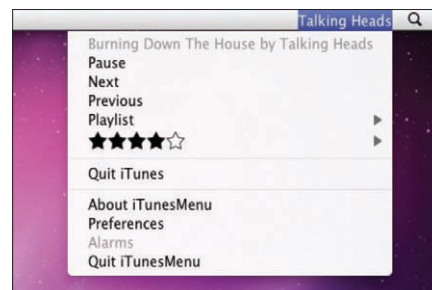
iTUNES PREFERENCE PANE
Price: Free
megabytecomp.com/apps.aspx

As with Mac OS X itself, Apple hides a number of iTunes preferences, not making them accessible via a graphical user interface. iTunes Preference Pane installs into System Preferences and provides options for tweaking iTunes. Perhaps the most useful setting is Invert Library Links, which turns the library arrows into links to your own library rather than the iTunes Store (Option-click for the default functionality). The ability to apply half-star ratings will benefit anyone who considers Apple's default system too restrictive. *Note*: Make changes to the settings *only* when iTunes isn't running.
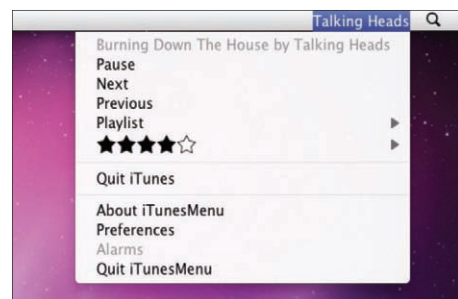
iTUNESMENU
Price: Free/$1.99
mrgeckosmedia.com/applications

Plenty of iTunes-notification apps exist, but most take up valuable space on your screen, or get hidden by other windows. iTunesMenu uses your menu bar to display the name of the song currently playing in iTunes, along with other information, such as the artist and album. The drop-down menu also provides access to basic iTunes controls, although we recommend your Mac's keyboard for those.

>> HOW TO SET UP iTUNESMENU

1 GET STARTED
iTunesMenu communicates with iTunes to find out what the currently playing track is. The track artist is displayed in the menu bar, updating as new songs begin. Click the artist name to access the app's menu. Choose Preferences to configure the display.
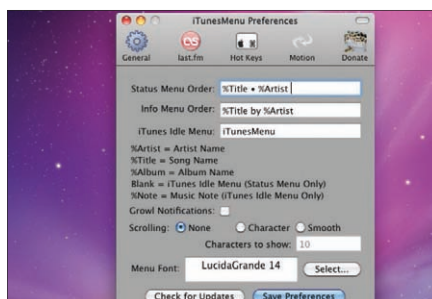
2 CONFIGURE THE DISPLAY
Select General and decide what you want displayed in the menu bar. To show the title and artist, separated by a bullet and with a space afterward, type **%Title • %Artist** into the Status Menu Order field, then click Save Preferences. (Ensure Scrolling is set to None.)

3 FONTS AND HOTKEYS
To change the iTunesMenu font, click Select and choose a new one from the Mac OS X Fonts panel. If your Mac keyboard lacks media keys, use iTunesMenu's Donate section to give $1.99, enter your activation key, and use Hot Keys to define iTunes controls.
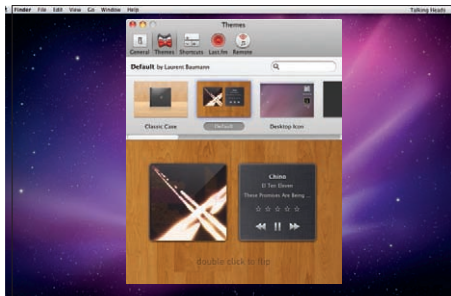
Bowtie has a few looks, and you can download more.

Lounge resembles the Now Playing screen on Apple TV.

Match all your albums to their artwork in no time.

BOWTIE
Price: Free
bowtieapp.com

Bowtie is similar to iTunesMenu, but instead of displaying the current track's name in text, it displays the album artwork. Preferences let you define the artwork window's depth (Desktop level, normal, or always on top). Bowtie includes two alternate themes: one purely text-based, and one with a tiny vinyl record poking out from the artwork. Additional themes can be downloaded (search Google for "bowtie theme"), or if you have knowledge of HTML and CSS, you can make your own.

LOUNGE
Price: $9.95
snarbsoft.com/lounge.html

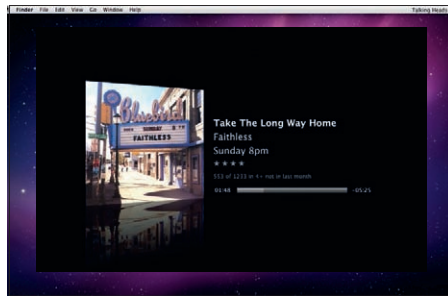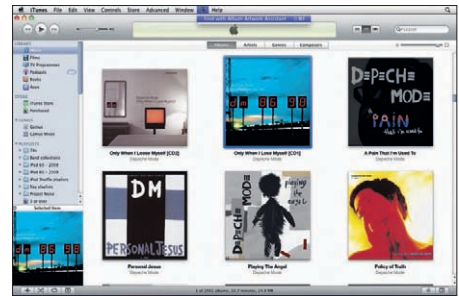Lounge is an interesting mix of screen saver and iTunes kiosk, and it's perfect either for parties or just as a good-looking screen saver for any Mac. Instead of iTunes-style visualizer pyrotechnics, Lounge displays the current track's artwork and information. Options let you toggle keyboard controls for skipping tracks and adjusting volume without exiting the screen saver, flip the screen periodically to avoid screen burn, and even choose a screen saver to switch to when a playlist has ended.

ALBUM ARTWORK ASSISTANT
Price: Free
entropy.ch/software

Album Artwork Assistant beats its artwork-seeking rivals by being comprehensive and offering plenty of choice regarding potential artwork to import. It also provides a queuing system for when you'd like to work through a bunch of albums, rather than immediately applying new art every time. To use this feature, switch Add Immediately for Add To Queue in our walkthrough below (Step 2), and when you're done, open the Queue drawer and click Process Queue.

≫ HOW TO FIND ARTWORK FOR YOUR ALBUMS
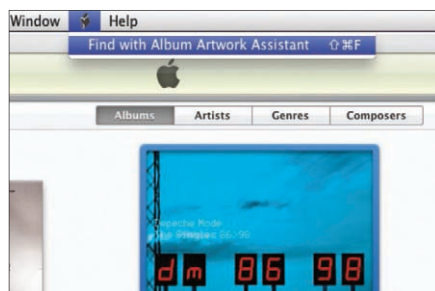
1 INSTALL A SCRIPT
Quit iTunes and System Preferences. In Album Artwork Assistant, select Install iTunes AppleScript from the Application menu, then click OK. Select a track or album in iTunes to change its artwork. From the Script menu, select Find With Album Artwork Assistant.

2 SELECT YOUR ARTWORK
Album Artwork Assistant will display the tracks to be updated. Below this list, the search string used is displayed, along with image results with a resize slider. To choose new artwork for your tracks, select an image and then click Add Immediately.

3 FIND ALTERNATE ARTWORK
Album Artwork Assistant may not find artwork right away for obscure releases. Try changing the search string. Alternatively, select the Web Search tab to activate the browser area. Once you find artwork to use, Control- or right-click it and select Add Immediately.

SCRIPTS MAKE iTUNES SING

Like a rock star's guitar pedals, AppleScripts add **even more variety** to iTunes

AppleScript is something of an unsung hero. It easily automates repetitive tasks, but few users ever go near it. If you're an iTunes power user, scripts are a must, but you needn't hack away in AppleScript Editor—many prebuilt iTunes scripts are available online. All you need to do is download them, plonk them in the iTunes Scripts folder, wait a second or two, and the extra functionality is yours.

The walkthrough on p43 shows you how to set up and manage scripts, so we'll concentrate on the best available scripts. All of the scripts mentioned are available for free from the Doug's AppleScripts for iTunes website (dougscripts.com/itunes).

TRACK MANAGEMENT
If you've got a pretty big music collection, keeping it in good shape can take time—way, way, *way* too much time. Scripts can assist you with management tasks, taking minutes or seconds to accomplish what might take you hours or more.

One of the best housecleaning scripts is Super Remove Dead Tracks. This finds songs in your library that are no longer available on your Mac. Every 500 tracks, it throws up a dialog to inform you of its progress, and the optional text-based log file at the end tells you which entries have been deleted. On our 13,500-track test library, this entire process took under a minute.

Tracks Without Artwork To Playlist is similar—you select a library, playlist, or an arbitrary bunch of tracks, and the script copies songs without artwork to a new playlist. On activating the script, all you need to do is click Proceed, choose a name for your playlist, and wait for a bit. On our iMac, the script took about 5 minutes to churn through our 13,500 tracks, finding about 1,500 that lacked artwork. With a No Artwork playlist in place, it's simple to send these tracks to Album Artwork Assistant (see p41) to grab artwork online.

Another great playlist script is Gather Up The One-Hits. It collects tracks where the artists are each represented in your library by just a single song. Chances are, this will mainly comprise content from compilations, but we found a bunch of one-offs we'd grabbed from the iTunes Store and subsequently forgotten about.

TRACK INFO AND PLAYBACK
Along with rapidly cleaning up your library, scripts can deal with metadata issues, and you don't have to open a single Get Info window. Quite often, iTunes downloads inaccurate data when you import tracks from CDs by obscure artists—a common error is the artist and track name fields being reversed. The Swap This With That script from the This Tag, That Tag Scripts compilation can handle this. Launch the script, select a tag to swap from and another to swap to, and your songs' data is
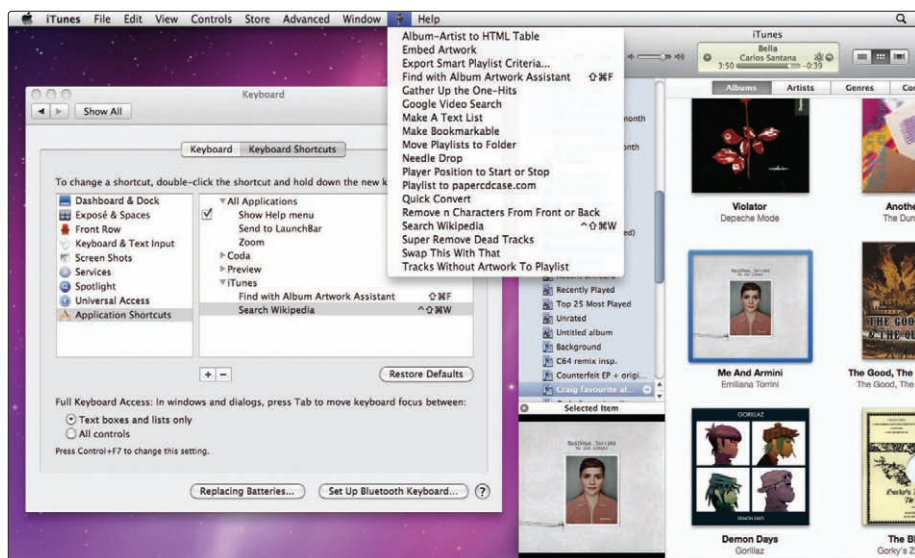
If you regularly use a script, apply a keyboard shortcut via Keyboard Shortcuts in System Preferences.

BACK UP YOUR iTUNES FOLDER
The add-ons mentioned elsewhere in this feature do relatively little to affect the content of your iTunes library. At most, they add a little data here and there, such as ratings and new artwork, and these things are easy enough to revert or delete at a later date. Scripts in iTunes can be a very different matter, because some of them automate complex and "destructive" processes, including reworking and

deleting tracks. We're not trying to scare you off—iTunes scripts can often be very handy timesavers—but we do suggest that you don't just start using scripts blindly. Before you work with scripts that do anything major to your iTunes library, ensure that you first back it up. The iTunes folder—including your music, other digital content, and databases—lives in the Music directory inside your user folder.
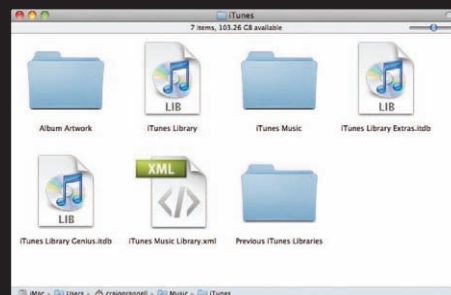
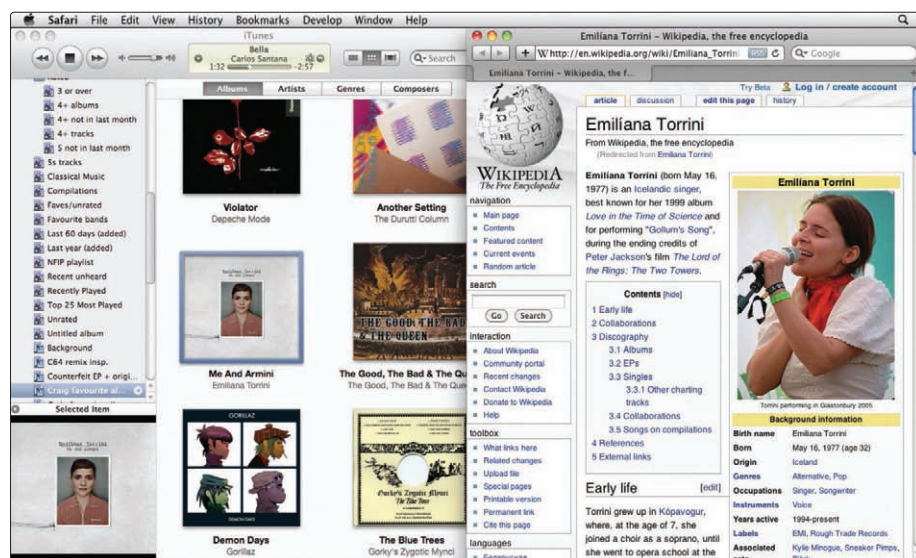amended. However, be aware that there's no undo. If your metadata issues are subtler, investigate Track Names To Sentence Caps and Track Names To Word Caps (both of which reformat cases in track names) and Remove N Characters From Front or Back. The last of those enables you to remove a specific number of characters from the start ('front") or end ("back") of a selection of song titles. So if some song titles have track numbers at the start or "disc 1" at the end, this script removes that information quickly and easily.

Scripts can also assist with playback controls. Needle Drop enables you to audition a selection of tracks in automated fashion, after defining playback length and an intro point. For example, you can play 10-second bursts from 2 minutes into every track from a specified playlist.

Another favorite script is Make Bookmarkable, which turns the file type of selected AAC tracks into M4B, thereby making them "bookmarkable," so playback resumes where you left off. Make UN-Bookmarkable reverses the process.

EXTERNAL CONSIDERATIONS

Search Wikipedia and Google Video Search search the web for more information about your music, working in similar ways: You select a script, and a dialog asks whether you want to search based on the currently playing track or the currently selected track. You then select a category to base the search
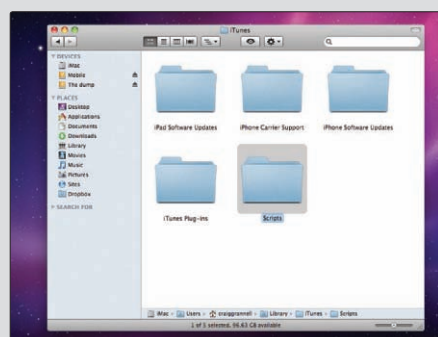
on. For Wikipedia, you can select the artist, album, or composer. For Google Video, you choose between song, artist, and album. The dialogs aren't pretty, but they get the job done and save time.

Another set of scripts enables you to export track information from iTunes. Although this can be done using File > Library > Export Playlist, the resulting text file is complicated, huge, and unwieldy. Instead, we recommend Album-Artist To HTML Table, which exports a list of your artists and albums (and, optionally, associated tracks, although processing that information takes a long time, so we don't

recommend it) to an HTML document that you can open in a web browser. The script has a couple of quirks: you need to reorder your track list to Album By Artist for best results, and don't let the script open a browser when it's finished, or you'll likely get an error. Instead, click Done and then manually open the HTML file it outputs.

Another export option worth a look is Playlist To Papercdcase.com. It lets you export up to 28 tracks from a playlist to papercdcase.com (the site opens in Safari), which cunningly formats the data into a PDF file that can then be turned into a CD case if your origami skills are up to snuff. <<<

Search for an artist or album on Wikipedia directly from within iTunes simply by using a little script.

HOW TO MANAGE YOUR SCRIPTS FOLDER

1 CREATE A SCRIPTS FOLDER
If you haven't installed scripts before, you won't have a Scripts folder to use. To add one, quit iTunes, use the Finder to access ~/Library/iTunes (the Library folder that's found inside your user account's home folder), and if a Scripts folder isn't present, create a new folder called Scripts.
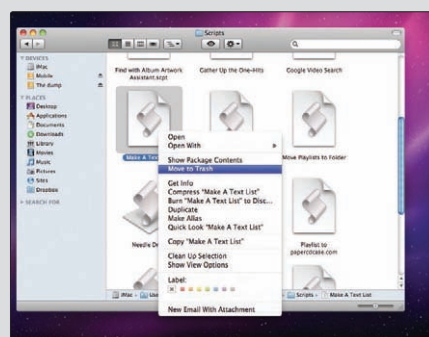
2 INSTALL AND REMOVE SCRIPTS
Managing scripts is a case of drag and drop. To install a script, drag it into the Scripts folder mentioned in Step 1. To remove one, drag it out of the folder or trash it. It's best to do such management when iTunes is closed, but iTunes typically tracks script changes well.
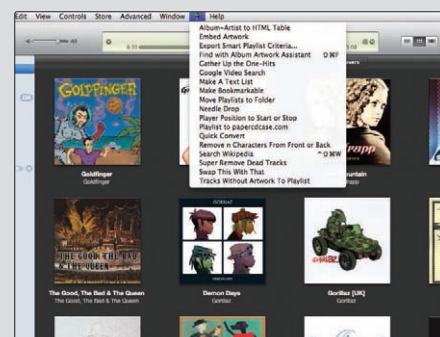
3 CHECK THINGS IN iTUNES
Launch iTunes. After installing a script, you'll see a script icon in the menu bar between the Window and Help menus. This is where you can activate the scripts. Scripts can even have keyboard shortcuts assigned in System Preferences > Keyboard > Keyboard Shortcuts, just like other menu items.

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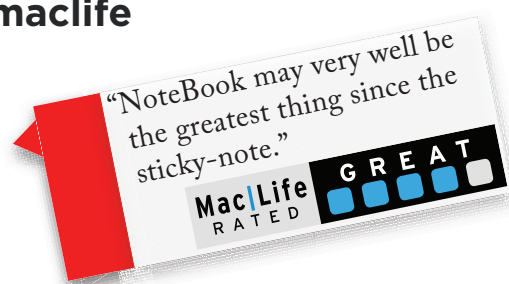
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A STAMPEDE OF NEW FEATURES FOR

SAFARI 5

BY CORY BOHON

THE NEWEST VERSION OF APPLE'S WEB BROWSER IS LEAN, FAST, AND FILLED WITH POTENT NEW FEATURES. USE THIS EXPERT GUIDE TO **HARNESS EVERY OUNCE OF ITS POWER.**

Unusually, we hadn't heard any rumors about a new Safari, so we were a bit surprised when Apple announced the recent 5.0 version of its signature browser. Even though Cupertino took the stealthy route with its debut, this update is no mere rehash. Safari 5's new features include some never-before-seen innovations that make it our favorite little browser on the Mac. We've sorted through all that new power to come up with 11 ways you can use Safari 5 to get the most out of your intertubes. And as it turns out, some of the cooler features don't come from Apple—but from the developers making some really interesting extensions…

Extensions...Finally, Extensions!

Block ads, download YouTube videos, remember your tabs, and more

1 The ability to customize Safari by installing extensions is a feature we've been wanting for a long time. The process is somewhat similar to what you might find in other browsers like Firefox or
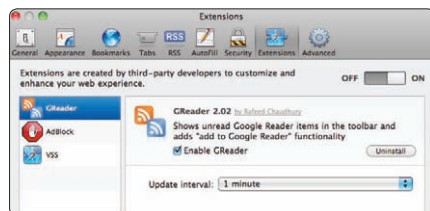
Chrome: when you install an extension, you get a new tab in your Safari preferences that allows you to manage them. We really like the option provided there to turn off all extensions with a single click of the mouse.

If you try to install an extension and get an error saying that extensions have not been enabled, then you can go to Develop > Enable Extensions. If you don't have a Develop menu, you can enable it by visiting the Advanced tab in Safari's preferences.

When you download and try to install an extension, Safari will alert you to make sure you really want to install that particular extension, similar to the way Dashboard handles installing widgets. You might need to refer to the extension's website to find out how to use it because Apple lets developers put options in a few different places. As a rule of thumb, you can commonly find installed extensions in the toolbar or as a right-click option.

Next, we'll run you through a handful of our most beloved extensions to get you up and running with this powerful feature. If you're hungry for more, check out pimpmysafari.com, which compiles the latest Safari extensions.

DISABLE ADS

One of the more popular plug-ins for other browsers, the Safari version of AdBlock lets you do just what its name says: block advertisements on websites. When you download and install the plug-in from the developer's website (safariadblock.com), you'll get a button next to the address bar that looks like a stop sign with a hand on it. Clicking this button opens a heap of possibilities.

In the General options, you can elect to have text ads on Google search results disappear, and you can also block ads inside of YouTube videos. However, these features are in beta, so don't be surprised if they don't work every time.

Under Filter Lists, you can subscribe to ad-blocking lists for your country of choice. These lists are updated every five days or manually as you wish. On the Blacklist tab, you can manually block ads by their CSS selector, or you can have the software do it automatically by pressing Control-Shift-K on any page that still has ads on it. This will add the page to your filter list.

Under Whitelist, you can specify websites where you actually wish to view ads (this would be a good place to add your favorite websites...like, cough, MacLife.com). You can add these manually or have AdBlock do it for you by pressing Control-Shift-L.
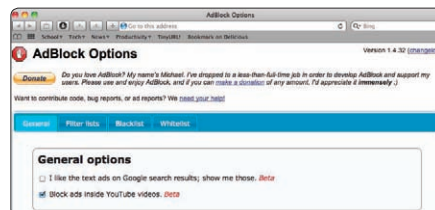

DOWNLOAD YOUTUBE VIDEOS

Do you like a particular YouTube video so much that you would like to store it on your computer for eternity? With an extension called YouTubeDownloader, you can do just that. After you've downloaded and installed this extension (bit.ly/ctdiUQ), visit any YouTube video, where you'll notice two new buttons near the top of the video. One will let you download an FLV (Flash video) file
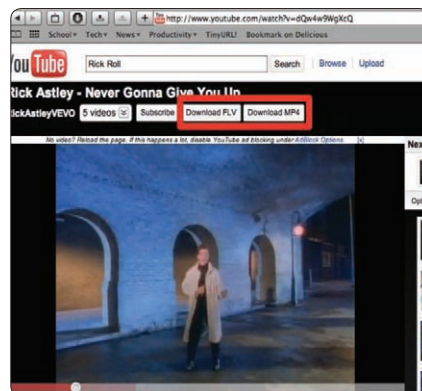
of the video, and the other will allow you to download the video as an MP4. Sync the MP4 to your iPod, and you'll never be without a Rick Roll again!

SAVE TABS BETWEEN SESSIONS

One of the biggest drawbacks to using Safari over Firefox is that Safari won't ask to save your tabs when you close the application and have multiple tabs opened. With the
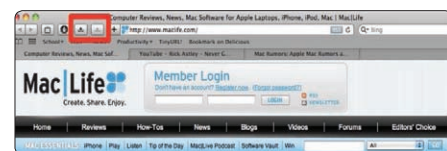

SaveTabs Safari extension, however, you can back up and restore tabs at will.

Once installed (bit.ly/cuETYV), you will have two new buttons next to the address bar—one shows a tab with a down arrow and one with an up arrow. When you're ready to save your session and quit Safari, click on the down arrow and close the application. When you reopen Safari, click the up arrow, and Safari will be populated with the tabs that you previously had opened.

BETTER SORTING FOR NETFLIX QUEUES

When you're browsing your Netflix queue, you don't have a simple sort option that will let you see your queue based on item availability, title, or instant availability. With the Netflix Queue Sorter extension, you gain these and many other sorting options.
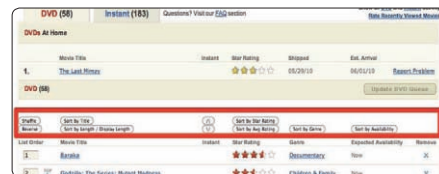
When installed (bit.ly/bslgW6), the Netflix Queue Sorter will let you sort by title, instant, star rating, genre, and availability date. This extension allows you to see at a single glance what's arriving soon or what's now available to play instantly on your computer. Your Netflix queue browsing will never be the same again.

And a Herd of Other New Features!
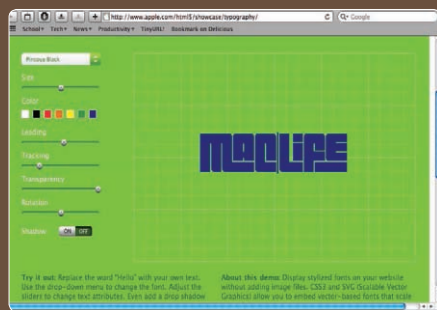
2 MORE SUPPORT FOR HTML5

HTML5 is the future of the web, and Apple is embracing it wholeheartedly with Safari 5. This new version contains support for many new HTML5 features like full-screen video, closed captioning, draggable attributes, and form validation. Rarely do end users care about the technologies surrounding the creation of different online tools, but HTML5 is something that will definitely benefit everyone soon. It allows for a richer web experience than you've had before. You can see this in Apple's recently posted demos (apple.com/html5), which showcase some of the strengths of HTML5.

3 BETTER ONLINE READING

Reading online articles can be a misadventure, especially if you're used to reading on paper. Like the Readability bookmarklet from Arc90 Labs, Apple's Safari Reader lets you click the Reader button in the address bar to read an article in a distraction-free space. The background dims, and you're left with simple text on a white background. Mouse over the bottom portion of the Reader page for five options: zoom out, zoom in, email, print, and close. The email and print functions only grab the text and graphics related to the article, not ads and other useless information. Nice!

4 MORE PRIVACY

Safari 4 introduced the ability to use private browsing. By turning on this feature in Safari, you are able to browse the web without logging any cache files, cookies, or history. With Safari 5, however, you can see a small icon in the address bar that will let you know with one glance if your web session is being logged. When you're done privately browsing, you can click the icon, and Safari will ask if you wish to end your private session.

5 BETTER TAB SETTINGS

If you've ever used Safari as your main browser before, you've probably been annoyed when you click a link in another program and it opens in a new window instead of a new tab. If you're a fan of tabbed browsing, you can now select a setting where all links are opened in a new tab and never in a new window. To do this, head over to your Tabs preferences (Safari > Preferences > Tabs) and select Always from the drop-down menu that says "Open pages in tabs instead of windows." And if you accidently close a tab, Command-Z reopens it. Magical.
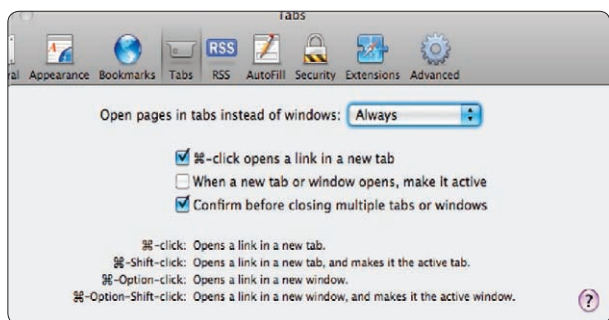
6 SNAPPIER PAGES

Sure, Safari 5's faster speed isn't something that you can physically see, but it is something that you can feel, especially when loading a page that contains a lot of JavaScript (such as Aviary's many products or Google Docs). According to Apple's specs page, the new Nitro JavaScript engine means that Safari 5 runs 30 percent faster than version 4, and 3 percent faster than Chrome 5.0. That makes the JavaScript engine in Safari 5 the fastest when compared to Chrome, Opera, and Firefox.

To make pages load even faster, Safari 5 also couples DNS prefetching with an improved caching system. Translation: Safari automatically searches through links on the page, looking up addresses and loading cached items to deliver a faster web-browsing experience.
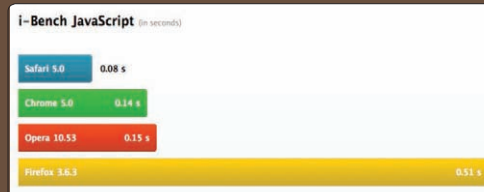
7 BETTER WEB DEVELOPMENT

A lot of web developers use Firefox because they can download web-development plug-ins to extend debugging and development. Apple's upped the game with Safari's Web Inspector. Right-click anywhere and select Inspect Element to view code from the webpage, and mouse over parts of code to highlight those elements on the page. It'll also show resource files and scripts (like JavaScripts), check profiles and storage, and display a log in the console. It's a great resource for developers, and Apple made it even better by adding a timeline view that lets you track your website-loading times for loading, scripting, and rendering.

8 BING SUPPORT FOR SEARCHING

As mentioned in June's WWDC keynote for iOS 4 devices, Apple is now supporting Bing for search in Safari. To switch your search preferences, you can visit Safari > Preferences > General. Select Bing from the drop-down menu that says "Default search engine." Google will remain the initial setting, but you can now opt for Bing and Yahoo! too. Hey, more choices is always a good thing, right?
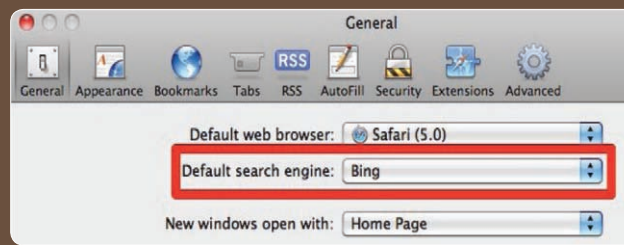
9 IMPROVED ADDRESS BARS

In a sorely needed upgrade, Safari 5's address bar now lets you type in keywords that match against titles of webpages you've visited in the past. It's very similar to what Firefox does with its so-called "awesome bar." In addition to offering up pages in your browser's history and bookmarks, the address bar will also still match URLs as the previous version did.
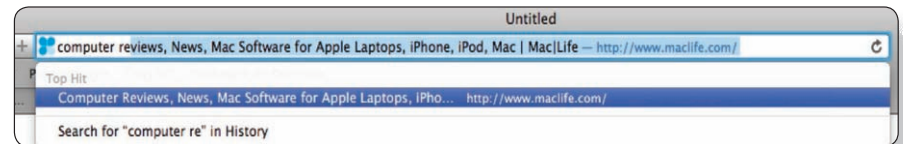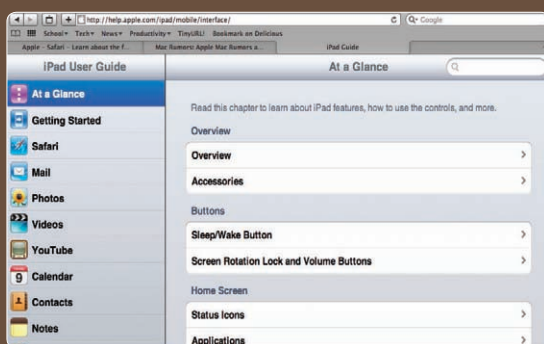
10 LOCATION SERVICES

HTML5 provides the ability to detect your location using the location services in Snow Leopard so applications like Google Maps can directly ask Mac OS X to pinpoint the location of your computer in the world. To enable location services all the time, visit Safari > Preferences > Security and check the box labeled "Location services: Allow websites to ask for location information." Note that this doesn't provide completely accurate location data due to the way it retrieves this info. Your computer is tracked via your IP address, which could be different from your actual location, depending on where your ISP's central office is.

11 iPAD-SPECIFIC USER AGENT

Apple added a new iPad-specific user agent to Safari 5. A user agent is a bit of information that tells a website which browser you're using. Under the Develop menu, Apple has had a few user agents to switch between, but now you also have an iPad-specific one to choose.

That means that you can go to Develop > User Agent > Mobile Safari 3.2—iPad and be able to load iPad-specific websites, such as Apple's own documentation that's specially formatted just for the iPad. If you're a developer, you can test your websites built for the iPad without having to own an iPad or use the iPad simulator. You can also play around with user agents to get to websites that are built for other platforms...yes, even Windows. <<<
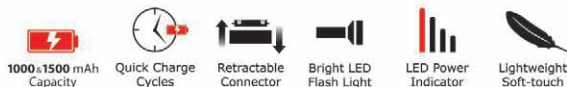
BETTER BARGAIN-HUNTING ON CRAIGSLIST?

THE UTILITARIAN BUY, SELL & SQUIRM SITE GETS THE APP TREATMENT, BUT DO ANY OF THEM MAKE *OUR* LIST? **BY NIC VARGUS**

Craigslist is the premier site for people looking for a good deal. Unlike Amazon and eBay, its searches are refined to sellers in defined proximities—usually people who are looking for quick pick-ups. Craigslisters who check often enough are bound to find something awesome for cheap, which means that well-designed iPhone and iPad apps could be huge.

We set out to determine if an iOS app could top the Mobile Safari experience, and it was no surprise to find literally dozens of Craigslist apps for the iPhone and iPad. It's as if developers realized that the infrastructure was already set up, and all they had to do was beautify the site. However, many of

them missed that mark, and we ended up wading through a sea of glitchy, crippled versions of the popular site—or apps even less attractive than the infamously minimal website. Still, a few interesting options emerged, so let's take a look at the best of the bunch.

Craigsphone beefs up Craigslist's attractiveness by utilizing drop-down messages, similar to Mail. On the browsing end, it's quick and easy to navigate, but it doesn't let you save searches or choose neighborhoods within districts (a deal-breaker for metropolitan deal-seekers). Posting is much more difficult than browsing, and Craigsphone is often unable to get your listing up at all, so if your main task is posting, you should look elsewhere.

CraigsFish is not the "elsewhere" frequent posters are looking for. It offers no way to log in to your Craigslist account, so it's impossible to post anything at all from within the app. While it utilizes a similar drop-down menu as Craigsphone, it isn't nearly as easy to navigate. After several updates, CraigsFish is now technically usable, but it remains glitchy and crashes often. At this point, stick with another app until the bugs are ironed out.

Craigslist Pro proves that a bit of polish never hurts. It's available on both the iPad and iPhone, but they're different apps with vastly different interfaces. With the iPad version, the only real issue was the miniscule size of the text. Though most people won't have a problem reading the smaller font, there's no way to zoom in, so steer clear if needlessly small text ain't your thing. With both the iPad and iPhone version, posting
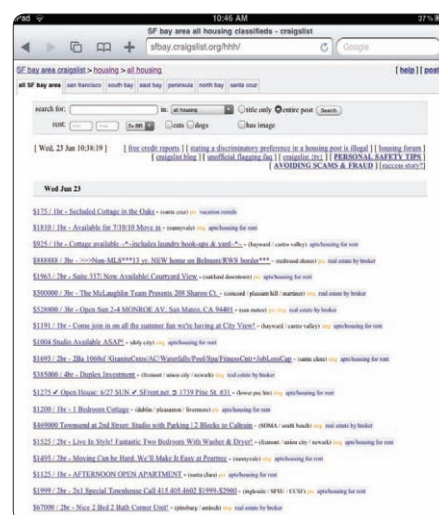
When all is said and done, viewing the site in Mobile Safari works better than any current iPad app.

from within the app was a piece of cake. As an added bonus, both applications permit you to manage multiple accounts. All told, they're easy to navigate and work well as a replacement for the site, but they aren't must-own apps.

CraigsPro+ is the best option for Craigslisting on an iPhone. It was made by the same development team as Craigslist Pro (IOCo), which is evident by its matching visual style. CraigsPro+ costs the same amount as its plus-less counterpart and boasts saved searches and tons of sorting options. But it also has a bit of added functionality: CraigsPro+ utilizes "agents" to filter your searches even when you're not using the application. When something comes up that matches your specifications, it'll send a push notification. The only problem with this ingenious feature is that


CraigsPro+'s ability to keep searching even when you're not using it is a killer feature... that's hindered a bit by restricting you to 50 "free" notifications. (You can buy more.)

you're limited to 50 notifications, and when those run out, you'll have to purchase more.

Craigly adds interesting functionality as well—the ability to format listings in four different views. It also lets you customize searches by neighborhood, price, number of bedrooms, and more. After sending an email, it displays a nice subtlety overlooked by other apps: a box that tells you "message sent." Regrettably, the interface is pretty clunky and could use a major cleanup. For instance, clicking on a posting displays it in a font so large even short posts will require scrolling.

The bottom line: More than a handful of apps mimic Craigslist's functionality and provide an almost-as-good-as-the-web experience. But they're all really only getting it half-right, and there's no reason to use an app that doesn't improve upon a perfectly functional website. CraigsPro+ is the only app that made 'listing significantly easier, but it's iPhone-only. For now, iPad users are better off just using the site.
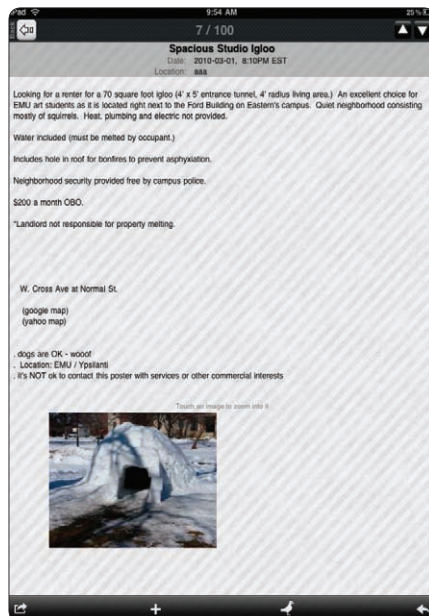
Craigslist Pro might be classy, but you're going to need to eat your carrots if you actually want to read posts.
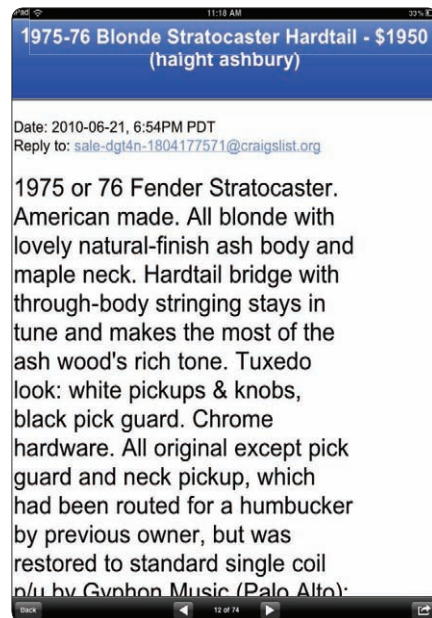
Though Craigly's format options utilizing the thumbnails are gorgeous, the text is just too large.
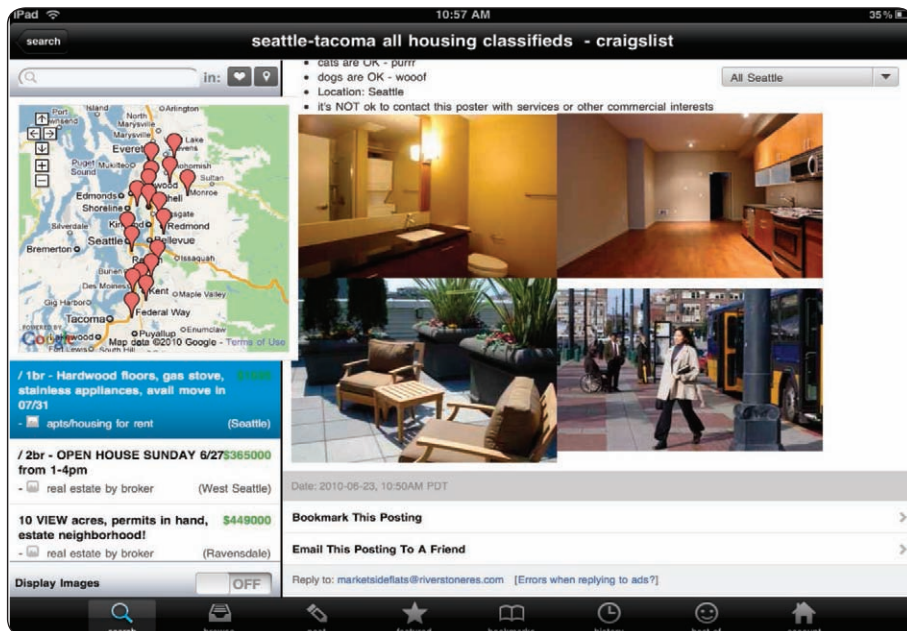
CraigsPhone is able to use your current location and drop pins at postings around you, but frustratingly, only for postings in the housing categories.

Craigsphone 2.0
Next Mobile Web
nextmobileweb.com/craigsphone
Free
OKAY ■■■□□ iPHONE+iPAD

Craigslist Pro 1.0.2
IOCo
www2.ladelo.com:8080/craigspro/
$0.99
SOLID ■■■□□ iPHONE+iPAD

CraigsPro+ 3.12
IOCo
www2.ladelo.com:8080/craigspro/
$0.99
GOOD ■■■■□ iPHONE

CraigsFish 1.2.1
AlterTap LLC
No working URL (at press time)
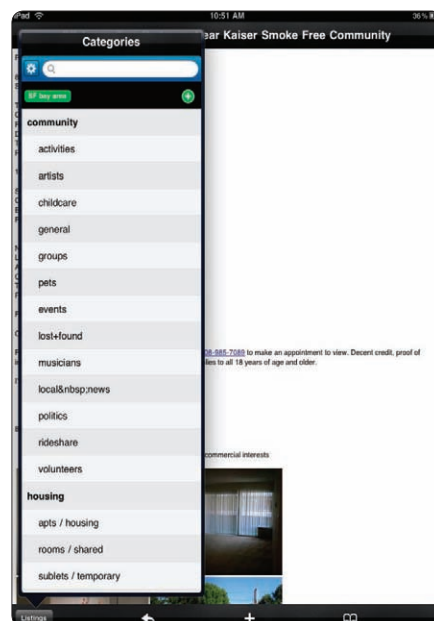**Free**
LAME ■■□□□ iPAD

Craigly 1.6
Mother Tucker LLC
mothertuckerllc.com
$1.99
OKAY ■■■□□ iPHONE+iPAD

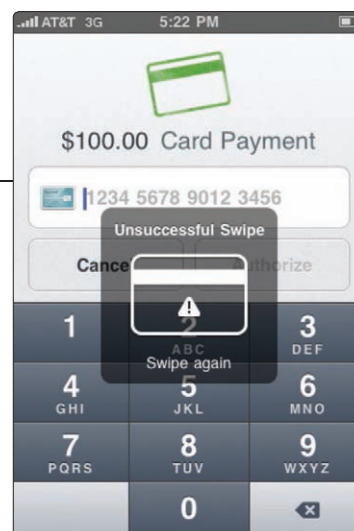Frequent glitches and crashes make CraigsFish a complete mess.

SQUARE

Twitter cofounder turns every smartphone into a cash register

Blogs put a printing press in every home. Smartphones provide internet access almost anywhere. Square, an app for mobile devices, turns anyone into a small business. Selling your couch, but the buyer only has plastic? No problem. Hawking T-shirts out of your trunk on the concert circuit, but don't want wads of cash? No problem.

Square, founded by Twitter co-creator Jack Dorsey, is looking to take a bite out of the digital economy pioneered by PayPal. With the Square app on your mobile and the free hardware add-on (we'll call it a dongle) plugged in to the audio jack, Square enables payments on the fly. Users swipe their card through the dongle, finger-sign on the touchscreen, and get their receipt via email. While PayPal dominates the digital market, not everyone has an account or PayPal's mobile "bump" app. That's Square's opening because nearly everyone does have a debit/credit card.

Using the app is super easy, though you may be waiting around for your dongle (at press time, demand far outstripped supply, making for long delays). You can't process credit transactions without the dongle and activation code, although you can create receipts for cash. If you forget your dongle, you can key in transactions, but in that case Square's cut is a higher fee (3.5% compared to 2.75% for swipes). If you have the hardware, you'll want to hold the dongle steady while you swipe; the connection felt a little precarious at times. Lastly, don't expect Square to be the cornerstone of a booming business—there's a $1.00 minimum transaction and $100 maximum with a $700 weekly cap for new users, although regulars can upgrade their accounts.

The bottom line Technophiles and digital natives will love everything about this app/dongle, but until Square gets enough name recognition to make grandma feel comfortable with any Tom, Dick, or Harriet swiping her credit card, it may be hard to make a dent in the market.—*J Keirn-Swanson*

Be sure to hold the dongle and swipe carefully.

Square 1.1.1
Square, Inc.
squareup.com
Free

GOOD ▪▪▪▪▫ iPHONE+iPAD

OUR FAVORITE APPS

Each month, the *Mac|Life* staff gives you a peek inside our iPhones, iPads, and iPod touches to show you the latest gems, oddities, and WTFs that we've uncovered in the App Store.

PAUL

My Stuffy Bear

This pick comes on behalf of my six-year-old daughter, who's fallen hard for this app. It lets her build teddy bears from scratch, picking their fur color and eye type to begin with. After that, it's dress-up time with a full array of pink-tastic accessories and clothes that keep her happily distracted in restaurants, cars, and other frontiers.

NIC

Robot Unicorn Attack

Imagine playing a game where you're a unicorn running across purple fields. But you're also a robot. And you have to rainbow-attack through metal stars and collect colorful fairies while jumping over sharp cliff crags that will blast your metal body into a million pieces, while listening to "Always" by Erasure on infinite repeat. No, I'm not kidding...it's awesome.

ROBBIE

Find My iPhone

Find My iPhone is one of the main reasons I continue to love MobileMe. We have a tendency in my house to misplace iPhones. The service has saved our bacon more than a few times. Now that it's on the iPhone, we don't have to rush to the nearest computer to figure out which German bar we left one of our iPhones in.

RAY

Gravity HD

Isaac Newton's Gravity HD from Namco is one of my favorite puzzle games. Using a collection of objects and the power of gravity, you have to navigate obstacles to activate a button on the playing field. The first five levels are free—a $9.99 in-app purchase gets you another 95 levels. And if you get in a jam, Isaac Newton can help you out.

FLO

eBoy FixPix

I'm a huge fan of eBoy's pixel art, and eBoy's FixPix puzzle game's simple, teeter-totter gameplay gives me something to do while I'm waiting in line at the grocery store. An added bonus is that I can save every puzzle I solve to my Photos and set it as my wallpaper on my iPod touch, or share it with my friends on Facebook.

PHOENIX WRIGHT

If you're a fan of Choose Your Own Adventure books, then you'll love the way Phoenix Wright plays out. This port of the popular Nintendo DS game is an en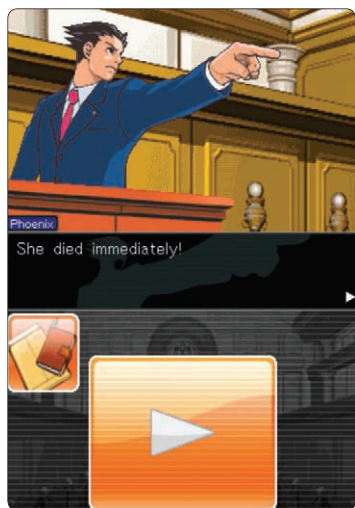gaging adventure filled with courtroom shenanigans where each case you tackle involves investigating the scene of a crime and procuring important evidence. When you finally go to trial, you have to present the right piece of evidence at the right time, or you'll be the laughingstock of the jury.

With five cases total, each with varying difficulty levels, the game delivers plenty of exciting legal drama. Because it's filled with cheesy one-liners and dramatized Japanese animation, it maintains a light, humorous atmosphere, though you might tire of all the clicking through you have to do to get through each line of dialogue.

The bottom line. All in all, this game will have you shouting "Objection!" in no time. —*Florence Ion*

This court drama will surely have you on your feet—even if you're playing it while sitting down.

Phoenix Wright 1.00.00
Capcom
capcom.com/phoenixwright
$4.99

GREAT ▪▪▪▪▫ iPHONE

POCKET LEGENDS

MMOs have traditionally been the domain of Macs and PCs, so Pocket Legends grabbed us by promising to bring World of Warcraft–style gaming to iOS devices. It sets you up as a furry little animal hero who must defeat zombies, yetis, and other villains. Levels are choose-as-you-go, so following along with the storyline can get confusing, but most quests can be done alone, so entering a level with other players doesn't mean you have to co-op. Unfortunately, the game has clumsy controls and redundant visual backdrops, but on the plus side, a nice tip system helps new players, and the generous focus on loot-collecting will keep MMO fans beavering away.

The bottom line. This game gets monotonous unless other friends join you to blaze the trail, but it's still a decent stab at bringing an MMO to iOS.—*Florence Ion*

The Mage's magical powers have sweet-looking effects, though they don't do much to your enemies.

Pocket Legends 1.21
Spacetime Studios, LLC
spacetimestudios.com
Free (not including in-app purchases)

SOLID ▪▪▪▫▫ iPHONE+iPAD

TO DO GENIUS

Intriguingly, ToDoGenius features an "AI" that helps you choose the perfect task. Just tell the ToDo Genie where you are and how you feel, and it'll conjure up a suggestion from your to-do lists. It isn't magic—just programmed rules—but the feature gives ToDoGenius lots of charm.

This productivity app is also snappy and easy to use. Adding tasks is a breeze thanks to a slick, color-coded interface, and it's loaded with features that let you add due dates, link contacts, and set alarms for tasks. You can filter tasks by type, reuse old to-dos, and split goals into smaller chunks. While that's plenty helpful, ToDoGenius disappointed us by limiting our plethora of tasks to two categories: work and home.

The bottom line. The Genie is more gimmick than genius, but ToDoGenius is easy to use and packs a ton of handy features. —*Dustin Driver*
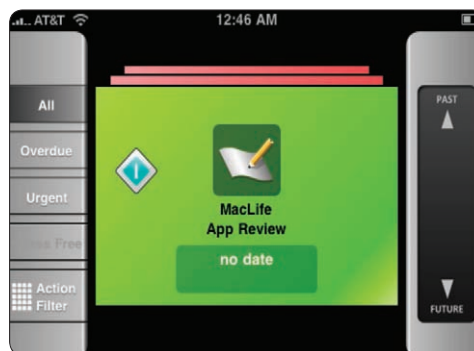
Flip your device to get a Stickies-meets-Time Machine view of to-do's.

ToDoGenius 1.0.2
Ipanamea
www.todogenius.com
$7.99

GREAT ▪▪▪▪▫ iPHONE

GUITAR HERO

Guitar Hero for the iPhone won't fulfill your rock-god dreams, but it will rock you in its own mobile way. That's because Activision adds swipe notes to the cascading audio timeline iPhone gamers are accustomed to with other music games. The swipe brings new finger action to the music genre that, surprisingly, doesn't feel like a gimmick. The app ships with six songs, and $1.99 three-song packs are available via in-app purchases. As of press time, the pickings were slim, and songs were only sold as bundles—a bummer if you only want one song out of the pack.

The bottom line. We did encounter a few bugs, and the inability to fail at a song took away some of the urgency of getting all the notes correct. Still, the game rocked our morning commute.
—*Roberto Baldwin*

I wanna rock! Especially if it involves giant fireballs.

Guitar Hero 1.0.0
Activision
hub.guitarhero.com/games/ghiphone/
$2.99

GOOD ▪▪▪▪▫ iPHONE

PUTTING DOWN THE SNOOZE-PAPER

Healthy iPad options make your RSS feeds A-OK

Like it or not, RSS feeds are the news carriers of the future. Instead of having a newspaper delivered to me each morning by a kid on a bike, I get my news delivered to me each second through the blazingly fast internet tubes. What's more, RSS feeds allow me to subscribe to only those things I actually care about, meaning no more flipping through boring business sections to get to my comics. The problem is most


If it looks like a newspaper and feels like a newspaper, it might not be a newspaper.

iPad feed aggregators (a fancy term for RSS collectors) are as ugly as sin or as hard to understand as another *Jersey Shore* spinoff. So I set out to locate the best and brightest ways to consume RSS news on my iPad's gorgeous screen.

That quest first brought me to the much-hyped Pulse News Reader ($4, alphonsolabs .com). Steve Jobs took a liking to this bad boy and showed it off live at WWDC. Later that day, Apple pulled it from the App Store after receiving complaints that it was utilizing *New York Times'* newsfeed. However, it's back and now more *Times*-less than ever. Pulse utilizes columns of news that can be navigated both vertically and horizontally. Most of the news items are displayed as a thumbnail with a small headline underneath. Pulse can also track top stories on Digg and constantly showed off new tweets from my Twitter feed.

Clicking on a thumbnail brought up an unassuming grey background with easy-to-read black text. The thumbnails dimmed slightly after being clicked to indicate which stories had been read, and altogether Pulse was attractive and easy to use.

I'd also heard about Reeder ($5, reederapp.com), an app that was getting more buzz than a vuvuzela at the World Cup, so I decided to give it a try. Reeder imports all your feeds from Google Reader with a straightforward login and then displays them in a minimal, stylish stack format. However, I didn't use Google Reader before my RSS quest, and Reeder's inability to add feeds from the app was initially a bad sign. If you haven't used it, Google Reader (google.com/reader) is an effective but ridiculously ugly site that compiles multiple feeds that you subscribe to. Reeder, on the other hand, is by far the cleanest, most stylish RSS feeder to use. That's because Reeder puts all your news in virtual stacks of papers. Folders (which are easy to make at Googlereader.com) can be reverse-pinched to display the folder's contents. News stories can be pinched back into their stacks, and headlines swiped to be marked as read or made favorites, or tapped to display in full story form. The ease with which these functions are accomplished is remarkable; Reeder feels like an app created
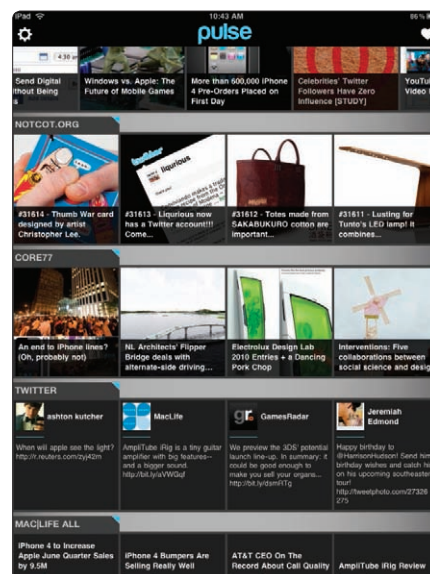
A classy layout and look proves the Stanford-student creators had their fingers on the pulse.

The Reeder app has more input commands than you can shake a finger at.

RSS feeds allow me to subscribe to only those things I care about...like the comics.

by Apple to show off the possibilities of an iPad. The last stop on my quest was The Early Edition ($5, glasshouseapps.com), a straightforward aggregator that delivered my news in nostalgia-inducing newspaper format. After using Reeder, I wanted to use pinches and swizzles and swoopydedoops and all the other fancy input functions it had implemented. But what The Early Edition lacks in input functions, it makes up for in ease of use; everything is simple—including importing RSS feeds, OMPL folders, and Google Reader accounts. The Early Edition is also a good starting point for people unfamiliar with RSS as it comes jam-packed with recommended feeds.

All of the apps I tested did similar things, but they all had distinct advantages. If you're not afraid to drop a couple bones to test out what works best for you, you might prefer one of these three great RSS readers over the other. Unfortunately, the same can't be said about your paperboy, who might just be replaced.—*Nic Vargus*

Reviews

TOUGH TESTING, TRUSTED RATINGS

PHOTOGRAPHY BY MARK MADEO

APPLE 2.4GHZ CORE 2 DUO MAC MINI

This mini is mighty

Apple's been pouring its design magic into handhelds lately, but now the lowly Mac mini joins the ranks of unibody hotness, complete with a glossy, almost liquid-looking black Apple logo on top. The smooth aluminum brick has zero screws or visible seams, just a round black hatch on the bottom that pops off with a twist, letting you upgrade the included 2GB of DDR3 memory to a maximum of 8GB. Gone and not missed is the sweaty pleasure of prying open a previous-generation mini with a putty knife.

The unibody mini is only 1.4 inches high, measuring 7.7 inches square and weighing 3 pounds. It's even shed the bulky power brick for a built-in power supply and a regular old cable. It's more efficient too, consuming under 10 watts of power when idle, which Apple says is 25 percent better than the last generation. Even the package is smaller, roughly the size of a takeout salad container.

But good things come in small packages, including a zippy 2.4GHz Core 2 Duo processor. The integrated Nvidia GeForce 320M graphics processor shares its 256MB of memory with the main system RAM, but we saw respectable performance, clocking 47 frames per second in Call of Duty 4. **Of all the machines we've tested this year, only the Core i5 MacBook Pro beats that benchmark—pretty impressive for an entry-level Mac.** Read more about the test results at maclife.com/mid2010macmini.

The mini's ports include one FireWire 800, four USB 2.0, Ethernet, an SD card slot, and two video-out ports: Mini DisplayPort and HDMI.

It can simultaneously support a 1920x1200 HDMI or DVI display and a 2560x1600 Mini DisplayPort or VGA screen, giving you lots of options whether the mini lives in your living room or office. Making its first appearance ever on a Mac, HDMI provides both 1080p video and 8-channel 24-bit audio in one cable. Apple also includes a video-only HDMI-to-DVI adapter.

While bumping up the specs, Apple also bumped up the price. This mini starts at $699 (2.4GHz processor, 320GB hard drive), $100 more than the last version (2.26GHz, 160GB hard drive). The pricey DDR3 RAM is getting cheaper all the time—the full 8GB upgrade runs $500 from Apple or (at this writing) around $290 from Ramjet.com or Other World Computing (macsales.com).

Unfortunately, Apple considers the RAM the only user-serviceable part. It's a shame to have that huge hole in the bottom and still not be able to upgrade the hard drive, which only comes in 320GB and 500GB capacities. iFixit.com has DIY instructions, but you have to move a lot of parts—including the logic board, which sounds incredibly nerve-wracking to us.

And the port placement—everything on the back—makes it awkward to plug in flash drives and SD cards, depending on where the mini is stashed. Moving the power button, SD card slot, and two of the four USB ports to the front would help, even if it would mar the mini's perfect form.

The bottom line. The new Mac mini's strong consumer-level performance, beautiful design, and good value make it a tempting choice, especially if you find the iMacs' and MacBooks' standard screens far too glossy. If replacing the hard drive were an Apple-approved upgrade, it'd be just about perfect.
—*Susie Ochs*

The new unibody mini provides a hatch on the bottom that you can quickly pop off to upgrade the RAM.

2.4GHZ CORE 2 DUO MAC MINI

Apple
apple.com
Price: $699
Specs: 2.4GHz Core 2 Duo, 2GB DDR3 SDRAM, 3MB shared L2 cache, 320GB 5,400-rpm SATA hard drive, Nvidia GeForce 320M graphics processor with 256MB of DDR3 shared with main memory, 4 USB 2.0 ports, FireWire 800 port, SD card slot, Mini DisplayPort, HDMI port, audio in, audio out, built-in speaker, Gigabit Ethernet, 802.11n AirPort Extreme, Bluetooth 2.1+EDR

➕ Great performance for the value. Easy-access RAM slots for a maximum of 8GB. HDMI out.

➖ Inconveniently located SD card slot and USB ports. Hard drive isn't upgradeable.

Mac|Life RATED **GREAT**

ADOBE PHOTOSHOP LIGHTROOM 3

Adobe's pro tool is better than ever, but does that mean it's the best?

For everyday snapshots of your kids, your dog, and your road trip to see the world's largest ball of twine, your Mac comes with iPhoto, a simple way to organize and edit your photos. But pro shutterbugs and photography enthusiasts need far more serious tools to manage ever-growing libraries of tens of thousands of images. Adobe's latest iteration of Lightroom aims to answer that call with pro-level organization and photo management, as well as robust editing tools for perfecting your shots.

In fact, Lightroom 3's editing tools are the real strong point. Edits are nondestructive, so you can go back and tweak (or remove) any of the adjustments you've made or create multiple versions of the same image

natural grain effect, perspective-correction tools for fixing things like converging verticals in tall buildings, and a more natural-looking vignette effect.

On the back end, Adobe has completely re-engineered Lightroom 3 to improve overall performance, and this is especially noticeable with big catalogs and high-resolution images. Even on a modestly powered MacBook with 2GB RAM, our test library of 30,000 images loaded noticeably faster than it did in the previous version of Lightroom.

Some other impressive changes improve input and output. Adobe has streamlined importing photos, and the new tethered shooting lets you connect certain cameras directly to your Mac, sending shots into

Lightroom as you go—perfect for studio photography. On the output side, Lightroom 3 supports visible watermarks, multi-image print layouts, and exporting photo slideshows as HD movies, complete with soundtracks. Lightroom can also now sync your photos to a Flickr account for automatic web sharing.

So Lightroom 3 is a seriously

Lightroom's stacking tools aren't as good as Aperture's, but the great Filter menus in the Library view make it easy to narrow down your searches.

with different treatments. Lightroom doesn't support layers, masks, or other advanced Photoshop tools, but for many photo enhancements, it's quicker than pulling out Adobe's big gun.

One of the best new features is automatic lens correction, which can correct for distortion, chromatic aberration, and vignetting for each of your lenses. Downloadable profiles are available for popular lenses, and if there isn't one for your favorite glass, you can create and save your own for later re-use. The RAW conversion process has also been improved, enhancing fine detail. New noise-reduction tools produce smoother images at high ISOs without serious loss of quality, and the sharpening is also improved. When using both features, you do need a bit of skill to get the balance just right, but that's always been the case with noise reduction and sharpening. Other changes include a

powerful professional tool. But is it better than Apple's Aperture 3? When comparing the two, Aperture is much better at organizing images. It has a clean, uncluttered interface, it scrolls through thumbnails a little more snappily than Lightroom, and its ability to store albums both inside and outside projects provides much more flexibility than Lightroom's confusing Folders (on the hard disk) and Collections (virtual albums), which really don't mesh well. While Aperture excels as a cataloguing tool, Lightroom has the edge when it comes to editing.

The bottom line. It's a no-brainer for Lightroom 2 users thinking of upgrading, but Lightroom 3 versus Aperture 3 is another story. If cataloguing is more important, then Aperture is the way to go, but Lightroom's beefier editing tools offer more flexibility for pro photographers and advanced hobbyists.
—*Rod Lawton*

PHOTOSHOP LIGHTROOM 3

Adobe
adobe.com
Price: $299; $99 upgrade
Requirements: Mac OS 10.5 or later; Intel processor

➕ Superb image-editing tools. Web-, slideshow-, and print-output options are even better than before. New lens corrections. Widespread performance improvements

➖ $100 more than Aperture 3. Screen-hungry interface. Collection and stacking limitations.

Mac|Life RATED **GREAT**

ETERNAL STORMS FLICKERY

A smarter, better way to Flickr

Since Flickr's inception in 2004, shutterbugs have been posting their photos to flickr.com for the world to see—and comment on. And Flickery from Eternal Storms improves that experience by providing a portal that makes everything cleaner and faster.

Flickery sports the now-familiar pane-based interface of iTunes and iPhoto. The column on the left offers one-click access to images marked as Favorites, drop-down menus for your photosets, and folders for your searches. Search terms can be used to quickly drill down to specific locations, descriptive text, tags, and users. Prior searches are persistent and refresh whenever you open Flickery, so it's easy to keep tabs on your favorite Flickr users or tags. When you're done with a particular search, they can be quickly nixed.

The main display area shows images in a grid, and a slider on the bottom increases the number of photos onscreen to a maximum of 21 at a time. The right-hand pane lets you view and post comments, as well as edit photo titles, tags, and descriptions. Photo geeks can also peek at EXIF data, great for picking out behind-the-scenes

It's Flickr, only faster.
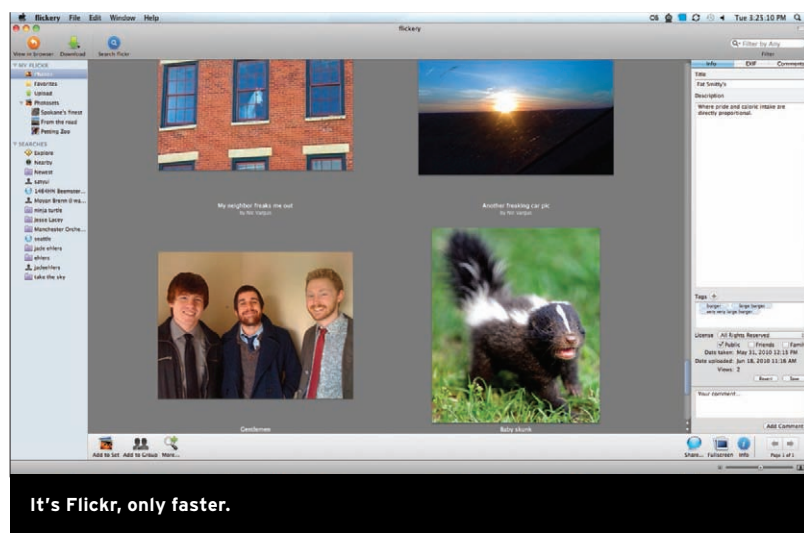
details. If a photo has geotag data embedded in it, Flickery can easily show you other images taken nearby. Additional photo information, like comments and licenses, are tabbed and can be hidden for more picture-viewing real estate.

Flickery also gives you some editing tools for your images. Although Flickery can't access Picnik, the official Flickr editing client, it does come with its own rudimentary editing system. The built-in tools aren't for serious polishing, but they're nice for fine-tuning brightness or image sharpness.

And speaking of your images, getting your masterworks online with Flickery is a snap. The Upload tab includes options for sending photos and videos to Flickr, as well as recording quick screencasts and grabbing screenshots. Obviously, photo and video uploads are the functions you'll use most often, but the others are so simple that you might as well take advantage of them if you need to.

The bottom line. Flickery is faster, cleaner, and arguably an all-around better experience than Flickr. Frequent users shouldn't hesitate to drop $18 on this impressive software.—*Nic Vargus*

FLICKERY

Eternal Storms
eternalstorms.com
Price: $17.95
Requirements: Mac OS 10.5 or later, free Flickr account

➕ Everything is always in one window. Does nearly everything Flickr does. Spells "flicker" correctly.

➖ A little slow to enlarge photos. Limited editing from within app. No group view for photosets.

Mac|Life RATED **EXCELLENT**

A slim, ultra-portable scanner comes in handy more often than you might think.

APPARENT DOXIE

Simply adorable

From the moment you take it out of the box, Doxie will charm you—and not just because it's adorned with pink heart stickers. Doxie is a portable, easy-to-use scanner that may very well replace that huge hunk of a scanner you have collecting dust in the corner of your home office—as long as your scanning needs fall into the "nothing too complicated" category.

Setting up Doxie is a snap. All you have to do is plug it in to a USB port (no AC power required), download the software from getdoxie.com, and feed through a calibration page. And speaking of feeding, sending documents and photos through the scanner is a cinch, and Doxie easily handles oddly sized paper. You do have to take care to align pages as they enter the feeder, though, or the resulting scans end up a bit skewed.

The best part about the software is its social-networking integration. You can set up the software to share your scanned items via popular sites like Twitter, Tumblr, Google Docs, and Flickr. Additionally, the free Doxie Cloud service allows you to upload your files and generate a short URL valid for a certain amount of time, ranging anywhere from one week to three months. These time-limited links can be useful, but we'd also like the ability to password-protect certain documents for added security.

The scan quality of the Doxie is fine for casual use. Business travelers will also like its slim, ultra-portable form factor and the fact that it doesn't require a bulky AC adapter. Pro users, though, will find the Doxie's tech specs a bit soft. For starters, this scanner isn't a flatbed, so it's only good for sheets of paper that can be fed through the device (up to 8.5 by 14 inches). And Doxie's resolution tops out at 600 dpi. The color quality of the scanned photos is slightly washed out, but scans of black and white text documents were satisfactory. Getting our scans perfectly straight was also a challenge, though the software does allow you to rotate the scans if things get a little out of whack.

The scanning software that comes bundled with Doxie is incredibly simple to use. To scan a document, press the Scan button in the software window, or press the heart-shaped button on the device itself. As soon as your scan is finished, the software displays a window with several customization options. You can add more pages to scan a multipage document into a single file, as well as perform minor photo corrections like cropping and tweaking the contrast, brightness, and saturation. You can also configure the Doxie scanner software to open your scanned images in other applications for editing, like Adobe Photoshop, Picasa, and iPhoto.

The bottom line. Casual users and travelers will appreciate the ease and portability of this adorable little scanner, but serious professionals should look for something a little more…serious.—*Florence Ion*

DOXIE

Apparent
getdoxie.com
Price: $129
Requirements: USB port. Mac OS 10.5 or later

➕ Extremely portable. Quickly scans documents and photos. Online storage and social-networking integration is convenient.

➖ Scanned photos aren't color-accurate. Oddly sized items tend to skew if not fed through the scanner straight. Highest resolution is 600 dpi.

Mac|Life RATED — **GOOD**

With EyeTV One, you don't need a TV—or even an internet connection—to catch up on all of your favorite shows.

ELGATO EYETV ONE

TV on your Apple—no downloads required

If you were one of the *Lost* faithful that missed the series finale because of a scheduling *faux pas*—yes, we're still mad about that—you'll be glad to hear that Elgato's EyeTV One can keep you on track with your favorite shows. This simple digital TV tuner can transform your Mac into a TV, and best of all, the included EyeTV 3 software schedules and records shows for later viewing.

Out of the box, EyeTV One is incredibly user-friendly. Setup amounts to little more than plugging in a coaxial DTV antenna—which you'll need to purchase separately—and plugging the EyeTV One into a USB port. From there, the EyeTV 3 software is the real brains behind the operation: an Auto-Tune option retrieves a list of channels available in your area, while the program guide—provided free for the first year from TV Guide, then for $19.95 a year after that—lets you know what's on.

In our testing, the EyeTV picked up about 30 different channels in a residential San Francisco neighborhood. At the *Mac|Life* office, located in an office park farther away from "civilization," we got half as many channels, so the usefulness of the EyeTV depends largely on your location and the reception of your antenna. Using a simple 12-inch antenna placed near a window, we got HD feeds of network affiliates and lower-powered local stations.

While you can use the EyeTV to watch live TV from your Mac, the best features are its recording and exporting abilities, giving your Mac DVR (digital video recorder) superpowers. We manually recorded individual shows and set the EyeTV software to automatically pick up episodes of our favorites using the Smart Guide feature. And if there are reruns to avoid, you can manually select showings to skip.

But don't throw out your dedicated TiVo box just yet. The EyeTV One is a single-tuner affair. You can't flip channels when you have a recording in progress, and you can't record two shows simultaneously. But recordings can be converted for Apple TV or your iOS device, shared with other computers in your network, or burned to a DVD with Toast or another external app for archiving. There's also a nifty, easy-to-use iPhone app to help you schedule and stream recordings while you're away from your home computer, though that'll cost you $4.99.

The bottom line. Coupled with the EyeTV 3 software, EyeTV One is a simple, portable way to pipe digital broadcasts into your Mac.—*Florence Ion*

EYETV ONE

Elgato
elgato.com
Price: $119.95
Requirements: Intel processor, Mac OS 10.5.8 or later, your own antenna

➕ Free, over-the-air high-definition television. Powerful recording tools.

➖ You'll have to pay for TV Guide service after the first year. No bundled antenna. Only one tuner. Annoying pop-up ads in the program guide.

Mac|Life RATED — **GOOD**

BLUE MICROPHONES YETI

Record the call of the wild

Bigfoot may get the majority of the media's attention, especially after his stint on *The Six Million Dollar Man*. But the real star in the half-man/half-bear/monkey/gorilla arena is the Yeti. While Bigfoot is out stomping his footprint into mud, the Blue Microphone Yeti (shown left at very close to its actual size) is doing a bang-up job recording your podcasts, band practices, and events. Pretty good for a mythical creature—er, an affordably priced USB mic.

Blue is known for its line of microphones for nerds, but the Yeti mic takes the company's dedication to computer-connected mics to the next level. It includes on-mic controls for selectable audio-recording patterns (stereo, cardioid, omnidirectional, and bidirectional), the ability to adjust the gain, a volume control for connected headphones, and a light-up mute button for when you're sneezing— or saying things your mom wouldn't approve of.

The mic itself is a solid piece of hardware. Its heft keeps it planted on your desk without worry of knocking it over during spirited recording sessions. If Edward R. Murrow needed a USB mic, this is what he would have on his desk. For you singers out there, the base can be removed and the Yeti can be attached to a standard microphone stand.

But let's not forget that all the whiz-bang features in the world don't matter if the mic can't deliver the audio goods. And the Yeti does just that. Our audio recordings sounded crisp and clean. The stereo recording setting was especially impressive. Audio panned smoothly as the sound source moved around the room. When recording in cardioid mode (intended to cut down on background "air" in your recordings) we had to lean in close to the mic. It's okay for singing, but it can get tiresome for longer sessions like podcasting. Overall the audio recording was stellar—and we didn't even need to download drivers. We just plugged it into GarageBand and were ready to go.

The bottom line. If you need to capture quality live recordings on your Mac, the Yeti will definitely deliver—and you get to look like an old-timey newscaster.—*Roberto Baldwin*

YETI

Blue Microphones
bluemic.com
Price: $149.95
Requirements: Mac OS 10.4.11 or later, USB 1.1 or later

➕ Hard controls on mic. Excellent audio recording quality.

➖ Controls on back of mic are awkward. Cardioid mode can sound thin.

Mac|Life RATED   GREAT ▪▪▪▪▫

COCOON GRAMERCY MESSENGER SLING

A mixed messenger

Cocoon's Gramercy bag tries to make carrying your iPad into a fashion statement of its own. And hey, why not? The iPad is sleek, sexy, and undeniably cool—shouldn't it have a case to match? As if in answer to that question, this bag nicks its name from the crazy-fashionable Gramercy neighborhood of Manhattan, but its overall stylishness is more plain and pedestrian. It's available in black, grey, or red, and provides just enough space to schlep an iPad and the included Grid-It accessory organizer.

The Gramercy is a vertical messenger-style bag. The front features a small pocket sized to fit an iPhone or iPod touch, and the clear plastic material allows you to change songs, answer calls, and otherwise operate your device normally without removing it from the pocket. That pocket is a necessity because the bag's only zippered pouch will be occupied by the included Grid-It organizer, a hardback board created to transport all of your accessories. The back can double as a mouse pad, but it's the weave of elastic bands on the front that makes Grid-It worth carrying. To keep all your cables, power adapters, and earbuds in place, simply slip your gear under the ribbed stripes. Though it's not much to look at, the Grid-It works remarkably well. We could barely shake anything free from the Grid-It board when we loaded it with stuff from our desks. It worked fine with both small items and bulkier stuff like sunglasses. With the iPad in the back sleeve, a fully loaded Grid-It fits in the zippered section with room to spare.

Almost everything about the Gramercy feels solid. The bag is made from ballistic nylon and has a heavy-duty zipper. But the strap is a bit wimpy—we wouldn't trust it with anything heavy, and the Gramercy is too small for serious loads anyway. Which is basically its major flaw. It won't help you haul a laptop, and if all

The red Gramercy looks like what you'd get if a defibrillator bag and a first-aid kit had a love child.

you're carrying is an iPad, you're probably not going to need to carry all the accessories intended to fit on the Grid-It. This poses a bit of an existential problem for the bag as an object for daily use. If it can't carry everything you'll need (and it can't), then why use it at all? Ultimately, this bag is filling a small niche for people who need a way to haul around iPads but not laptops, books, or even just a sandwich.

The bottom line: As long as you can travel lightly enough, the Gramercy messenger is a solid iPad bag with a very useful accessory.
—*Nic Vargus*

This seemingly simple design works better than you'd imagine and makes carrying accessories effortless.

GRAMERCY MESSENGER SLING

Cocoon
cocooninnovations.com
Price: $29.99
Requirements: iPad

➕ Snug fit without being too tight. Front iPhone/iPod pocket is useful. Grid-It securely holds your accessories. Good price.

➖ Shoulder strap is a touch on the wimpy side. Bag is too small to fit more than an iPad.

Mac|Life RATED | **SOLID**
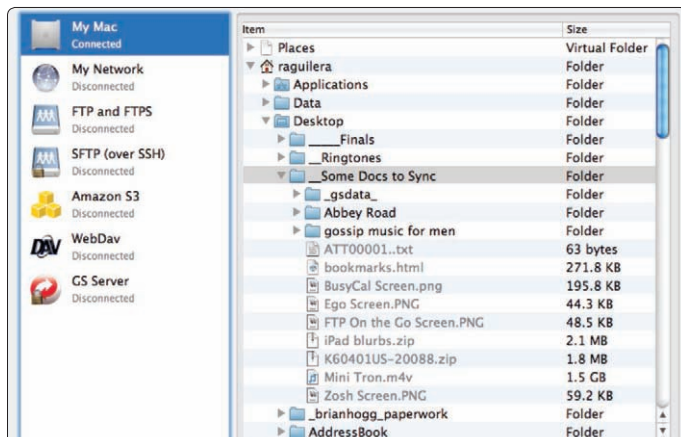
Don't let the complicated-looking interface scare you away. It's easier than it looks, even if you're not a power user.

SIBER SYSTEMS GOODSYNC PRO

Reliably keeps your files in sync

With the Mac's drag-and-drop interface, you'd think duplicating files would be a snap. And if all you're doing is a simple, one-time copy job, it is. But OS X doesn't offer much help if you want to regularly keep files in sync. Sure, Time Machine handles backups, but even that has its limits. You might want to work on your local machine for speed's sake, but then regularly copy your work over to a network drive, for example. Or maybe you have a set of working files that needs to be dumped to a USB stick at the end of every work day. GoodSync can handle both of those situations easily—and it can be used in place of Time Machine if Apple's simple backup doesn't quite meet your needs.

At its core, GoodSync copies files from Point A to Point B. It doesn't sound like much, but when Point A is your office machine and Point B is your Mac at home, the power of GoodSync quickly becomes apparent. You're not limited to folders on a single machine or network, either. GoodSync is compatible with FTP, SFTP, and WebDAV servers, as well as Amazon's pay-as-you-go S3 file storage (aws.amazon.com/s3). So no matter what your hardware configuration is, cross-platform GoodSync helps you build your own file-synchronization setup.

GoodSync's interface feels a bit overwhelming at first, but after some brief study, the configuration screens will have you building bidirectional (for keeping two file sets in step) or one-way syncs (for backing up to a second location). We wish the Mac application had built-in help, but the web-based manual is thorough, if a little technical.

The bottom line. It may not feel very Mac-like, but GoodSync offers flexible file syncing whether you're working with a single Mac, a local network, or keeping data in the cloud.—*Ray Aguilera*

NIKON COOLPIX L110

The 15x zoom delivers, but this low-cost shooter is light on extra features

The CoolPix L110 is a low-cost superzoom from Nikon's "L" line of consumer shooters, and while its 15x zoom is attractive, the camera's other features are somewhat limited. For users with modest needs, the 12-megapixel L110 offers straightforward photography at a good price, but advanced shooters will quickly outgrow the L110's minimal feature set.

The 15x zoom is the camera's marquee offering, covering a range equivalent to 28–420mm, which is plenty for all but the most extreme sports or wildlife shots. While other superzooms offer DSLR-style manual exposure modes, the L110 is auto-only, which is a significant limitation. Here's two more: the camera runs on four AA batteries, rather than rechargeable lithium-ion cells (Nikon says it can take up to 270 shots on a set of ordinary alkaline cells and 840 shots on more expensive lithium AAs). And it has no electronic viewfinder, so pictures are composed solely on the three-inch LCD.

The L110 has just five operational modes—Easy Auto, Scene, Smart Portrait, Sport Continuous, and Auto—which are selected via a button on the back of the L110. The interface is basic in a way that makes it clear that the L110 is designed for snapshot shooters rather than photo experts. The Easy Auto mode offers automatic scene mode selection, though it uses only a handful of the more common scene modes, such as Macro, Portrait, and Landscape, and the camera often takes a few seconds to figure out the appropriate mode. You need to switch to Scene mode to choose from the full range of preset options. For capturing people, Smart Portrait mode uses face and smile detection to snap frames, though it's a bit hit-or-miss—and depends on what the camera interprets as a smile. In a lot of cases, you're better off with one of the other shooting modes.

Sport Continuous mode lets you shoot at speeds of up to 11.1 frames per second and for 20 shots in succession, but the resolution is limited to just three megapixels, and for some reason the camera uses a minimum ISO of 640. The manual does warn you to expect more noise and that shooting in bright light may lead to overexposure, but still...

The plain Auto mode is where you get the most control over your photographs, though there really isn't very much to play with apart from ISO, white balance, and image size and quality. The good news, though, is that while the L110 is certainly basic, that makes the camera very simple to use. Autofocus is responsive, even at full zoom, and apart from a slight dead spot in the middle, the zoom travels quickly from one end of its range to the other.

This dead spot in the zoom becomes a lot more obvious in the HD movie mode, where the zoom speed plummets and the autofocus becomes painfully slow. But even the more expensive Nikon CoolPix P100 (Aug/10, p64, 3.5 stars) has the same problem—and a lot of digital cameras with movie modes don't zoom or autofocus at all while filming. While it's important to point out the L110's limitations, it's equally important to point out that it's still pretty good for a stills camera—especially at this price.

It's a similar story with the picture quality. The lens loses definition toward the edge of the picture, but it's sharp in the center, even at full zoom. It's not the best, for sure, but for the money, it's better than we expected.

The bottom line. The L110 is pretty basic, and some of its features are quite slow to use or have annoying limitations. But in its standard Auto mode, it delivers good quality, it's easy to use, and it's very good value.—*Rod Lawton*

The L110 lacks the manual controls and some of the advanced photographic features of more expensive superzooms.

NIKON COOLPIX L110

Nikon
nikonusa.com
Price: $279.95
Requirements: Mac OS 10.4.11, 10.5.8, 10.6, or later; USB port; SD or SDHC memory card

➕ 15x 28–420mm zoom. 3-inch, 460,000 pixel LCD. Autofocus and zoom speed. Value for money. Comes in snazzy red or basic black.

➖ Very little manual control. Limitations in Easy Auto, Smart Portrait, and Sport Continuous modes.

Mac|Life **GOOD**
RATED

SCOSCHE FLIPSYNC

Until the day we can sync our iPods wirelessly, cables are essential

When is an iPod cable more than just an iPod cable? And when will you finally solve the seemingly constant problem of never having one handy when you need it? When it's on your keychain.

Scosche makes a number of über-useful iPod/iPhone accessories, and the FlipSync is a fully functional Dock Connector–to–USB cable that folds up into a compact unit that measures less than two inches long and weighs just 0.3 ounces. A separate version providing USB-to-mini USB connectivity is also available. With the connectors tucked away, it's smaller than the fob that unlocks your car.

Since the ends are both attached to one 5.3-inch cable that runs through the plastic piece in the center, they need to be pulled out one at a time. First you pull the 30-pin dock connector out of one end, then the flat USB 2.0 connector on the other end—Scosche subtly labels these 1 and 2 so you remember. When you fold the FlipSync back up again, the USB end is replaced first, then the dock connector. Well-made and sturdy, the FlipSync ably does its job, and *we used it in a MacBook Pro's crowded USB ports without pulling it off our keychain, which was also occupied by eight keys and a car fob.* And keeping it with our keys also gave us a natural excuse not to loan it out to people, which is the No. 1 way iPod cables get lost at *Mac|Life* HQ (our coworkers must think we get them for free).

The bottom line. Apple charges $19 for a basic cable, which is highway robbery. Scosche's version isn't cheaper, but its utility and convenience give you plenty of bang for your buck.—*Susie Ochs*

Fully extended, it's 5.3 inches. Closed up, less than 2.

FLIPSYNC

Scosche
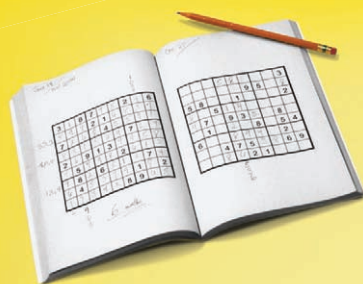scosche.com
Price: $19.99
Requirements: iPod or iPhone with 30-pin dock connector

➕ Folds up into a lightweight keychain. Sturdy. Convenient.

➖ Can be tricky to plug in to an iMac since the cable is so short.

Mac|Life RATED — **GREAT**

WESTERN DIGITAL WD TV LIVE PLUS

Now playing: Netflix

We still miss our now-defunct local video store, but yes, Netflix movies beamed right to our TV is a pretty fair trade. And if Netflix streaming hasn't found its way to your TV yet via a game console, Blu-ray player, or TiVo, the WD TV Live Plus (the fourth iteration in Western Digital's line of home media players) makes a great purchase. After all, who doesn't want to pipe their digital videos, music, and photos to their existing TV and stereo these days? If that's a superpower your living room lacks, the Live Plus can be your radioactive spider with minimal hassle and none of that messy biting.

At 3.94x4.94x1.57 inches, the petite WD TV Live Plus is the same size as its predecessor (the WD TV Live), and hooking it to your entertainment center is as easy as plugging in a few cables. An HDMI or component port connects it to your HDTV for awesome hi-def video, while a composite A/V out and a Toslink audio out talk to your receiver. Add in a USB drive full of media and an Ethernet connection for streaming media from network-connected media shares, and you're off.

Using the bundled remote, the Live Plus's interface is perfect for navigating from couch distance. **The headlining new feature is support for Netflix streaming. And unlike many Netflix-compatible devices, this one lets you actually add items to your Instant Queue from the device itself**. But don't get too happy just yet. While you can browse several category lists on the Live Plus—

New Arrivals, and various genre lists, for example—there's no way to search Netflix for specific content, so you'll still need to head to a Mac (or any number of iPhone apps) to do real queue management.

But like setting up the WD TV Live Plus itself, activating the box on a Netflix account is a simple affair—we were watching *Die Hard 2: Die Harder* in no time (yes, voluntarily). The Live Plus delivers another serious upgrade, too. Along with the alphabet soup of audio and video file formats already supported by WD TV hardware, it now supports DVD navigation. So rather than converting all your discs to folders of menuless, flat files, you can now use the Live Plus to easily navigate disc images, including special features and extra content. It mirrors the experience of playing back the original discs themselves, and travelers, cinephiles, and parents of disc-destroying toddlers will appreciate this extra flexibility—especially its added benefit of eliminating time you'd otherwise spend transcoding video files to whatever digital format your player of choice requires.

The bottom line. We would've liked to have seen full Netflix search capabilities, but the Live Plus's streaming works great, and its support for DVD navigation makes it feasible to set one up as the hub of your digital film library.—*Ray Aguilera*

WD TV LIVE PLUS

Western Digital
wdc.com
Price: $149.99
Requirements: TV with HDMI, Composite, or Component input

➕ Simplest way to get video files from Mac to TV. Supports a huge range of audio and video formats.

➖ Netflix feature lets you browse predefined lists, but there's no search capability.

Mac|Life RATED **GREAT** ■■■■□

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VIRTUAL TIMECLOCK '10 PRO EDITION
Punch the clock

Tracking your work hours has evolved considerably since Fred Flintstone held a slab of rock in a bird's mouth and bonked it on the head. Virtual TimeClock '10, the latest product to tackle the job, has refined employee time tracking to the point where clocks, cards, and their attendant administrative tedium are handily tamed. As the name suggests, Virtual
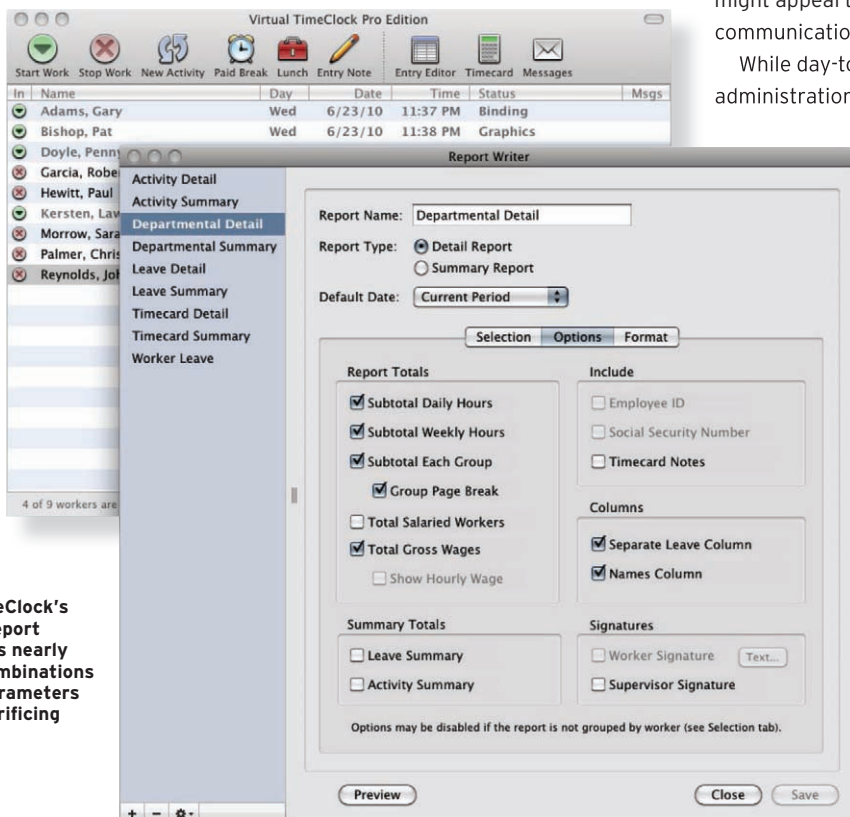
Virtual TimeClock's excellent Report Writer offers nearly limitless combinations of report parameters without sacrificing ease of use.

TimeClock replicates the functionality of the traditional employee time clock. The Basic edition runs on a single computer and allows up to three employees. The Pro edition we reviewed removes the three-employee cap and adds features like overtime tracking, vacation accrual, unpaid hours, and a variety of reports. The Network edition pairs a server application with client software to enable multiple interconnected time-clock stations across one or more physical locations.

From an employee's perspective, using Virtual TimeClock could hardly be simpler. It does away with paper or magnetic-stripe cards, and employees simply double-click their name on a list to clock in or out. An optional password can be assigned for employees to enter before they clock in or out as well. For organizations that need to track more than simple hours, Virtual TimeClock can track specific

activities—useful for situations where you need to track billable hours. Employees can also add a note to any time-clock entry, documenting a flat tire on the way to work, for example. And a built-in messaging system lets users exchange messages. We're guessing that not many people relish the thought of yet another inbox to manage, but the closed nature of the system might appeal to HR departments who need a private communication channel.

While day-to-day use for employees is simple, administration of Virtual TimeClock is significantly more involved. Setting up the system involves populating eight different lists of information. Some lists require little explanation, like Users and Departments. Others, such as Overtime and Time Deductions, are more complex. A quick-start guide competently takes newbies through the initial configuration process, but a guided setup option would have made the initial heavy lifting much easier. A clear and comprehensive user guide is available, although there aren't any explanatory screenshots to help you through. Since the software is cross-platform, we can cut Redcort a little slack in that department, but some visual references would be a welcome addition to Virtual TimeClock's documentation.

Once you've got TimeClock up and running, it's easy to generate detailed reports from the collected data, starting with a handful of baked-in reports. The Report Writer feature can also be used to modify the existing ones or create entirely new reports to suit the needs of your business. Export options let you share data with other applications, though we'd appreciate a bit more flexibility than either tab- or comma-separated text files. Still, Virtual TimeClock manages to put a simple interface on a very flexible and powerful reporting engine—a very difficult and frequently underappreciated feat.

The bottom line. Virtual TimeClock '10 Pro Edition contains everything a small- to mid-sized company needs to track workers and time-dependent benefits. A lack of visuals in the documentation is made tolerable by a clean and well-thought-out interface. Reporting features can't eliminate rote administrative tasks entirely, but it can make some of them a lot less onerous.—*Stuart Gripman*

VIRTUAL TIMECLOCK '10 PRO EDITION

Redcort Software
redcort.com
Price: $195
Requirements: Mac OS 10.3 or later, 1GHz processor

➕ Simple for employees. Outstanding, highly customizable reporting engine. Cross-platform.

➖ Initial setup can be confusing. Documentation lacks useful illustrations.

Mac|Life RATED **GREAT**

MATIAS TACTILE PRO 3

The sound of success

Apple makes excellent pack-in keyboards—unlike the bizarro world of PCs and their cheap-as-possible extras. But even Apple's standard can be beat, and Matias' new Tactile Pro 3, a USB 2.0 keyboard with a decidedly old-school feel, does just that. Mechanical springs and switches let you feel the action as you type, subtly improving your accuracy and comfort while you're in front of your Mac.

Of all its features, Tactile Pro's keys speak the loudest—literally. The keys click and rebound like clattering rain on a sheet-metal roof. This keyboard definitely won't blend in if you work in a quiet office, and recipients of our phone calls found it distracting. But we embrace the sound and consider it a small price to pay for the precision of mechanical keys. The keys collapse at a point that you can feel, sending commands to a Mac. With either nimble typing or half-hearted stabs, we could tell every time if the key had traveled far enough to register a keystroke.

Tactile Pro gets high marks for its key switches, but its other features back up that success. Contoured key caps cradle your fingers, helping you stay centered. Each key is also etched with its extended characters,

making it easy to use often-forgotten symbols. Two feet raise the back of the keyboard at an angle, although we prefer the default pitch. Three USB ports are useful for flash drives and other accessories even though Matias doesn't officially support charging. Despite that, we were still able to charge an iPhone.

We only have one complaint. We wish the Caps Lock key would stay down when activated. It's a small detail, but it would've provided excellent feedback in a keyboard that otherwise excels at feedback and accuracy.

The bottom line. Its sweet feel—and sound—make the Tactile Pro 3 one of our favorite keyboards ever.—*Zack Stern*

The key action echoes the classic Apple Extended Keyboard.

TACTILE PRO 3

Matias
matias.ca
Price: $149.95
Requirements: Mac OS X; USB port

➕ Great feel keeps you connected to your typing. Symbols and special characters printed on keys. Built-in, three-port USB 2.0 hub. Includes Volume and Eject keys.

➖ Clattering sound can overpower quiet rooms. Caps Lock lights but doesn't stay down when activated.
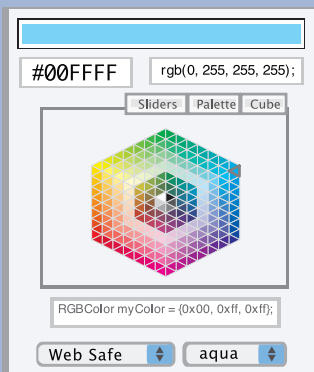
Mac|Life Editors' Choice

Mac|Life RATED — EXCELLENT
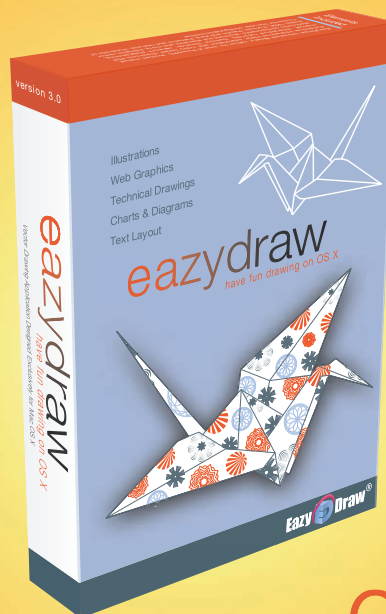
Keyboard Maestro's macro editor offers plenty of options, but its sleek design keeps things simple.

STAIRWAYS SOFTWARE KEYBOARD MAESTRO
Holy macros!

Insanely great as Macs are, using them means losing some of your day to launching apps, hunting down files, and performing other routine iChores. Keyboard Maestro helps reclaim some of that time by letting you create custom macros—keyboard commands that automate lengthy or repetitive tasks and add new productivity tricks to your favorite applications. It's a powerful package that can simplify any Mac user's life, but if you're not already comfortable with Macs, you may need to work a bit harder to get the most from the application.

Keyboard Maestro comes with predefined macros for everything from keyboard control of your cursor to searching Google from any application, but you'll quickly learn how to build your own macros thanks to the streamlined editor and a handy tutorial. Just set a macro's activation trigger, then choose from a searchable library of customizable actions you want to perform. Triggers can be hotkeys, system events, schedules, and more (even commands from the web or the Keyboard Maestro iPhone app). Actions activate button presses, text input, scripts, and almost anything else you can click, type, or move on your Mac. If you don't see the exact action you want, you can record steps taken in any application and add them to your

macro. When it's finished, a macro can be activated individually or in a group, assigned to work globally or only in specific applications, and made available from a menu bar icon or floating palette for quick access. More than a one-trick macro machine, Keyboard Maestro also offers additional palettes that let you manage and control windows, multiple clipboards, and applications on the fly with—yeah, you guessed it—macros.

Despite everything Keyboard Maestro let us do, we still wanted a bit more. Macros can be shared manually, but can't be synced automatically across multiple Macs. Actions are organized strictly according to preset categories; the ability to create our own organizational structure—or to save frequently used actions as favorites—would make macro design even easier. And while Keyboard Maestro strives mightily to meet novice users halfway, the extensive documentation assumes an understanding of nitty-gritty Mac and computer operations that not all users will share.

The bottom line. Minor missing features aside, Keyboard Maestro is a productivity-boosting toolkit worth a serious look. It may not get you out of the office any earlier, but its flexibility and features will juice your productivity.—*Adam Berenstain*

KEYBOARD MAESTRO

Stairways Software Pty Ltd.
keyboardmaestro.com
Price: $36
Requirements: Mac OS 10.5 or later; 10.6 recommended

➕ Lets you easily build shortcuts that speed up routine tasks. Floating palettes put window, app, and clipboard management a click away. Efficient interface.

➖ Doesn't sync shortcuts among Macs or allow custom organization of actions.

Mac|Life RATED   **GREAT**

GRIFFIN A-FRAME

Hefty iPad stand with a price to match

The iPad is great for video, but after about 15 minutes of holding it up, we start looking for ways to use it hands-free. Griffin's A-Frame gives your arm a rest and sports a minimal style that doesn't detract from the iPad itself. If it weren't for the logo plastered on the front, it could almost pass as a piece of modern sculpture. But don't be fooled—there's quite a bit of substance here to go with that style.

A-Frame is as hefty as it is attractive and weighs nearly as much as an iPad. It's built out of thick aluminum with hard edges and silicone grips. It's clear that this isn't a stand to lug around; it's a desktop solution. But the weight adds to A-Frame's functionality. Unlike lighter competitors, the A-Frame stays put as you use your iPad, touching, pinching and scrolling through games, webpages, movies, and documents.

Griffin didn't stop at simply building a sturdy stand, however. Small details help the A-Frame stand out from the competition. For instance, a small recess on the speaker side of the silicone cradle actually makes the iPad a tad louder when you put it upright. The cradle is also wide enough to fit an iPad outfitted with a number of different cases, including Apple's iPad Case.

The stand looks and feels great when the iPad is positioned in either landscape or portrait mode. In portrait mode, a well-designed cut-out in the back lets you plug in for charging or syncing without visible wires. You can also fold up the A-Frame and place it on a desktop, and it'll keep your iPad at an easy typing angle, which also works well if you're using a Bluetooth keyboard. It's a spiffy functionality that you never realized you needed until you have it.

The bottom line. Quality comes with a price, but with a cost as hefty as the aluminum, this stand may not be for everyone.—*Nic Vargus*

The A-frame folds up, but it's still too heavy to carry around regularly.

A-FRAME

Griffin
griffintechnology.com
Price: $49.99
Requirements: iPad

➕ Sturdy. Speaker recess improves sound. Supports portrait, landscape, or table-top orientation. Smartly designed cut-out for plugging in or docking.

➖ Really expensive. Heavy enough to not be portable.

Mac|Life R A T E D **GOOD**

POLAROID 300 INSTANT CAMERA

Shake it like a Polaroid picture

After a two-year hiatus, Polaroid is back with an instant camera that has a whole new look and feel. The Polaroid 300 instant camera is a cross between the company's now-antiquated One600 model and the i-Zone pocket camera from the early 2000s, and taking photos with it is just as much fun as it was with its predecessors.

Loading the film is as easy as always. Simply drop in the film cartridge and hit the shutter button to eject the plastic sheet that protects your film. The camera powers up with a simple pull of the lens, but it takes about 12 seconds to get ready to shoot. The long delay means you'll miss most action shots, but the upside is that the photos develop "instantly," and their small, 2.1x3.4-inch size (roughly a credit card) makes them easy to carry around in your wallet and share with friends.

Each film cartridge gives you 10 exposures, so digital shooters used to grabbing multiple shots at a time will benefit from patience and basic photo composition (since there's no cropping). The instant film is ISO 800, so it can handle low lighting and fast movement, and

it also gives the photos a nice old-school graininess. The 300 lets you choose from four different settings—Indoor, Cloudy, Fine, and Clear—which adjust the camera's aperture for proper exposure. All of the modes trigger the camera's onboard flash when necessary. Photos taken indoors are crisp and clear, though those taken outside on a sunny day with the Fine setting came out overexposed. Though the photos are a smaller form factor than classic Polaroid 600 snaps, they have the same vintage feel as before and take about three minutes to develop fully.

The biggest downside to this charming camera is its price tag—$90 is a bit much for a walk down memory lane. On top of that, it's $10 for each pack of film. **At about a buck a frame, this isn't really a camera for everyday picture-taking.** While the nostalgia alone might be enough for some, a dollar a pop feels steep for images that don't fully replicate the classic Polaroid experience.

The bottom line. If you've got the cash to spare for this nostalgic throwback, the Polaroid 300 is a fun novelty shooter.—*Florence Ion*

POLAROID 300 INSTANT CAMERA

Polaroid
polaroid.com
Price: $89.99
Requirements: Four AA batteries, Polaroid 300 Instant Film

➕ Instant gratification. Has four different picture modes. Photos are small enough to carry around in your wallet.

➖ Expensive. Small images don't quite recapture the classic Polaroid vibe.

Mac|Life **RATED** **GOOD**

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That's www.maclife.com

So, you guys are brothers? We can see the resemblance.

HALF-LIFE 2

Some things are worth waiting for

Almost six years after its release on Windows, the legendary Half-Life 2 has arrived on the Mac thanks to Valve's Steam digital distribution channel. For newcomers to the series, Half-Life 2 is everything the Mac hasn't had since the halcyon days of Marathon—it's a terrific sci-fi/horror first-person shooter with a brain.

Set in a dystopian world where humanity has been enslaved by a multidimensional alien race known as the Combine, Half-Life 2 places you in the role of Dr. Gordon Freeman, a theoretical physicist turned unlikely hero who must battle the Combine and work to free humanity from both the Combine itself and the authoritarian human presence that has seized power since the alien invasion.

The game takes a little while to get going—it'll take about half an hour to obtain your hazardous environment suit and get your hands on the game's first weapon, the mighty crowbar—but it's worth the wait. This isn't your typical first-person shooter. You'll need to solve puzzles to advance, and at times you'll be seriously outnumbered and outgunned—moments that require more brains than brawn to survive.

Despite Half-Life 2's age, this giant of a game still impresses. Beautifully rendered models both create stunning landscapes and convey an incredibly claustrophobic world you can't help but rebel against. The outstanding dialogue draws you into the plot and characters. Those in authority sound like they enjoy their power, the friendly scientists sound lost in their intellectual wanderings, and the rebels gain your sympathy and make you want to fight for their cause. Half-Life 2's unique inventiveness also sets it apart. Where other first-person shooters might immediately grant you a giant arsenal and tell you to shoot everything in sight, Half-Life 2 utilizes quieter strengths: good artificial intelligence, for example, great controls, a terrific physics engine, and pheromone-based pods that can summon a giant insect army to attack your enemies. The awesome gravity gun can draw objects to you and fire almost any object as a projectile—it's as much a tool as it is a weapon.

Valve did well with the port to Mac, but a little more work remains to be done. During testing, the game crashed twice on a Mac Pro running Mac OS 10.6.3, and occasional control glitches emerged that caused the main character to automatically move sideways for 30 to 60 seconds. These are by no means deal-breakers to an otherwise great game, but some patch work isn't out of the question.

The bottom line. A few hiccups aside, this remains one of the finest first-person shooters for any platform—ever. The story and visuals are spectacular, and the inventive gameplay keeps you coming back. For $9.99, it's hard to go wrong, even though the multiplayer mode is in a separate $4.99 game called Half-Life 2: Deathmatch, which wasn't available for the Mac at press time (as soon as it's out, we'll review it on MacLife.com).
—*Chris Barylick*

HALF-LIFE 2

Valve
valvesoftware.com
Price: $9.99
Requirements: 1.8GHz or faster Intel processor, Mac OS 10.5.8 or later, 1GB RAM, ATI X1600 or Nvidia GeForce 8 graphics card or better, 3GB free disk space

➕ Terrific story, great graphics, amazing sound, and inventive gameplay for a meager $9.99 price tag.

➖ Occasional system crashes and control issues make us grateful for Valve's frequent updates.

Mac|Life RATED **EXCELLENT** ■■■■

Zoom in on the busy streets to watch your citizens hustle from one spot to the next.

THE SETTLERS 7: PATHS TO A KINGDOM

Settle down

If managing and expanding a kingdom sounds like a good time, perhaps you haven't thought it all the way through. Governing an empire, as the real-time strategy game The Settlers 7: Path to a Kingdom is eager to point out, is all about micromanaging. Wage wars on too many fronts, and you're toast. Don't research enough technology, you're toast. Don't cut down enough trees...well, you get the point.

Learning how to do all of these things is almost as difficult as doing them. In fact, nearly the entire single-player campaign serves as a tutorial. After you've spent hours of trudging through the game, Settlers is still introducing new objects and features. Sure, series' veterans will have much less trouble becoming acquainted with the controls, pacing, and overall structure of Settlers, but those picking up the series for the first time will struggle through seemingly easy tasks. That's because Settlers isn't incredibly accommodating when it comes to helping players achieve their goals. For instance, if you pause a task in the building queue because you don't have enough resources to build it, construction on the next items will never start. Little frustrations like these arise without any explanation.

Adding to the problem, the campaign doesn't include an easily accessible help system, so if you forget how to do something (and you will), you'll have to pull up a separate site or consult the hardcopy manual. In short, saying Settlers 7 has a long learning curve is like saying Godzilla would be an unpleasant neighbor.

Once you get the hang of the controls and juggling the tasks, you'll promptly be thrown into a roller coaster of emotions. Settlers is constantly challenging, frustrating, and, against all odds, fun, thanks to the generally quick pace. Bouncing from one camp to the next, constantly dashing from one duty to another, and finally defeating your rivals is rewarding on many levels. Still, at certain times the gameplay slows down to a crawl as constructors walk from one end of the map and back—a fast-forward feature would have been a hugely beneficial addition for those moments.

Settlers' distinct visual style makes viewing the cartoony world enjoyable from both a bird's-eye view and a fully zoomed-in street view. The cut-scenes are equally impressive and stylized, but unfortunately they often stutter and sometimes even cut short an important character's dialogue.

Online multiplayer adds yet another layer of depth with matches often lasting well over an hour. Players can fight alongside or against their friends and can also appoint computer players as allies or enemies for full-scale war with up to six players. Connection hiccups are usually resolved through a quick reconnection, which is lucky because Ubisoft's always-online antipiracy software is finicky and bothersome, requiring players to be online at all times to play the game. At certain times, the game even logged out because of a malfunction in the antipiracy software—how lame is that?

The bottom line. Unless manic multitasking is your idea of fun, Settlers won't settle into your gaming rotation.—*Nic Vargus*

THE SETTLERS 7: PATHS TO A KINGDOM (NORTH AMERICAN EDITION)

TransGaming
gametreeonline.com
Price: $49.95 ($59.95 Gold Edition includes downloadable content)
Requirements: Intel Core Duo processor, Mac OS 10.6.3 or later, 2GB RAM, Nvidia or ATI video card with 256MB VRAM, 8GB disk space, internet connection

➕ Fast-paced task juggling is fun. Great artistic style. Tons of ways to achieve victory. ESRB rating: Everyone.

➖ Incredibly difficult learning curve. Glitchy cut-scenes. Micromanaging isn't always fun. Persistent online connection required by Ubisoft's DRM scheme.

Mac|Life RATED **SOLID**

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>>>CANON COMES CLEAN

All of the Macs at our company print to two very expensive network photocopier/ scanners: the Canon ImageRunner 2270 and the Canon ImageRunner 3025. We just upgraded the office to Mac OS 10.6 Snow Leopard, but there are no Snow Leopard drivers on Canon's website! So now we can't print at all! We called Canon, and they told us to downgrade to Leopard or purchase a newer photocopier because ours have been discontinued.

We've received several questions like yours (many of them irate at Canon) since Snow Leopard was released. So we decided to take matters into our own hands and contact Canon to see what the problem is. We phoned Canon several times and also got the same frustrating "downgrade to Leopard or buy a new photocopier" line. That's really not an acceptable answer when you've invested $4,000-plus on a printer, so we continually escalated our calls over a series of weeks until we finally got hold of perhaps the only knowledgeable technician at Canon.

It turns out that there actually *are* Snow Leopard drivers for your ImageRunner printers. They're just hidden on the Canon website, which is why you couldn't find them. In its infinite wisdom, Canon decided to only list its Snow Leopard drivers alongside its very newest ImageRunner models, even though those very same drivers are compatible with nearly 100 older ImageRunner printers.

So the trick is to go to the driver download page for one of Canon's newest ImageRunner printers, such as the ImageRunner 9070 (tinyurl.com/4ul6bc) and download the Snow Leopard driver, which is currently named UFRII_v2.10_MacOSX.zip. Open the ReadMe file that comes with the driver, and you'll see a list of all 100 ImageRunner models that it supports.

Once you install the driver, please note that the configuration is completely different than it was in Mac OS 10.5. Within your Print & Fax System Preference, you no longer choose More Printers, but rather go to IP Printing and choose the LPD protocol. This is outlined in more detail within the updated user manual that comes with the driver.
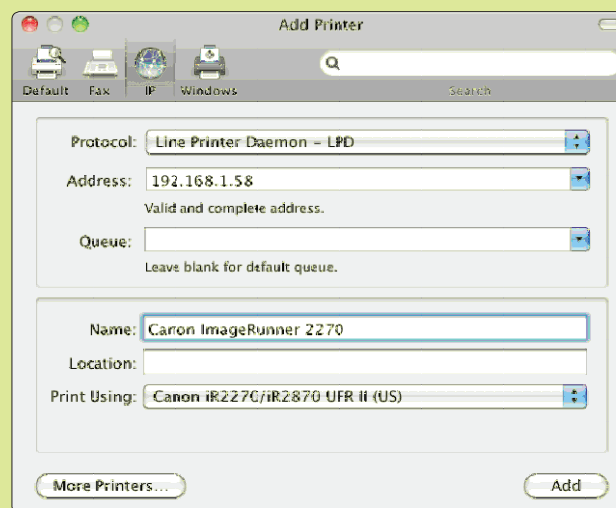
Once you install Snow Leopard drivers for your ImageRunner, you'll use this new configuration screen to add the printer to your Mac.

Let Your Fingers Do the Switching

In Windows, when I press Alt-Tab, it switches me between all of my open web browser windows. However, when I press Command-Tab on the Mac, it switches me out of Safari and into a completely different application. How do I use the keyboard to switch between windows instead of applications?

As you've discovered, the Mac keyboard shortcut Command-Tab is used to switch between applications. To switch between windows of one application, you must first switch to that application, and then use Command-~ (tilde) to cycle through its open windows.

But don't forget about Exposé (F9), which was designed to help you get to any window fast with either your mouse or your keyboard. It's even better in Snow Leopard because it now shows your minimized windows too. You can customize Exposé to your liking in System Preferences > Exposé & Spaces.

And those aren't the only ways to switch windows. You can always right-click an application's Dock icon to select any of its open windows or look in the Window menu of any

Witch takes application- and window-switching to a new level of awesome.

application. But for the ultimate option, we love the utility Witch ($19, manytricks.com), which gives you an unbelievable amount of control over switching windows on your Mac. Witch lets you assign keyboard shortcuts for virtually every conceivable application- and window-switching task you can dream of. You can cycle through all open windows in all open applications (even ones in other Spaces), add visual feedback when switching through open windows in your current application, switch between minimized windows, and much more.

Picking Apart PDFs

I've opened up a 75-page PDF in Preview, and I need to extract three pages to email to somebody. I've been looking for some way to export only these three pages out of the PDF or to split the PDF, but I can't figure out how to do it.

The secret to extracting pages out of a PDF file with Preview is that you actually need to re-create the PDF file with only the pages you want. With the PDF open in Preview, display the sidebar if it's not already displayed, then choose the Thumbnails option at the bottom of the sidebar (second button from the left).

In the sidebar, select the thumbnails for your desired pages (Shift-click for consecutive pages or Command-click if they're not next to each other), press Command-C to copy those pages, then press Command-N or go to File > New From Clipboard to paste those pages into a new Preview document. Save that new document in the normal fashion, and it's ready for emailing.

If you'd like to accomplish this via software, plus get more PDF creation and editing tools, check out PDFClerk (35 euros, sintraworks .com) or PDFpen ($50, smileonmymac.com). These products rival Adobe's Acrobat 9 Pro ($449, adobe.com) and Acrobat 9 Standard ($299), but at a fraction of the price.

Copy the thumbnails in Preview's sidebar, then choose File > New From Clipboard to paste them into a new Preview document.

The Juice Is Loose

What's the situation with portable batteries? If I'm out and about and need some juice for my MacBook but don't have my cables, what do you recommend?

We recently reviewed Sanho's HyperMac line of external batteries (4 out of 5 stars, Apr/10, p68). And we still use them all the time for tasks ranging from keeping a MacBook Pro fully charged during a grueling live blog of the iPhone 4 announcement (our 3G modem saps the MacBook Pro's battery life insanely quickly) to topping off an iPad's battery during a long weekend camping trip out in the woods (no, we don't care to leave the electronics at home, thank you).

They're pricey, starting at $199.95 for the 60-watt-hour battery to $499.95 for a 222-watt-hour one (hypershop.com). And they're heavy—you won't want to schlep it everywhere with you, only the places you really think you'll need it. The mid-range one we tested (150 watt-hours, $399.95) is 2.4 pounds, just over half the weight of a current 4.7-pound MacBook. But they last and last (and last), and the built-in USB port lets you charge up your iDevices or other USB gadgets too.
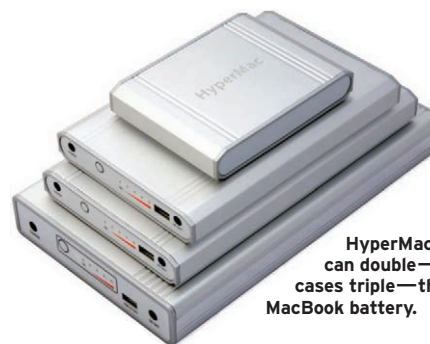
HyperMac's batteries can double—and in some cases triple—the life of your MacBook battery.

Safari Incognito

It doesn't happen often anymore, but once in a while I'll surf to a page that won't open in Safari, and I get a message saying something like, "Sorry, you are using a browser that isn't supported. Please use a supported browser." I'm using Safari 5, if that matters. Should I just stick with Chrome or Firefox all the time?

If you like Safari 5, you can still use it and just trick the uncooperative websites into thinking you're using a supported browser. First you need to enable the Develop menu in Safari. This used to require a Terminal command, but now it's right in Safari > Preferences > Advanced; just check the box for "Show Develop menu in menu bar." Boom, there it is—magical. Stunning. Phenomenal. (Okay, not really.)

You can ignore the Develop menu for now. But the next time you get an error message like that, pull down the Develop menu to User Agent, and select a different browser from the list that pops out. You can try Firefox, an older version of Safari, Opera, even Internet Explorer 8, 7, or 6. Once you make your selection, the page automatically reloads, but it'll think you're using that other browser, even though you never left Safari 5. The User Agent submenu even lets you pretend to be surfing on a Windows machine, in case you run into any Mac-hating sites out there.

Found a site that requires Internet Explorer 6? Safari 5 can fake that.
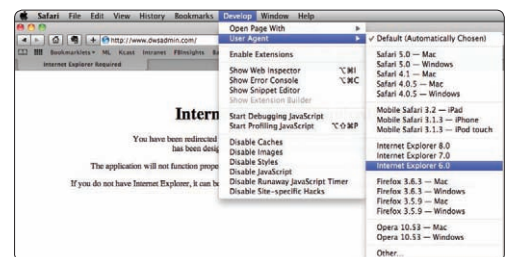
Preview's Hidden Power

I found this tip by accident and wanted to share it—hope you haven't heard this before. One frustrating thing about the iPhone is photo management. Oh, sure, you get a chance to delete photos after importing them into iPhoto, but you only get that one chance, and it's all or nothing. If you only want to delete some of the photos, you've got to do that manually on the phone—or so I thought.

Turns out there's another way. Plug in your iPhone and open Preview, then select File > Import From [Your iPhone's Name]. A window appears showing all the photos on your phone, and you can move them around, save them to disk, and delete them from the phone individually or in batches. Don't ask me why this is in Preview and not iPhoto!

Great tip—we had never heard of that! Thanks so much for passing it on! (This was sent in by Mike Romo, who manages Norton for Mac products for Symantec, plus writes a weekly column for iFanboy.com.)

This tip works with iPads too, and if you have both an iPad and an iPhone connected to your Mac at once, the menu item becomes Import From Camera, with a submenu that lets you choose which device. We are just as baffled as you regarding why this is in Preview instead of iPhoto, or even stuck in iTunes somewhere. But it works great, and that's the most important thing.
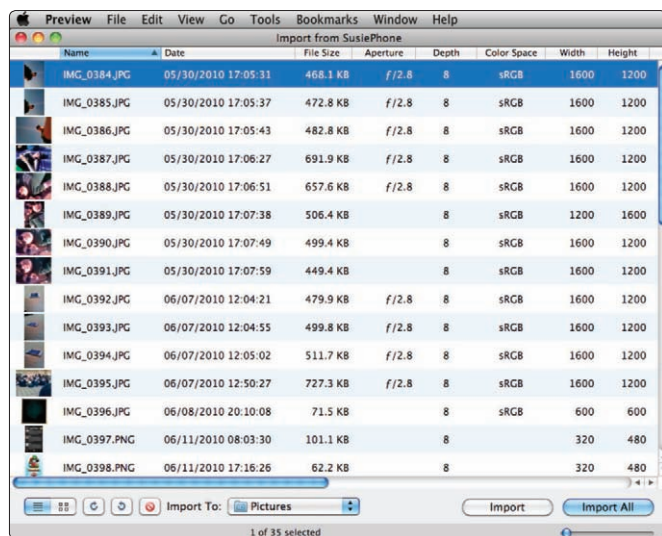
Preview's photo-import window has tons of information and power. Who knew?

All I Want To Do Is RightZoom a-Zoom-Zoom

I'd like to upgrade to Snow Leopard, but I'm afraid that if I do, the RightZoom app I have installed will no longer work, and I can't figure out how to determine whether it will or not. SnowChecker (free, snowleopard.wikidot.com/snowchecker) doesn't list RightZoom, so I couldn't check compatibility that way. I'm not sure I want to go back to the default behavior of OS X's yellow and green buttons, but I'd like to upgrade. Any advice?

You're in luck. BlazingTools Software has updated RightZoom (free, blazingtools.com) to be Snow Leopard compatible as of version 1.7. We installed and tested it on a MacBook Pro running Snow Leopard, and it worked as expected. Upgrade away!

For readers who haven't tried RightZoom, it's a utility that lets you reassign the green "zoom" button at the top-left of application windows to make that window full-screen. You can limit this behavior

RightZoom is a handy way to make those green buttons behave.
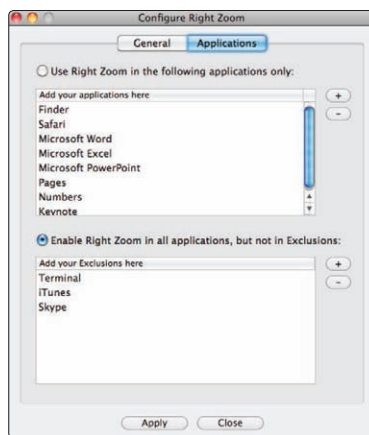
to certain applications, or exclude applications, and even set keyboard shortcuts for maximizing windows, instead of or in addition to the green button.

Pack 'Em In

I've got a 32GB iPhone 3GS and was planning to upgrade to the iPhone 4 (probably for the holidays), but I really wish there was a 64GB option. I download a lot of apps, but I have to keep reducing the amount of music I keep synced, so there's enough room for the apps and a free gig or two for upgrades. Do you think Apple will increase the storage space in iPhone 4 before releasing the next version of the iPhone? Or should I start carrying my 8GB iPod nano again too, so I can keep more of my music on me at all times?

We'd be pretty surprised if Apple released a 64GB iPhone 4 by the holiday season, but stranger things have happened. (We don't get any advance notice of new Apple products.)

You didn't mention what bit rate your iTunes library is ripped at, but if it's greater than 128kbps AAC (say, 256kbps AAC, Apple Lossless, etc.), you can have iTunes 9 automatically downsample your music as it adds it to your iPhone. We did this recently with an iPhone 3G and reduced our library from 8.92GB of audio to just 4.85GB. So you can save some serious space that way. The original files in iTunes aren't changed, so you can still enjoy your higher-bit-rate songs at your Mac. The setting is in your device's Summary screen; check the box for "Convert higher bit rate songs to 128 kbps AAC." As another option, try apps like OrbLive Free (free), which streams your music from your Mac, and Pandora Radio (free), which streams music from Pandora.com.

Or you could just duct-tape the iPod nano to the back of your iPhone. But that would be silly.

We started with almost 9GB of music on our 16GB iPhone 3G (top), then compressed that down to less than 5GB (bottom) with the new setting in iTunes 9.
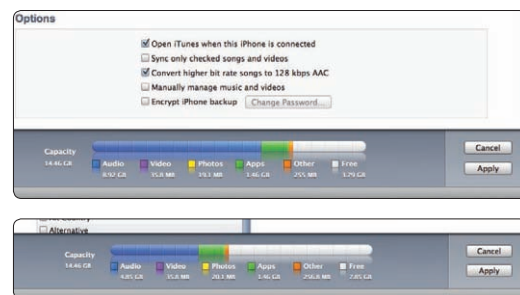
Ask is written by Susie Ochs and Scott Rose, a Los Angeles–based FileMaker developer and Mac consultant. Visit him at www.scottworld.com.

GOT A TECH QUESTION OR A HELPFUL TIP TO SHARE?
Email ask@maclife.com or write to *Mac|Life*,
4000 Shoreline Ct, Suite 400, South San Francisco, CA 94080

>>>Create

Hidden Features of the iPad Camera Connection Kit

The iPad Camera Kit can add countless features to your iPad—and save you some dough in the process

Many people wouldn't take a second look at the $29 iPad Camera Connection Kit because they could simply transfer photos and videos from their computer to their iPad via iTunes. But the Kit's little USB port-equipped dongle has unadvertised features. By letting you connect other USB devices besides your digital camera to your iPad, the Kit adds tons of features and could save you quite a bit of money if you use its capabilities to avoid buying iPad-specific accessories. We found seven hidden features that Apple may not want you to know about. **BY CORY BOHON**

>>>**WHAT YOU NEED**

LEVEL:
easy

>> iPad Camera Connection Kit
($29, apple.com)
>> iPad to connect it to
($499 and up, apple.com)

1 Attach a USB Keyboard

The Kit's USB dongle lets you use any USB keyboard—like the one likely already attached to your Mac—by simply plugging it in. This saves you $69 if you forgo buying the Apple iPad Keyboard Dock or the Apple Wireless Keyboard. Plus, if your own USB keyboard sports a number pad, iTunes controls, and volume and/or brightness controls, they'll still work with the iPad. And you won't have to deal with the sometimes-pesky onscreen keyboard, of course.

With some keyboard models, you'll see a message that the attached accessory won't work with your iPad—but don't believe the hype. After you dismiss the message, you'll be able to use the keyboard with no problems.

Connecting a keyboard through the camera kit is almost too easy.

2 Use Your USB Headphones

Some people prefer the sound of digital output over USB to analog output from a headphone jack. If you've invested in a great-sounding USB headset, you'll be thrilled to know you can use it with your iPad via the Camera Connection Kit. Just plug it into the dongle's USB port, and the iPad might think a minute, but after that you should be able to use your headset to listen to music or video. Plus, if your headset has a microphone, you'll be able to use that too—this can be a money-saver since the iPad doesn't come with earbuds (mic-equipped or not) like the iPhone does. Apple's own mic-equipped earbuds are $29 (for the Apple Earphones with Remote and Mic) to a whopping $99 (Apple In-Ear Headphones with Remote and Mic).

This setup might not be particularly glamorous, but vanity is a small sacrifice to make for sound quality.

3 Attach a USB Microphone

As with the headphones, you can connect a USB microphone to use with Skype or any other application that can capture or record audio from the iPad's built-in microphone. Using a USB mic gives you better audio quality than the built-in mic, too.

When you attach one of these audio devices, you can use your iPad just as you normally would, launching applications like Skype without having to worry about configuring any audio settings. The iPad will automatically get input from the connected device.

A USB mic like this Yeti from Blue (bluemic.com, reviewed on pp62-63) will always sound better than the iPad's built-in mic.

4 Remove Items from a Camera or SD Card

Besides transferring photos from your digital camera or its SD card to your iPad, you can use the iPad Camera Connection Kit to quickly erase all of the images, freeing up the storage space on your camera or card. Connect the Kit's USB or SD dongle to the iPad's dock, and attach a camera or insert your SD card, respectively. Wait a few seconds while the Photos application's Camera Import screen opens.

After viewing the photos to make sure you want to delete them, tap the red Delete All button in the upper left. You'll be asked for confirmation, and then the iPad will remove all of the photos on your card or camera. No need to start up your camera or drag out your laptop. If you want to remove some photos but not all of them, select the photos by tapping, and then tap the Delete Selected button.
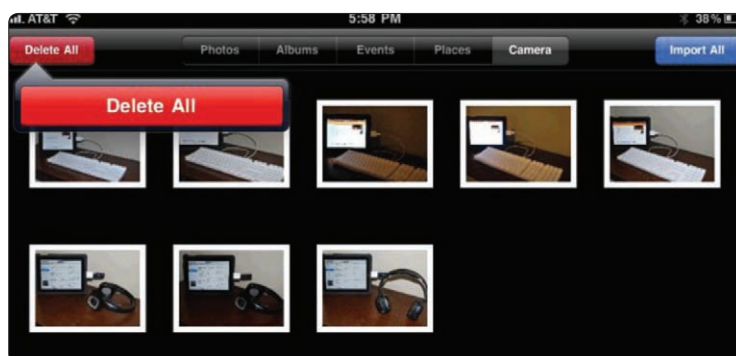
Removing files from your SD card is now another iPad-friendly procedure.

Hidden Features of the iPad Camera Connection Kit (continued)

5 Transfer Photos from an iPhone

Because the camera-less iPad can't take its own photos, you need to sync photos to it from a computer or connect your camera through the iPad Camera Connection Kit. But if your photos are already stored on an iPhone or iPod touch, the Kit can help you get those on your iPad without needing a computer—it only takes a few taps.

To do this, use an iPod-sync cable to connect your iPhone or iPod touch to the Kit's USB dongle. After a minute, you'll see the Import screen of the Photos application, displaying the photos on your iPhone or iPod touch. Select the photos you want and tap the Import button. If you use a passcode on your device, the photos won't be displayed until your device is unlocked. In testing, we found that we needed to sleep our iPhone 3GS in order for the images to display. As soon as we awoke the device, the Import window disappeared—we suspect the iPhone was trying to draw too much power from the iPad.

Our smudged-up iPad and iPod touch—partners at last.

6 Connect an External Hard Drive

While this isn't supported by Apple, a few clever iPad hackers have figured out a way to let the iPad Camera Connection Kit support an external hard drive, which means you could store more files than would fit in the iPad's built-in storage. It does require you to jailbreak your iPad, following a rather lengthy guide on Maxwell C. Shay's site, time-more.com/ipad. The hack isn't for the faint of heart, however, as it does require some Unix monkey business. And your external drive needs its own power supply too.

Mr. Shay even has a YouTube video on his site that walks you through the whole process.
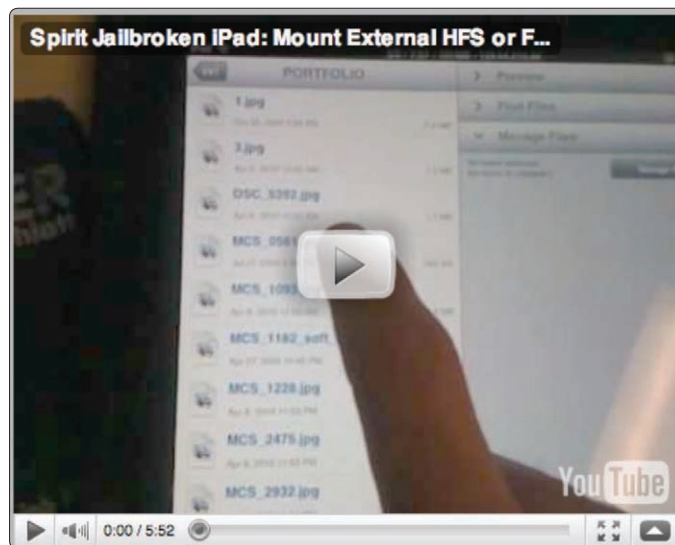
7 Hook Up a USB Hub

To hook up several different low-powered USB devices (i.e., camera, headphones, keyboard) at once, we found that you can add a USB hub and even use the USB accessories simultaneously. Depending on the types of accessories being added, you may need a powered hub. And keep in mind that the more items drawing power from the iPad, the less battery life you're going to have. We were able to plug in an Apple keyboard, USB headphones, and an iPod touch at the same time without any problems. Your mileage may vary.

Belkin's 4-port Swivel Hub ($29.95, belkin.com) is compact and includes an external power adapter if you need it.

Mac|Life

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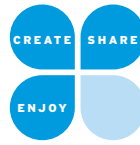
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Master Services in Snow Leopard

The revamped Services menu in Mac OS 10.6 can save you tons of time and effort

Since the early days of the Mac OS, most users have avoided the Services menu, largely because of what used to be found there: a bewildering, ever-growing mess of options, submenus, and shortcuts. But with Snow Leopard, the Services menu got a major revamp, making it contextual to the application you're using, as well as configurable. Once you know how to take advantage of its useful actions, you'll save yourself lots of time.

First, some background: The Services menu houses a bunch of small actions, primarily for manipulating selected text and documents. For example, there are services for looking up a word in the Dictionary and for creating a new email or note from selected text. These commands can have keyboard shortcuts for even faster access. And in Snow Leopard, the Services menu is now context-sensitive, so it only displays relevant options. In (increasingly rare) applications that don't support services, you see no options. If you've selected some text, you'll see quite a few choices in apps that support services; select an item in the Finder to see different choices.

BY CRAIG GRANNELL

>>> **WHAT YOU NEED**

LEVEL:
easy

>> Mac OS 10.6 Snow Leopard ($29 upgrade from 10.5, apple.com)
>> Snow Leopard requires an Intel Mac

The Services menu got an overhaul in Mac OS 10.6 for contextual sensitivity.

1 Using the Menu

The best way to find out about the Services menu is to use it. Open a website in Safari, select some text, and select Services from the Safari menu. You'll see options for what you can do. These might vary from Mac to Mac depending on your installed apps.

Each application's relevant services are found in [App Name] > Services in the menu bar.
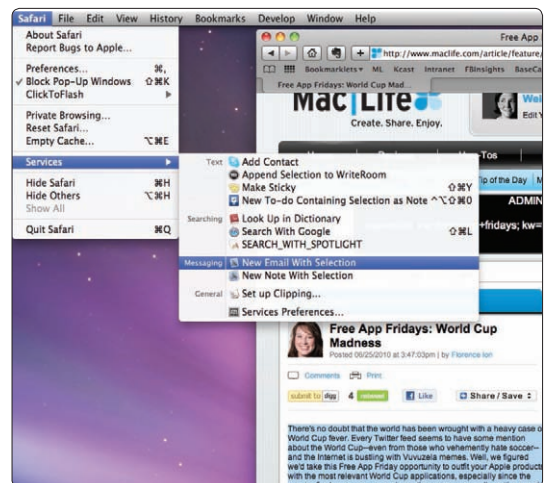
2 Text-Based Services

Assuming you haven't amended default services settings, select New Email With Selection. Mail will open with your text in a new message, saving you the trouble of copying the text to your clipboard, opening Mail yourself, and pasting in the text. The New Note With Selection option works the same way, but creates a new note in Mail.
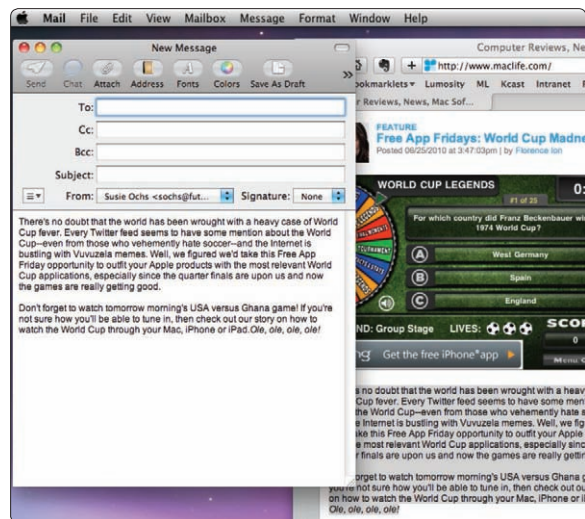
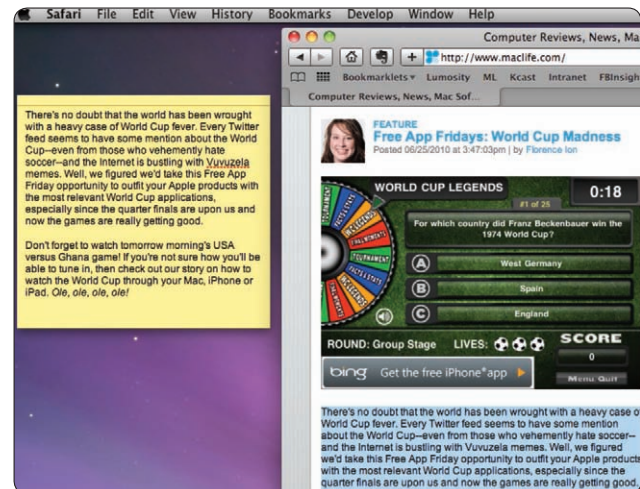Sending text straight to a new email will save you several clicks and keystrokes.

3 Services Shortcuts

In the last step, you may have noticed that Make a New Sticky Note has a keyboard shortcut, Command-Shift-Y. Switch back to Safari. With your text still selected, press the keyboard shortcut. Stickies will open with a new note containing the selected content.

Stickies are useful, and the Services menu lets you create one with a simple keyboard shortcut.

4 Manage Your Services

Launch System Preferences and select Keyboard. Click the Keyboard Shortcuts tab and choose Services from the list of options in the left-hand pane. In the scrolling pane to the right, you'll see all the available services. Use the checkboxes to turn individual services on and off.

Uncheck services you know you'll never, ever use.

5 Define a Service Shortcut

Keyboard shortcuts are easy to define in the same System Preferences > Keyboard pane. Scroll down to Look Up In Dictionary, double-click to the right (near the scroll bar), and hold Command-Control-D to set the shortcut. Select a word in TextEdit and use that shortcut—you'll see a pop-up definition. (Some apps launch Dictionary to show the definition; others don't.)
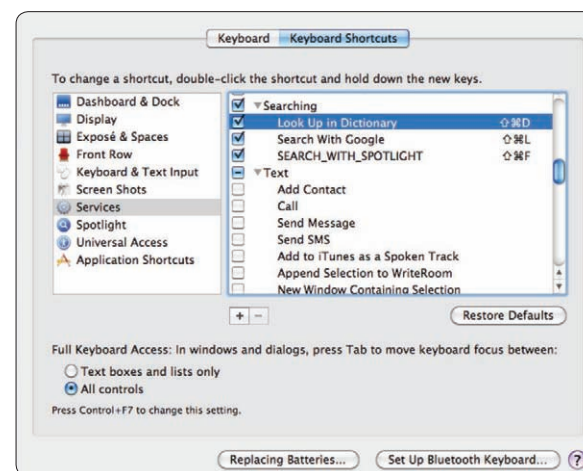
Keyboard shortcuts make services even easier to use.

Master Services in Snow Leopard (continued)

6 Searching for Content

In the Searching section of System Preferences > Keyboard > Services, ensure Search With Google and Search With Spotlight are active. You can then use Command-Shift-L and Command-Shift-F, respectively, to search for a selected term in Google (via Safari) or Spotlight.
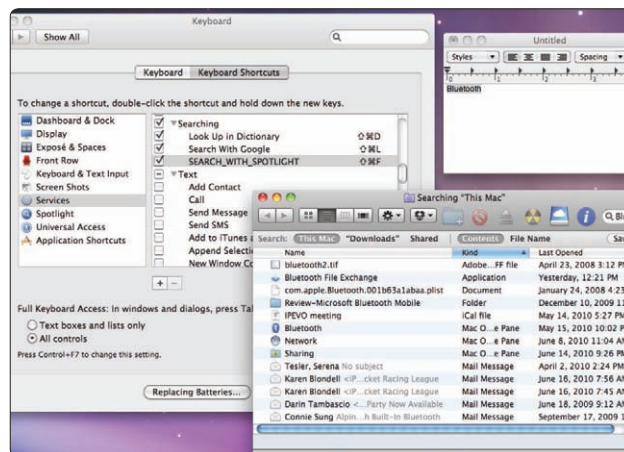
Search With Spotlight launches a new Finder window with your Spotlight search results.

7 Import a Screen Grab

The Services menu enables you to import a screenshot into Mac word processors such as Pages and TextEdit. Select Capture Selection From Screen and drag an outline for your screenshot. The selection will be sent to your text editors. Other options can be selected in System Preferences.
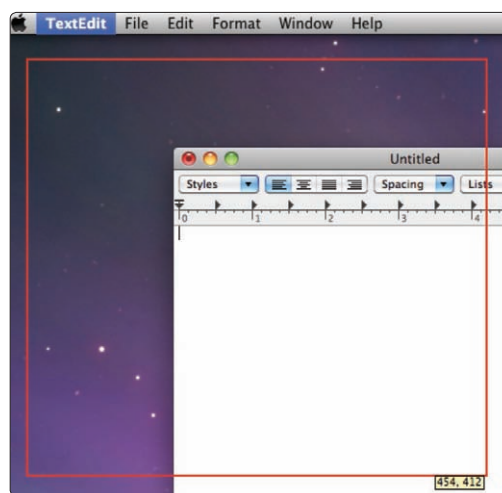
Drag the red box to define your screenshot, which is sent right to your text document.

8 Use the Contextual Menu

Relevant services are also available in the contextual menu (Control- or right-click to see it). If you don't see options such as the ones mentioned in Steps 2 and 3, that's a known Mac OS X bug. Turn the services off and on again in System Preferences to fix it.

The "Make a New Sticky Note" service is missing, but we can bring it back.
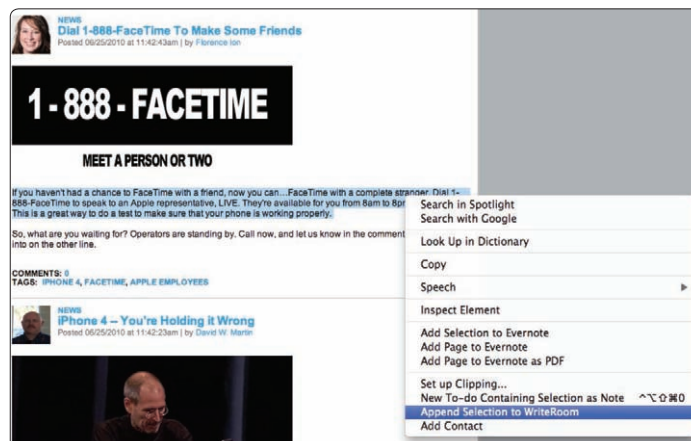
Start Blogging with WordPress

Get your own website up and running in minutes with the WordPress content-management system

Websites can be a pain to set up—even with HTML and CSS, hand-coding a site can take hundreds of hours. And it gets worse if you want a website you can update frequently because you'd have to dig back into the original code to make changes. Enter the CMS, or content-management system, designed to let you easily update a site without monkeying with the underlying code. WordPress is perhaps the most impressive, powerful, and widely used blogging CMS there is. For beginners and non-technical types, it's incredibly easy to set up, even if you're using your own domain. More advanced users can tweak WordPress to an incredible degree with themes and plug-ins, and power users can even adjust the open-source code with a basic text editor.

We'll assume you want a self-hosted blog with your own domain name; for example, mygreatsite.com. (The other option, a hosted blog, is easier but less professional looking. Wordpress.com lets you sign up for a free hosted blog.) You can get a cheap domain name at NearlyFreeSpeech.net—a .com address runs about $9/year. Next you need somewhere for your blog to run. A WordPress blog is a piece of software, albeit not one that runs from your Mac. That means besides simple hard disk space on a server, you need a few minor bells and whistles to go with it. Make sure your prospective web host provides compatibility with PHP and SQL databases. Web hosting is cheap—NearlyFreeSpeech.net, for example, offers pay-as-you-go pricing for storage and bandwidth that can be as low as $2/month. Popular domain-registration and hosting service GoDaddy.com charges about $57/year for hosting with 10GB of storage and 300GB of traffic. That should be sufficient for most blogs, even if you intend to stream video. Lastly, pick up a good FTP client, which makes it easy to upload files to your blog—we like Fugu (free, rsug.itd. umich.edu/software/fugu/). **BY DAVE STEVENSON**

>>>**WHAT YOU NEED**

LEVEL: *medium*

>> WordPress (free, wordpress.org)
>> TextEdit (included with Mac OS X)
>> FTP client such as Fugu (free, rsug.itd.umich.edu/ software/fugu/)
>> Web hosting space (prices vary)
>> Personal domain name (optional, prices vary)

1 Set Up an SQL Database

With your web hosting and domain name set up, the first step is to create an SQL database. Your new host's help section will walk you through the process of setting one up. Make sure you note down the name of the database, as well as your username and password.
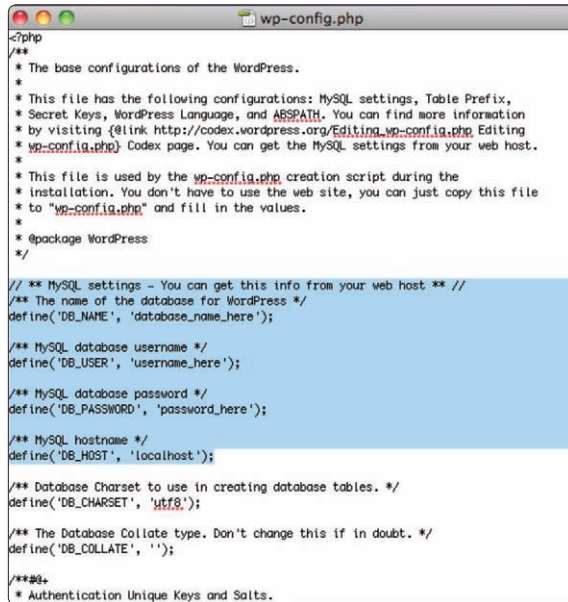
Every host's SQL setup is a little different.
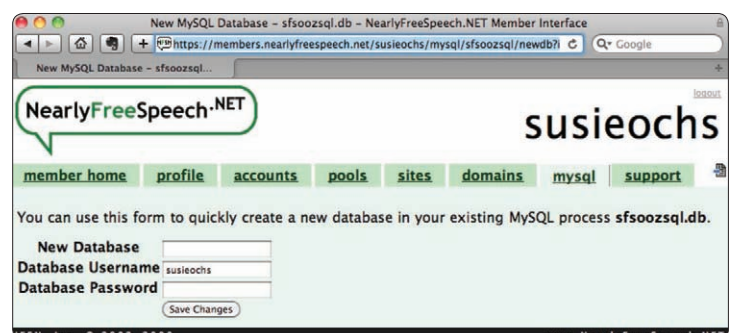
# Start Blogging with WordPress (continued)

2 Download WordPress

Download WordPress from wordpress.org. Rename wp-config-sample.php to wp-config.php and open it using TextEdit. Go to the section called My SQL settings. Enter the details exactly as they appeared when you created your database.

Replace database_name_here, username_here, and password_here with the correct details. We also had to change localhost, according to our hosting company's instructions.

3 Secure Your Site

Copy and paste the link in the config file into the address bar of your web browser to generate a set of keys that will make your passwords harder to crack. Copy the keys from your web browser back into your config file. Save it and close it.
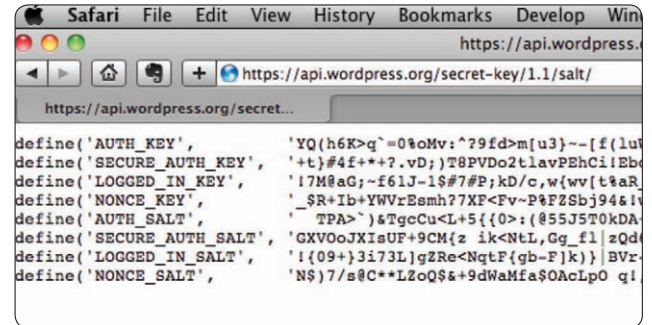
Looks like gibberish, but think of it as secret security sauce.

4 Upload to New Host

Log in to your space using your FTP client (we're using Fugu). You'll get the login details from your hosting service, or try ftp://[your-site-name].com, although the address can vary depending on your hosts. Upload everything in your WordPress folder to your new host. Go to [your-site-name].com, and you'll see the WordPress welcome screen.
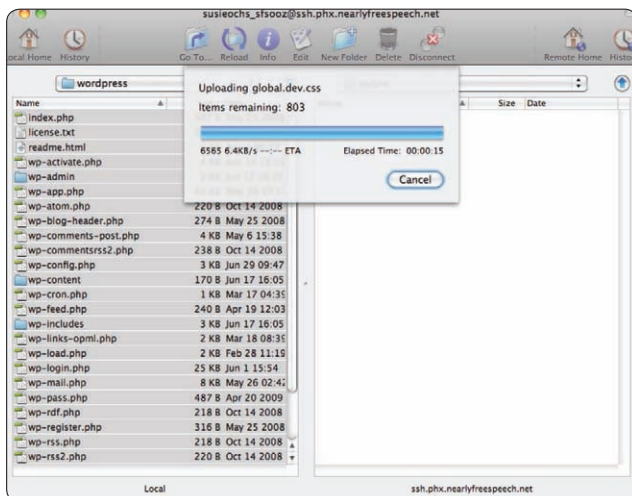
Upload it all; you're basically installing WordPress in your web space.

5 Name Your Blog

Think up a name for your blog and make sure you enter a reliable email address so your WordPress install knows where to reach you—this address will be used to notify you when someone leaves a comment on your blog, and it's where a new password will be sent if you forget your old one. Make sure to change the username from "admin" to something less common and harder to guess, and use a strong password.
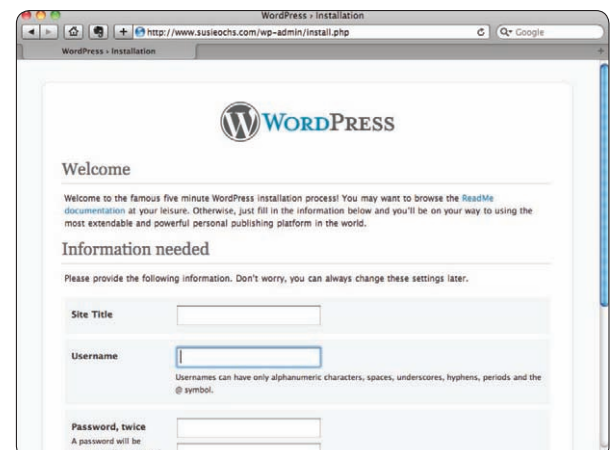
Your blog needs a title, a username for you, and of course a password.

6 Preview Your Blog

Once you're in the WordPress Dashboad, click your blog's name in the upper left (mouse over it for a tooltip saying Visit Site) to see the prototype of your new blog. When you next visit your blog, type [your-site-name].com/wp-admin to get to the login screen and Dashboard.


Our default blog isn't much to look at, but it's up and running, and it's ready for content and customization.
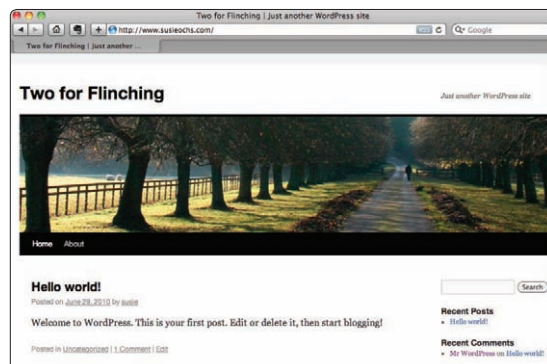
7 Upload Multimedia

With WordPress installed, you'll be able to see why so many bloggers swear by it. Naturally, you get rich text formatting, and WordPress allows you to upload images and videos without needing to revisit your FTP client. Once you've clicked Add New Post, simply click the image button on the toolbar, and WordPress will automatically upload your multimedia files into new folders on your FTP server.

Let WordPress handle the uploading.
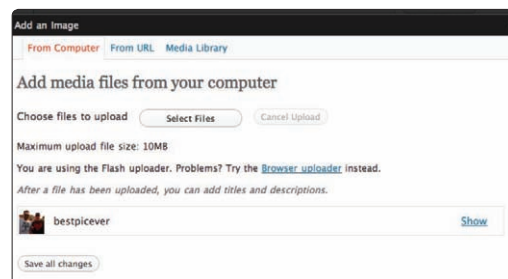
8 Explore Themes and Plug-ins

In days gone by, installing new themes or plug-ins was a nuisance. You had to download a new theme, upload it via FTP, then activate it in WordPress. Now, if you go to WordPress's Dashboard and click Appearance, you'll see the Themes settings and an Add Themes tab. Click this, and you're taken to a wonderland of free themes where installing a new one couldn't be simpler. The same goes for plug-ins, which can be searched for by keyword. WordPress is resilient to user error as well—if you make a mistake in the front end (as opposed to in an FTP client or when trying to edit your WordPress database), you're very likely to be able to undo your changes and return to a working version of your site.

More themes than you can shake your mouse at.
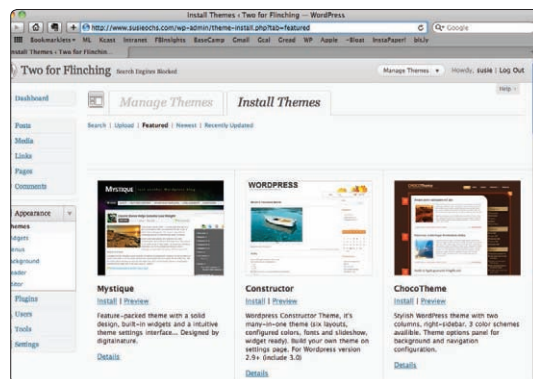
>>Why Not iWeb?

It's hard to ignore the temptation of Apple's iWeb. You probably already have it, it produces acceptable results, and unlike WordPress, iWeb doesn't make you go near an SQL database or fiddle with the back ends of hosting accounts or domain names. iWeb even has built-in and downloadable themes and enough multimedia compatibility to keep people happy.

But WordPress leaves iWeb in the dust, especially for the ambitious webmaster or those who think they might make some money from their blog. For starters, WordPress has a far more active community than iWeb, which means a lot more choice when it comes to themes, as well as more plug-ins and more help forums if you get stuck. The upshot is that your website is likely to be more individual if you use WordPress. iWeb's themes are quite heavy on clip art and stock backgrounds, which will mark your new site as the work of a rookie. iWeb is also poorly suited to blogging. It lets you add a blog, but in order to update it you need to be in front of a Mac that has iWeb installed—not much use if you're without your MacBook. A WordPress blog can be updated from any computer with a web browser, and you won't lose any features.

iWeb does have a few upsides: it's undeniably easy to use, and its iPhoto integration means that if you don't care to learn anything new, you can still have a decent-looking presence on the web. But anyone with a modicum of ambition should give WordPress a go—you won't regret it.

Storage drives are evolving significantly, and this month, **Rik Myslewski** examines the approaching sea-change known as SSDs and bids…

Farewell to Hard-Disk Drives

The plain, unvarnished truth about the future of storage is that fundamental differences between hard-disk drives (HDDs) and solid-state drives (SSDs) will lead to the HDD's doom. Those differences, however, also explain SSD's bad reputation for getting slower over time, among other things. Such kinks are being worked out, and 2011 will be the year SSDs go mainstream.

To the SSD's advantage, the HDD's ancient spinning-disk tech makes the average latency (the time it takes to find the data) of a speedy Seagate Barracuda 7200.11 HDD a full 4.16 milliseconds. For a bits-on-chips Micron RealSSD C300, average write latency is a little over 0.08 milliseconds. Ouch. Also, a hard drive reads and writes data in a single stream, while an SSD deals simultaneously with multiple chip channels (four to ten, usually). The more channels, the higher the bandwidth. A serial HDD just can't compete with a parallel SSD.

There are two types of SSDs. One, called a single-level cell (SLC), holds one bit per cell; the other, called a multi-level cell (MLC), holds two. The cells are essentially identical—it's the way they store bits that's different. But MLCs are cheaper than SLCs, and they're (usually) slower and (potentially) have shorter lifespans. That's why SSD manufacturers use a

A serial HDD just can't compete with a parallel SSD.

technique called wear-leveling to evenly balance cell usage. Essentially, it ensures that an SSD's MLC cells grow old together.
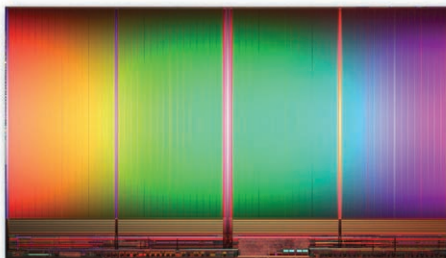
The facts behind why older SSDs have slowed down relate to how bits are erased on HDDs and SSDs. When you delete a file, you don't actually erase anything—you merely tell your Mac to forget about that file. When you need its space back on an HDD, you simply write over it. On an SSD, however, you have to erase it first, then write over it. But when you erase bits from an SSD, you have to do so one block at a time (usually

512KB), even though you write to one page at a time (there are commonly 128 4KB pages in a block).

Let's say a block on your SSD contains data from multiple files. Some of those files are active, some are "deleted" but not erased. But now, when you want to write a new file to pages in that block, there are so many inactive—but full—pages that there's no room for that file. So you need to erase those inactive pages.

But remember that you must erase the entire block at the same time. So to protect the active files in that block, you write the block out to some free space on your SSD or to a buffer, then erase the block, then write the original good stuff back to the just-erased block. And you've just wasted a ton of time.

What's worse, the more you use your drive, the more it fills up, and the more time you waste keeping it clean. The older it gets, the slower it gets. The solution to this problem was once simply to wipe an aging, slowing SSD clean and start over—not convenient, but effective. But SSD designers have come up with better ideas, such as setting aside a good chunk of the SSD as extra space for write operations (called overprovisioning), then to erase inactive pages during garbage-collection idle time—and to have those overprovisioned blocks be available when others go south.

Another was the introduction of TRIM technology, in which the operating system explicitly tells the SSD to erase the pages it no longer needs. Windows 7 supports TRIM; Mac OS X doesn't—though it's rumored for the future.

More effective, however, are increasingly sophisticated, zippy drive controllers, such as the Indilinx Barefoot or the Marvell controller in the Micron RealSSD C300, that are smarter than TRIM. SandForce's DuraClass Technology controllers, which power Other World Computing's Mercury Extreme Pro SSDs, among others, add compression and other goodies to the mix.

So SSDs will get better. Indilinx's new JetStream controller is coming soon, and Intel's popular X25-M will update late in the year. It may take a generation for SSDs and HDDs to reach price parity, but when they get even close, hard-disk drives are doomed.

›› *Since the late 1980s, Rik Myslewski has paid his rent by keeping an eye on Apple. He was editor-in-chief of* MacAddict *from 2001 until its transformation into* Mac|Life *in early 2007, and is now a member of the snarkily sophisticated team at London's* The Register, *which is "biting the hand that feeds IT" daily at www.theregister.co.uk.*

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HyperMac Micro
3600mAh
Recharge iPhone 3X

HyperMac Mini
7200mAh
Recharge iPhone 6X

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