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*About This Particular Macintosh: About the **personal** computing experience.™*

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Welcome

by Robert Paul Leitao, rleitao@atpm.com

Welcome to the August issue of *About This Particular Macintosh!* We begin this issue with a look back at Apple's June quarter results, and we bring things forward with a mention of the newest Macs in release. Join us this month, and every month, as we celebrate the personal computing experience and continue our chronicle of today's digital lifestyle with Apple product users in mind.

Record Revenue, Near-Record Earnings

For the three-month period ended June 26, 2010, Apple reported revenue of \$15.7 billion and earnings per share of \$3.51. These results represent record quarterly revenue for the company and near-record earnings per share, eclipsed only by the \$3.67 per share earned in the December quarter. For the quarter, revenue rose 61% over the prior-year period, and earnings per share increased by about 75%.

The fiscal quarter's record revenue was achieved through the sale of 3.472 million Macintosh computers, 8.398 million iPhone, and 3.27 million iPads. The iPad, in its first quarter of release, generated \$2.166 billion in device and accessories sales. For the fiscal year ending in September, Apple is on track to report record revenue of close to \$65 billion and earnings of near \$15 per share. At \$65 billion in annual revenue, Apple's revenue take is greater than the GDP (gross domestic product) of most nations.

It's interesting to note: in the June quarter, close to 50% of Apple's revenue was generated by products that did not exist in the marketplace just over three years ago.

High Profits, Low Share Price

In spite of Apple's 75% increase in earnings per share in the June quarter, at \$257.25, the closing price on the last trading day of July, Apple's shares ended the month's trading at less than 20 times trailing 12-month earnings. In the three-month period ending in September, Apple may surpass Microsoft in both revenue and earnings. We won't speculate on the factors impacting the company's current valuation, but there may be upside potential in the stock as market conditions eventually improve and investors return to equities.

Magic Trackpad

In July, Apple released a new accessory for the Mac called the [Magic Trackpad](#). It adds the popular Multi-Touch functionality found on the MacBook Pro line of laptops to the Mac desktop. For \$69, this Bluetooth accessory, operating on AA batteries, adds roughly a five-inch square surface for pinching, swiping, and scrolling gestures. Accompanying the new Magic Trackpad, Apple offers for \$29 an Apple [battery charger kit](#), complete with six rechargeable batteries for use in the Magic Trackpad and other battery-powered wireless accessories such as the Apple Magic Mouse or the more conventionally named Apple Wireless keyboard.

Combined, the Magic Trackpad and the Apple battery charger kit cost \$98. It's accessories such as these that add nicely to Apple's robust revenue growth and impressive earnings results. It isn't magic that's producing record revenue for Apple but smart marketing, an expanding retail store presence, and attractive hardware devices with nicely designed accessories to match.

The New iMac

Just before press time, Apple announced a refresh to its iMac all-in-one personal computer. Available with i3, i5, and i7 Intel Core processors, the [new iMacs](#) also sport updated graphics processor options, making the iMac a satisfactory choice for professional content creators and amateur gamers alike.

The New Mac Pro

It's been quite awhile since Apple updated its Mac Pro line of workstations. But [new Mac Pros](#) featuring up to 12 cores of processing power (via two six-core Intel [Westmere](#) processors) will be available later this month. The hefty specs and lofty performance makes the Mac Pro a solution for the most demanding professionals. It's also a margin expander that will only enhance Apple's quarterly results.

Dollar for dollar, the iMac is one of the best personal computer values on the market today. The Mac Pro has moved beyond the realm of a personal computer, and in the 12-core configuration offers computing power in a mini-tower enclosure that would have been almost unimaginable just a few years ago.

Mac OS X Today

The new Mac Pros demonstrate the scalability of Mac OS X. From the iOS that runs popular handheld devices such as the iPad and iPhone to the workstation-class Mac Pro, Mac OS X was intended from the beginning to be a versatile and adaptable operating system. Although Apple's latest digital devices have overshadowed the quiet work being done on the next Mac OS X update, we'll be hearing more from Apple in the coming months about the next version of the operating system that sits at the center of over 100 million devices in use worldwide.

The August Issue of *ATPM*

Each month our editors scour the world of Apple computing to bring you interesting views, insightful reviews, and a unique look at today's Apple-related news. As we head into the second half of the season of summer, please share a copy of the August issue of *ATPM* with family and friends. This month's issue is an excellent barbecue-time companion.

Our August issue includes:

[MacMuser: Laissez-Faire Wee-Fee](#)

Mark Tennent finds the lack of restriction to Wi-Fi in France to be quite refreshing.

MacMuser: ...001 a Space Odd...

A classic story of why we Mac users are Mac users instead of Windows users.

Next Actions: E-mail Tricks and Tools

Ed Eubanks Jr. updates his GTD Master List and returns to the question of processing e-mail.

Segments: Size Really Matters

Linus Ly shares his tale of migration to and from a 10 GB iPod, an iPod touch, and the iPad.

How To: Things I Wish Someone Had Told Me About Networking

Sylvester Roque reminisces about networking antics in the mid-90s and describes the core basics for accomplishing the same setup today.

Desktop Pictures: Tremiti Islands

Giuseppe and Cecilia Balacco and their daughter Maria Luisa offer this month's desktop photos taken around Italy's Tremiti islands.

Out at Five

Matt Johnson's new series, *Out at Five*, looks at the workplace and its boundaries from all angles, revolving around many of the same characters from his former series, *Cortland*.

Review: OWC Express

The OWC Express is a great hard drive enclosure for Mac notebook users.

Review: Wiretap Anywhere 1.0.8

Our look at WireTap Anywhere, Ambrosia Software's slick utility that converts any Mac software or hardware into an audio source for mixing, recording, and playback.



On Temptation

I very much agree with your feelings about every new device that comes along every few months—cars, electronics—you name it. I still use Mac OS 10.4 on a Mirror Drive Door Mac desktop along with the later systems available on a MacBook Pro, and some external hard drives.

I like being able to keep a system going that does what I want, and I'll keep using it until it can't do that any more.

I finally bought a simple, basic cell phone (they practically give those away these days) that stays off most of the time. I don't get many calls backed up on it because I don't give my cell phone number out to anyone but family. I have a regular phone at home with an answering machine—that's good enough.

I rarely buy anything major new—if you do your homework, you can buy things that will last for years used, and save lots of money—particularly on Apple products. They are really good products...and that's what makes them so good as used products as well.

As you say—enjoy the quiet...read a book.

—*Tad Brillhart*



You are right, it is important to be able to get away from the grid, if only because it's the only way many of us ever allow ourselves a moment to not be working in some way.

I resisted buying an iPad for a whole month! Now that I've bought one, I have to say that: a. it doesn't really replace anything; b. I find it indispensable. The biggest plus is the ease of reading PDFs. The reading is so enjoyable because you can physically resize things, flip the orientation, etc., in a way that is qualitatively better than on a laptop or desktop. The wonderful application [iAnnotate](#) lets you annotate with your finger, which is fun and useful. The one limitation of the iPad is that it's hard to take notes while you read—it *can* be done, but you have to be very clever about it.

The iPad is way, way, way more convenient traveling by air, and works very well on the go, e.g., in meetings and stuff for the note-obsessed. It's far less obtrusive than any laptop or netbook, simply because a clamshell always creates some kind of perceived social barrier, but the orientation of the iPad is not a barrier.

I *do* laugh as I remember that my first Mac was a Mac Plus, which I suspect has a screen about the size of the iPad's, though of course the resolution, color, etc., makes the iPad far superior. And I seem to recall paying about \$2K for that Mac Plus!

I love the foosball game, too!

I think the iPad is here to stay. I think it will evolve to a. be larger but thinner (the screen space available now is really only good for one window at a time, and to be productive, we need at least two); b. have a virtual keyboard that gives tactile feedback.

—*Rand Valentine*

What a Waste

I have to ask: were all of these purchases really necessary (i.e., replacing bad/obsolete hardware), or just because you want to keep up with the latest kit? Since 1994, we've bought/inherited new and used Macs, etc. and handed them down/around to keep them in use as long as possible. A bro-in-law still uses my son's '99 G3 iMac, and the Personal LaserWriter 320 lasted 14.5 yr.

Total hardware/software costs for seven desktops, four laptops, two multifunction devices, five printers, six OS upgrades, seven HDs, 18 cellulars (no iPhones): \$24,480/16 yr/6 users = \$255/user/yr.

By comparison your £30,000 = \$45,600/7 yr/2 users = \$3,257/user/yr, or 12.8× as much.

I'm certainly not criticizing—only you can gauge the value of your purchases to your life and well-being (our musical instruments are worth more than all our cars); but it does seem like a lot of money. . .

I guess my point is that it *is* possible to have a credible Mac experience on a more modest budget.

Your mileage obviously may vary.

Regards from the US.

—*Mike Horstman*

They have all been swapped out at about four or five years old or when they have broken (as in laptops) or are unable to keep up with the tasks they are bought to do. The first pair in the series seven years ago, were five years old, and their replacements lasted another five years before being replaced.

These are work machines, and if they make work too slow, the Mac gets the push. The last time was because we needed faster video compression. When a 2 GHz MacBook compresses video quicker than the desktop Mac, it's time to upgrade.

—*Mark Tennent*



Not that I don't have a drawer full of odds and ends, but I am still using the G4 desktop with a 800 MHz upgrade processor as my home server. Laptops I have been going through more—those clamshell iBook G4s seem to really have problems. I haven't gotten a new desktop unit in years, and all my laptops are used. One of the reasons I like Apple stuff is generally the lack of waste—a used one can last and last.

—*Avery Ray Colter*



Over the years, I've learned to slow down that Apple replacement cycle just a bit, but it's gets hard not to rush out and buy the latest and greatest from Cupertino. We have 4 desktops in the house, complete with LCD monitors, 1 MacBook, 1 iPad, two iPods, one of which lives on my Sony clock radio dock full time, an iPhone 3G that's going on eBay the second I buy an iPhone 4.

We have old cars too, including a 15-year-old Civic, a ten-year-old GMC pickup, and a 13-year-old Escort. You've got to draw the (replacement) line somewhere! :)

I think Macs are a incredible value because their life-cycles are so long. I remember teaching my toddler son on one of the first PowerPC Macs back in 1996, just before the Blue and White G3 hit the stores. I sold that B&W unit to my now current boss, and *his* kids are using it! Longevity. A term never used in conjunction with PCs. I can apply it to every Mac I ever owned from desktops to laptops. It's a shame so many people see the price tag on a Mac Pro tower and buy a PC at half the price to find out two years later they bought junk that isn't worth a dime. Being cheap never pays off.

—*Grover Watson*

[BearExtender n3](#)

Sounds great and just what I need to boost the coverage to my iMac G4 at home. However, the BearExtender doesn't seem to be readily available in the UK, which is disappointing. They do ship to the UK, but I would then get hit with a hefty delivery charge and presumably customs duty. Shame, as it sounds like just what I need.

—*Tony Hacche*

The defining feature of the BearExtender is that its vendor attempts to be as Mac-friendly as possible. Other than that, it's just another USB Wi-Fi device. There are a number of other such devices based on the same Ralink chipset that should work just fine on a Mac, many of which can probably be located in the UK without customs or shipping fees, if

you're willing to put in a little more effort in setup and configuration. I haven't personally tried any of them, but it's worth a shot.

—Chris Lawson

BusyCal 1.2

Thanks Frank, for a useful review. I have been trialing BusyCal for about a week now, and while I accept it does have some more features than iCal, BusyCal does have a *big* let-down for me in its printing department. On my iCal, I have run for ages now, a mix of personal and work calendar groups, and I can thus print a “work only” weekly timesheet in iCal via its *hugely* useful print configuration step. So for now, if I am going to buy BusyCal, I expect to run it in the foreground, but print via iCal, thanks to their seamless syncing.

BusyCal's tags is an interesting feature, one with a lot more potential. For my use, I would like to have a calendar application with something like tags, which can sync with say a FileMaker or Bento database of job numbers and job names, to provide a context sensitive pick-list. My impression from some shallow-depth searching is that iCal can be made to do this, so I wouldn't be surprised if BusyCal could, too.

—Simon Woodward

A Tutorial on Resolution

I have been searching for a simple, concise explanation and yours was perfect, I finally get it! Thank you so much!

—Shannon Miller

Glad you found it useful.

—Lee Bennett

LogTen Pro 5.1.4 and LogTen Mobile 2.4.1

Thanks, Chris. Your review has been most helpful. I'm also a regional FO that has been procrastinating on the purchase of an e-logbook, and your candid words have been insightful. This will positively influence my decision to take the leap.

—nathan

Coping With Mac OS X's Font Rendering

I just got my first Mac, and though I've used them before, I never realized how much I'd be bothered by the font they use. Everything just looks somewhat blurry to me, and it's bothering my eyes.

I've tried using [TinkerTool](#) to get rid of the blur, which helps some. I wish there were a default option somewhere to display Windows-style fonts.

I may have to install Windows 7 so I can use this baby. :(

—*Adam Capriola*

PowerBook G4 Titanium

I've owned my Titanium PowerBook G4 since 2002 and have used it every day since. These days it is too slow to run any applications with efficiency but still surfs the Internet like a champ. As far as breakage, the only thing that has gone wrong is my optical drive. Apparently the weight of my hand over the years has crushed the optical drive.

I am buying a new laptop (PC for cost) and am still planning on using this PowerBook G4 for surfing the Internet without concern of viruses, spyware etc.

I am so impressed with this machine that I can't endorse it enough. I can only hope my new Lenovo W510 will last as long.

—*Greg Cart*

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Laissez-Faire Wee-Fee

We are just back from staying in an idyllic 13th century manor house in Le Mesnil Jourdain, Normandy. So much *gîte* for so little money, IKEA meets antiques. And it even included “wee-fee if we could log onto the Negeer,” said the nice French lady.

With six feet of solid stone walls and 50 feet separating us from the Netgear router, we congregated round the windows, trying to make connections on our iPhones and lappies. In the end, we found spots in the garden where the signal was strongest and shade from the blazing sun the deepest.

We eventually got a signal when the wind blew in the right direction—this air current being mainly goat farts, as the whole manor house commune is surrounded by trebuchet-proof walls. Whereas goats roam the inner-fields, eating everything they can reach, are only separated from us by strands of electric fencing.

What surprised us is that the router’s Wi-Fi network is wide open, as is another’s nearby. When we left the commune and ventured further afield, we found many private routers open for anyone to log on. In small French towns such as Louviers, where the only thing to do on Sunday is a down-market Tabac, a boulangerie or one of the few “Continental” grocers, there are free public wee-fee networks as well as open private ones. At least in the town many had some form of access control.

We aren’t sure whether this laissez-faire attitude to Internet connection is by accident or just part of French life, but it was very welcome.

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...001 a Space Odd...

I'm a Mac user. There, I've said it, just like they do at AA meetings. I'm a Mac user and quite happy about it—as I kept reminding myself last Thursday and Friday.

The task was straightforward. One Dell Optiplex was sitting unused because the person who used that PC left her employ before revealing the passwords. In the Windows world, this means a new system install—at least, that's what the Dell site said. Of course, with Mac OS X it would have simply been a matter of starting from an installer DVD and resetting the password, a matter of less than five minutes.

No problem, I thought. I test systems on our Macs, usually installing a new beta OS as a background task while I'm doing the morning's e-mails and dropping toast crumbs into the keyboard. Admittedly, this is onto a second hard drive, but Windows can't be that different, can it?

First, I had to find out exactly how to get the Dell into a frame of mind where it would start up from a CD. A quick call to my PC guru sorted that one out. Press F2 as you restart and choose from the various options on screen.

But when the machine started, its F2 menu was displayed in 24-point text on a 17-inch screen. I couldn't actually read what it said because the sentences were cut off on each side. The last time something like this had happened was back in the 70s when I'd gone to see *...001 a Space Odd...* at the local flea-pit cinema.

Luckily, the monitor lets you adjust horizontal and vertical positioning. Settings were made in F2 by moving the screen display to the left and right, the hard disk was erased and partitioned, and installation commenced at about 9:15 AM.

For the next two hours, the Dell needed constant attention, either to select from various choices offered during the installation process or because it kept forgetting where parts of the operating system were stored on the CD. This was largely because the CD drive stopped spinning so that when the installer wanted a chunk of code, the drive had gone to sleep. It needed the disk to be ejected and then reinserted to force it to spin up.

By 11:15 AM, the screen said 39 minutes to completion. At 12:45 PM, I'd also installed a copy of Microsoft Office. That, at least, went without a hitch. The problem now was that the screen still showed everything in glorious 24-point, 8-bit colour. As the Dell was not connected to the Net, getting driver software was not going to be easy.

The rest of the day was spent dismantling the monitor to find what type it is, searching the Dell site for the correct monitor driver, and trying to download and install using sneaker

net and a memory stick. At one point, I had a huge length of Ethernet cable snaking down the corridor to an adjacent office, connected the Dell to the outside world in an attempt to get online.

Then I made a fatal error and clicked on an option deselecting the default monitor. The screen went blank, and I went home.

Day two. A determined disk partitioning and reinstallation saw the Dell running in two hours. This was from the CD supplied by Dell as the way to get your PC up and running and containing all the correct software. Except it didn't. This time, I searched for video card drivers instead of monitor software. The PC used Intel built-in video, so why the drivers aren't on Dell's disk is a mystery.

Nevertheless, now that the correct video drivers is installed, plus various BIOS updaters and such I'd also found, the PC is working better than ever.

Total time, about 12 hours.

Total time to do the same on a Mac? About 30 minutes.

Says it all, really.

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Next Actions

by Ed Eubanks Jr.

E-mail Tricks and Tools

I mentioned in a previous column that I would come back to the question of processing e-mail efficiently and effectively. I wanted to focus on a few tools that help me do that.

On E-mail Clients

Like many Mac users, I've tried a variety of different e-mail clients to see if they might better suit my needs. Every so often (most recently, it was after about 18 months) I get frustrated with one aspect of my mail client or another, and decide that I might find the solutions I'm searching for elsewhere. I've looked seriously at [Postbox](#), [Mailsmith](#), and [Entourage](#). (The last version of Entourage I considered was the one bundled with Microsoft Office for Mac 2004; I would be willing to look at the 2008 version, but I use Word about twice a year and Excel even less—so I can't justify the expense for the whole suite.)

Each time, I have returned to Apple's Mail.

Mail has 99% of what I want in a mail client. I recognize that others will disagree (sometimes strongly and vehemently!). I have utter respect for your right to that opinion. But for me, Mail has it—unified inboxes, smooth integration with other tools, and it is stable and fast enough (usually) to keep me satisfied. Plus, there's something to be said for familiarity; I've been using Mail for about eight years straight, and I'm very familiar with it. It would take me a while to settle into another client (which probably explains part of my willingness to keep coming back.)

Therefore, your mileage may vary significantly for what I have to say. Many of these tools are Mail-specific and simply wouldn't apply (directly) to other clients.

(In all fairness, some of these tools might be either built-in or reproducible through scripts, macros, or something like an Automator action.)

Basic Setup

Along with Mail, I rely heavily on Google's Gmail services for my server-side mail configuration. I have eight e-mail accounts that I use (more or less), and five of them are hosted by Gmail; the others happen to be the ones that I use infrequently or almost not at all (like my MobileMe mail account). Gmail offers me three things that I love: IMAP (thus, syncing between multiple Macs, my iPhone, and soon an iPad); a very usable and functional Web-based mail client (for those times when I'm on my wife's Mac or another computer); and great server-side spam filtering.

(Here again, I know that some folks are dubious about sharing all of their mail contents with Google. In my view, anyone who is online has forfeited their privacy to some extent, and it's all a matter of degrees after that—but that is another column for another day!)

I also make heavy use of [SpamSieve](#), which I believe is the best spam filtering tool around. Michael Tsai, who also happens to be one of the editors of ATPM, has continually provided outstanding quality in the updates of this very mature tool. SpamSieve also works with a small horde of other mail clients, by the way.

I use SpamSieve on all of my Macs and wouldn't do without it, but I have become more dependent on Gmail's server-side spam filtering as well, mostly because of my mobile devices. I can deal with the occasional spam message on my iPhone; it's easy enough to overlook these when checking mail quickly on the go. But when I notice a persistent source coming onto my iPhone, I'll cut it off at the server level and never worry about it again.

I advise everyone I've worked with in setting up e-mail to get good spam filtering in place. If you don't already have it, you'll be amazed at how much time it saves you on e-mail: not only because you don't waste time deleting stuff you're not interested in, but also because you can more efficiently glance at new e-mails with trust that what you are seeing is useful, pertinent communication. (Remember, a key component of GTD is the *trusted* systems—that includes e-mail.)

I also encourage everyone to use IMAP. If you don't have it available through your current server, look into one that does offer it. For efficient e-mail processing, you need to be able to sit down and know you can access the same messages everywhere. POP e-mail accounts (which were the default until just a few years ago, and still are in many cases) simply don't offer this. The two exceptions to this are 1) if you only use one computer all the time, or 2) if your e-mail is completely walled off, so that you don't access work e-mail at home, and vice-versa.

Advanced Setup

I make heavy use of folders. I have several sets of folders that fit with my GTD-style system. First, I have folders for @Respond, @Urgent, @Someday, and @Waiting. These are mostly self-explanatory, and they function in the same way that my physical set of 43 folders does.

The key difference is the distinction between @Respond and @Urgent. For my purposes, this is a helpful distinction because there are some e-mails that only require a response (but are otherwise urgent), and others that need action other than an e-mail response. For example, if someone e-mails to ask me to evaluate their article in the next two days, it would go into @Urgent; the reading/commenting is not simply e-mail work to be done. Someone else may write to ask a series of questions that I'll respond to in-line, so that will be @Respond.

By the way: by putting the “@” at the front of these, Mail puts them at the top of the “stack” of folders in the sidebar. This means they are readily viewable no matter how many

hierarchies of folders are open or closed. Mail's alpha-numeric sorting of folders prefers numbers (and the symbols associated with the numbers) first, then alphabetical characters.

I also have other folders for archiving purposes. For a long time, these were broken down into either projects or categories of information. Consulting clients had their own folders, and I kept almost every piece of correspondence for each client. A book or other writing project might get a folder, as would things like group assignments for classes when I was a student. Many of these project folders were actually subfolders in categories. Just as with a physical file system, having these various folders made referencing my archived files much quicker and more efficient.

Recently, though, I've moved away from the multiple-folder archive system, and I just use a single folder labeled "archives." There are two reasons why this is just as efficient for my purposes: first, Spotlight in Mail is faster than clicking through folders and subfolders. It's faster and easier to search by sender, or to use a keyword or two to find archived messages, than it is to find the folder I need and scroll through a list of senders and subject lines. Second, I now archive my e-mail in DEVONthink Pro Office after it has aged beyond three months, and my system for filing in DEVONthink is much more robust (and also very searchable, both through DEVONthink's search tools and through Spotlight).

You might use a different system for archiving—maybe it is [pubblog's MailSteward](#), C-Command's [EagleFiler](#), Ironic's [Leap](#), or another system. Regardless, you might find, as I did, that regular archiving not only speeds up your mail client, but it also streamlines your archiving and referencing process.

Or you may still prefer the multiple-folder approach. If so, there's good help for you yet to come.

Inbox-Zero

If you aren't already familiar with the concept of [Inbox-Zero](#)—well-articulated by Merlin Mann, so much so that I need not re-cover it here, then the next thing for you to do is to read up on that concept.

I wouldn't go as far as to say that it is *impossible* to process e-mail efficiently without keeping your inbox cleaned out. However, I do lean toward thinking that. For one thing, I've never encountered anyone whose typical practice was to leave all messages in their inbox who could convince me that they were efficient in processing e-mail. Rather, everyone I've ever met or worked with for whom that was the practice fell into one of two groups: either they simply didn't rely on e-mail much as a regular, reliable means of communication (and in many cases this was because they weren't able to trust e-mail as a reliable tool *because* of their cluttered inbox); or, they were frequently frustrated and bogged-down by the many e-mails that they left unattended for too long, and consequently were often slow to respond even to more time-sensitive messages.

Another reason I lean that way is because of my convictions that the GTD principles are useful and applicable everywhere. That means that, just as you would be negligent in

leaving your physical inbox cluttered and unattended, you are also negligent if you leave your e-mail inbox in that state. Good GTD practice stipulates that you regularly process the contents of your inbox—and by processing, I don't mean looking at it and then putting it back in the box! This is true for papers in a file tray, and its true for messages in an e-mail client inbox.

Processing Tools

The goal, then, is to process all of those e-mail messages. In other words, to get those messages put into places where they will be present and accessible when you are ready to put them to use. And in my view, processing efficiently means doing that as quickly and effortlessly as possible.

I make regular use of a couple of tools that allow me a great deal of speed in e-mail processing.

One tool that I have found useful is [MailTags](#) from InDev Software. MailTags allows you to attach keywords and project tags to messages, as well as notes and color-coding. You can even use MailTags to create events and tasks in iCal. MailTags is Spotlight-compatible, and the tags are also recognized by Google Desktop. Especially if you're keeping your messages in Mail for a long time, MailTags is helpful for appending markers that will help you find messages and act on them. However, MailTags also works with MailSteward, Leap, and EagleFiler. (They do not transfer to DEVONthink, however.)

[Mail Act-On](#), also from InDev Software, is one of the best tools in my toolbox for rapid action on individual messages. A couple of keystrokes allow you to perform an extraordinary set of actions automatically on each message. Whether you simply want to move messages to other folders or automate elaborate actions when processing, Mail Act-On is probably the number one tool that I use for processing Mail. Naturally, Mail Act-On and MailTags work very well together, and it is easy to add these tags to messages through Mail Act-On.

I also like [SignatureProfiler](#) by Little Known Software. SignatureProfiler lets you take signatures much further in terms of things like embedded HTML, adding current iTunes tracks, Skype availability, or random quotes. I attach a signature to almost every e-mail I send, and while I don't make use of stuff like the iTunes tracks and Skype, I do like the HTML embeds. You might also find a lot of efficiency gained by making use of signatures in the same way that [Michael Hyatt does](#)—that is, to build templated e-mail responses through signatures. If so, then SignatureProfiler may be a great tool for your signature/template-building.

If you don't want to use signatures that way but still need templates for e-mailing, MacTank's [MailTemplate](#) might be the thing for you. I've used it, and love how it essentially allows me to do a mail-merge via e-mail instead of printed snail-mail. I'm still looking for a tool that will allow a different kind of template—where I have a set group of addressees, sometimes utilizing multiple addresses from the same card in Address Book. (Anyone have a suggestion for me? Add it to the comments for 1,000 brownie points!)

Using these tools, I can process a surprising volume of e-mail very quickly. I don't get nearly the volume that some guys do, but I do get between 50 and 100+ e-mails on a busy day; I

check my mail at different intervals, and find that I can usually deal with 20 or so e-mails in less than 10 minutes, especially by making use of my @Respond and @Urgent folders (these get processed in my brief mail-checking intervals, then get “scheduled” as tasks in my next review): I respond to those messages that will take me only a minute or two to answer, file/archive those I need to keep, and put the rest into one of the four actionable folders I mentioned above.

If you’re one of those guys who needs to be notified every time a new message comes in, you might look into InDev’s [MiniMail](#), or [Growl](#) plus a plugin like [GrowlMail](#). I used to be one of those guys, but a while back I changed my setup entirely: I turned off automatic mail checking, turned off the “badges” in the Dock to tell me how many unread messages I have, and started checking my messages at certain times/intervals during the day. (A confession: I’ve recently found myself checking it much more often, so I will either need to renew my disciplined efforts to quit checking e-mail so often or go back to the old system! I’ll still probably leave the “badges” off in the Dock, though.)

Rules and Scripts

Now we’re really getting somewhere, but there’s one more thing I do to make my e-mail usage much more efficient. Rather, there’s one more thing I *don’t* do, because I have some tricks to keep me from having to deal with certain kinds of e-mail on a regular basis.

I have signed up for a couple of e-mail groups, as I’d bet many readers have as well. These aren’t spam, but (in my case) neither are they must-read, mandatory stuff that I need to deal with right away. I have a rule for each one, therefore, that puts those messages into a unique folder for each group. Mail serves me by giving these folders badges with unread messages, so I know they are there when I want to read them, but I don’t have to process each one. The downside to this is that I’m sometimes (or often) late to a conversation, but it’s worth it to me to avoid the processing. *Note:* I don’t recommend this for groups or lists that are time-sensitive for you! For me, none of my groups are.

Like so many people, I have family and friends who seem to thrive on forwarding cute and/or funny messages to others en masse. 99% of the time (or more!) I’m totally uninterested in these, so I have a rule set up to automatically put forwarded messages in the Junk box: if the subject line contains either “fw” or “fwd” then it is dumped. I also have a few relatives who are especially repeat-offenders, so I have unique rules for them (From = their name and Subject contains “fw”), because of Mail’s tendency to favor those messages from people in your Address Book.

Why put them in the Junk folder? Because I do periodically check my Junk folder for errant messages. As good as SpamSieve is, probably once a week I get a message that I need or want to read. (Thankfully, SpamSieve makes it very easy to “train” those as good messages.) And sometimes—maybe every couple of months, or once a quarter—I’ll come across a forwarded message that I actually want. Because my rule sends those to Junk (instead of Trash) then I can find these and read them.

Not Perfect

There are some things that I would change if I could (or if I could figure them out!). For example, I would like to have a rule that recognizes messages that are sent to me, along with a lot of others (maybe more than 10 addressees?), and have those automatically set aside in a “Mass Mailings” folder. I know some clients will do this, and I’d like a way for Mail to do it too, but not so much that I’ll give up my existing system.

Still, I’ve reduced the time and mental energy that goes into processing e-mail down to a fairly slim amount. These tools and tricks work for me. Maybe they’ll be helpful for you as well.

About the List

There are a lot of things happening on the iPad/iOS platform, and these probably merit a round-up or at least a look of some sort. For now, I have added notations about “iPad Presence” in the list below, and I’ve included the information that I have been able to gather. Feel free to comment with more, if you know about them.

I always welcome any feedback on my list or suggestions for additions. I don’t always add every suggestion, but I’ll look at them and evaluate whether they fit with my goals for this column.

Locally Installed GTD Applications

[EasyTask Manager](#)



Developer: Orionbelt.com

Current Version: 2.1

Price: \$20

Development Status: Release

iCal Sync: Yes

QuickSilver Plug-in: Yes

Web-app Sync: Yes

Print Lists: Yes

iPhone Presence: App (free); Web app (free)

iPad Presence: App (free), Web app (free)

OS Requirements: Mac OS X 10.4

Required Applications: None

Distinguishing Features: Windows version available; automatic advance of uncompleted due tasks to today.

News: None

[Frictionless](#)



Developer: Twin Forces

Current Version: 2.0d18

Price: Free, open-source

Development Status: Release

iCal Sync: No

QuickSilver Plug-in: Yes

Web-app Sync: No

Print Lists: Yes

iPhone Presence: None

iPad Presence: None

OS Requirements: Mac OS X 10.5

Required Applications: None

Distinguishing Features: Quick-entry box; fuzzy repeated actions.

News: None

[Ghost Action](#)



Developer: Ghost Park Software

Current Version: 1.3.2

Price: \$20

Development Status: Release

iCal Sync: Yes

QuickSilver Plug-in: No

Web-app Sync: No

Print Lists: Yes

iPhone Presence: Sort of—a non-syncing application (\$10)

iPad Presence: None

OS Requirements: Mac OS X 10.4 [only](#)

Required Applications: None

Distinguishing Features: .Mac syncing (without iCal running); PDA/iPod syncing; two-way iCal syncing.

News: None

[iCog](#)



Developer: HensPace

Current Version: 1.90

Price: Free

Development Status: Release

iCal Sync: No

QuickSilver Plug-in: No

Web-app Sync: No

Print Lists: Yes

iPhone Presence: None

iPad Presence: None

OS Requirements: Unknown

Required Applications: Python 2.4 or later

Distinguishing Features: Compatible with any OS running Python (including Windows); very simple text-only utility.

News: None

[mGTD](#)



Developer: Jeff Fisher

Current Version: 1.3

Price: Free

Development Status: Pre-final

iCal Sync: No

QuickSilver Plug-in: No

Web-app Sync: No

Print Lists: Yes

iPhone Presence: None

iPad Presence: None

OS Requirements: None (Mori template)

Required Applications: Mori 1.6.11

Distinguishing Features: Expands Mori (digital notebook) functions to include GTD principles.

News: None

[Midnight Inbox](#)



Developer: Midnight Beep Softworks

Current Version: 1.4.4

Price: \$35

Development Status: Release

iCal Sync: Yes

QuickSilver Plug-in: No

Web-app Sync: No

Print Lists: Yes

iPhone Presence: App “coming soon”

iPad Presence: App (\$15)

OS Requirements: Mac OS X 10.4

Required Applications: None

Distinguishing Features: Action timer; quick-note and quick-action hot keys; Mail compatible; automatic data collection.

News: The “touch” application is finally here for iPad. It’s marked as 50% off, which suggests that the price will eventually be close to \$30. Initial reviews are not favorable, however. The iPhone version is still unavailable. The Leopard-compatible version 2.0 of the Mac application is still “coming soon.”

OmniFocus



Developer: Omni Group

Current Version: 1.7.5

Price: \$80

Development Status: Release

iCal Sync: Yes

QuickSilver Plug-in: Yes

Web-app Sync: No

Print Lists: Yes

iPhone Presence: App (\$20)

iPad Presence: None

OS Requirements: Mac OS X 10.4.8

Required Applications: None

Distinguishing Features: Mail compatible and Spotlight compatible; simple interface with powerful view features.

News: None

Pluto menubar



Developer: MOApp Software Manufactory

Current Version: 5.1.1

Price: €16 (about \$24)

Development Status: Release

iCal Sync: Yes

QuickSilver Plug-in: Yes

Web-app Sync: No

Print Lists: Yes

iPhone Presence: None

iPad Presence: None

OS Requirements: Mac OS X 10.5

Required Applications: None

Distinguishing Features: This is a menu-bar application, but don't be fooled—it is a very fully featured GTD tool. There is a lot to see here, and you won't find any of the standard features you're looking for missing. Note the full-screen editing, searching, tags, contacts, and priorities.

News: None

Ready, Set, Do!



Developer: Todd Vasquez

Current Version: 1.4.5

Price: \$30

Development Status: Release

iCal Sync: Yes

QuickSilver Plug-in: Yes

Web-app Sync: No

Print Lists: Yes

iPhone Presence: None

iPad Presence: None

OS Requirements: Mac OS X 10.4

Required Applications: None

Distinguishing Features: A very different approach using a set of AppleScript routines to impose organization and communication across a computer's entire file system; productivity scoring; help with files and tasks related to meetings; multiple language support.

News: A very incremental release that includes some bug fixes.

TaskPaper



Developer: Hog Bay Software

Current Version: 2.2.1

Price: \$19

Development Status: Release

iCal Sync: No

QuickSilver Plug-in: No

Web-app Sync: No

Print Lists: Yes

iPhone Presence: App (\$10)

iPad Presence: App (\$10)

OS Requirements: Mac OS X 10.5

Required Applications: None

Distinguishing Features: Simple text-based system; no-frills; intentionally designed as an alternative to more fully featured systems.

News: The iOS app is now compatible with both iPhone *and* iPad.

[The Hit List](#)



Developer: Potion Factory

Current Version: 0.9.3.20 (beta)

Price: \$50 (pre-order)

Development Status: Beta

iCal Sync: Yes

QuickSilver Plug-in: No

Web-app Sync: No

Print Lists: No

iPhone Presence: No (but indicated as “coming”)

iPad Presence: None

OS Requirements: Mac OS X 10.5

Required Applications: None

Distinguishing Features: List view and “card” view; task timer; system-wide quick-entry; tabs allow good project management; AppleScript support; tags and prioritization of tasks.

News: Latest version extends the beta license, but still no substantial development on this application.

Things



Developer: Cultured Code

Current Version: 1.3.4

Price: \$50

Development Status: Release

iCal Sync: Yes

QuickSilver Plug-in: No

Web-app Sync: No

Print Lists: Yes

iPhone Presence: App (\$10)

iPad Presence: App (\$20)

OS Requirements: Mac OS X 10.4.11

Required Applications: None

Distinguishing Features: iCal sync; repeating tasks; Mail compatibility; tags; network and multi-computer operation; and import/export options.

News: Lots of bug fixes in the incremental release.

Thinking Rock



Developer: Avente Pty Ltd

Current Version: 2.2.1

Price: Free, open-source

Development Status: Release

iCal Sync: No

QuickSilver Plug-in: No

Web-app Sync: No

Print Lists: Yes

iPhone Presence: None

iPad Presence: None

OS Requirements: Mac OS X 10.4

Required Applications: None

Distinguishing Features: Cross-platform compatibility through Java; interactive collection and processing; can be run off of a flash drive.

News: I'm still unsure about how to address future upgrades and development of Thinking Rock. In addition to version 2.2.1, version 3.1 is available and in active development—and is a paid application at \$40 for the first year, \$10 for each additional year. Probably the next list will switch the coverage to the paid, active-development version (with a note about the free/open-source version 2.x).

What To Do



Developer: Objective Satisfaction

Current Version: 1.3.2

Price: \$29

Development Status: Release

iCal Sync: No

QuickSilver Plug-in: Yes

Web-app Sync: No

Print Lists: Yes

iPhone Presence: None

iPad Presence: None

OS Requirements: Mac OS X 10.4.9

Required Applications: None

Distinguishing Features: Drag-and-drop intensive for easy reorganization; .Mac syncing for multiple computers; XML export.

News: None

Locally Installed General Task Managers

Anxiety

Developer: Tom Stoelwinder, Model Concept

Current Version: 1.0

Price: Free/Donationware

Development Status: Release

iCal Sync: Yes

QuickSilver Plug-in: No

Web-app Sync: No

Print Lists: Yes (through iCal)

iPhone Presence: None

iPad Presence: None

OS Requirements: Mac OS X 10.5

Distinguishing Features: A menu-bar utility that gives a HUD-like interface to iCal tasks; sorts by calendar; Mac OS X 10.5 only.

News: None

Chandler

Developer: The Chandler Project

Current Version: 1.0.3

Price: Open Source

Development Status: Release

iCal Sync: Yes

QuickSilver Plug-in: No

Web-app Sync: Yes

Print Lists: Yes (through iCal)

iPhone Presence: None

iPad Presence: None

OS Requirements: Mac OS X 10.3

Distinguishing Features: A good integrated calendar makes this one a fairly full-orbed PIM.

News: None

Check Off

Developer: Second Gear

Current Version: 4.1.1

Price: \$13

Development Status: Release

iCal Sync: No

QuickSilver Plug-in: No

Web-app Sync: No

Print Lists: Yes

iPhone Presence: None

iPad Presence: None

OS Requirements: Mac OS X 10.5.2

Distinguishing Features: A menu-bar utility that manages basic task lists; syncs with iPods; a .Mac Backup QuickPick is provided.

News: None

Dejumble

Developer: Thinking Code Software, Inc.

Current Version: 2.0 (beta)

Price: \$20

Development Status: Release

iCal Sync: Yes

QuickSilver Plug-in: No

Web-app Sync: No

Print Lists: Yes (through iCal)

iPhone Presence: App (\$8)

iPad Presence: None

OS Requirements: Unknown (would assume 10.4 or later, due to presence of Spotlight functions)

Distinguishing Features: A simple yet powerful menu bar-style task list manager, with tags, groups, notes, and a handful of other options.

News: Pre-orders for version 2.0 (while in beta) are offered at \$20, which the Web site indicates is “almost 50% off of the retail price.” Other features for version 2.0 are unknown.

Docket

Developer: Surprise Software

Current Version: 1.3

Price: \$20

Development Status: Release

iCal Sync: No

QuickSilver Plug-in: No

Web-app Sync: No

Print Lists: Yes

iPhone Presence: None

iPad Presence: None

OS Requirements: Mac OS X 10.1

Distinguishing Features: A neat basic list-management application. A Windows version is also available.

News: None

Dolt

Developer: Jim McGowan

Current Version: 2.6

Price: Donationware

Development Status: Release

iCal Sync: Yes

QuickSilver Plug-in: Yes

Web-app Sync: No

Print Lists: No

iPhone Presence: None

iPad Presence: None

OS Requirements: Mac OS X 10.4

Distinguishing Features: .Mac support and AppleScriptability. Also supports file attachments and categories for lists. Skins are available for customization.

News: None

FlexCal

Developer: flexgames

Current Version: 1.14

Price: Free/Donationware

Development Status: Release

iCal Sync: Yes

QuickSilver Plug-in: No

Web-app Sync: No

Print Lists: Yes (through iCal)

iPhone Presence: None

iPad Presence: None

OS Requirements: Mac OS X 10.5

Distinguishing Features: A task and event creator for iCal—something of a collection bucket for GTD users.

News: None

Hot Plan

Developer: Intuiware

Current Version: 1.5.3

Price: \$20

Development Status: Release

iCal Sync: No

QuickSilver Plug-in: No

Web-app Sync: No

Print Lists: No

iPhone Presence: None

iPad Presence: None

OS Requirements: Mac OS X 10.5.8

Distinguishing Features: Tracks a substantial amount of information about a given task, including completion status, priority, and time remaining; supports tagging, color coding, and locking of tasks. Also allows collection of URLs and files.

News: Incremental update fixes many bugs.

iClock Pro

Developer: Script Software

Current Version: 1.1

Price: \$20

Development Status: Release

iCal Sync: Yes

QuickSilver Plug-in: No

Web-app Sync: No

Print Lists: No

iPhone Presence: None

iPad Presence: None

OS Requirements: Unknown

Distinguishing Features: Offers a menu bar-based method of managing task lists; includes .Mac syncing.

News: None

Life Balance

Developer: Llamagraphics

Current Version: 5.1.1

Price: \$65 (\$80 bundled with Palm version)

Development Status: Release

iCal Sync: Yes

QuickSilver Plug-in: No

Web-app Sync: No

Print Lists: Yes (through iCal)

iPhone Presence: App (\$20)

iPad Presence: None

OS Requirements: Mac OS X 10.4

Distinguishing Features: Gives “meta-feedback” about tasks: how much time are you spending in different areas of your life (i.e., work, family, hobbies, etc.), and are you keeping it balanced? Palm and Windows versions available.

News: None

[NoteBook](#)

Developer: Circus Ponies

Current Version: 3.0

Price: \$50 (academic and family pack pricing available)

Development Status: Release

iCal Sync: Yes

QuickSilver Plug-in: Yes

Web-app Sync: No

Print Lists: Yes

iPhone Presence: None

iPad Presence: None

OS Requirements: Mac OS X 10.4.11

Distinguishing Features: Highly customizable system with project management built-in; also works well for heavy day-to-day GTD use.

News: None

[Organized](#)

Developer: iSlayer

Current Version: 1.11

Price: Donationware

Development Status: Release

iCal Sync: Yes
QuickSilver Plug-in: No
Web-app Sync: No
Print Lists: No
iPhone Presence: None
iPad Presence: None
OS Requirements: Mac OS X 10.5
Distinguishing Features: Dashboard widget with calendar events, tasks, notes, and world clock.
News: None

[Qu-s](#)

Developer: Urban Design Limited
Current Version: 1.5.3
Price: \$17
Development Status: Release
iCal Sync: No
QuickSilver Plug-in: No
Web-app Sync: No
Print Lists: No
iPhone Presence: None
iPad Presence: None
OS Requirements: Mac OS X 10.5
Distinguishing Features: Allows lists (and other things) to be created as an editable part of the desktop. Good for simple lists.
News: Bug fixes in the incremental release.

[Stapler](#)

Developer: The Blue Technologies Group
Current Version: 1.1
Price: €7.50 (about \$10)
Development Status: Release
iCal Sync: No
QuickSilver Plug-in: No
Web-app Sync: No
Print Lists: Yes
iPhone Presence: None

iPad Presence: None

OS Requirements: Mac OS X 10.4

Distinguishing Features: A combination notepad and to-do list manager, with creation date, notes, and a check box for completed items. Tasks can be color-coded based on a low-level preference set-up.

News: None

[TaskMate](#)

Developer: Ryan Conway

Current Version: 1.2.1

Price: Free

Development Status: Release

iCal Sync: No

QuickSilver Plug-in: No

Web-app Sync: No

Print Lists: No

iPhone Presence: None

iPad Presence: None

OS Requirements: Mac OS X 10.5

Distinguishing Features: Ultra-simple task list: remaining tasks in a simple list; completed tasks in a drawer (which can be hidden). Tasks are just single-line descriptions with a check box. Could be right for the super-simplified life.

News: None

[Today](#)

Developer: Second Gear

Current Version: 2.2

Price: \$22

Development Status: Release

iCal Sync: Yes

QuickSilver Plug-in: No

Web-app Sync: No

Print Lists: Yes

iPhone Presence: None

iPad Presence: None

OS Requirements: Mac OS X 10.5

Distinguishing Features: A window interface for quick reference and entry to iCal events and tasks. Allows global shortcuts for viewing and creation of new tasks and events.

News: None

[ToDo X](#)

Developer: Omicron Software Systems, Inc.

Current Version: 2.3

Price: \$15

Development Status: Release

iCal Sync: Import from iCal only

QuickSilver Plug-in: No

Web-app Sync: No

Print Lists: No

iPhone Presence: None

iPad Presence: None

OS Requirements: Mac OS X 10.2

Distinguishing Features: Offers categories, priorities, and attached notes.

News: None

[ZooDo](#)

Developer: InterfaceThis

Current Version: 1.0

Price: Free

Development Status: Release

iCal Sync: Yes

QuickSilver Plug-in: No

Web-app Sync: No

Print Lists: Yes (through iCal)

iPhone Presence: None

iPad Presence: None

OS Requirements: Unknown

Distinguishing Features: A basic task creator for iCal, serving as a collection bucket.

News: ZooDo has disappeared from the InterfaceThis Web site, so there is some question about its ongoing support. I'll remove it from the list in upcoming editions.

Browser and Web-based GTD Applications

[30 Boxes](#)

Price: Free

Description: Lean and fast, including a calendar, task list, and limited Gmail interaction. Also RSS and iCal feeds, SMS, and sharing. Nice interface, too.

[43 Actions](#)

Price: Free (donations get extra features)

Description: Specifically designed as an iPhone Web app, it's light and lean for EDGE network optimization. Submit inbox items via e-mail, Twitter (with donation), Jott (with donation), and the usual features.

[GTDAgenda](#)

Price: Free

Description: Another Web version of a GTD tool, with the standard features. Plus, addition of Goals, checklists for recurring tasks, schedule management, and an iCal-compatible calendar. A mobile version is also available.

[GTDInbox](#)

Price: Free

Description: A Firefox extension for GTD integration with Gmail. Prepackaged labels, a Review process, specialized searches within Gmail, quick-entry for tasks, and printable. Works well in conjunction with RememberTheMilk. Current version, 2.0.8.4, is open source; requires Firefox.

[GTD-PHP](#)

Price: Free

Description: A PHP solution designed to be locally installed. A simple tabbed interface for the capture and process stages; weekly review. Currently at version 0.8.

[Neptune](#)

Price: \$10/year

Description: Includes a collection inbox and context or project task viewing panes, as well as inactive projects and tasks. Daily e-mail reminders of tasks; new tasks can be added by e-mail; data export.

[Next Action](#)

Price: Free

Description: Uses Google Gears and Firefox; has a lean, basic interface with multiple-list management capability. Works with or without a network connection.

[Nexty](#)

Price: Free

Description: PHP-based, so it installs locally and runs in your browser; supports contexts and reminders.

[Nozbe](#)

Price: Free

Description: Has markers for which action will be next and a time estimation for tasks. Contexts are visible and identifiable; easy to collect and process quickly; iPhone-ready.

[SimpleGTD](#)

Price: Free

Description: Tabs for next actions, contexts, projects, and done actions; drag-and-drop organization; easy undoing of tasks.

[Task Writer](#)

Price: Free

Description: Easy keyboard navigation, good use of calendaring for tasks, and a useful set of attributes for tasks, as well as the ability to auto-hide unneeded list views, help Task Writer to stand out a bit.

[Toodledo](#)

Price: Free

Description: Has a Firefox plug-in and a Google gadget for easy collection; also supports e-mail, voice mail, and traditional entry for collection. Includes a good overview of GTD in co-operation with its tools, as well. iPhone-optimized.

[Tracks](#)

Price: Free

Description: A Web server that runs locally or hosted through tracks.tra.in. Fast, lean, and pretty, it offers calendaring and a multi-user component. Currently at version 1.6.

[Vitalist](#)

Price: \$5/month (premium)

Description: Is a wide-scale GTD system: collection, project management, recurring actions, and tickler files. Includes a mobile edition, iCal and RSS feeds, and e-mail and SMS reminders. An iPhone-specific version is available. A premium (paid) version also includes security encryption, collaboration, file attachments, and calendaring.

Other Browser/Web-based Task Managers

- [Backpack](#)
- [Basecamp](#)
- [CoMindWork](#)
- [HiTask](#)
- [Hiveminder](#)

- [Joe's Goals](#)
- [Mojonote](#)
- [Remember the Milk](#)
- [Scribe](#)
- [Sproutliner](#)
- [Task Freak!](#)
- [Tasks](#)
- [Tasktoy](#)
- [TeuxDeux](#)
- [Todoist](#)
- [Tweeto](#)
- [Zenlists](#)
- [ZenPages](#)

GTD and Task Management Wikis

- [D3](#)
- [GTD TiddlyWiki](#)
- [MonkeyGTD](#)
- [Pimki](#)

iPhone Applications (not Web Apps)

- [2 Minute Timer](#)
- [2Do](#)
- [Actions](#)
- [Checklist Wrangler](#)
- [Chores](#)
- [Dejumble](#)

- [DoBot ToDos](#)
- [EasyTask Manager](#)
- [Firetask](#)
- [Habits](#)
- [Life Balance](#)
- [Lists by MobilityWare](#)
- [Lists by Tynsoe.org](#)
- [Matalot by dPompa](#)
- [My Lists](#)
- [OmniFocus](#)
- [Outliner by CarbonFin](#)
- [Sciral Consistency](#)
- [Tanjas Checklist](#)
- [Tasks](#)
- [Things](#)
- [ToDo by Appigo](#)
- [To Do by Erica Sadun](#)
- [To-Do List by Concrete Software](#)
- [To-Do Lists by Tapku](#)
- [ToodleDo](#)
- [Zenbe Lists](#)

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Segments: Slices from the Macintosh Life

by Linus Ly, lly@atpm.com

Size Really Matters

One Christmas Day a few years ago, my wife surprised me with an iPod touch. For the next few months I was happy with it. It was a step up from my 10 GB iPod. All of a sudden, I not only could listen to music and podcasts but also was able to do e-mail and Web surfing, albeit not that comfortably because of the small screen size.

I took it to work and checked e-mail using the public library's Wi-Fi. Coming home, before stepping inside I would check e-mail one more time. Then the battery started to lose charge too quickly, but I adapted by always having the charger with me. Next, Wi-Fi just stopped working, and no more e-mail or Web surfing for me.

I still used it for music, podcasts, and even some videos. I was able to add apps via the Mac laptop. Before the two-year anniversary, the iPod touch simply stopped charging and would not even turn back on. The local Mac shop, Tekserve, declared its logic board dead, too expensive to replace. My wife took it to an Apple Store and was told the same thing.

Any red-blooded consumer would go out and buy a new iPod touch or something similar. I wanted to, also, but I really wanted an iPod touch with a camera. I found that I often use my cell phone to take photos, mostly because I usually had it with me, but also because of its form factor. An iPod touch is about the same size as a cell phone and would make a decent camera. (I always use family plans that cost about the same as a single iPhone plan, so the iPhone is out of the question for me.) The big issue with the cell phone is that getting photos out of it is a painful process. I want something that I can hook up via USB to initiate the photo-transfer process.

As I went back to using my 10 GB iPod, I waited for the announcement of an iPod touch with a camera. Storage got bigger for the iPod touch, the Nano got a video camera, the iPhone 3GS was announced, etc., but no camera-enabled iPod touch. Oh yes, the iPad came out too, all Magical and Revolutionary, supposedly. When the iPhone 4 came out, I unreasonably thought that an iPod touch with camera would finally come out, and of course it didn't. In my moment of despair, I settled for the iPad. After all, the iPad is just a larger version of the iPod touch, no?

As a former iPod touch owner, I don't see anything magical or revolutionary about the iPad. The first iPhone was certainly revolutionary. The bigger screen is nice but not magical. The iPad sure is a larger version of the iPod touch. It is not necessarily a bad thing to be described as such. Size really matters, and whereas with the iPod touch I would curse the small screen as I surfed the Web, with the iPad I was a happy surfer. I was pleasantly surprised to discover that, even without Flash, most of the sites I frequent worked fine.

Most of the apps I got for the iPod touch work great on the iPad, even when magnified two times to fit the larger screen. I even bought more apps directly from the iPad, something I never did with the tiny iPod touch screen.

My iPad bliss was short-lived. Soon enough, the Wi-Fi problem reared its ugly head. I heard about the issue but thought maybe since I'd waited a few months after the iPad debuted the problem would go away by then. It was a very frustrating problem. The iPad would not be able to remember the Wi-Fi password and would ask for it again and again. Sometimes it would take it and resume working again; other times it would accept the password but still could not load Web pages or fetch e-mail.

At some point, over-confident that I had the lengthy password memorized, I entered it incorrectly and the iPad simply did not ask for it any more but also was not able to connect to the Net. I had to reset the network settings and was again prompted for the password. Apple had a long list of things to try to fix the Wi-Fi memory loss, and most of them sounded useless. I actually tried the one about adjusting brightness to the max, but it didn't do me any good. For all its capabilities that almost match a real computer's, the iPad is still basically an Internet appliance. Without the ability to connect to the Net, its value diminishes.

Luckily, my discontent with the iPad was also short-lived. Along came the iOS 3.2 update for the iPad, and like magic Wi-Fi has worked constantly ever since. Now this is the way it should be. Enter the Wi-Fi password once and never have to worry about it again, unless of course the password is changed at the router or the iPad is restored.

Speaking of which, the iOS 3.2 update did not go smoothly, as the installer crashed. The iPad totally lost its mind and had to be restored. Good thing there was a good backup on the Mac, something created by the installer prior to updating the iPad to 3.2. Mere days before the update, I decided to sync my entire 8 GB iPhoto library to the iPad, so the restore process was painfully slow as there was much data to be copied.

Fortunately, the whole mess is now behind me, and I am again happily using the iPad. I still limit my use to e-mail and the Web. I bought Autodesk Sketchbook Pro hoping I would finally draw cartoons completely away from the pencil-and-paper method, but that has not happened. I also got a Chinese-teaching program in hope of getting my son interested in learning Chinese. Then I made the mistake of introducing my wife to a mahjong solitaire game. The iPod touch had the game before, but she was never interested in it because of the small size. With the iPad, she is hooked on the game, so now I need to compete with her, plus my son, for the use of the iPad. I wonder if iOS 4 for the iPad will fix my latest issue. . .

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How To

by Sylvester Roque, sroque@atpm.com

Things I Wish Someone Had Told Me About Networking

Let's face it: there are some household chores, such as washing dishes or getting rid of the scary insect on the living room floor, that no one really likes to perform. In this age of "always on" Internet and Internet-enabled everything, managing the household network probably falls into that category of unpleasant jobs. I think every household has unwritten rules for deciding who's responsible for which unpleasant jobs. Apparently, in our household the rules say that networking issues are my job. I don't remember actually being consulted about this. Like the extra pounds I have added over the years, the networking chores seem to have become mine over time.

My first foray into Mac network settings came when we shifted from AOL to a local Internet provider sometime in the mid-90s. We went in on a Friday afternoon near closing time, set up the account, and things went pretty well. The gentleman I talked to admitted that they were far more familiar with PCs than they were with Macs, but he offered to come set things up for us anyway on Monday. Anxious to be connected before then, I assured him that I knew my way around a Mac reasonably well and could probably work things out on my own. Armed with a copy of their directions and a copy of [Internet Valet](#) purchased a few days before, I was sure I'd be surfing in no time. Without going into detail, on Monday we still weren't on the Net and I had to call them, anyway. The one guy who knew anything at all about Macs came by late that afternoon and fixed a setting in five minutes that I couldn't find all weekend. Thus began my Mac networking career.

The More Things Change, the More They Stay the Same

Things have changed for the better since that first experience so long ago. Settings that were scattered over three or four different control panels in the System 7 days are now collected in the Networking preference pane. Even sharing files with Windows users is easier over a network now. What used to require third-party software and a bit of hope can now be accomplished with much less effort and extra software. I bet most of you don't remember having to use software such as Miramar's [PC MacLAN](#) to share files.

Although things have gotten better, I've had some experiences recently that brought me back to the bad old days of confusing settings and, in some cases, less-than-stellar documentation. Let's look at what I have learned so far. If you're setting up your first network, or expanding an existing one, perhaps you will get some food for thought. We won't dive into all of the settings this month. Instead, we'll start with some things to consider before even touching the first piece of equipment or typing in the first setting.

A Few Basics to Get Us Started

Home networking has become a big business. I guess that's because almost everyone wants to share a broadband Internet connection among several devices, pass files from one computer to another, or use devices connected to one computer while sitting at another computer. In fact, it seems that this type of sharing was a force in the development of [AppleTalk](#). In order to understand how all of this works, let's look at some basics.

In order for networks to function properly, every device on the network has to have a unique IP address. This address consists of a series of numbers which allows other computers to know which computer requested a piece of information, where that computer is located, and how to get the information to that computer. IP addresses do for the computer what your physical address does for the postal service.

This system works fine if there is one computer per household, but what happens if there is more than one computer there? Let's return to the postal analogy for a moment. At this point, the postal carrier has gotten all of the mail to your address correctly but doesn't know which member of the household is supposed to get a specific piece of mail. Now, in the real world, someone in the household would look at a piece of mail and route it to the right person—or everyone could grab their own mail. In the computer world, having everyone try to grab their own information would cause too much chaos, so the work is accomplished by a [router](#). The router assigns each device on your network a number and routes information coming in from the modem to the device that requested that information. This is how you can be reading this e-zine online at the same time someone else is reading their e-mail.

In order for routers to pass information to a given computer, that computer has to be connected to the router in some way. By the time I started experimenting with networking, [Ethernet](#) was becoming the dominant form of connection. Today, wireless connections are becoming increasingly more common. No matter the technology, there have to be working connections among the modem, router, and connected computers before any information transfer can take place. We'll get into the established protocols for that transfer next time, perhaps. For now, we have gone far enough to look at some of the problems I've had recently.

Leave Your Wireless Options Open

Twice in the last several years, I have had Mac desktop models that did not ship with wireless cards built in. They were available as an option, but I didn't need it at the time, and waiting for the installation would have added a few days to the delivery date. Come on. Who wants to wait a couple of extra days for their new Mac to be delivered? Besides, being reasonably handy working on the inside of a Mac I figured I'd just install it later. Until then, there was an Ethernet wire running from the router, part way around the perimeter of our computer area, into the next room where the Mac Pro would be located. The distance would still be well within the 100-meter [recommended maximum distance](#) for Ethernet connections.

That arrangement worked fine until we moved to a new address. Running Ethernet wire from the router to the computer is still well within the distance maximums, but now it

is either unsightly and highly visible or easy for someone to trip over. Needless to say, my spouse vetoed the option to use another long Ethernet wire. When I looked at the instructions for installing an AirPort card in my 2007 Mac Pro, I decided it was a bigger hassle than I wanted to tackle given my clumsy fingers. For the present, I have settled on the [MAXPower Wireless USB Stick Adapter](#) as a solution. The moral of the story is that if you are buying a new Mac and wireless capability isn't already built-in, ask about your options for having the seller add it. You may not need it now but might well avoid a hassle later.

What Are Your Network Expansion Options?

When I discovered that a wired Ethernet connection wasn't a good option in our current setting, I looked at options to extend the network. Most routers readily support extending a network via Ethernet by adding a second router and Ethernet cable. That wasn't an option, but I did have an older router with built-in wireless, so maybe that would work. After all, the documentation suggested that it could be used as a [wireless access point](#).

After a couple of days fighting with this, a friend and I reached the conclusion that the router I was trying to use did not support extending an existing network wirelessly. If you are buying a new router, download the documentation and at least glance at the options that are possible for extending an existing network. No matter how clueless you think you may be about networking, the manufacturers ought to be able to make it clear whether it is possible to extend a network using their equipment. Since the whole world is going wireless, shoot for routers that support extending the network that way.

Some of you may wonder why I did not use the older router as the base of the network and use our dual-band [Time Capsule](#) to extend the network. The first problem is that the Ethernet ports in the older router are slower than those on the Time Capsule. We would like to have our primary machines always connected to the faster equipment. The second problem is that in the testing I have done so far, the Time Capsule refused to extend the network wirelessly and simultaneously keep the Ethernet ports active. There may be a way to make this work without purchasing additional gear, but for now I have solved the problem with the USB wireless adapter. I guess the moral of this story is to keep future expansion in mind. Look for gear that not only clearly states what it can and cannot do but also gives you the most flexibility that you can reasonably afford.

What If You Don't Need Wireless Access All the Time?

I have noticed recently that some routers are offering the option of turning off the wireless access functions while the firewall and wired access functions continue to work. If it's available on your router, it is relatively easy to implement. The idea here is that wireless access can be disabled at times when you are pretty sure it will not be used and re-enabled when it is needed. Suppose you are going on that long awaited trip for the next several weeks. While you are getting some hard-earned rest and relaxation, why should your wireless network be sitting there just waiting for someone to guess your password and poach your bandwidth?

Some devices take this option one step further, allowing users to disable wireless access at certain days and times. The current Time Capsule supports this, and it's a potentially useful feature. Want your wireless network deactivated while the family is off to work and school, but don't want to have to remember to reactivate it later? It wasn't possible when I bought my first router, but it is now.

Final Thoughts

That pretty well covers some of the networking lessons I have learned in the last few weeks. Next time, I plan to look at some basics of configuring the settings for a network. Of course, if I get distracted by some other project that is much more interesting, that may change. I will have to think very carefully about that article. It would be easy to get bogged down in terminology and the nuts and bolts of getting things up and running. Stay tuned, though. I may have a few tricks up my sleeve.

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Desktop Pictures

by Giuseppe Balacco

Tremiti Islands

We need new desktop pictures each month. [Write](#) to us!

This Month's Desktop Pictures

These photos of the Tremiti islands were taken by Giuseppe Balacco, his daughter Maria Luisa, and his wife Cecilia. They used a Vivitar ViviCam 7410 with automatic settings and presets for landscape, sunset, etc.

Into the pictures you can recognize several [typical places](#) of the islands, whose names are not always easy to translate from Italian: San Nicola (Saint Nicholas, island and monastery), Grotta delle Viole (Cave of the Violets), i Pagliai, il Cretaccio, Cala del Sale, Cala Matana, and Cala degli Inglesi.



[View Pictures](#)

Contributing Your Own Desktop Pictures

If you have a picture, whether a small series or just one fabulous or funny shot, please send it to editor@atpm.com and we'll consider publishing it in next month's issue.

Previous Months' Desktop Pictures

Pictures from previous months are listed in the desktop pictures [archives](#).

Downloading All the Pictures at Once

Some browsers can download an entire set of desktop pictures at once.

Safari Use [this Automator workflow](#).

iCab Use the Download command to “Download all linked files in same folder” and configure the limits to download only the linked images.

OmniWeb Choose “Save Linked ▸ Images...” from the File menu.

Placing Desktop Pictures

Mac OS X 10.3.x Through 10.6.x

Choose “System Preferences...” from the Apple menu, click the “Desktop & Screen Saver” button, then choose the Desktop tab. In the left-side menu, select the desktop pictures folder you want to use.

You can also use the pictures with Mac OS X’s built-in screen saver. Select the Screen Saver tab which is also in the “Desktop & Screen Saver” System Preferences pane. If you put the ATPM pictures in your Pictures folder, click on the Pictures Folder in the list of screen savers. Otherwise, click Choose Folder to tell the screen saver which pictures to use.

Mac OS X 10.1.x and 10.2.x

Choose “System Preferences...” from the Apple menu and click the Desktop button. With the pop-up menu, select the desktop pictures folder you want to use.

You can also use the pictures with Mac OS X’s built-in screen saver. Choose “System Preferences...” from the Apple menu. Click the Screen Saver (10.1.x) or Screen Effects (10.2.x) button. Then click on Custom Slide Show in the list of screen savers. If you put the ATPM pictures in your Pictures folder, you’re all set. Otherwise, click Configure to tell the screen saver which pictures to use.

Mac OS X 10.0.x

Switch to the Finder. Choose “Preferences...” from the “Finder” menu. Click on the “Select Picture...” button on the right. In the Open Panel, select the desktop picture you want to use. The panel defaults to your ~/Library/Desktop Pictures folder. Close the “Finder Preferences” window when you are done.



Out at Five

by Matt Johnson, mjohnson@atpm.com

Do or Do Not



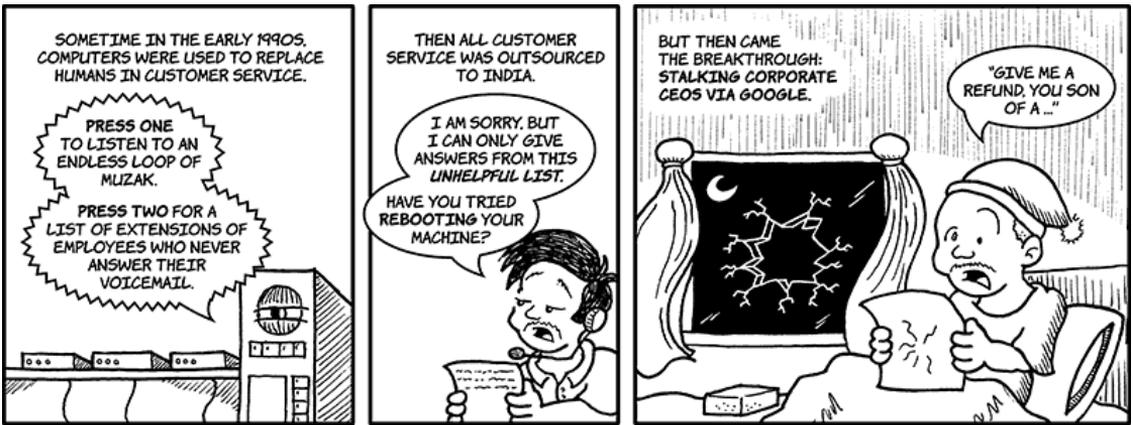
Profit Margins



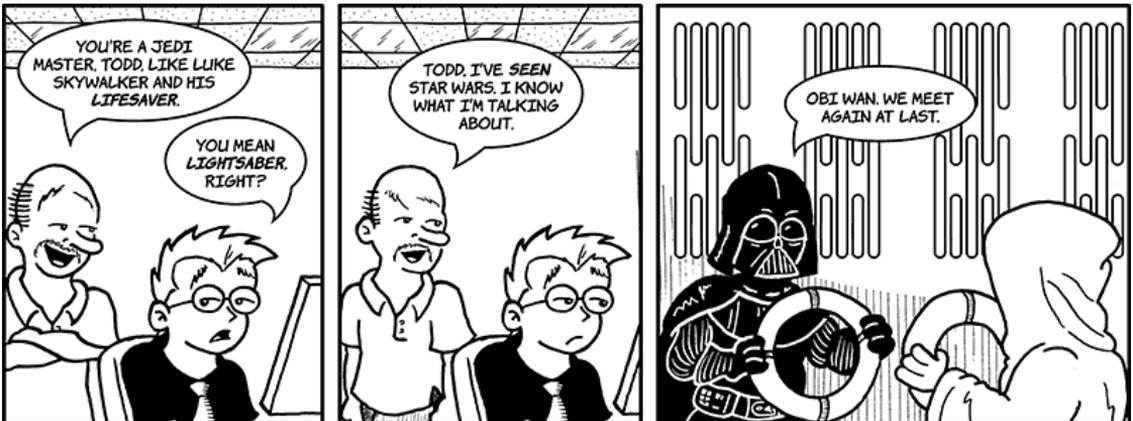
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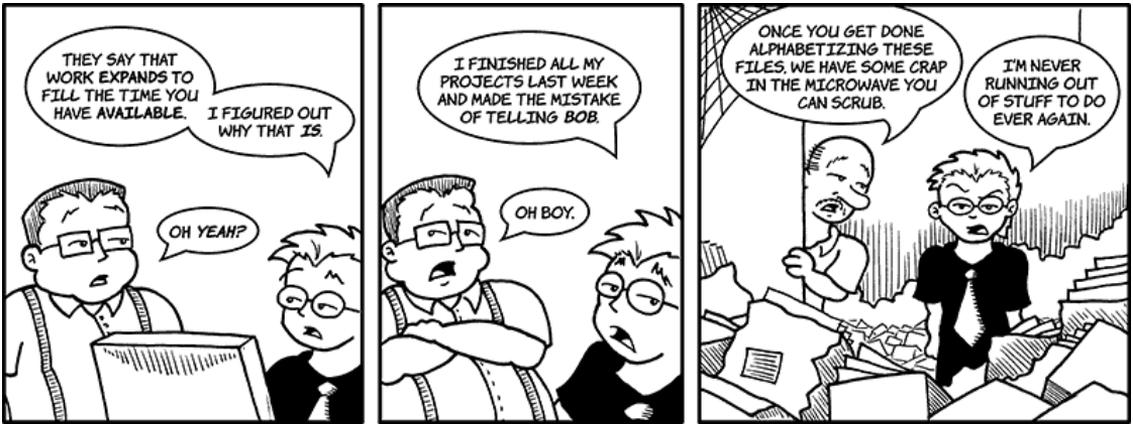
Customer No-Service



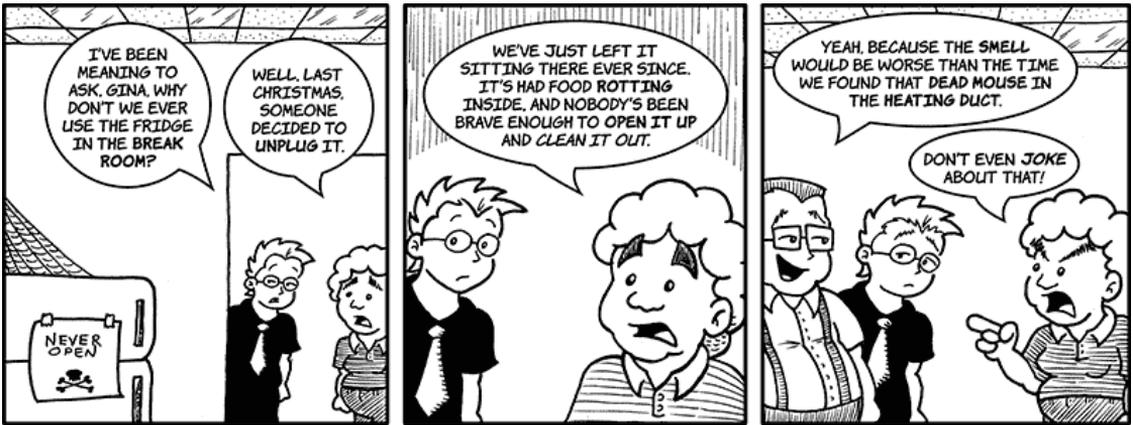
Lifesavers



Keeping Busy



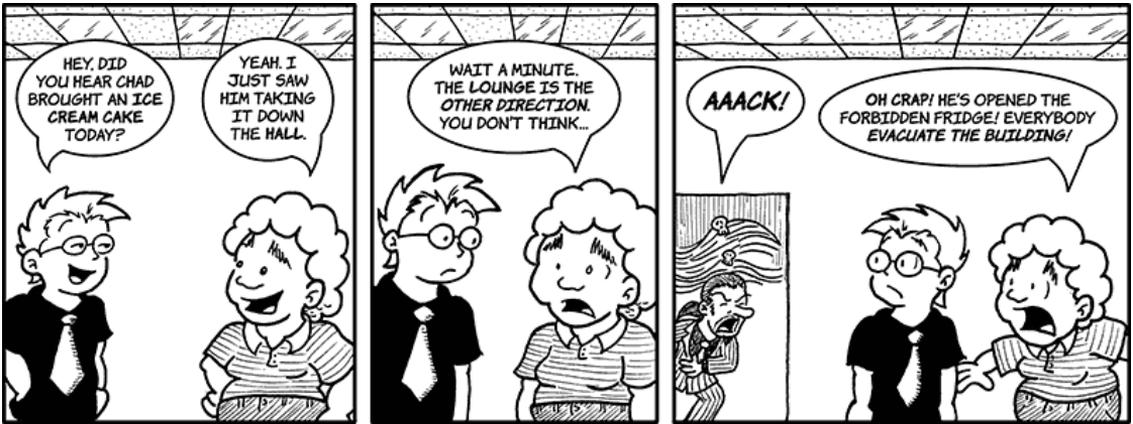
Break Room Fridge



Break Room Fridge 2



Pandora's Fridge



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Hardware Review

by Christopher Turner, cturner@atpm.com

OWC Express

Function: Bus-powered 2.5" USB 2.0 enclosure.

Developer: [Other World Computing](#)

Price: \$20

Requirements: 2.5" SATA hard drive or SSD up to 9.5mm tall.

Trial: None



Last year I fulfilled something of a computing dream: I purchased a black MacBook. It was used, of course, the next to last version of the BlackBook Apple produced before taking the line down the aluminum road. I, like many others, have always liked the look of Apple's black notebooks. In my former life as an IT grunt, I pined for the sleek black PowerBook G3s I would set up for the trainers and graphic artists we supported, while making do with the orange iBook our bosses provided our department.

So it stood to reason—geek reason, that is—that upon acquiring the black MacBook I would require a suitable external hard drive with which to back it up. I had purchased a Seagate Momentus 500 GB 2.5-inch drive for this purpose, doing some future proofing as I plan to upgrade the MacBook's internal hard drive to 500 GB at some point. Then it came down to an enclosure for the new Momentus.

Enter the OWC Express.

The Express USB enclosure is available in three colors: white, black, and Apple-aluminum silver. So no matter the color of your MacBook, you can properly coordinate. (Sorry, orange iBook owners.) I went, of course, with basic black.



Despite the product photography, these enclosures are not metal, but rather ABS plastic, which OWC bills as “impact resistant.” I have consciously chosen not to test that claim, especially with a brand new hard drive inside.

Installation of the hard drive was quick and easy. Removing the two small Phillips-head screws on the bottom of the enclosure is all that is necessary to gain access. The top cover comes off, and then one simply angles the hard drive in and onto the SATA connector. Click into place and you’re done. Replace the cover, tighten the two small screws, and connect the USB cable to the drive, then to your Mac. A quick trip into Mac OS X’s Disk Utility to format the drive, and you’re in business.

The OWC Express enclosure has a blue LED status indicator, so you know when the drive is receiving power. When reading and writing to the hard drive occurs, the status light blinks steadily.



I use Shirt Pocket's [SuperDuper](#) for cloning my MacBook's internal hard drive as a form of backup. We've previously [reviewed SuperDuper](#). The first time one runs a backup with SuperDuper, it can take quite a while, depending on how many gigabytes one is cloning. Such was the case with the now fully-equipped OWC Express, and it got a workout.



The enclosure is fanless, so the only noise coming from it during use is from the hard drive itself. The Seagate Momentus is relatively quiet on its own, with little noise coming from it even during heavy use—such as a first-time backup of 100 or so gigabytes. Together, they make for a combination that won't bother those sensitive to computer noise, especially if there's already some other white noise or sounds from music or television in the room.

The Express uses Jmicron's 20329 chipset, leading on the outside of the enclosure to a Mini-B USB female connector. The enclosure ships with a Mini-B cable, through which power is provided. No external power adapter ships with the Express, and none is needed, as there is no other connector on the enclosure except for the Mini-B USB. This helps with the Express's clean, minimalist look, and means you only have to tote around a single cable to connect it to your Mac.



If you don't have a drive to throw into the Express, OWC offers several Value Priced Kit [bundles](#), which pair an Express enclosure with a choice of several different hard drives. Prices range from \$64 all the way to \$715, for those wanting to go with a large-capacity SSD.

There are many options when it comes to portable hard drives and enclosures. OWC's Express enclosure offers a good value: it's affordable, quiet, and as fast as current consumer technology allows.

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Software Review

by Matthew Glidden, mglidden@atpm.com

WireTap Anywhere 1.0.8

Function: Virtual audio patchbay.

Developer: [Ambrosia Software](#)

Price: \$129

Requirements: Mac OS X 10.4.11. [Universal](#).

Trial: Fully-featured (30 days, then adds voiceover to recording)



For all of the Mac's talent with audio input and output, moving sound around *inside* your system can be a jigsaw puzzle. Each program does its own bit, but might not play well with others. The DVD player shows movies—without letting you pull out and save a favorite quote. Web browsers help you watch free concerts *now*, but don't always provide audio replays. In each case, sound gets “tied” to a source that's hard to reuse elsewhere.

WireTap Anywhere clears up the input/output hedge maze by letting you combine anything that makes sound—Web browsers, VoIP phones, microphones, and so on—into a custom source device. Your Mac now treats it just like any other input, freeing you to record, edit, or play back what you want, when you want.

First Impression

Once installed and fired up, WireTap Anywhere looks like a shiny fuse box, similar to Apple's own brushed steel software. Every “fuse” in this list now also works as a source of sound for another program on your Mac. Open another program on your Mac and WireTap adds it to this list.



WireTap Anywhere's default list of devices.

To capture audio from a single source, such as an iTunes radio stream or your Web browser, select the right WireTap input from an audio editor and start recording. I use [Audacity](#) to record because it's free and straightforward. Ambrosia includes a trial version of their own [WireTap Studio](#) editor with the WireTap Anywhere package, if you want something more polished.

I've been using a cumbersome process to record Skype calls, so I tried to simplify things with WireTap. This example shows how to set up a two-sided audio capture.

Wiretap Example: Record Internet Phone Conversations

Folks use Skype and other phone-like software to call friends, hold business meetings, or even perform for a crowd. (Search for "Skype concert" to see that last one.) I'm interviewing friends and relatives to build up an oral family history, so I tried using WireTap to record our conversations with this setup:

1. Desktop USB mic (for my side)
2. Skype (for their side)
3. Audacity (freeware audio recorder)

Skype and the mic start as separate audio devices that we'll combine into one using WireTap. First, open the Audacity preferences pane to check our default recording options. It should be the same list we saw before.



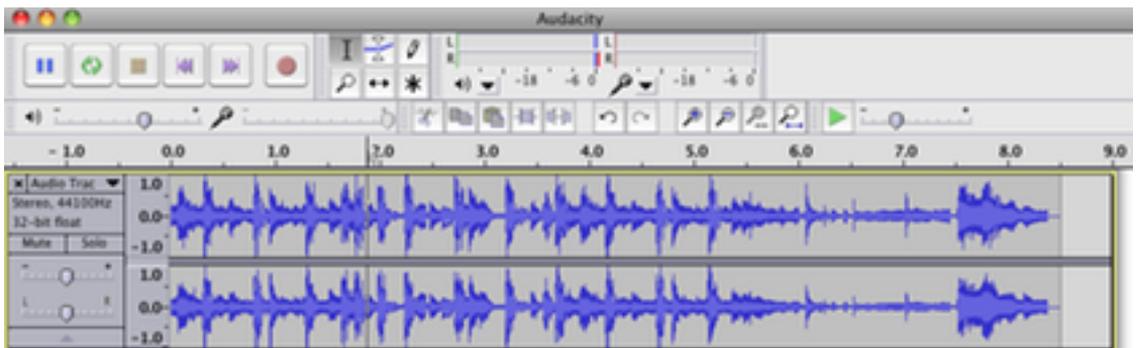
Audacity with the default WireTap devices.

Go back to WireTap and create a new device (“+” button). In the “WireTapped Audio” sidebar, add Skype and the Logitech USB Microphone. This mixes them into a single audio source I named appropriately.



Creating a new WireTap device.

Check the preferences in Audacity to see your new Skype + mic input. Select it and start your call in Skype. At any point, switch back to Audacity and start recording!



Audio captured from a Skype call.

Other Wiretap Anywhere Uses

This review mentions just two ways to use WireTap, rerouting music streams and Skype conversations, and both worked well. See [this article](#) by John Hawkins for a more complex podcasting setup that even a pro could use.

If you like how it sounds so far, note that Ambrosia's currently [seeking beta testers](#) for WireTap Anywhere 2.0.

WireTap Competitors

Two other applications, Audio Hijack Pro (\$32) and Jack OS X (freeware), overlap functionality with WireTap Anywhere. Here's a brief comparison of their dos and don'ts:

Audio Hijack Pro

- *Does:* Capture audio from any application or hardware source, with a built-in recorder.
- *Doesn't:* Create new audio inputs for other applications (capture only).

Jack OS X

- *Does:* Redirect audio between sources, using client and server (see product documentation for details).
- *Doesn't:* Look very easy to use.

If you just want to capture music and sound, Audio Hijack saves a step over my Skype example by creating its own recordings—no Audacity required. WireTap makes audio available to all your applications, so recording's just one color on a larger palette.

WireTap and Jack OS X both move audio between applications, but with very different interfaces. Jack OS X's client-server GUI has a steeper learning curve than WireTap's fuse box, but also costs everyone's favorite price: free.

Is It Worth the Cost?

WireTap Anywhere straddles the fence between amateur and pro users, so it costs more than your typical shareware release. As mentioned above, only recording from applications is a good match for Audio Hijack, but WireTap Anywhere handles more sophisticated input/output work with power and good ease-of-use. I find it really easy to use, and the ability to mix-and-match all this audio is inspiring. That's not meant to be dramatic—it really does spur different creative ideas for complex project applications like GarageBand and iMovie. Even if you don't ultimately use WireTap for audio work, it's worth trying out just to stretch your mind.

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FAQ: Frequently Asked Questions

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About This Particular Macintosh (ATPM) is, among other things, a monthly Internet magazine or “e-zine.” ATPM was created to celebrate the personal computing experience. For us this means the most personal of all personal computers—the Apple Macintosh. *About This Particular Macintosh* is intended to be about your Macintosh, our Macintoshes, and the creative, personal ideas and experiences of everyone who uses a Mac. We hope that we will continue to be faithful to our mission.

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How Can I Submit Cover Art?

We enjoy the opportunity to display new, original cover art every month. We're also very proud of the people who have come forward to offer us cover art for each issue. If you're a

Macintosh artist and interested in preparing a cover for ATPM, please e-mail us. The way the process works is pretty simple. As soon as we have a topic or theme for the upcoming issue we let you know about it. Then, it's up to you. We do not pay for cover art but we are an international publication with a broad readership and we give appropriate credit alongside your work. There's space for an e-mail address and a Web page URL, too. Write to editor@atpm.com for more information.

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There are several sections of ATPM to which readers frequently contribute:

Segments: Slices from the Macintosh Life

This is one of our most successful spaces and one of our favorite places. We think of it as kind of the ATPM "guest room." This is where we will publish that sentimental Macintosh story that you promised yourself you would one day write. It's that special place in ATPM that's specifically designated for your stories. We'd really like to hear from you. Several Segments contributors have gone on to become ATPM columnists. Send your stuff to editor@atpm.com.

Hardware and Software Reviews

ATPM publishes hardware and software reviews. However, we do things in a rather unique way. Techno-jargon can be useful to engineers but is not always a help to most Mac users. We like reviews that inform our readers about how a particular piece of hardware or software will help their Macintosh lives. We want them to know what works, how it may help them in their work, and how strongly we recommend it. Please contact our [reviews editor](#), before you begin writing, if you have a piece of hardware or software that you'd like to review.

Which Products Have You Reviewed?

Check our [reviews index](#) for the complete list.

What is Your Rating Scale?

ATPM uses the following ratings (in order from best to worst): Excellent, Very Nice, Good, Okay, Rotten. Products rated Good or better are ones that we recommend. Okay products get the job done. We recommend avoiding Rotten products.

Will You Review My Product?

If you or your company has a product that you'd like to see reviewed, send a copy our way. We're always looking for interesting pieces of software to try out. Contact reviews@atpm.com for shipping information. You can send press releases to news@atpm.com.

Where Can I Find Back Issues of *ATPM*?

[Back issues](#) of *ATPM*, dating since April 1995, are available in DOCMaker stand-alone format and as PDF. In addition, all issues since *ATPM* 2.05 (May 1996) are available in HTML format.

What If My Question Isn't Answered Above?

We hope by now that you've found what you're looking for (We can't imagine there's something else about *ATPM* that you'd like to know.). But just in case you've read this far (We appreciate your tenacity.) and still haven't found that little piece of information about *ATPM* that you came here to find, please feel free to e-mail us at (You guessed it.) editor@atpm.com.

