



MAC FACTS

from

Mac Help Desk

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🍏 Apple Solution Experts 🍏

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A Message from Dru

Apple Event Announcement - I'll be teaching a few classes for Apple in the month of April. On April 4th I'll be teaching a morning and an afternoon session of *Mac Basics 101 - An Introduction to the Mac*. Cost is \$100/person (that's a 33% savings from our regular price!). And on April 18th I'll be teaching a FREE morning and an afternoon session seminar about *DVD the Easy Way*. For more info or to register go here:

Mac Basics 101 (Early)

http://asp-web.info.apple.com/em/search/detail_full.lasso?-token.id=EV011088

Mac Basics (Late)

http://asp-web.info.apple.com/em/search/detail_full.lasso?-token.id=EV011089

DVD the Easy Way (Early)

http://asp-web.info.apple.com/em/search/detail_full.lasso?-token.id=EV011155

DVD the Easy Way (Late)

http://asp-web.info.apple.com/em/search/detail_full.lasso?-token.id=EV011158

Seating is VERY LIMITED. So call early to reserve you space!



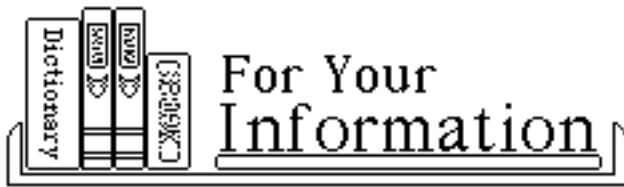
Here's the new crew that joined our 'family' last month - Susan Gaedke, Elle Fitzgerald Design, Dana Nearburg, Wesley United Methodist Church, Norman Otto, Robbie Siben, Elroy Lehmann, Spencer Theatre, Lorraine Pingree, Kent Glasby, MGW Group, and Bill Crisler. Welcome all!



Speaking of 'All' - If you'd like to read the Grand Prize Winner of this year's KERA 90.1 FM Selected Short Story - click <http://www.machelpdesk.com/all.html>



The next meeting of the Apple Corps of Dallas is Saturday March 24. Presenter for the main meeting is Thursby Software, manufacturer of the great program 'Dave'. If you do any cross-platform computing, you need to see 'Dave'. Meeting starts at 10 am. Special Interest Groups (SIGs) start at 12 noon. FREE & Open to all. Membership suggested. See <http://www.acd.org> for more details.



Getting The Most Out Of Your Mac

By Tristan Moore

Weeding Your System Folder

I work as a freelance Mac consultant repairing, tuning, and upgrading computers for various individuals and businesses, and I find that most people's problems with their Macs are related to too many files in their System Folder.

It all starts when a Mac leaves the factory - just the full install of Mac OS 8.6 or 9 has many extensions and other files that most users will never need. Apple seems to take the approach that if you install everything, then when the user plugs in their printer for example, the driver will already be loaded. This works, but it wastes memory and slows down the computer. The problem continues to get worse as the user installs third party software, and after a while the System Folder begins to look like that closet you have been meaning to clean out for years, but never the time. You always find room for one more toy, or useless appliance, until one day you open the door and CRASH! it all falls out on the floor. Fortunately, with a little preventative maintenance you can avoid a lot of problems.

How To Weed the System Folder

After I install a new System the printer drivers I don't use are the first to go. Most of them are named after the printer they go with, and they often have a little picture of it on them. If you don't have the printer they belong to, then throw them in the trash, or at least disable them with Extensions Manager.

If you don't know whether you need an extension, try turning it off and if something you need stops working, turn it back on again. It's best not to trash things right away unless you're really sure what they do and that you don't need them.

It is usually not too hard to tell what each extension does, for example the names of Apple drivers for USB devices all start with "USB". The icon also can help - most extensions relating to Firewire have the FireWire icon on them. If your Mac doesn't have FireWire or USB you can safely turn all extensions relating to them off.

An excellent source of information on Extensions, Control Panels, and what they do is "Extension Overload." A \$20 Shareware Program that lists information about many Apple and third party extensions, and what they do.

The Control Panels folder is weeded in the same way as the extensions folder. Just turn off, or remove unnecessary items.

Another problem is all the "cool toys" that people like to download off the Web or get off shareware CDs and install on their Mac. Screen savers and virtual pets that live on your desktop are fun, but they slow down your Mac, and use up memory. I have completely stopped using these "enhancements" because of the trouble they caused me. I'm not saying they are all bad, some of them are pretty cool, but I'm not willing to put up with the problems to make my Mac look a little

more fun. If you start experiencing crashes or other weird behavior after installing a new "toy", try disabling it and if the problem goes away, then you know what caused it. Remember not to install a whole bunch of things at once. Finding out just which one is causing you grief can be a nightmare.

It's not only shareware screen savers and virtual pets that can cause trouble though, many commercial software packages install extensions and control panels that modify the Mac OS's user interface; Netscape Communicator which also installs AOL Instant Messenger along with it's "IdleTime" and "AIM Menu" extensions. These are not necessarily bad extensions, but many users who install Netscape don't use AIM, and therefore should just turn them off. Norton Utilities installs a bunch of Extensions, and Control Panels in the System Folder which many users don't really need, and so does Aladdin Stuffit Deluxe. I use all of these programs on a daily basis, and they are outstanding products, but I don't really want the junk they install in my System Folder. They all work without it, although some features may not be functional. I had the True Finder Integration part of Stuffit Deluxe installed for about a year, and it was very useful, but it slowed down the Finder, so I switched to using Aladdin DropStuff to stuff files quickly. Sure DropStuff doesn't have all the cool features of TFI, but I don't have to wait as long for something to happen when I'm working on the Desktop. It would be nice if software developers would tell the user at the time of installation that parts of their software are optional, and that there may be performance penalties if you install them.

Most programs do have a custom install option and I suggest you use it. If you bought Norton Utilities, and you only want it to fix a corrupted hard disk that Disk First Aid can't repair, then just install Norton Disk Doctor, and skip the rest of the package. Sure DiskLight is cool, but do you really need it? This is a good question to ask yourself every time you are running an installer.

And last but not least, don't forget about the Preferences Folder. It can hold hundreds of megs of useless crap that belongs to programs which aren't even on your hard drive anymore. If you throw out a program, why not send its preferences to the dumpster too, and save some HD space.

It's best to take it slow when you first start weeding. Turn off a few things at a time, and then a few more in a couple of days when your sure your Mac is still working OK. I get a call every couple of weeks from a frustrated user who got a little over zealous while weeding and tossed part of a program they need to do their work. This costs them downtime, and money if I have to come clean up the mess they caused for themselves.

Hard Disk Maintenance

Another often overlooked section of many Macs is the hard drive's directory. Unlike the System Folder, this part of your Mac is hidden, and can only be worked on with special programs designed for repairing and optimizing it. Apple ships a program called Disk First Aid with every copy of the Mac OS, and since Mac OS 8.5 your Mac even auto-checks its disk with Disk First Aid after a crash, that is unless you disabled the auto check option in your "General Controls" Control Panel. This is not a good idea; it lets Hard Disk problems sneak up on you. If you ever get a message saying that problems were found, and Disk First Aid cannot repair them after a hard disk check, do something about it right away, get a copy of Norton Utilities, or Alsoft DiskWarrior, and fix the damage, or take your Mac to a repair shop [*or call us at Mac Help Desk, Ed. ☺*]. Don't just forget about it or one day your Mac won't boot up, and you will be forced to do something about it RIGHT AWAY and you probably will lose data.



NEWSLINE

Mac OS X Hits Stores This Weekend

CUPERTINO, Calif., March 21 -- Apple today announced that beginning this Saturday, March 24, customers can buy Mac OS X in retail stores around the world. Mac OS X is the world's most advanced operating system, combining the power and openness of UNIX with the legendary ease of use and broad applications base of Macintosh.

"Mac OS X is the most important software from Apple since the original Macintosh operating system in 1984 that revolutionized the entire industry," said Steve Jobs, Apple's CEO. "We can't wait for Mac users around the globe to experience its stability, power and elegance."

Over 350 applications for Mac OS X are shipping today, with hundreds more coming by this summer. More than 10,000 developer organizations around the world are working on over 20,000 Mac OS X applications, including 4D, Aladdin Systems, Alias|Wavefront, Avid, Connectix, Dantz, Digidesign, EarthLink, FileMaker, IBM, Macromedia, Microsoft, MYOB, Palm, Sun, Symantec, and Thursby Software Systems.

Apple will also ship Mac OS X versions of its three most popular applications on March 24, available as free downloads at www.apple.com: iMovie 2, the world's most popular and easiest-to-use digital video editing software; iTunes, Apple's wildly popular "jukebox" software that lets users create and manage their own music library; and a preview version of AppleWorks 6.1, Apple's award-winning productivity application.

Mac OS X is built upon an incredibly stable, open source, UNIX-based foundation called Darwin and features true memory protection, preemptive multi-tasking and symmetric multiprocessing when running on the dual processor Power Mac G4. Mac OS X includes Apple's new Quartz 2D graphics engine (based on the Internet-standard Portable Document Format) for stunning graphics and broad font support; OpenGL for spectacular 3D graphics and gaming; and QuickTime for streaming audio and video. Mac OS X also features an entirely new user interface called Aqua. Aqua combines superior ease of use with amazing new functionality such as the Dock, a breakthrough for organizing, documents and document windows.

In addition, Mac OS X includes hundreds of new features, such as:

- Dynamic memory management, eliminating "out of memory" messages or need to adjust the memory for applications
- Advanced power management, so that PowerBook® and iBook systems wake from sleep instantly
- QuickTime 5, shipping for the first time as an integrated feature of Mac OS X
- Automatic networking, allowing users to get on the Internet using any available network connection, without adjusting settings
- A single interface to easily manage all network and Internet connections, including direct support for DSL systems that require PPPoE connectivity
- Full PDF support and PDF integration into the operating system, so that Mac OS X applications can generate standard PDF documents to be shared with any platform
- Direct support for TrueType, Type 1 and OpenType fonts, and an intuitive and flexible interface for managing fonts and groups of fonts
- More than \$1,000 of the best fonts available today, including Baskerville, Herman Zapf's Zapfino, Futura, and Optima; as well as the highest-quality Japanese fonts available, in the largest character set ever on a personal computer

- iTools integration into Mac OS X, for direct access to iDisk free Internet storage in the Finder and Open/Save dialog boxes, and free IMAP mail for Mac.com email accounts
- Built in support for popular HP, Canon, and Epson printers
- Easy to administer multi-user environment, with access privileges to keep documents secure
- Powerful web development tools and technologies such as WebDAV, XML, Apache and QuickTime
- BSD UNIX services including popular shells, Perl and FTP
- Support for symmetric multi-processing, so that on dual-processor Power Mac G4 systems, both processors are used automatically to deliver up to twice the productivity
- File system and network security including support for Kerberos
- Support for Java 2 Standard Edition built directly into Mac OS X, giving customers access to cross platform applications

Apple's successful Mac OS X Public Beta, which shipped in September 2000, was instrumental in several key enhancements to the operating system. Apple shipped more than 100,000 copies of Mac OS X Public Beta and received more than 75,000 individual user feedback entries from Mac users and developers worldwide.

To help customers migrate to Mac OS X, Apple iServices will offer several new services, including a comprehensive set of Mac OS X training and certification offerings for Mac OS X system administrators.

Pricing & Availability

Mac OS X will ship with 7 languages -- English, Japanese, French, German, Spanish, Italian and Dutch -- included on a single CD. In addition, the Mac OS X box will include a full copy of Mac OS 9.1, for running Classic applications, and the Mac OS X Developer Tools CD.

Mac OS X will be available through The Apple Store (www.apple.com), through Apple Authorized Resellers, and Mac Help Desk, Inc. for a suggested retail price of \$129 (US) beginning March 24, 2001.

Mac OS X requires a minimum of 128MB of memory and is designed to run on the following Apple products: iMac, iBook, Power Macintosh G3, Power Mac G4, Power Mac G4 Cube and any PowerBook introduced after May 1998.



Thanks for taking the time to read our newsletter. Feel free to 'pass it along'. Any comments would be greatly appreciated