



# MAC FACTS

from

## Mac Help Desk

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**a Macintosh Solutions Provider company**

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### *A Message from Dru*

Happy St. Patrick's Day. "May you be gone a half hour before the Devil realizes that his Dell server has crashed...again!"



We're moving! After 7 years in our current location wife Carol and I decided that a 4 bedroom, 2.5 bath, and 12% mortgage was not what we empty-nesters needed. We'll be moving on March 26<sup>th</sup> and will be out of touch for that weekend. Phone and e-mail will remain the same. Does this call for a party?



Apple and Pepsi (Revisited) - Unless you're living in a cave, you need to know that you can get FREE music (downloadable from the iTunes Music Store) from under 100 million of the 300 million yellow-capped Pepsi, Diet Pepsi, and Sierra Mist 20oz bottles. Available everywhere. [I'm 16 winners for 20 bottles bought!!!]



Thanks to all of you who showed up earlier this month for my band's gig at the Coffee Haus in Plano. In particular, the O'Dwyers, Halls, and Bells all had a great time. You could, too. We're on again on Saturday April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 8pm -10pm. Coffee Haus, 1045 15<sup>th</sup> Place, Plano. Good coffee, good food, good friends, and (of course) great music!



## **Mac OS Security: The Obscurity Myth Has Legs**

by Gene Steinberg

I suppose that it would be great to be invisible. There are dangers lurking everywhere, and if you could just go about your business and not be noticed, you'd stay out of trouble. Well, at least the

trouble you don't cause yourself. So persists the myth of the reasons why the Mac OS isn't subject to all those security issues that afflict the Windows platform.

I am sure you've heard the statement repeated over and over again, whenever the latest Windows e-mail virus makes the rounds. The Mac has a wee market share, and thus virus authors, ever vying for attention, don't cast their dangerous glances our way. Now if Mac OS X really gained a huge market share, well, things would be different. We'd be installing those daily virus software updates too, and the folks who switch platforms would find they are no safer.

Just the other night, on a certain all-night radio program that often talks about alien visitors and things that go bump in the night, a former computer hacker who had mended his ways spread the myth yet again. I was sorely tempted to pick up the telephone and set things straight, but I quickly realized that I was only listening to the taped replay. The show had already been broadcast, and the host and guest were no longer at the office, just a lone engineer or two keeping things running.

So why does the security myth persist? Perhaps wishful thinking. A lot of so-called experts don't really want to admit that perhaps Mac OS X is simply a more secure operating system because it was designed to be that way. Your Mac arrives with many of the vulnerable pathways shut, and you have to deliberately open them by conscious action. You want root access, you have to enable it. Not so with Windows. You want to install software, you have to give your user name and password. Some Mac users rebel at the prospect of having to tell their computers that, yes, it's all right to install software. Else why run the installer?

But when you look at the logic behind this practice, you'd see that it really makes a lot of sense. Would you rather have software installed on your computer without your explicit approval? What if that software contained code that could commandeer your Mac and let it spread junk mail and viruses across the Internet? How would you even know unless you were a networking expert or just knew which tools to check? But if you have to take affirmative action, maybe, just maybe, you'll think twice before you give the OK.

Under Windows, unless you have up-to-date virus software and the latest and greatest security patch from Microsoft, bad things can happen behind your back. You accidentally execute a tiny application that came with e-mail you thought came from a friend, and unsavory consequences may result. That, of course, assumes there is a patch to protect you, and that's not always the case in the early days when a new virus rears its grotesque head.

On occasion, I talk to a Windows user and ask them how their computers are working. Fine, they tell me, although, yes, they did have to rebuild the system because it got mangled by a virus infection of one sort or another. "Didn't you update your virus software?" I ask. "Well, I thought I did," is the inevitable response. And, sure enough, the automatic detection routines used to look for updates on the Internet were just never turned on, or switched off by mistake.

It's not that Macs are invulnerable. Apple does occasionally issue security patches to fix leaks that could cause havoc under the right circumstances. Nothing is perfect. Surely there will be a Mac OS X virus some day that will require new virus definitions to combat. After all, the very first computer virus was developed under Unix.

But the risk is less, not because virus writers don't think the Mac is big enough to warrant attention, but because it is safer by design.

Of course this doesn't mean you shouldn't install virus protection software and observe some simple cautions. In addition, if you use broadband to get online, you'll want to engage Mac OS X's built-in firewall, get a third party program to do the job, or place a hardware router with firewall capability between your broadband modem and your Mac.

You'll also want to be doubly careful about the things you forward to your friends. You would not, I trust, want to accidentally send a letter with a virus-infected attachment to someone using Windows. Why become a Typhoid Mary (or Martin)? This is a reason, by the way, why a virus program such as Norton Anti-Virus for Macintosh also protects against Windows mail viruses. Yes, maybe you feel it just serves them right for using the wrong platform, but think of the destruction that virus may wreak if someone gets infected. Surely you don't hate anyone that much.



## ***OPINION:***

Mac OS X is an enormous leap in terms of usability and stability, and it provides some revolutionary features (like Exposé) that never would have been possible with Mac OS 9.

All too often, Mac OS 9 users go into Mac OS X expecting that they can do everything just like they used to, when in reality, an expectation of having to change one's habits would be more appropriate. Indeed, when one adopts such an attitude, refusing to let go of one's old habits, it's obvious that such a person is going to be frustrated with a radically new operating system. Many of the habits that such users think are "more intuitive" are actually less to do with "intuitivity" and more to do with ingrained habits.

Many diehard Mac OS 9 users that I've met seem to adopt an attitude of thinking that Mac OS 9 is perfect and should be Apple's current operating system, when Mac OS 9 was full of more usability problems than the current version of Mac OS X. The only reason why Mac OS X endures the brunt of "usability" attacks is that Mac OS X is obviously the future of the Mac, so it's useless to go back and look at problems with an old operating system. Apple is trying to push the traditional limits of an operating system, but along with that comes the necessity of breaking old guidelines.

Not only that, but an operating system cannot be everything to everybody. There will always be complaints about how something should work. So, sometimes old "features" of Mac OS 9 are very confusing to Mac OS X users, and therefore Apple changed the functionality in order to appeal to new Mac users. Mac OS 9 users need to realize that in many cases, their view of a good feature is biased by familiarity.

Don't construe my argument as saying that we shouldn't bash Apple at all, or that Mac OS X is perfect. On the contrary, I realize that many of the complaints lodged against Mac OS X are valid. John Siracusa of [ArsTechnica](#) fame does an [admirable attempt](#) (at covering all the nooks

and crannies of the usability question in Mac OS X. And he does this for EVERY major Mac OS X release! I admire that kind of dedication to usability. (<http://www.arstechnica.com/reviews/003/panther/macosx-10.3-1.html>)

But where John Siracusa is objective and [realizes that Mac OS X is clearly the future of the Mac operating system](#), many Mac OS 9 users [don't have this objectivity](#). Ingrained habits and a refusal to change them only leads to frustration with Mac OS X, instead of giving the new operating system a little leeway since you've been using and have become familiar with Mac OS 9. Pointing out the smallest little details and then complaining that Mac OS X has a horrible interface, that Apple's attention to usability is going down the tubes, and refusing to report them as bugs just smacks of Mac OS 9 elitism, especially when some of the complaints are unfounded (e.g.: the iChat buddy list scroll bars are small in order to save space, whereas in message windows they aren't small, because space isn't as crucial in those windows; the application menu houses menu items that are actually carried over from Mac OS 9, and putting them in the application menu actually makes sense).

So to all of those who have yet to make the switch to Mac OS X: instead of comparing it to Mac OS 9 immediately, take a month to get used to it. Keep an open mind about Mac OS X, because it does introduce some jarring changes with which you won't be familiar. Start doing everything in Mac OS X so you force yourself to get used to the new interface. But once you've used it a bit and you know where everything is, most things will start to feel intuitive again, and you'll wonder how you ever got around in Mac OS 9. Case in point: exposé. Once you start using it, you'll cringe when booting into Mac OS 9 because of the lack of that feature.

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## NEWSLINE

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### **iTunes Music Store Downloads Top 50 Million Songs**

Apple® today announced that music fans have purchased and downloaded over 50 million songs from Apple's iTunes® Music Store, not including songs redeemed from the currently-running Pepsi iTunes promotion. The 50 millionth song, purchased last Thursday afternoon, was "The Path of Thorns" by Sarah McLachlan. iTunes users are now downloading 2.5 million songs per week, which is an annual run rate of 130 million songs per year.

"Crossing 50 million songs is a major milestone for iTunes and the emerging digital music era," said Steve Jobs, Apple's CEO. "With over 50 million songs already downloaded and an additional 2.5 million songs being downloaded every week, it's increasingly difficult to imagine others ever catching up with iTunes."

Apple is the only company to offer a complete solution for buying, managing and listening to digital music anywhere with the unique combination of the iTunes digital music jukebox software, the pioneering iTunes Music Store and the market-leading iPod™ and iPod mini digital music players. All work seamlessly together to make the new digital music era accessible to everyone.

The iTunes Music Store offers Windows and Mac® users the industry's largest online music catalog of over 500,000 songs, industry-leading personal use rights and uniform 99 cents-per-song pricing. With exclusive tracks from more than 150 artists, the iTunes Music Store offers music from all five major music companies and over 300 independent music labels. Plus more than 5,000 audiobooks, online gift certificates, Apple's patent-pending "Allowance" feature which lets parents automatically deposit funds into their kids' iTunes Music Store account every month, Celebrity Playlists, iTunes Essentials and Billboard Charts.



## Apple Ships New iPod mini



### Over 100,000 Pre-orders Already in for the World's Smallest 1,000 Song Music Player

Apple® today announced that iPod mini, the world's smallest portable music player ever to hold up to 1,000 CD-quality songs, will be available on Friday, February 20 at 6:00 p.m. at the Apple Store® ([www.apple.com](http://www.apple.com)), Apple's retail stores and Apple Authorized Resellers throughout the U.S. iPod mini is encased in an ultra-portable, lightweight anodized aluminum body and available in a choice of five colors - silver, gold, pink, blue and green. Apple has received over 100,000 pre-orders for the iPod mini which was introduced last month.

"The response to iPod mini has been off the charts," said Philip Schiller, Apple's senior vice president of Worldwide Product Marketing. "iPod mini broadens the market for iPod by competing head-on with flash-based players. iPod mini costs only about \$50 more than a 256MB flash-based player, yet it holds 16 times the music, is smaller, is easier to use and provides superior audio."

Smaller than most cell phones and weighing only 3.6 ounces, iPod mini builds on the success of the original touch wheel with Apple's innovative patent-pending Click Wheel, which combines the ease and simplicity of the touch wheel with five push buttons for precise, one-handed navigation.

iPod mini features the same award-winning user interface as the rest of the iPod family and works effortlessly with Apple's iTunes® Music Store\*, the world's number one digital music service, and the iTunes digital music jukebox software for seamlessly buying, managing and listening to digital music collections. iPod mini uses Apple's patent pending Auto-Sync technology that automatically downloads an entire digital music library onto iPod mini and keeps it up-to-date whenever iPod mini is plugged into a Mac® or Windows computer.

### **Pricing & Availability**

iPod mini for Mac and Windows will be available in the U.S. through the Apple Store ([www.apple.com](http://www.apple.com)), Apple's retail stores and Apple Authorized Resellers on Friday, February 20 for a suggested retail price of \$249 (US). iPod mini will be available worldwide in April. iPod mini comes in a choice of a silver, gold, pink, blue or green 4GB model and includes a belt clip. All iPod minis include earbud headphones, an Apple iPod mini power adapter, a 1.2m 30-pin to FireWire® cable, a 1.2m 30-pin to USB 2.0 cable, and a CD with iTunes 4.2 for Mac and Windows computers.

Optional accessories with the following suggested retail prices include the iPod Dock for \$39 (US), in-ear headphones for \$39 (US) and arm band for \$29 (US). Laser engraving is available for iPod mini for \$19 (US) and can include two lines of text with up to 23 characters per line.

iPod mini can be charged with either the FireWire or USB 2.0 cable and gets up to eight hours of battery life\*\*. iPod mini requires a Mac with a FireWire port and Mac OS® X version 10.1.5 or later (Mac OS X v10.2 or later recommended); or a Windows PC with a FireWire or USB 2.0 port, or a Windows-certified FireWire or USB 2.0 card and Windows 2000, XP Home or Professional.

\* iTunes Music Store open in U.S. only.

\*\* Battery play time and life span vary by use.



Thanks for taking the time to read this month's newsletter. Hope you enjoyed it. If you have any comments or suggestions for stories (or would even like to write a story - hint, hint, hint), please send them to me at [machelpdesk@comcast.net](mailto:machelpdesk@comcast.net) Feel free to share this newsletter with a friend. The newsletter archives are located at <http://www.machelpdesk.com/page6a.html>. Y'all come back now, y'hear.