

MACFACTS

M a c H e l p D e s k , I n c

SUPPORT, SALES, TRAINING, & SERVICE

(972) 783-9787 • (214) 336-7162 - Cellular

e-mail address - support@machelpdesk.com

Web site - <http://www.machelpdesk.com>

a Macintosh Solutions Provider company

INDEX

Page 2

For Your Information
"Title"

Page 3

NEWSLINE

Page 4

Ask the Tech

Page 5

Opinion

Page 6

Product Review
"Not Just MP3 Players"

Page 7

Hints & Tips

Page 8

Comments

Page 9

'One More Thing...'

A MESSAGE FROM DRU

To all of our Jewish client/friends – L'Shana Tovah - May you be inscribed in the book of life, prosperity and health, for this year and many more to come. We will be closed on September 20th for the Jewish Holy Day of [Rosh Hashana](http://www.jewfaq.org/holiday2.htm) (<http://www.jewfaq.org/holiday2.htm>) and closed on Monday September 28th for [Yom Kippur](http://www.jewfaq.org/holiday4.htm) (<http://www.jewfaq.org/holiday4.htm>). Traditionally on Yom Kippur, Jews atone for their sins to G-d. But sins to their fellow man are a different matter. **If I have offended you or caused you pain or suffering, if I have slighted you or caused ill will, if I have done any act that displeased you, please accept my humblest apologies.**

.....

"It's like this. You've bought an old house and [are] settling in for months of renovation. You have goals for every month and many of them give you immediate and intense gratification. The cramped Avocado Green kitchen is now open and airy, doused in natural light, and filled

with modern appliances. The rickety back porch is now a full deck, with a six-person hot tub.

Other renovation landmarks include a new roof, upgraded electrical service, and a new heating system with multiple zones. Boring. But nonetheless essential. These are the things that keep a house functional and livable, and ensure that it'll still be a fun place to live in twenty years' time.

That's my overall take on Snow Leopard, aka Mac OS X 10.6."

— **Andy Ihnatko**. *Chicago Sun Times*

.....

One for the Band - Just a brief note to let y'all know (at this, the beginning of the holiday season) that live music enlivens ANY party or holiday gathering (private or corporate). My band, [LoveSong](#), is accepting bookings for such events. You can go to our [web site](#) or our [You Tube page](#) and see what we sound like and listen to the types of music we play. High quality, low cost music can be yours if you book early. Don't be left in the quiet!

•

Well, actually, two for the band - If you want a 'low-cost' night out on the town with great music, mosey on over to the [neuhaus café](#) (N.W. corner of Preston and Royal) on Saturday, September 26th. My band, [LoveSong](#), will be performing there from 6:30 pm - 9:30 pm. The best part...no cover charge! The next best part - great food and drink. Oh, and then there's the chocolate! Ohhh yeah, the chocolate. neuhaus is, after all, a chocolatier.

♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥

PAGE 2 - FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Using iWork as an Image Editor



I recently noted the image-editing functionality of Preview.app, which can act as a “good enough” image editor for many that don’t have access to Photoshop. While it’s difficult to argue with the free price tag, Preview is not without its limitations. Fortunately, many of these limitations are unlocked if you happen to own Apple’s iWork suite, which in its own right can serve as an image editor for the budget-minded. Read on to see how to use iWork in this unconventional way.

The three components of iWork -- Pages, Keynote and Numbers -- each serve different purposes. Pages is an alternative to Microsoft Word, and Keynote and Numbers can be seen as respective alternatives to Microsoft’s PowerPoint and Excel. Despite their respective core competencies, each app has page layout functionality. And this page layout capability serves as canvas of sorts, providing you a space to edit your images. Among these editing features are the ability to add or manipulate:

- Text Boxes
- Shapes
- Shadows
- Angle-based image rotation
- Reflections
- Opacity
- Instant Alpha
-

Although Pages, Keynote and Numbers are separate apps, the image editing functionality within each is nearly identical; in fact, I haven’t been able to spot the differences, if indeed they do exist. For the purpose

of this demo, I’m going to choose the Page Layout template in Pages. However, if you choose Keynote, you’ll want to delete the preset text boxes that will accompany the first slide. Likewise, if you choose Numbers, choose the blank spreadsheet, and then delete the table in the first spreadsheet.

I am in Pages’s page layout view with a stock photo of Apple’s MacBook Pro line taken from Apple’s website. I’d like to add some copy to accompany the image. To do this, I’ll need to click on the Text Box button on the menu bar; alternatively, I could add text within a shape via the Shapes button.

Perhaps this image would look a bit nicer with a shadow and reflection. To do this, I just need to select the image and enable Shadow and Reflection on the menu bar. But if I want more granular control of shadows and reflections, as well as other attributes



(such as image opacity and the angle of the image), I can get to them by clicking on the Inspector button and clicking on the Graphic Inspector pane within it.



Like Preview and iPhoto, you can adjust other image attributes (such as

saturation, contrast and exposure) via the Adjust Image palette. This is accessible on the menu via View > Adjust Image.

Now that I’m complete with my editing, I’ll need to save it as an image. Since selecting Save within Pages, Keynote, or Numbers will result in the image getting saved in the respective native file formats of those apps, I’ll need to move this image over to Preview. To do this, select all of the elements in the newly edited picture and click on copy. Then launch Preview and select New from Clipboard from the File menu. This will bring all of the elements over to Preview as a flattened image. Alternatively, one can choose to export the document as a PDF, cropping it in Preview, and saving it as your desired image format.

As with many Apple products, the UI (User Interface) plays a major role in making for a more pleasurable experience. This ethos is certainly evident across the iWork suite, resulting in a very similar and seamless workflow within all three apps. Hence, I was able to illustrate the image editing features just using Pages.

By no means is iWork a replacement for Photoshop, Photoshop Elements or Pixelmator. But for the \$79 price tag of iWork, you certainly get much more than just an office productivity suite.

PAGE 3 - NEWSLINE

Snow Leopard sales roar out the gate

First two weeks' retail sales double Leopard's, four times better than Tiger's, says NPD

Sales of Snow Leopard during its first two weeks on the shelves far exceeded those of the last two Apple operating systems -- Leopard and Tiger -- a retail research analyst said today.

According to the sales data that the NPD Group collects from U.S. retailers, both online and brick-and-mortar, Mac OS X 10.6, aka Snow Leopard, sold twice as many copies in the first two weeks as Leopard, its immediate predecessor, did in 2007 -- and almost four times higher than Tiger, which debuted in 2005.

"Absolutely, I was surprised -- especially compared to how much push Leopard had," said Stephen Baker, the NPD analyst who covers retail software sales. "But when you think about Snow Leopard's pricing, it really shouldn't surprise anyone."

Apple set Snow Leopard's price at \$29 for a single license, \$49 for a five-license family pack, \$100 less than the corresponding Leopard packages, claiming in June that "we want all Leopard users to upgrade to Snow Leopard, so we're pricing it at \$29."

Most analysts read different tea leaves, and said that Apple recognized it couldn't charge its usual for what had been billed as a stability and performance upgrade with relatively few visible new features. "I think Apple's pricing strategy is something other companies should follow," Baker said. He didn't name names, but was clearly referring to Microsoft, which is set to ship Windows 7 next month.

"Apple clearly demonstrated that aggressive pricing policies in this economic environment generate an outstanding consumer response," said Baker.

Some retailers have discounted Snow Leopard. Amazon.com, for example, is currently selling the single-license OS for \$25, and the family pack for \$40.

Microsoft has set the lowest retail list price of a single-license Windows 7 upgrade at \$120, and the price of a three-license family pack at \$150.

For a limited period, Microsoft discounted an upgrade to Windows 7 Home Premium to \$49.99, but the company has not announced plans to rerun that program either before or at the time the new OS ships in late October.

Snow Leopard's momentum during the two-week period was also stronger than its predecessors, Baker noted. According to NPD's data, Snow Leopard sales declined about 25% from Week 1 to Week 2; both Leopard and Tiger dropped more than 60% between Weeks 1 and 2. "That's the really interesting thing," Baker said. "I think one reason is that Apple released Snow Leopard early. Maybe some people weren't expecting it."

Apple had originally said Snow Leopard would ship sometime this month, but beat that deadline by several days when it launched the upgrade Aug. 28.

"Even though some considered Snow Leopard to be less feature-focused than the releases of Leopard or Tiger, the ease of upgrading to Snow Leopard and the affordable pricing made it a win-win for Apple computer owners, helping to push sales to record numbers," Baker concluded.

He hoped Microsoft looks at the numbers and rethinks its pricing strategy. "There will be a lot of promotion for Windows 7, but it would behoove Microsoft to be more aggressive on price," Baker said. "It will be interesting to see if that upgrade can deliver the same incremental increase in consumer demand that Snow Leopard has enjoyed."

NPD Group does not typically disclose sales numbers, even aggregates, reported by retailers. Today, Baker declined to provide sales figures for Snow Leopard's first two weeks.

Apple Introduces New iPod nano With Built-in Video Camera

World's Most Popular Music Player Now Available in Nine Brilliant Colors

Apple introduced the new iPod nano, adding a video camera, mic and speaker to the world's most popular music player. Music lovers can now shoot video wherever they are, view it on their iPod nano and use their computers to easily transfer their videos to YouTube. The new iPod nano features an ultra-thin and sleek design with a larger 2.2-inch color display and gorgeous polished aluminum and glass enclosure. iPod nano also features a built-in FM radio with live pause and iTunes Tagging, as well as a built-in pedometer. The new iPod nano is available in an 8GB model for \$149 and a 16GB model for \$179, and comes in nine brilliant colors including silver, black, purple, blue, green, orange, yellow, (PRODUCT) RED and pink.

PAGE 4 - ASK THE TECH



Q: I just upgraded to OS X 10.6 - a.k.a. Snow Leopard. Most things are working well, the exception is my Canon scanner. What now?

A: It depends. Many manufacturers wait until after a new OS is been shipped before releasing an update to the drivers for their products. Drivers, in this context, are not folks who shuttle people to and from the airport, but are small bits of code that enable various peripherals to 'talk' to the computer. There are drivers for almost everything - printers, monitors, scanners, cameras, keyboards, and more. My recommendation is to visit the web site of the device manufacturer and see if they're going to support Mac OS X 10.6...and when! If you have an older device, it might require purchasing a new(er) device. If it's a new(er) device all that might be required is a software download and install.

Q: I have a gMail account that I've been using for some time now. I use it for everything. All of a sudden I've started getting this strange message on my Mac at home and my PC at the office: "Too many simultaneous connections." I also have seen a few of these on my iPod Touch: "The user name or password for [account] is incorrect" -even though I know I entered it correctly. What did I do?

A: These alerts do not indicate an issue with your mail application or

email account settings. Gmail has a limit of ten simultaneous IMAP connections per account, and checking your account from multiple devices in a short period of time can exceed this limit.

If this occurs, quit or exit any email applications you are not actively using. For more information on this issue, see this [Gmail Help Center article](#).

Q: I'm considering upgrading to Mac OS X 10.6 - Snow Leopard and I'm concerned that my older programs won't run in the new OS. Is there a list of what will run and what won't?

A: You betcha! and it's growing almost every day. Check here for the first 800 (or so) programs - <http://www.macintouch.com/specialreports/snowleopard/slcompat.html> - I'm sure that more will quickly follow.

Q: Safari feels like molasses running uphill in December in Vermont on my Mac. Is there any way to speed it up or should I move over to a different web browser (like Firefox)?

A: There are a few things that you can do to speed up Safari. Try these:

Clear the those cookies!

If you've ever called your internet service provider complaining about poor performance, it's likely whomever answered the phone walked you through the process of clearing your cookies. For whatever reason, cookies can cause Safari to hang intermittently and locating the offending one can be well nigh impossible.

That said, it's a lot more efficient to clear the lot:

1.) In the Safari menu, go to Preferences

2.) Click the Security icon, then click Show Cookies

3.) Click remove all, then click Done

Empty that cache

When you surf the Internet, Safari automatically caches web pages and images in temporary storage for easy repeat access and faster page loads, which is perhaps more important for those on dial up versus those on broadband. Regardless of your connection type, regularly dumping the contents of this folder can greatly improved performance:

1.) In the Safari menu, select Empty Cache

2.) A dialog box will appear, click Empty

Clear History

I don't believe clearing your history will improve Safari performance, but regularly removing references to the less savory websites you've visited can't be a bad thing. Think of it like keeping your feet toe jam free—it just feels good.

1.) History -> Clear History

2.) Click Clear (note the option to simultaneously clear Top Sites)

PAGE 5 - OPINION

Music Industry Wants Apple, Amazon to Pay Up

By Ian Paul

Music professionals want more money, and now, they're going after online retailers like Apple's iTunes and Amazon to get it. Performing rights groups such as the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP), Broadcast Music Inc. (BMI), and others believe online retailers need to pay industry professionals for music contained in film and television downloads, thirty second song samples, and radio station streaming, according to CNET. Their rationale for the new fees? All of these instances count as public performances.

Let's boil these complaints down one by one:

Pay me for those thirty-second samples

iTunes allows you to listen to a short snippet from a song before choosing to buy it, something that's even easier to do in the new iTunes 9. Music professionals have also noticed how easy it is to sample their work in the iTunes Store, and argue that these samples count as public performances. Apple, therefore, owes the rights holder a royalty payment every time someone listens to one of these snippets, they claim.

What the music pros fail to acknowledge is that short samples are a method of enticing a customer to make a further purchase. They are not meant as a way for you to listen to a song for free, but a way to decide whether you want to buy a particular song.

If the music publishers want Apple to fork over money for those snippets, then one of two things will happen:

iTunes prices will go up or the thirty-second samples will disappear. Both would result in fewer song sales, and even smaller royalty checks going to the music industry.

Pay me for radio streaming

A creaky old feature on iTunes is radio listings that allow you to listen to radio stations over the Internet. Quite frankly, I've always found this to be a terrible feature, and the streaming quality has never been that good.

So why should iTunes pay out for this feature? Apple is merely acting as the conduit for the radio stations; it is not the source of the broadcasts. If the music publishers have a beef with anyone, it should be the radio stations creating the broadcasts not iTunes.

Would anyone be sorry to see this feature go if it got too expensive? I know I wouldn't be.

Pay me for film and TV downloads

The music industry is trying to argue that whenever someone downloads a television episode or a film, the musicians need to be paid. That sounds like a reasonable idea, but the music pros are arguing that an episode download is the same thing as watching it on TV.

When video content is broadcast on television or screened in a theater, the musicians get paid because it is considered a public performance. However, when you buy a video download many music professionals receive nothing for the music they created. This happens, as CNET points out, because lesser known composers will often waive royalty fees for the actual making of the music, in the hopes of earning significant revenue from public broadcasts and screenings.

The problem is, as more people opt for digital downloads, those public performance revenues disappear.

An argument for the music industry

The music industry may be going overboard with this latest attempt to pull more money from Apple and other online retailers, but music professionals are getting screwed in the digital age. Let's be clear: we're not talking about rock stars and celebrity film composers living in Beverly Hills, but unknown middle class people who create music scores for television and film on a daily basis. These people need to get paid.

But is an online retailer the right target? Buying content from iTunes and Amazon is no different from buying a DVD at Target or Wal-Mart. Sure, the content is easier to buy and you are not forced to purchase entire seasons of a particular television show, but the end result for the consumer is exactly the same.

If music creators want royalties for their content found in DVDs and digital files, they should take it up with the movie studios and television networks, not iTunes.

PAGE 6 - PRODUCT REVIEWS

Not-Just-MP3 Players: Apple and Microsoft Audition For New Roles

By Rob Pegoraro

We need to retire the term “MP3 player.” Not only do the newest media gadgets from Apple and Microsoft play more music formats than MP3 -- in addition to showing photos and videos -- they also fill some roles once reserved for high-end smartphones. They can even replace an old transistor radio.

Doing something, however, doesn't always equate to doing it well. Both Apple's updated iPod nano and Microsoft's Zune HD, each released earlier this month, work fine as basic music players but exhibit weaknesses in their new roles.

With the new nano, the fifth generation of a product line that's yielded 100 million sales so far, Apple added a video camera and an FM radio. An eight-gigabyte model sells for \$149; a 16 GB model goes for \$179, \$20 less than its predecessor.

The video camera is an awkward addition. Its lens is too easy to cover with a stray finger, and it deals poorly with low light and moving subjects. In good light, it can record decent clips, but their low resolution (640 by 480 pixels) and dull colors make them a better fit for YouTube than your HDTV.

If, however, the alternative to the iPod's camera is a cameraphone that offers no easy way to transfer clips to a computer, or a low-end Flip camera that will be yet another gadget to tote around, this video capability may not seem so bad.

The new iPod's FM tuner makes more sense, especially with two smart features Apple added. You can pause

a broadcast, saving up to 15 minutes of it for later listening. And if a station adds the right encoding to its signal, you'll see a song's title and artist show up on the screen next to a tag icon; hold down the center button of the iPod's “click wheel” dial bookmark it in your copy of iTunes the next time you synchronize your iPod, from where you can buy it off Apple's iTunes Store.

That second feature, however, suffers from apathetic support by radio stations. Around Washington, I only found four broadcasters tagging their tunes, all run by radio conglomerate Clear Channel -- a firm that seems to have a deathly fear of playing songs it hasn't focus-group-tested into submission.

The new nano throws in two bonus features: a built-in pedometer to estimate your calorie burn from your steps and a voice-memo application to record your mutterings.

Microsoft's Zune HD is a much more ambitious attempt -- but maybe not ambitious enough. It falls into a gap between simpler players like older Zunes and full-fledged, Internet-enabled gadgets such as Apple's iPod touch.

For its higher price (a 16 GB unit costs \$219.99, a 32 GB model \$289.99), you get a slim, stylish but limited fusion of media player, digital-radio tuner and WiFi-enabled Web browser.

The HD's vivid, touch-sensitive screen replaces the buttons of older devices, which makes some actions (scrolling through a playlist, selecting a photo) blissfully easier but complicates others (without physical volume buttons, cranking up a song takes two steps). Its onscreen graphics look beautiful but can wash out in daylight.

Another long-standing Zune feature vanished with the old buttons: the ability to share songs wirelessly with nearby Zune users.

The “HD” in this model's name refers to its HD Radio tuner; it's only the second portable player to support this somewhat obscure technology developed by Columbia-based iBiquity Digital. This allows the Zune HD to pick up clearer versions of some existing FM signals as well as secondary, digital-only channels-- for example, WAMU's bluegrass channel.

Like the new iPod, the HD can also tag songs for later purchase if a station encodes its broadcast properly. But the Zune connects to a store far inferior to Apple's iTunes.

The Zune Marketplace stocks fewer titles (the Zune HD found only two of the four songs I tagged in the Marketplace, while iTunes had all four), makes you prepay for “Microsoft Points” that can then be used on Marketplace purchases and still handcuffs some songs with “digital rights management” restrictions. Unless you're interested in Microsoft's \$14.99/month “Zune Pass” all-you-can-download rental offer, shop elsewhere.

The Zune's radio tuner and WiFi combine to eat into its battery life. A day of moderate use left a model loaned by Microsoft inert.

The HD's other major addition is its Web browser. But although this software does a fine job of displaying most full-sized pages, it does so slower, and with more visual glitches, than the browser on Apple's iPod touch -- which Apple [now sells](#) for just \$199 in an 8 GB version, while faster 32 and 64 GB models go for \$299 and \$399.

Continue on Page 9

PAGE 7 - HINTS & TIPS

Trade your old iPod for cash

Gazelle.com pays customers for used electronics — everything from BlackBerrys to digital cameras to cell phones. And they'll recycle your clunkers for free.

Consumers with a drawer full of old electronics could net a windfall at Gazelle.com.

The start-up, which launched in 2006, pays cash for used electronics -- ranging from LCD TVs to video game consoles and cell phones -- and then either resells or recycles the items.

Users log on to the site and answer a few quick questions, like whether the device powers on successfully, and if the battery works. Then Gazelle calculates how much it will pay for the item through an algorithm that uses price data culled from primary and secondary retailers like eBay and Amazon. Four-year-old laptops can fetch as much as \$200, and fourth-generation iPods can score nearly \$100.

The company isn't profitable yet, but hopes to see a return simply by reselling the electronics for more than what it pays consumers for them. "Customers pay a premium for the convenience of having us sell the item for them," said spokeswoman Kristina Kennedy.

Gazelle accepts about 30,000 electronic devices -- although printers are excluded because of the cost to ship them.

The company pays for shipping and will send customers a box for most orders. When the item arrives at Gazelle's Boston office, employees sort the inventory in what Kennedy calls the "electronic orphanage."

How it works

One of Gazelle's 75 employees hand-inspects each device to insure the customer rating is accurate, and erases any user files -- from documents to photos to MP3s. If the item is deemed to be in good enough condition to resell to secondary retailers, wholesalers or refurbishers, the owner gets a check. If not, Gazelle recycles it at no cost to the owner.

Inventory usually leaves the the company's headquarters within four days of its arrival. And about 90% of the 75,000 items that Gazelle has received have been resold, with customers netting an average of \$100 per device, Kennedy said.

"We actually lose a nickel here and a dime there on recycling, but it helps us make morally conscious decisions and serve our customers," Kennedy said.

That green spirit was a main driver in the creation of Gazelle.com. Co-founder Israel Ganot was inspired to start the site after a local retailer said it would charge him \$10 to recycle his old BlackBerry. He had a feeling most consumers would never pay to recycle items, which spurred a big idea: create an online marketplace for used electronics.

Ganot and Rousseau Aurelien launched the site in 2006, just as the release of Al Gore's "An Inconvenient Truth" had amped up talk about global warming concerns and environmentally-focused ventures.

Their goal is to change the way consumers look at consumption. Most people won't simply junk their car -- they'd trade it in. Why can't that same school of thought apply to electronics? The concept is catching on; Kennedy said that Gazelle is growing by 100% each quarter. The company took in more than 10,000 products in August

alone. That's a lot of electronics, and the scalability of this business could soon pose a problem.

"Like any business, we're going to have certain challenges to scale up," Kennedy says. "But we've invested in back-end preparations, and we'll be ready when [growth] comes."

Whether Gazelle can turn a profit is another matter.

"We see this as a growth phase, and that's where we're challenging ourselves," said Kennedy. "We see this as a potentially \$1 billion opportunity."

In the meantime, Gazelle's goal remains the same as when it began.

"We want to close the gap between stopping usage of a product, and its actual end of life," Kennedy said. "The dresser drawer is our biggest competition."

[And consign your old Macs to Mac Help Desk for cash! - Ed]

.....

PAGE 8 - COMMENTS

How Should Mac Apps Be Distributed?

Alexander Limi has a thoughtful piece regarding the problems Mozilla has identified with the current installation process for Firefox on the Mac. As it stands, they're following the common pattern of delivering the Firefox app on a disk image, which, when mounted, uses a background image and alias to the /Applications/ folder to encourage users to copy the app from the mounted image to their startup drive. Limi writes:

Some common errors that we have seen repeatedly among informal testing with friends and family are:

They drag the application to their dock directly.

This creates a link to the file inside the disk image, which means that every time they try starting Firefox, the disk image is unpacked and mounted, and starting of Firefox becomes very slow, which makes it a bad experience.

They think that starting Firefox is done by opening the disk image every time.

This is very common, and the logic is that the first time they started Firefox, they had to do this, so they continue doing it. This makes starting Firefox a chore, since it takes a lot of clicks to accomplish.

I agree that disk images are problematic for lay users. The whole concept of a virtual volume is just too abstract. There's a wonderful simplicity to the way that nearly all good Mac apps can be installed just by copying the AppName.app bundle to anywhere you want it on your hard drive, and that apps can be uninstalled simply by dragging that same bundle to the trash. Users don't, of course, need to understand or even be aware that .app bundles are really just folders that the Finder treats as a single item. The only

conceptual abstraction Mac users should need to know is that the icon is the app.

But to make this work for apps delivered by disk image, users have to understand that they must copy the app from the image to their startup drive. This is where some get lost.

The iPhone shows just how much simpler the concept of app installation — and just as importantly, un-installation — can be. There is only one place where iPhone apps can be: on one of the home screens. The entire file system has been abstracted away. If you see the app icon, it is installed. If you want to get rid of it, you just press and hold to invoke jiggle mode and tap that icon's X button. Even better, there is nothing to "clean up" after an iPhone installation: no mounted image to unmount, no .zip or .dmg download file to throw away.

But while I agree with the problems associated with using disk images for Mac app distribution, my initial reaction was that I did not like Limi's proposed solution: a disk image containing an installer app that is set to auto-run when the image is mounted.

What I don't like about installers is that users don't know what's been installed where. (Yes, you can use the Show Files command in the installer File menu to see what's going to be installed, but the only people who know about this command are those of us who aren't confused by any of this stuff in the first place.)

But after thinking about this some more, it occurs to me that an installer for a Mac app — even if it's merely copying a .app bundle to /Applications/ — arguably provides a more iPhone-like installation process. The iPhone's App Store app is, effectively, an installer. You install by clicking an

"Install" button; you uninstall by taking action on the app icon.

The difference, though, is that on the iPhone, the App Store isn't just the conventional way of installing and updating apps, it is the only way. On the Mac, installers are considered at least slightly unconventional. It's also the case that installers work against the wishes of some advanced users. Whenever I install a Mac app by drag and drop, I don't put it in the root-level-of-the-startup-drive /Applications/ folder, but instead in the inside-my-user-account-home-folder ~/Applications/, just as a simple way of keeping third-party apps separate from Apple's system apps. Installers that hard-code the destination to the root-level Applications folder work against that.

In Firefox's case, Limi covers this scenario in an aside:

Note that experienced Mac users should be able to cancel the installer at any time and drag the Firefox application to the location they want instead, thus there should be no loss of functionality or flexibility for them.

Perhaps that's a good compromise, but I suspect that many experienced users, who would in fact prefer to install Firefox by drag and drop manually, would not cancel the installer to do so, on the reasonable assumption that if there is an installer, it must be doing something in addition to just copying the .app bundle. "Cancel the installer" does not sound like a good step in the instructions for installing software.

ZIP IT

What I like best is the resurgent trend of delivering Mac apps as simple .zip archives (a technique that harkens back a decade to when Mac apps were typically delivered as Stuffit archives).

Continue on Page 9

PAGE 9 - ONE MORE THING...

Not Just MP3 Players, cont.

The iPod touch also includes calendar and contacts software and can run most of the 75,000-plus applications offered in the iTunes App Store.

On the Zune, you can only add a handful of simple programs, none worth collecting. A chess game, for instance, took almost half a minute to launch -- while it played irrelevant ads. And its desktop software only runs in Windows, while Apple provides Mac and Windows versions of iTunes.

Microsoft deserves credit for putting serious resources into giving Apple honest, sustained competition. But it's going to have to do more than ship flashy hardware that compares favorably with last year's iPods.

.....

Mac apps, cont.

Download the .zip file, double-click, and there's the app. Just like with disk images, what users should do then is move the app to their Applications folder. But — and this is the advantage of using a zip archive over a disk image — they don't have to. Users can just launch the app right from their Downloads folder, and it'll work just fine. They can drag it to their Dock, and it'll work just fine. It's not tidy, but there's no confusing abstraction like a virtual disk volume that will disappear after they log out for reasons they don't understand.

And you know when you double-click certain non-app bundles of software, like Dashboard widgets and System Preference panes, and the Finder prompts to ask if you'd like to install it, and if you agree, the system goes and puts the bundle in the right location, like, say, ~/Library/Widgets/ or ~/Library/PreferencePanels/?

Perhaps Apple should do something like that for .app bundles, where if you launch an app from ~/Downloads/, it would prompt you to install the app, and if you agree, it would move it to the Applications folder and launch it from there.¹

1. Patrick Dubroy proposed something along these lines two years ago in a fine essay titled "[Why Is Installing Software on a Mac So Complicated?](#)". And Lukas Mathis had two good pieces on Mac app distribution in July, [here](#) and [here](#).

.....

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@tx.rr.com

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.