



April 2004

Apple Bytes

A publication of San Leandro Macintosh User Group



Second quiet month in a row...

Another quiet month has passed with nothing new under the Apple. The only excitement was the release of 10.3.3 updater which, by the way, has been very well received. Even Mikey likes it. Of course Stan thinks it is the most stable thing since concrete was invented. This does lend credence to the fact that even the almighty Apple is prone to a few cracks now and then.

However, we should stand by for a busy month coming up. Even Stevie has said that they will be releasing some new "products" soon. Could that possibly mean Paris? Might just be a nice time to announce some new and faster laptops.

It is interesting to recall that in July '03 Mr. Jobs promised 3 Ghz machines would be available in just one more year. Now there is a \$500 discount on any new CPU with purchas of a 23" monitor with it. This discount is available until May 26. Add 11 days to that and something else is happening -- the WWDC in San Francisco. Might be a good time to announce the new and faster G5s.

Whatever happened to the 30" Cinema Display? That may well happen soon too. *Especially since* I am considering the purchase of a 23" Cinema Display in the near future.

Will the rumors ever stop? I hope not. We need to have something to talk about...

Club Calendar for April

Apr. 2004

1... SLMUG General Meeting 7:30 pm
San Leandro High School
Room 416 (iMac Lab)
2200 Bancroft Ave.
San Leandro (Info: 510 828-9314)
SLAEUG Board Meeting. Normally held after the general meeting at a nearby eating establishment.

15... SLMUG Mac SIG
The Mac SIG meets on the third Thursday in Room 416, the new iMac Lab. Items for discussion are brought by you, the attendees. Discussions are specific to your problems and requests.
(Info: 510 828-9314)

May 2004

7... SLMUG General Meeting 7:30 pm
San Leandro High School
Room 416 (iMac Lab)
2200 Bancroft Ave.
San Leandro (Info: 510 828-9314)

The Fine Print

Apple Bytes is published by and for the members of the San Leandro Macintosh User Group. It is created on a Mac G4 867 running Mac OS 10.2.6 using Adobe InDesign 2.0.2 and printed on an HP Laserjet 2200DTN.

It is an independent publication, not affiliated with, sponsored, or sanctioned by Apple Computer or any other manufacturer. The opinions, statements, views, and positions herein are those of the author(s), or editor(s) and are not intended to represent the opinions, statements, views, and positions of Apple Computer or any other company, or anyone else for that matter. Original articles published in Apple Bytes may be reprinted or reproduced by other non-profit user groups provided that acknowledgement is given and a copy of that newsletter furnished to:

Editor
P.O. Box 4111
San Leandro, CA 94579

Living in an OS X World

According to Stevie, OS 9 has been officially dead for some time. At least that's what he told developers, wanting them to get on the train to OS X. Indeed, except for those individuals who are either married to an application that is not native in X and won't run in Classic, or those who can't afford new gear for this latest bit of bits and bytes, we have all but left 9 behind. Along with the comfort of those old systems, we've had to leave the familiar, old troubleshooting routines and skills.

First of all, almost all of us chose Macs for reasons that were directly related to the GUI--the Graphical User Interface. We didn't want to mess with DOS commands. What we euphemistically called typing was something slightly less than random pounding of innocent keys with two index fingers. (Think Darren McGavin as Kolchak in the Night Stalker TV show.) Those that really could type were either geeks or girls. Is it any wonder that we didn't want to do command line dancing? One little typo and who knows what havoc might be wrought.

A lot of X is still a geek's domain but there are some simple things we can all do to keep it running smoothly. The following is a list of some of my various voodooes which has kept me afloat... so far.

Good memory. No, not gray cells, but RAM. It's possible that you may one day be greeted by a small rectangle in the middle of your screen which tells you, in several languages, that you need to restart your computer. This is a kernel panic. Your crash resistant OS has just crashed. This is almost always hardware related, and memory is the usual suspect. Often removing all modules that did not ship with your Mac will eliminate the KP. Then it's a matter of isolating the bad DIMM, and replacing it.

Removing any newly added hardware or even all peripherals can often help determine what might be panicking your Panther.

DiskWarrior. This commercial application is the biggest gun in my armory. Everybody should own and use DW on a regular basis. It repairs all but the worst directory damage and is probably responsible for more OS "saves" than any single app or procedure. I run it once a month and before and after every OS update. If you are having trouble with apps frequently crashing, then you must run DW right away while figuring out what's wrong with the app. DW is pricey- but we're worth it.

Safe Boot. In those older OSs, Disk First Aid never, ever fixed a thing for me. It never found anything wrong, yet always "repaired" the drive. First Aid in X will actually fix some things, but you have to boot from another drive to run it on your "startup" drive. Instead you can boot while holding the Shift key until you see the Apple. Then you'll see Safe Boot in the window. Starting up will take longer as a file check is being run, and may actually fix some file damage. This is visually more pleasing than the Single User Mode/fsck -y routine that we did previously. Unfortunately we don't see what the file check is doing.

Also, you have now booted without extensions (remember those?) so some apps may not work properly. I Safe Boot one more time, since I can't see the results of the file check, then restart normally to get back to business as usual. Less informative, yes, but much less geeky, and--it's free!

Repair Permissions. In X, all files "belong" to someone or something and one needs permission to modify them. This allows multiple users to operate without messing up the files of others or the OS itself. I do this after any software installation and every two weeks. I'll RP anytime I need to Safe Boot or run DW. Do it anytime, but only from Disk Utility on your boot drive.

This is the short list, a few things we can do without making matters worse. If something bad does happen, then our plane had already lost a couple of engines and it may be time to punch out and install the OS. The idea is not to let them flame out in the first place.

Until next month— go commando.

Kline's Korner

Mac OS X

With all sorts of shareware and freeware coming out for OS X, it is impossible to keep tabs on their various uses. Every once in a while you may want to know if there is software for particular use, for example, a typing tutor. As mentioned before, VersionTracker is an outstanding resource for this or any such (search.) On the VersionTracker page you will find a "SEARCH FOR SOFTWARE" box. Type "typing" and hit return or the little "GO" button next to the box and something like the following will appear (I have truncated it a little)

aType-X

Ten Thumbs Typing Tutor

Letter Invaders

Key Advantage Typing

Master Key

Also, shown on the page is the file size and whether it is commercial, shareware or freeware. Click on the file name to see more detail about the software.

If you do not have VersionTracker in your bookmarks do it by typing versiontracker in your URL location window at the top of the browser. Once the page appears add it to your bookmarks. In most browsers you can move the link to the tool bar or personal links so that you can see it easily. If it is "hidden" in your regular bookmarks it may be forgotten til' the next time I mention it. VersionTracker senses the OS that is viewing their page so that even if you just type "versiontracker", what will result in the address bar is what you see below. Notice VersionTracker OS X and VersionTracker in my tool bar.



Mac OS X 10.3.3 has presented the fewest problems yet. It is nice to see most of the user group using OS X. Now that we have two evolutions of OS X, 10.2 and 10.3, it may be valuable to discuss a particular problem that could occur if one need to reinstall OS X.

Archive and Install vs. Erase and Install.

Apple notes that when you try to open Safari after an Archive and Install, the Safari icon may bounce in the Dock and display the triangle that indicates activity, though no window appears.

This would only happen when performing an Archive and Install of Mac OS X 10.3 to 10.3.2 on a computer that, prior to the install, had Mac OS X 10.3.2 and Safari 1.2 (v125). Earlier versions of Safari should not be affected.

The best solution is to update to Mac OS X 10.3.3 or later which includes Safari 1.2.1. If for any reason you don't want to update to 10.3.3 immediately, just reinstall Safari 1.2.

Recently, Dale Scott related a stability problem in the SLMUG thread, "Perplexing Problem 2", which he fixed by doing a clean install of Mac OS X. I had suggested the Clean Install rather than an Archive and Install which could copy the problem right into the new OS. Archive and Install reduces configuration by bringing over your Home folder and other support files from the old Mac OS X install.

One possible source of the problem is described in a recent Knowledge Base article which states "You may be unable to open an application or its files after reinstalling Mac OS X, including an Archive and Install, and then not updating to the version of Mac OS X you'd been using, or later."

Some other problems that can occur are:

- Disk Copy may unexpectedly quit when you open a disk image (.dmg) file.
- Double-clicking on a document launches the wrong version of the application.
- Double-clicking an application does not produce the desired result. It may briefly appear then disappear, or unexpectedly quit or not respond ("crash or hang").

When doing a reinstall of OS X using Archive and Install, you must also download and install any OS updates to bring the OS up to what you had been using prior to the reinstall. Otherwise you must use Erase & Install as OS X searches for the latest version of the default application for the document you are trying to open and it may use a later version of the application that is only compatible with a later OS. For example, if you had been using 10.3.2 but Archive and Install back to 10.3, there are applications still in your Application folder that are only compatible with 10.3.2 or later and you are trying to run them in an earlier OS.

This problem would be even more evident if you Archive and Installed back to 10.2 after being at 10.3 and later. You must do an Erase & Install and reinstall all your 10.2 - 10.2.8 software. During the install have all your serial numbers available.

Sharing and Accessing the iDisk Public Folder -- TidBITS #720

You don't need a .Mac account to access someone else's iDisk Public Folder. In fact, you don't even need a Mac, as Windows XP users can also access iDisk Public Folders using Apple's free iDisk Utility for Windows.

By default, your Public folder is set to allow others read-only access, which is the safest approach. However, sometimes you may want other people to send files to you by copying them to your Public folder. In that case, give your folder read-write access and specify a password to restrict access using the iDiskUtility.

To connect to your friends .Mac public folder from the Go menu, select Connect to Server. To connect to someone else's iDisk Public folder, type the following into the Address field: "http://idisk.mac.com/TheirMemberName/public," where "TheirMemberName" is replaced by their .Mac account name.

Enjoy!!

The April 1st meeting features...

Bob Shayler and John Mitchell will provide a review of their recent training class at Apple covering Mac OS X Help Desk Essentials v10.3. This is a very intensive three day training class leading to Apple Certification. Hopefully they will not be too brain dead to provide some valuable insight. Be sure to attend.



San Leandro Macintosh
User Group
P.O. Box 4111
San Leandro CA 94579-0111



Main Meeting - April 1st