



December 2004

Apple Bytes

A publication of San Leandro Macintosh User Group



The iMac doth excel...

Nancy continues to enjoy her new iMac G5. It just works like it should and we can't say any thing except good things about it. I read a number of threads where people are complaining loud and long about this vibration or that noise and this or that does not work ad infinitum. My observation is that the vast majority of these complaints are related to the 17 inch models! It appears to the casual observer that the the same internal components are stuffed into an enclosure with roughly 35% less volume. Small wonder that the fans have to work harder (generating still more heat) to remove the same amount of heat! I seldom hear the fans run in the 20" model. I only hear them when I run DiskWarrior as there is apparently no fan control software in the limited OS provided to 3rd party utility companies. Hence, a good way to test the fans on a periodic basis.

It appears that 10.3.7 may be nearing release. There have been at least two developer releases in the past month and surely untold routine builds in the big think tank.

MacWorld is just around the corner. For the January meeting we hope to have a recommended must-see list for the expo.

Merry Christmas to all and to all a good night.

Club Calendar for December

Dec 2004

2... SLMUG General Meeting 7:30 pm
San Leandro High School
Room 507 (Shop 7 Graphics Lab)
2200 Bancroft Ave.
San Leandro (Info: 510 828-9314)
SLMUG Board Meeting. Normally held after the general meeting at a nearby eating establishment.

16... SLMUG Mac SIG
The Mac SIG meets on the third Thursday in Room 507, the Shop 7 Graphics Lab. Items for discussion are brought by you, the attendees. Discussions are specific to your problems and requests.
(Info: 510 828-9314)

January 2005

6... SLMUG General Meeting 7:30 pm
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2200 Bancroft Ave.
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The Fine Print

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Kline's Korner

Mac OS X

The arrival of Adobe Acrobat 7.0 necessitates a reminder. While most of us use the reader, it is the use of the full version, whether it be the Professional or Standard, that can create a compatibility problem. The commercial versions can disassemble older PDF's and re-assemble them as new versions. While they previously could be opened by an earlier version of Acrobat Reader, they will now no longer be compatible with older Readers. Issuing a reminder to download the latest Reader is always a good idea whenever you are shipping your PDF creation.

As mentioned, another beta of VLC has been released. Those who have tried VLC will note not only its stability, but the wide variety of media formats it handles. VLC is not at all like beta software. I find it is easier to list what it does not handle than what it does handle:

- DTS Audio CD - Digital Theater Systems (very hi-definition audio)
- DVB-S/C/T - Digital TV (HDTV)
- Realaudio (RealOne is recommended anyway)
- WMV 3 (soon to be added, making M\$\$'s Media Player 3 not necessary)
- Intel's Indeo Video 3 (Intel has never provided a cross-platform solution)
- Intel's Indeo Video 4 and 5 (ditto)
- Closed Captioning - text display of the spoken part of the video
- SDL - Don't know (therefore how important can it be?)
- ASCII art (thanks for GraphicConverter)
- AMR (3GPP) - audio mpeg codec

For a full list of enabled formats see <http://www.videolan.org/vlc/features.html>

This un-enabled list is very small compared to what formats VLC does handle. Yet, would it not be valuable for just the AVI and WMV 2 files your doorstep friends send you. You may have noticed that one thread in my rantings is to decrease the pain in dealing with email attachments.

Now for a public service announcement:

There has been a tremendous increase in the number of phishing sites. Phishing is the practice of making sites look and act like popular sites such as banks in order to entice you into giving them personal information, which the scammer then uses for identity theft. There are now estimated to be 1,150 such sites. Phishing emails have grown an average 36% since July. The cost to banks and credit card companies is in excess of \$10 million. This does not include the expense and time necessary for the victim to clear the matter.

If you are ever asked by a web page or email to verify information you have previously provided to the supposed same, such as name, address and credit card number, immediately stop. If you want, call that creditor or web service provider (ie eBay or Wells Fargo) to verify the request. 100% of the time it will be a phishing attempt. Your credit card company or bank has that information. There is no reason they would ask for it again. Do not think otherwise.

If you send in your Mac to AppleCare, remember to back up the hard drive. You may limit that back-up to just your home directory (/Users/user name). This will preserve your configuration files, music (if you have your music in your home "Music" folder), Pictures, Movies and, but not limited to, Documents. My Documents folder is 334 MB.

Also, my music is in a separate folder outside my User (Home) folder and is huge. It would be much easier for me to copy all this to a second hard drive, be that internal or external. Then remove that hard drive prior to shipping the Mac.

This is important due to the possibility that the repair will involve reformatting of the hard drive. The reformatting does not have to be related to the initial problem. One repair story involved the latch on a PowerBook and the hard drive was reformatted. Go figure.

Some problems with Mac OS X 10.3.6:

Truncation of file names transferred over a network.

Mounting of FireWire drives.

Both seem to be addressed in the next update (10.3.7). Why would not the problems mounting of external FireWire drives be discovered in the developer's testing of the preliminary releases of 10.2.6? I will reserve that question for MacWorld.

Some workarounds involve substituting the .kext file. The .kext file for sending files over a network is located at:

/System/Library/Filesystems/AppleShare/afpfs.kext

As mentioned in recent email, these files are similar to extensions. Not mentioned was the possibility that the .kext installed by 10.3.6 enables features that the earlier .kext file does not. While you can substitute the "afpfs.kext" file from a 10.3.5 Mac, installing this .kext file may reduce functionality while, at the same time, fixing the specific problem.

Not directly related: my external CD-RW drive would not mount any CD after the update. Not really strange, as it always is difficult to mount after an update. I finally got some success with opening System Profiler then unplugging the FireWire cable and power cord, then plugging it back in. Any CD has since consistently mounted.

The U2 iPod includes a 12th U2 song from the album "How to Dismantle an Atomic Bomb" which is not available on Amazon.com or Apple's Music Store, "Fast Car". The album is, as expected, not a technical instruction manual.

iTunes 4.7 is available for the latest Photo iPods. While this version of iTunes is compatible with Mac OS X 10.1.5, in order to copy photos you will need Mac OS X 10.2.6 or higher, QuickTime 6.5.2 and the latest iLife updates.

Enjoy!!!!

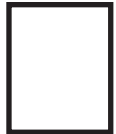
December 2nd meeting features...

Stan will provide a dynamic review of the news of the recent month. Ed is planning a review of the CD indexing program on the last monthly CD of the year. There will be a discussion of the election of next year's officers. Be sure to attend. As usual, this should be a fun meeting.

20-inch



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Main Meeting - Dec 2nd