Apple*byte*

September 2009

Waimairi School
   September 30th   7:30 pm

Contents

Cover:

Photo credit: Photo by Dennis Conner. Courtesy of Snow Leopard Trust.

Photo location: Woodland Park Zoo; Seattle, WA USA

Meeting venue

Meetings are held on the last Wednesday of each month (except December) beginning at 7:30pm, at Waimairi School at the end of Tillman Avenue, off Bligh's Road.

Drinks and snacks are available while we all calm down after the excitement of the meeting.

Some members carpool to get to meetings. If you don't have a car and find it difficult to get to meetings, please contact a committee member to arrange transport.   Usually there is someone living near you who can offer a lift.

Meeting programme

Wednesday 30th September 2009

Monthly Meeting

- Welcome and News
- MacBasics
- Mac Maintenance
- Snow Leopard
- Questions & Answers

Come along and share your passion for Apple products. Learn about the latest technology, and enhance your skills. And meet with old and new friends over supper.   Also remember to try your luck with the evening's raffle. Visitors welcome.

Submitting your article

Electronic submissions are preferred (to save wear and tear on my fingers). Just choose whatever format suits and send it to:

editor@appleusers.co.nz

One page is roughly 450 words. Most article are less than 4 pages, but longer articles may be accepted if of particular interest or relevance. Please ask in advance if you are planning a longer article.

Please write clearly; short sentences are recommended to help you do this. Use a spell-checker. If you are quoting some other article, please include an acknowledgment of your source.

Pictures can help explain your article, so by all means include one (or more) if appropriate. The format is not important - jpeg, tiff and gif are all fine, but try to provide a high quality image (300 dpi) if possible.

For screen shots, you can use the build-in Apple functions Apple-Shift-3 or Apple-Shift-4, or a utility such as Snapz Pro, available from:

http://www.macdownload.com.

Next Deadline: 12 October 2009

Prez sez

Bart Hanson

Hi AUGC Members,

We have been treated to several new and improved products from Apple this month and although the media event Apple held may have been called "It's only Rock and Roll" it could just have easily been called "A rolling stone gathers no moss". Steve is back on deck after a six months period away for health reasons and the future looks good again.

I hope you will be able to come to the meeting on the last day of this month (30th Sept.) at the Waimairi School Library. We will talk about maintaining your Mac at peak operating condition, some short video clips, a MacBasics session and ???

Looking at what is going on around the world ...

Snow Leopard (Mac OS X 10.6) is now released into its new habitat (the userland environment). It looks to me like it's adapting well. This cat has plenty of zip and runs faster than the previous cat released, Leopard.

The new Mac OS has had older most of the old "Carbon code" stripped out, and while this means that 10.6 requires less disk space, it also means that it will only install on to Macs that use Intel processors. Applications are moving away from being Universal Binary (Carbon and Cocoa code). Older applications with legacy Carbon code (like Microsoft Office 2004) need to run in a special emulated mode called Rosetta. Rosetta is an optional install (from the MacOSx 10.6 DVD) and it enables the old G3, G4, and AltiVec instructions (the non-Intel code) to run on the Intel CPU.

Several early issues found with Snow Leopard have already been fixed with update 10.6.1 arriving within two weeks of release, so remember to install this at the same time as you install Snow Leopard now.

There is some loss of Quicktime Pro functionality in Quicktime X, the codec and bitrate export options are gone, there are no A/V Playback controls and you can't copy and paste selected portions of movies. Non-video files such as QuickTime VR panoramas or 3D objects will not play and if you try to open a non-supported file, you are prompted to install QuickTime Player 7 which at least offers some backwards compatibility.

For a list of applications and their Snow Leopard compatibility, see:
http://snowleopard.wikidot.com

(*At least the box is getting smaller and smaller. The next release may be on a thumb-drive - think how small that might be!*)

What are all these Rocks? and do they Roll? Yeah Baby...

Apple held a special event, "It's Only Rock and Roll" to announce iTunes v9 and an iPod nano with a video camera.

Just a day before the event, Oh No! Yoko appeared to let slip that the Beatles back catalogue was coming to iTunes. As this co-incided with a new game "The Beatles-Rock Band", the rumour sounded credible as one of the

announcements for the event, but as we now know it was just that, a rumour.

Steve Jobs fronted the event and expressed gratitude for his donated kidney, in his own words "I'm vertical, I'm back at Apple and loving every day of it".

At the event Steve reminded us that Apple had sold 50 Million iPods, 20 Million iPhones and iTunes has 100,000,000 credit card customers. Our favourite company is now the largest retailer of Music in the world, think about that. Jeff Robin came on to demo all the new features in iTunes and Phil Schiller ran through the iPod Touch as a gaming platform before Steve came back with the updated iPod nano which is to get video capabilities with a camera, microphone and enlarged screen. It's also got an FM receiver and a pedometer.

- Video camera
- Larger 2.2-inch display
- Polished anodized aluminum
- Microphone and speaker
- VoiceOver
- FM radio
- Built-in pedometer

PirateBay

A while back I mentioned a web-site calling itself PirateBay. PirateBay is a server somewhere that hosts indexes to torrent files. Torrent files allow you to download original (very often pirated) files from several servers at once so quite high speeds can be achieved.

The premise is that you also become an uploader and while it is a brilliant technology to enable rapid sharing it is also being used to illegally download movies, books and music. Recently the Swedish courts convicted the people behind PirateBay who immediately claimed that:
1: the Judge was biased,
2: they had no money and would not be able to pay any fine, and
3: they are only the messenger and that it is wrong to prosecute the middle man as they neither uploaded nor downloaded the original material.

(They were both fined and sentenced to prison.)

In this they were similar to Napster, that offered searchable databases of music without actually hosting any actual music themselves, Napster was also shut down by the courts.

Well the soap opera that is PirateBay is a fun read, they sprung off a political party who garnered 7.3% of the total Swedish votes in the 2009 European Parliament elections meaning one or two seats in the European parliament.

PirateBay have an anthem, listen to it here:
        http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1fCHoI0h7Tc

The latest episode has seen PirateBay attempting to sell itself to a mysterious buyer Global Gaming Factory X (GGF) who supposedly is going to use PirateBay for legal downloading purposes.

CEO of GGF, Hans Pandeya is offering SKr60 million (about $8 million), however the company is being examined by the Swedish government's economics unit.

Hans Pandeya has since offered a "manifesto" on property rights and civilization ("Man's innovation and creation was the driving force of the rise of all of the great civilisations.) and we only down-load content illegally because there is no equivalent and easy legal way to get the same content. The new owner says we will gladly pay for such access and the content creators will be rewarded. Anyway, now someone has "torrented" the entire PirateBay site itself so that anyone can host it anywhere (at their own risk of course) and most recently Hans Pandeya has had his car and a motorcycle repossessed, after a tax debt of more of $110,000 went unpaid, now GGF's shareholders have called off the deal.

Stephen Fry

.... (whom you may know better as Jeeves from the TV series Wooster and Jeeves), is a Mac user and has discovered that "Apple Macintosh" is an anagram of "Laptop Machines"

You can find your own anagrams here:

http://www.easypeasy.com/anagrams/input.php

Putting my name in gave me "Baron Hasn't", not too flattering really is it?

For "AppleByte", the site suggests: "Apply Beet" or "Peepy Blat"; and for our AUGC name, there are 300 suggestions, such as:

Burglarproof Curse Ape Pun Yet
- now, how do we make use of that?

"People often say that motivation doesn't last. Well, neither does bathing - that's why we recommend it daily."

- Zig Ziglar

"The best way to cheer yourself up is to try to cheer somebody else up."
- Mark Twain

Special offers

Peter Fitchett

Note: These specials are available to all user group members. Contact Peter (web@appleusers.co.nz) for access or coupon codes.

O'Reilly: Mac OS X Snow Leopard books

O'Reilly and No Starch have three upcoming Mac OS X Snow Leopard books. Titles include:

"Mac OS X Snow Leopard: The Missing Manual" by David Pogue,
"My New Mac, Snow Leopard Edition" by Wallace Wang, and
"Mac OS X Snow Leopard Pocket Guide" by Chris Seibold.

Get up to speed quickly with this new operating system; see
http://search.oreilly.com/?q=snow+leopard

User group members will receive 35% discount.

This offer is valid through **November 30, 2009**.

Peachpit: Mac OS X Snow Leopard books

Snow Leopard introduces and upgrades many new features and technologies. The operating system is faster, more reliable, and easier to use than earlier versions. Peachpit's new books will help you unlock the power and features of Mac OS X Snow Leopard to maximize their use. Titles include:

"The Little Mac Book, Snow Leopard Edition" by Robin Williams,
"Mac OS X 10.6 Snow Leopard" by Robin Williams, John Tollett,
"Mac OS X 10.6 Snow Leopard Visual QuickStart" by Maria Langer,
"Mac OS X 10.6 Snow Leopard Pocket Guide" by Jeff Carlson, and
"Automator for Mac OS X 10.6 Snow Leopard: Visual QuickStart"
    by Ben Waldie.

AUGC members receive 35% discount.

PocketMac RingtoneStudio 2

PocketMac (**http://www.createiphoneringtones.com**) makes a variety of productivity tools for PDA and Mac connectivity, including using your Mac to support your iPhone. With RingtoneStudio2 for iPhone, you can easily create iPhone ringtones. By creating and setting ringtones for each of your friends and family, you can get an early heads-up before you even look to see who's calling.

Apple user group members receive a 30% discount, making your price $20.96 (US).

This offer is valid through **November 30, 2009**.

Snow Leopard Ebooks from Take Control

Apple says Mac OS X 10.6 Snow Leopard will make your Intel-based Mac faster and more reliable for a mere $29. That's great, but Snow Leopard also brings an extra helping of important changes to the user interface: Expose has new options and the Services menu is entirely more useful, plus there's a new text engine that provides smart quotes, smart copy and paste, automatic spelling correction, and automatic text substitution. Then there are enhanced searching features, a new version of QuickTime (with some gotchas), Time Machine tweaks, a new input-menu language switcher, and, wait for it... you can finally show the date on the menu bar!

To help you discover and take advantage of all this Snow Leopard goodness, we have new editions of our Take Control ebooks about upgrading and customizing Mac OS X. Since you're a MUG member, you can get these books for 30% off.

"**Take Control of Upgrading to Snow Leopard**," by Joe Kissell. (30% savings, you pay us$7.)

The Snow Leopard installer offers fewer options than previous Mac OS X installers, but it has a few twists and quirks that can cause stress and uncertainty. In this 81-page ebook, Joe helps readers upgrade calmly and successfully with clear, expert steps developed over innumerable test installations.

"**Take Control of Exploring & Customizing Snow Leopard**, by Matt Neuburg (30% savings, you pay us$10.50.)

This new 165-page ebook is based on Matt's "Take Control of Customizing..." ebooks, but we added "Exploring" to its title to give Matt more room for how-to topics. The ebook points out lots of tiny things that are new in Snow Leopard but that you might not notice otherwise. You'll learn lots...

AUGC members receive 35% discount.

{Ed: Seems to be a bit of a theme here!}

Note: These specials are available to all user group members. Contact Peter (web@appleusers.co.nz) for access or coupon codes.

For further specials, see our website.

From Russia with ...

David Chilvers

Wed 26th 27th and 28th August

After two days travel (including 24 hours in Singapore) we arrived at Vilnius to a fine hot sunny late autumn afternoon. Vilnius is the capital of Lithuania, an ancient city of under a million people, recently nominated as a world heritage city, largely for its outstanding buildings.

After a shower and clean up we went in search of an **evening meal**, finding a pavement café outside a local tavern. It seemed an ordinary tavern until a very happy group of mature leather jacketed men turned up on their Harley Davidson's for a "few beers" and a meal. They were a good-natured lot who did not bother us, but gave us an evening's entertainment whilst we ate. The most interesting things about them was that their jackets were printed in English. They were called the "Free Hawks". Their ranks were note as "President", "Board member" etc. Bikers and their bikes are the same the world over!

Sat 29th August.

A day walking the old town. Malcolm Carr our tour leader, starts us off with a visit to the ancient St Ann's church, a small red brick building dating back to the 14 the century. We then wander the old streets and buildings until rain and the need to find a toilet forces us to lunch. We find a recently opened Mexican restaurant. The owner tells us he saw a gap in Vilnius for the only genuine Mexican restaurant and came and filled it!

After lunch we walk up the only hill in the town to the restored round tower for a birds eye view of the city, before returning for our tour introductory evening meal.

Sunday 30th August

This morning we explore Vilnius and in the afternoon we travel 50 mins out by bus to the lakeside and castle town of Trakai.

Vilnius is a city of about 500,000 people established about 1323. The name comes from the word Lietvuos meaning rainy! (But we have had it largely dry) Our bus tour of Vilnius is mainly about churches in the historic heart of the city.

But first we visit the city-viewing site, which orients us to the places we will visit. It also contains a railing, which is covered in padlocks inscribed with the names of the couple that placed them there on their

wedding day, and threw away the key! As one in three marriages in Lithuania end within a few years this must be an embarrassment for many!

Today is Sunday so all our church visits are in service time, which makes them very much more interesting and musical, if more difficult for photography! 85% of the population are Catholic, about 15% Russian Orthodox and a few "others" including the descendents of the 5% of the half a million or so Jews which did not perish under Hitler's grand extermination plans.

We visit the **Vilnius Peter and Paul cathedral**, the main feature of which is its ornate plaster interior. (See photo). The service here seems to be a continuous mass to which the locals pop in to receive the sacraments, and are out again within 15 mins or so.

Next to the Russian Orthodox Church, a very full church with many doing their own thing in the side isles worshiping the idols and pictures by kissing them whilst crossing themselves.

Finally, of the main churches, we visit the **Vilinius Basilica**. We are given an example of the tenacity of religious belief. The front of this huge church dominated by three 10-metre statues atop the roof.

These where toppled with ropes from tanks when the Russians took over in 1950, (much like the toppling of the statue of Saddam Hussein in Iraq recently), and the Church closed up for nearly 50 years. As soon as independence was declared the church was re-opened , the Statues re-erected and services enthusiastically resumed.

We passed St Casimir Church, of interest because it was started by Brazilian monks (Why?) and turned by the Russians as a Museum of Atheism!

Lithuania is a country of forests and Lakes (I think there are about 2000 of the latter).

This afternoon we travel to visit a castle/fort built on an Island in just one of them at Trakai. Whilst it did fall into ruin it has been rebuilt to the condition it was in the 1300/1400 century when its occupant was at the hight of power in the area. Even so the main preoccupation of the then owner seemed to be to guard against the constant threat of attack from outsiders, with a series of look out towers, moots, gates, port-culices and secret escape tunnels, all at the ready.

Mon 31st August

All day in the bus Vilnius to Riga , capital of Latvia.

Distractions today were:

Lunch in Kauvas after a wander around what looked like from the outside just a rather large old brick Church. Inside the **Cathedral Basilica of St Peter and St Paul** it was quite a different matter, assisted by some beautiful organ music being practiced.

Next to the **Hill of Crosses** on which are now thousands of crosses, individually placed. It all started with one placement as thanks for an illness recovery. It then turned into a peaceful protest action against the occupying Russian authorities and mushroomed.

Finally to **Rundale Palace**, built in the 1730/1780's, the summer palace of one of the Russian Empress's "Favourites" Obscene I call it

Tuesday 1st September

A walking tour of old Riga today (At least for Alison - I bought up last night's tea and stayed in bed and slept most of the day).

The day was spent looking at Guild buildings, Cathedrals, Monuments and Museums.

For Alison, the highlights were **paddling in the Baltic** and watching children take flowers to their teachers on the first day of school, particularly one little boy accompanied by his **grandmother**!

Also a very moving visit to a newly opened Jewish synagogue. We were shown around and it was explained to us. Really interesting in view of the decimation of the Jewish population in Eastern Europe, which has never really recovered. The Latvian Govt's sensitivity to the Jews is indicated by the fact that the building has a twenty-four hour watch by the Police.

Friday 4th September

Tallinn to St Petersburg across the Russian border in the pouring rain!

We leave Tallinn and drive through scruffy forest and farmland to the Russian Border.

About 8 Km from the border we start to pass stationery trucks parked on the verge. Yes the queue is 8 Km long and the average wait to get your truck of

goods (predominately Japanese cars for sale to Russians) through the border is 3 days!

It takes us about one and a half {*hours? :ed*} to get through the border. The border guards give the bus the once over but our cases did not have to come off the bus as they usually do because it was raining! That saved the best part of an hour. We use the first Russian toilet at the border and I found an unexpected use for the waterproof trousers I was wearing. When I had "the trots" later on in the bus, they kept my involuntarily expelled body fluids IN and off the bus seats as well!

A marked difference as soon as we started travelling through the real Russian countryside en route to St Petersburg. Lots of peasant type people living in very poor housing (by our standards) in small village groups on mud roads.

We progress to the spaghetti junctions of the approaches to the 5 million-population St Petersburg. We board our boat and prepare for the onslaught of the Venice of the north! St Petersburg is built on 44 islands and canals on the Niva River. Its strategic significance for the rest of Russia is its seaport to the Baltic.

Saturday 5th September 2009

We start with overview morning. A bus tour, for an outside looks at the main sites we will visit over the next two days.

Our first stop is at the Battleship Aurora. Famous for firing the "big gun" round that signalled the start of the 1918 revolution. Then in quick succession, the former KBG headquarters, The State University, Monument to Peter the Great, Smolny Cathedral (Convent of the Resurrection) and the following to which we returned in the afternoon.

The Peter and Paul fort on Hare Island (including the St Peter and Paul Cathedral where several Czars and their families are buried.

St Issac Cathedral, covered icons on the walls and the roof

Then to The Church on Spilt Blood (built in memory of Alexander the second who was murdered during unrest in 1881). Similarly covered, but this time all the icons are made of miniature mosaic tiles.
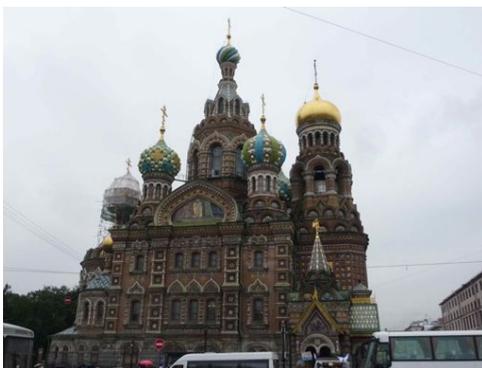
All day pounding the streets of St Petersburg in the rain, so back to the boat for an early night!

Sunday 6th September

Away all day today. The Hermitage museum tour in the morning and The

Peterhof gardens in the Afternoon.

The Hermitage was so named because Catherine the Great felt a bit lonely, rattling about there by herself in later life. I suppose this is not surprising if you have had your Husband "disposed of" and fallen out with your son as a result!

Anyway, this building is the home of one of the greatest collection of European art ever put together.

Apart from the opulence of the buildings we saw art works by: Da Vinci, El Greco, Rafael, Michael Angelo, Rembrandt, Van Dyk and Rubens.
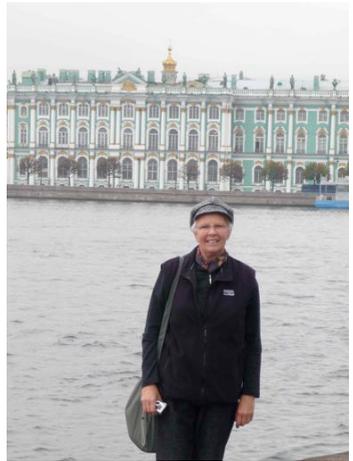
As well, we visited the 1812 Napoleonic War art display and "The perfect Victory" display (commemorating the Victory over Sweden in the "Northern Wars" of 1700/1721)

For me, what is impressive here is, nothing to do with the wars (The foolishness and mayhem mankind inflicts on itself as depicted is madness anyway), but the artistry in the huge battle canvasses.

In the Afternoon we took a hydra foil towards the mouth of the Volga river to visit the gardens of the Peterhof (Or Peters escape) palace. Peter the Great established this initially very modest palace and large gardens when he was setting up St Petersburg, as an escape palace that he could sail down river to, for a few days.

Fortunately the rain eased in the afternoon, so we did not have such a wet day as yesterday.

Monday 7th July

As you learn more about the succession of Csars and their wives you begin to pick up on their personalities.

Peter the Great and his commoner wife Catherine the first whilst high spending absolute monarchs, did introduce some reforms and western ideas. Their daughter Elisabeth was nothing but a good time girl who built extravagantly, lived extravagantly and by the time of her death had emptied the countries exchequer.

Today, we visit the Pushkin palaces complex about 25 Km north west of St Petersburg, all built by Elisabeth, in the extravagant baroque style. Which means lavish amounts of gold decoration on all walls and ceilings. We walk through a series of about 10 large rooms all in a row, all thus decorated. The interesting thing was that they were all trashed and burnt back to the basic brick walls by the Nazi's, and very early after

the war the then Communist Soviet regime made the shrewd political decision to reinstate them to original. It took 25 years, but not only did they remind the locals of the sins of the Nazi's and what they had been "saved" from by the Bolsheviks, but provides a gold mine of tourism now!

This evening we experience the highlight of our Russian evening entertainment. Namely a performance of the ballet Swan Lake in the Small Hermitage theatre (holds only 500) in the State Hermitage Museum complex. This was an extremely professional dance company performing a very exacting ballet.
The orchestra on the other hand was a little loud and casual according to our "on tour" professional orchestral player Gloria Streat.

Tuesday 9th September

On our last day in St Petersburg we look at some city contrasts.

Firstly to the home of one of Russia's Traditional wealthy families, represented by the Yusupov palace.

This originally Muslim family, worked their way from Iraq to St Petersburg in the 12 or 13th century, made them selves useful to the ruling houses and kept on acquiring land and property through the centuries as a result. The house they lived in at the time of the revolution which we were shown through, included 3 reception rooms, 3 dining rooms, a large concert room and a small 3 tier live theatre! And this was only one of their 50 mansions!

It was in the basement of this house that the religious mentor to the last Czar, Gregor Rasputin, was murdered by noblemen jealous of his influence with the Czar.

Next to the rented apartment of the Dostoevsky, author of the novel Crime and Punishment, written in the later part of the 18th century and getting more popular as time goes by.

Finally to the 19th century cemetery of some of Russia's literary and theatre elite, not the most interesting part of the day!

Many thanks to our intrepid explorers - we look forward to hearing further of their adventures. One final word from David:

"I am so pleased I brought my Mac!"

Thought for the Month

How 10 digits will end privacy as we know it

Internet denizens and urban dwellers alike need to recognize that an era of anonymity is ending.

The population of the world stands at about 7 billion. So it takes only 10 digits to label each human being on the planet uniquely.

This simple arithmetic observation offers powerful insight into the limits of privacy. It dictates something we might call the 10-Digit Rule: just 10 digits or so of distinctive personal information are enough to identify you uniquely. They're enough to strip away your anonymity on the Internet or call out your name as you walk down the street. The 10-Digit Rule means that as our electronic gadgets grow chattier, and databases swell, we must accept that in most walks of life, we'll soon be wearing our names on our foreheads.

A study of 1990 U.S. Census data revealed that 87 percent of the people in the United States were uniquely identifiable with just three pieces of information: five-digit ZIP code, gender, and date of birth. Internet surfers today spew considerably more information than that. Web sites can pinpoint our geographical locations, computer models, and browser types, and they can silently track us using cookies. Banking sites even confirm our identities by verifying that our log-ins take place at consistent times of day.

Database dossiers, too, carry surprising amounts of identifying information, even when specifically anonymized for privacy. Researchers at the University of Texas at Austin last year studied a set of movie-rating profiles from about 500,000 unnamed Netflix subscribers.

Knowing just a little about a subscriber--say, six to eight movie preferences, the type of thing you might post on a social-networking site--the researchers found that they could pick out your anonymous Netflix profile, if you had one in the set. The Netflix study shows that those 10 deanonymizing digits can hide in surprising places.

Our physical belongings also betray our anonymity by silently calling out identity-betraying digits. Small wireless microchips--often called radio frequency identification, or RFID, tags--reside in car keys, credit cards, passports, building entrance badges, and transit passes. They emit unique serial numbers.

Once linked to our names--when we make credit card purchases, for instance--these microchips enable us to be tracked without our realizing it. One popular book inflames imaginations with the lurid title, "Spychips: How Major Corporations and Government Plan to Track your Every Move with RFID."

But wireless microchips also highlight the futility of anonymity protections. To begin with, concerns about RFID tracking miss the forest for the trees. After all, mobile phones are ubiquitous and can be tracked at much longer ranges than standalone chips. Many people have GPS receivers in their phones and are signing up for location-based services, voluntarily (if selectively) disclosing their movements. There's little point in hiding the serial numbers of chips when your mobile phone squeals on you.

Many scientists (including me) have developed antitracking techniques for mobile phones and microchips. Instead of fixed serial numbers, wireless devices can call out changing pseudonyms, such as the rotating license plate numbers on spies' cars in the movies. The problem is that the plates may change, but the car always looks the same. In this regard, chips are like cars.

Scientists at ETH Zurich recently showed how to identify microchips uniquely using radio waves --and consequently to see through the disguise of pseudonyms. Their experiments showed that thanks to manufacturing variations, microchips, laptop Wi-Fi cards, and other devices can't help but emit physical "fingerprints"--essentially God-given serial numbers. More digits that we radiate unknowingly.

In the end, we probably won't need to carry anything at all to see our identities betrayed in public spaces. There are already tens of millions of surveillance cameras in public spaces in the United States.

Face recognition software is crude today, but it will improve. Cameras will eventually recognize faces as well as people do. Unlike people, though, they'll have the backing of databases containing millions of faces--or the headshots that so many of us already post online.

Thankfully, despite proliferating sources of those 10 digits that are fatal to anonymity on the Internet and the sidewalk, we can still prevent the world of the film "Minority Report." There are many defensible facets to privacy beyond identity. Even if our names are blazoned forth to all and sundry, we still have the opportunity to safeguard health care and financial data, entertainment preferences, purchase histories, and social interactions.

In this battle, identity theft is a key challenge for technologists and policymakers. The only way to prevent unauthorized access to personal data is to ensure that even when criminals learn the digital constituents of your identity, they can't steal it. Strong authentication will need to fill the gap as the privacy of identities crumbles.

Perhaps the world will be friendlier when in-store advertisements greet you personally, criminals wear "Hello, My Name Is" badges, and the people you meet at parties already have your bio in hand. Facebook, Twitter, and pervasive blogging already augur a society of reflexive exhibitionism and voyeurism. But the technologies that advance us into a

world of omniscience will also bring us a step backward.

For years, people aspired to escape small towns for the big city, for the fresh start of an identity without history. The Internet offered similar horizons of freedom. But the society of the small town will soon have us back in its clutches, for good and bad. And on the Internet, everyone will know if you're a dog.

Do you know which "10 digits" let people know all about you and your life? And knowing this, how will it affect your ongoing life?

6385539127

Mac 111

Christopher Breen

Dealing with a full hard drive

"I have a 17-inch MacBook Pro with a 320GB hard drive. (Formatted it has 297GB, but who's counting?) I'm down to 70GB and I heard that a full hard drive is a slow hard drive. I went looking for files to delete and found a fair few that were either hardly ever used or never used. Are there any secret locations on my hard drive that large and disposable files could be hidden?"

There's lots to talk about here.

Let's start with the capacity of your hard drive. For just about ever, hard drive manufacturers have defined a megabyte as 1,000KB. The Mac OS defines a megabyte as 1,024KB. It's for this reason that a 320GB drive (using the 1,000KB measurement convention) appears to have much less capacity, because it's being measured by the OS using the 1,024KB definition. It's been reported that this behavior will change in Snow Leopard so that OS X 10.6 will show a 320GB hard drive having exactly that capacity.

As for a full hard drive slowing down your Mac, it's true. OS X uses your hard drive to swap files out of RAM and if there's very little room to do that, your Mac needs to work harder at the job and therefore slows down. Note, however, that at 70GB your 320GB isn't there yet. Continue to leave 10 to 15-percent of your hard drive free and you should be in fine shape.

Now, let's turn to lurking files and folders. In this regard it's worth your while to download a copy of The Omni Group's free OmniDiskSweeper. This utility will tell you how much space is consumed by folders and files on your Mac. When you find something you believe you can do without, simply highlight it and click on the Delete button in the bottom-left corner of the window.

Good places to start looking are in the /Library and ~/Library folders. For example, look in the Audio folder within the /Library folder and you'll find an Apple Loops folder that holds GarageBand's audio files, which take up many gigabytes of storage. If you don't use GarageBand, this folder can go. Similarly, iDVD's themes (found in /Library/ Application Support/iDVD) take up a couple of gigabytes of storage that you can free up if you never touch iDVD.

Because it doesn't go without saying for everyone, allow me to offer a couple of safety tips. First, don't throw out items in the System folder unless you really, really, really know what you're doing. And, more generally, don't toss out files and folders stored elsewhere on your Mac unless you know the purpose they serve. Doing so could land you knee-deep in the soup.

Streaming large movies

"I have a 1.75GB MPEG-4 Quicktime Movie file. If I subscribe to MobileMe and upload it using iDisk, will friends and family be able to see it? If so, could they stream it, or would they have to download it? Or, is this file too large for them to access at all? If MobileMe can't do this, is there any other movie/video hosting app that could?"

If you dropped it in you iDisk's Public folder your friends and family would be able to download it but not stream it. But let's back up a second. That's a honkin' big movie and one that, in its current form, I wouldn't advise streaming. First of all, it could take a long time to start streaming to your viewers. And, perhaps more importantly, if a lot of people access the thing, you could easily run over your MobileMe monthly data transfer limit (that limit is 200GB of data transfer for a standard MobileMe account).

If you want to go with MobileMe I'd severely slim down that movie. One good way to do that is to import it into iMovie '09, pull it into a project, and then choose Share - MobileMe Gallery. In the sheet that appears you can choose a size that will work better for streaming--Tiny (176 x 144), Mobile (480 x 272), Medium (640 x 360), or Large (960 x 540) for a 720p HD movie.

From the sound of your question, you don't yet have a MobileMe account. If the MobileMe Gallery feature is the single thing that's pushing you toward this $99-per-annum service, perhaps you could save some money by creating a YouTube account and posting your video to that fine free service using the Share - YouTube command. As with MobileMe Gallery you have options for creating movies of different sizes and you needn't grant the general public access to your movie. Just make it a personal movie and then grant access to your family and friends.

No, you're not infected

"I used Yahoo to search for something and was sent immediately to the following [redacted] site. I believe my Mac was invaded and don't know what to do!"

First, relax. Your Mac wasn't invaded, infected, compromised, co-opted, or conquered. If you'd clicked through a few of those dire pop-up warnings you might have been as amused as I was to see a phony Windows Security Alert appear on a Macintosh. What you've encountered is termed "scareware"--a scam that attempts to frighten those confronted with these pages into downloading a hunk of software that will allegedly deal with the problem.

The chain of events goes like this: A perfectly legitimate URL is hijacked by the scammers and you're redirected to the scareware page. That page is designed in such a way that several dialog boxes pop-up, warning you that your computer is infected. Click Cancel and you'll just get more

warnings and an interface that makes it appear like your computer is being scanned. If you fall for the trick and click the buttons necessary to download the offered antivirus software, you'll pay for a product that is likely a hunk of malware (and I hate to think what happens to your credit card information). This malware is bad for Windows PCs but has no effect on Macs.

Regrettably, these pages are sometimes difficult to dismiss because the constant pop-up warnings prevent you from leaving. Clicking OK may get rid of the pop-ups so that you can close the window or tab (and no, doing so won't automatically download the software to your Mac), but I faced a situation with my wife's Mac (who was just concerned as you were) where I had to force-quit Safari to get away from the scareware page.

You can take some comfort in knowing that the search engine folks do their best to weed out this junk and that those who promote it have been-- and will continue to be--prosecuted for engaging in such malicious and scammy activities.

[Macworld Senior Editor Christopher Breen is the author of "Secrets of the iPod and iTunes (6th edition)," and "The iPod and iTunes Pocket Guide (4th edition)" both from Peachpit Press   and   "Mac OS X 10.5 Leopard Essential Training (video)" from lynda.com   Find Chris' books at www.amazon.com and www.peachpit.com.]

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Under the Covers

Peter Fitchett

Snow Leopard

A little earlier than expected, but Snow Leopard is now with us, and we are starting to see just what we have received. According to initial information, there isn't much to see - just a few refinements of existing features, the ability to talk nicely with Microsoft Exchange for whatever business users may be around that want it, and some major changes to the underlying architecture of Mac OS X. It seems to me that we should spend a little time to actually have a look at what is going on under the covers ...and even better, it is really great to see a few journalists actually looking beyond the standard press releases, to give us some real information.

Up until a few years ago, everyone knew that if you wanted a "better" computer, you had to get one with a faster processor; then the guru designers found that they just couldn't make faster processors for our computers. The compromise was to start putting multiple processors there instead, but this introduced a new problem. Programs are written to make use of only one processor, (and programmers didn't know how to write their programs to use more - efficiently!) Even today, programmers cannot do this, just because they don't know what actual hardware configuration will be available when the program runs. This is even more complicated when you consider that several programs may be running - so what is actually available may change second by second.

What Apple has done is to move this optimisation problem into the lowest levels of Mac OS X, where the necessary information about the actual hardware configuration, and what is available instant by instant, is available. By offering an efficient solution that any (or every) program can use, Apple is enabling programs to actually be simpler to write, even while running in a more sophistically manner and providing a more responsive result to the user.

 So lets us see what Apple has done ...

Grand Central Dispatch

Snow Leopard's answer to the concurrency conundrum is called Grand Central Dispatch (GCD). The name is extremely apt, though this is not entirely clear until you understand the technology.

The first thing to know about GCD is that it's not a new Cocoa framework or similar special-purpose frill off to the side. It's a plain C library baked into the lowest levels of Mac OS X. This means that it can be used directly from all of the C-derived languages supported on Mac OS X: Objective-C, C++, and Objective-C++. That's the really technical bit, so lets just forget that now, and we will look at what GCD is and how it works.

There are a few technical terms that we need to use, so let's pop into Pack'N Save for a couple of minutes and fill up our shopping cart. We now have a **Task** that needs to be done - scan the products we selected and pay for them. In the checkout area, there are a number of **Queues** that we can join. Our task is **enqueued** into a **FIFO** (First-In, First-Out) queue. In due course, we will be **dequeued** from the queue, and served. If we were in the 'self-scan' queue, there are actually several scanning stations, each processing a task from the one queue - several tasks from the same queue are being processed in **parallel** (at the same time). Now I have just described something that you may actually do any day of the week - did you realise that you were taking part in a very complicated process that often stumps some of the best programmers in the world? The words in bold are quite possible different for what you would normally use, but they are all understandable, aren't they?

Grand Central Dispatch is built on exactly these simple entities - **queues**, **tasks**, and **threads**. Threads - that is another new term that I didn't introduce above, but it is there in the supermarket - it is the Checkout Operator - it is where the task actually gets its work done.

Before going on, let us take a step back, and look at a program that we want to run. The program can be looked at as many simple tasks, each doing some simple function or calculation. Such functions may be to draw an image, to calculate how a ball moves or bounces, to make some change when a key is pressed on the keyboard, and so on. The program then uses sequences of these functions to accomplish some aspect of the action required. Some of these functions must be performed only after others have completed, but others may be able to be done at any time before the end of the sequence. The programmer writes each of these functions as a separate task, then enqueues the tasks into different queues to reflect the order that the tasks must run in to complete a required action. Some of these queues may permit the tasks to process in parallel, and other queues require that tasks are processed one at a time, in the queue order. Does this sound a bit familiar?

Programmers actually started doing this some time ago, but became unstuck, with the next step of actually processing the tasks in the queues. Why? Let's say a program has a problem that can be split into eight separate, independent units of work. If this program then creates four threads on an eight-core machine, is this an example of creating too many or too few threads? Trick question! The answer is that it depends on what else is happening on the system.

If six of the eight cores are totally saturated doing some other work, then creating four threads will just require the OS to waste time rotating those four threads through the two available cores. But wait, what if the process that was saturating those six cores finishes? Now there are eight available cores but only four threads, leaving half the cores idle. The programmer is very unlikely to be able to win in this dynamic environment.

The bottom line is that the optimal number of threads to put in flight at any given time is best determined by a single, globally aware entity. In Snow Leopard, that entity is GCD. It will keep zero threads in its pool if there are no queues that have tasks to run. As tasks are dequeued, GCD will create and dole out threads in a way that optimizes the use of the available hardware. GCD knows how many cores the system has, and it knows how many threads are currently executing tasks. When a queue no longer needs a thread, it's returned to the pool where GCD can hand it out to another queue that has a task ready to be dequeued.

(Threads are pooled rather than being discarded as they are very expensive to create and destroy. Queues, on the other hand, are very small, and very cheap to create and destroy, so programs are free to use as many as they want - thousands if necessary!)

Remember the problem of the programmer trying to figure out how many threads to create? Using GCD, he doesn't have to worry about that at all. Instead, he can concentrate entirely on the optimal concurrency of his algorithm in the abstract. If the best-case scenario for his problem would use 500 concurrent tasks, then he can go ahead and create 500 GCD queues and distribute his work among them. GCD will figure out how many actual threads to create to do the work. Furthermore it will adjust the number of threads dynamically as the conditions on the system change.

But perhaps most importantly, as new hardware is released with more and more CPU cores, the programmer does not need to change his application at all. Thanks to GCD, it will transparently take advantage of any and all available computing resources, up to—but not past!—the optimal amount of concurrency as originally defined by the programmer when he chose how many queues to create.

But wait, there's more! GCD queues can actually be arranged in arbitrarily complex arrangements. (Actually, they can be cyclic too, but then the behavior is undefined. Don't do that.) Queue hierarchies can be used to funnel tasks from disparate subsystems into a narrower set of centrally controlled queues, or to force a set of normal queues to delegate to a serial queue, effectively serializing them all indirectly.

There are also several levels of priority for queues, dictating how often and with what urgency threads are distributed to them from the pool. Queues can be suspended, resumed, and cancelled. Queues can also be grouped, allowing all tasks distributed to the group to be tracked and accounted for as a unit.

Overall, GCD's use of queues and threads forms a simple, elegant, but also extremely pragmatic architecture.

And an early result from one programmer reports that his program is running twice as fast since modifying it to use the Grand Central Dispatch in Snow Leopard - without any other changes!

iMumble 18.0

Barry Clark

iTrade

Emissions trading - what a crock.

iReduce my emissions to save the planet, then iSell my credits to someone else so that they can release their carbon. Who's talking methane emissions here?

Spam of the Month

This month I have to give the prize to:

Dear Customer!
Thank you for ordering at our online store.
Your order: Sony VAIO A1133651A, was sent at your address.
The tracking number of your postal parcel is indicated in the document attached to this letter.
Please, print out the postal label for receiving the parcel.

Internet Store.

How many of you print the postal label AFTER the parcel has been mailed to you? (Mostly, they are printed first, so they can go on the parcel!)

I know that spammers rely of us being stupid, but ....

SeniorNet Mac

Computer Training Lessons: Two-hour sessions, once a week for four weeks. Course notes are provided. Classes are small with a maximum of six students and two tutors per lesson.

Social Events: Held on the fourth Tuesday of the month.

Newsletter: Supplied every two months.

The **Learning Centre** is situated in the Cranmer Centre Poolhouse, which is accessed from Montreal Street at the Armagh Street corner.

Contact: If you would like to join SeniorNet Mac and are in the 55-plus age group, please contact Allan Rutherford at (03) 352-4950, or email:
ajmr@xtra.co.nz,
or else leave a message on the club's answerphone at (03) 365 2003.

From the emailbox

Snow Leopard

I have not installed Snow Leopard yet, and won't, while I am still using three programs on Classic on my iMac G5, the last one with the 32-bit processor that still allows old Classic software to run. One is Quicken 98, because it is better than later versions of Quicken, the world's largest-selling accounting software. The latter have bugs in them which I cannot eradicate, and no-one I've asked has any clues how to get rid of them (or any interest in trying, really), so I potter along in my businesses with the old software. I also have a small calculator in Classic which works better than the freebie in OSX. The latter's drawback is that after you have done a calculation, you can't copy the answer and paste it into your document or spreadsheet. A major drawback. Neither of these are as old as my version of WriteNow, which was last updated in 1994. It is still the simplest and best word processor I have used. Yes, I have Office 2004 and use Word in that, but it is not as user-friendly as WriteNow. The latter's spell-checker is brilliant, so fast, and sensible. Word is capable of doing more things, but less easy to use. So, with three pieces of software coming from last century, still working well and not having anything better than them, why would I wish to upgrade to Snow Leopard? I'm sure Queen Victoria would agree.

Nigel

PS I used the same arguments with my friends when they first got email connections on their computers. I resisted for four years. Postage with stamps had worked well for me for decades. Why change? Mmmm....

PPS I had better stop writing this. I have 17 emails in my in tray for the business to answer.

Mac OS X Calculator:

If you look at the Edit menu, you will see that the standard Copy and Paste functions (and their usual keyboard shortcuts) are available. The only special thing to note is that Calculator has only one text area - the number you are entering or have just calculated - so you don't need to explicitly select the text before you copy or paste. The displayed number is always selected, so jump right on in and try Copy and Paste.

New disk - New trap for old player

I just bought a new hard disc to store all the Applebytes I've opted not to get in the post, But when I came to format it, Leopard's Disc Utility wouldn't give me an option to partition. All I could do was First Aid, Erase, Restore or RAID it.

Fortunately Ken Stone's excellent blow by blow article on *Partitioning in Tiger and Leopard* rescued me In Leopard, Partition doesn't appear as an option until you have selected a disc. Solved.

Jim Pollard

SneakPeek for Digital Photography

Here it is! The first Quick Look plugin geared specifically for photographers. No longer do you have to import a picture into a photo application just to get detailed information about the shot. With SneakPeek Photo simply click on the unopened photo file (no matter where it is, even on your card reader) and hit the space bar. Up pops the picture into a large view that immediately gives you the detailed information you need. The preview's toolbar contains the much needed basics such as file type, size, f-stop, focal length, color profile (sRGB, ProPhoto, etc) and even a mini histogram.

But there's much more. Also available are elements which offer Exif data, camera settings, a Loupe View with high resolution zooms, and a large Histogram to see the blueprint of your shot. If the photo is geotagged, you'll not only see the coordinates, but a nifty map of where the picture was taken. Plus there's even a link to a more detailed map online.

SneakPeek Photo gives you access to the kinds of information usually found in expensive photo applications. The cost? Only us$10 dollars. Try it for free for 15 days to be sure. SneakPeek Photo requires Mac OS X 10.5 or later (including 10.6).

Download SneakPeek Photo:
  http://www.code-line.com/software/download/SneakPeekPhoto.dmg

Group contacts

Website   **http://www.appleusers.co.nz**
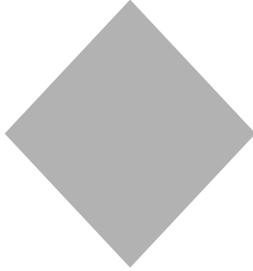
Mailing Lists   **Peter Fitchett**   (3) 960 8189
                       listadmin@appleusers.co.nz

                       The AUGC Discussion List is for members who wish to discuss club matters.

                       The HELP list is open to all Mac users who wish to give or receive assistance.

Aims

The Apple User Group of Canterbury Incorporated (AUGC) is a non-profit organisation which exists for the purpose of exchanging ideas and expertise about the use of Apple computers, the Macintosh operating systems, and related hardware and software.

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Help:	A full list of helpers and volunteers can be viewed in the Contacts section of our website.
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 Apple User Group