Living the iLife

Apple Mac news, tips and tricks

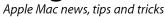## The Apple Core : *Latest technical news*

• A lot has happened since the last issue, not least of which was the very last Macworld Expo in San Francisco. During that event, Apple introduced a brand new 17" MacBook Pro which matches the rest of the laptop family except for its new and powerful battery capable of running for a full eight hour before needing a recharge.

• Apple's media and business suites were also updated with iLife '09 and iWork '09 respectively. All applications have had many new features added to them to make them even more indispensable and if your Mac is powerful enough, you should definitely have a look at what these new updates bring. You can also download a trial version of iWork by going to *www.apple.com/nz/iwork/download-trial*.

The Hardware Refresh Cycle
To help you know when to buy a new computer or iPod

Model	Last Updated	Recommendation
Mac Pro	8 Jan 2008	Update should be soon
Mac mini	7 Aug 2007	Update should be soon
iMac	28 Apr 2008	Update should be soon
MacBook	14 Oct 2008	Mid product cycle
MacBook Pro	6 Jan 2009	Buy now
MacBook Air	14 Oct 2008	Mid product cycle
iPod	9 Sep 2008	Mid product cycle

The Help Desk

Answering your most pressing technical questions

Q: My Mac is behaving strangely, applications don't work as they should, double-clicking on an icon doesn't always open the file and I'm told I haven't got permission to do something I was always able to do before.
A: Mac OS X is based on UNIX, a powerful and very stable operating system which runs most of the internet. As it's designed to run 24/7, several diagnostic features kick in around 2 or 3am.

As is to be expected, most Mac users don't have they computers on at that time and sadly, Mac OS X doesn't do these diagnostics at another time. Without them, your Mac can start behaving oddly after weeks of continuous use.

Thankfully, a small company by the name of Atomic Bird created an application called Macaroni which is clever enough to check if those diagnostic programs have run and if they haven't to do them at a time when your Mac is on but not in use. This removes most potential odd behaviours and avoids you having to call people like me to fix the problem!

Go to *www.atomicbird.com* and download a copy. You can use it free for 30 days, after which you would need to pay US$ 9.99 to keep it working, which I'm sure you'll agree is well worth the price.

To submit your questions, send an email to roundabout@machelp.co.nz.

Only on a Mac : *A brief look at a feature not available on other platforms*
Save as PDF

PDFs are incredibly useful files: not only can they be viewed on any computer but they also preserve the layout and fonts you have used so that the reader will see the file exactly as you intended. In contrast, a web page can be rendered differently depending on which browser is used to display it and a Word document would switch to a generic font is one you used wasn't available on the reader's computer.

Another great use of PDFs is the fact that you don't have to wonder if the reader will own the application you used to create the document: PDF readers are either pre-installed on all computers or available as a free download from *www.adobe.com*. Also, for all intents and purposes, PDFs cannot be edited, limiting the ability of others to alter your work.

The great thing about Mac OS X is that it lets you save any document as a PDF, no matter which application you are working from. It's all part of the system so you don't need to pay for any additional software to make this happen. In order to achieve this, the option resides in the generic Print menu. Go to File > Print (or use the ⌘P keyboard shortcut) to open the print window. Bottom left of it is a 'PDF' button. Click on it and choose 'Save as PDF'. You even have the option of adding a password to your file to make your work even more secure.

Virus Watch

Since the release of Mac OS X v10.0 in March 2001, Apple Macs have been completely virus, adware and spyware free. Despite their increasing popularity, it is still a much more secure platform than the alternatives. This is because it has been built from the ground up with security in mind, making virus attacks much more unlikely.

Steve Paris has had over 25 years experience in computers. He is an internationally published writer supplying articles, reviews and tutorials to the main Mac magazines worldwide. He is also an Apple Certified Trainer and provides consultancy, training and troubleshooting services to the Waitakere area. You can contact him on 09 817 4127.