



The Apple Core

Latest technical news

- Safari 4, Apple's own web browser for both Macs and Windows is currently available as a public Beta. This means it isn't finalised yet, may well be buggy, but if you're looking for a cutting edge browser, head over to www.apple.com/safari.

- It's been a long time coming, but Apple have finally updated their entire Desktop line: the mini, iMac and Mac Pro. Full details can be found at www.apple.co.nz/mac.

- A new even smaller iPod shuffle has been unveiled to the world. Check it out at www.apple.co.nz/ipodshuffle. Its controls are so small, they're located on the cord.

- You'll be pleased to know that all previous articles are now available online in the Writing section of www.machelp.co.nz. And if you have the time, I'd love to know what you think of the page's redesign.

The Hardware Refresh Cycle

To help you time your Mac or iPod purchase perfectly

Model	Last Updated	Recommendation
Mac Pro	3 Mar 2009	Buy now
Mac mini	3 Mar 2009	Buy now
iMac	3 Mar 2009	Buy now
MacBook	14 Oct 2008	Mid product cycle
MacBook Pro	6 Jan 2009	Buy now
MacBook Air	14 Oct 2008	Mid product cycle
iPod shuffle	12 Mar 2009	Buy now
iPod classic	9 Sep 2008	Mid product cycle
iPod touch	9 Sep 2008	Mid product cycle



The Help Desk

Answering your most pressing technical questions

Q: I can't control my application any more and my cursor has turned into a spinning coloured ball.

A: Sometimes, a program will misbehave and lock you out of it: you won't be able to control anything within it and, as you pointed out, your cursor changes to a spinning beach ball.

However, this lock-in behaviour doesn't affect other parts of your Mac: move the cursor over the Desktop or a window belonging to another application and it should turn back to a regular black arrow.

If you have unsaved work in a frozen application, it is best to leave it for a while and work with other parts of your Mac: sometimes, all it needs is a little time to become responsive again.

If this has no effect, you'll have no choice but to force quit the application. This will result in you losing any unsaved portion of your work, but there is sadly no alternative.

You could go to the Apple menu (top left of the screen), choose 'Force Quit' and be presented with a special window to get rid of unruly apps, but by far the quickest way to force quit a program is to click and hold on its icon in the Dock. After a few seconds a menu appears. Select 'Force Quit' from the available options. You may need to do this at least twice for the application to shut down properly. You can then relaunch the program and carry on working.

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

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 more unlikely.

Only on a Mac : A brief look at a feature not available on other platforms

The One-Button Mouse



Ever since it was introduced in 1984, the Mac's funny little pointing device was ridiculed. When mice became more mainstream in the computing world, the Mac version was still laughed at because it only had one button. But what the critics failed to realise was that those mice were designed that way for a very good reason: it forced developers to ensure that all their application's commands could be accessed via the menu bar at the top of the screen. Even if you were using the program for the first time, you would know to only look for commands in one place.

By contrast, Windows computers come with mice bearing two or more buttons. As a result, developers assume that their customers will have access to and understand how to use multi-buttoned mice, leading to many commands only being accessible when the user right-clicks on a specific part of the interface. This makes applications more confusing to interact with and frustrates novices no end.

Ironically, Macs have been able to handle multi-buttoned mice for over ten years: just plug in any USB mouse and Mac OS X will have no problem using it fully. In fact the latest mouse that comes bundled with iMacs and Mac Pros may appear to be of the one-button variety, but is in fact a programmable four-button mouse (you can set it up by using the Keyboard & Mouse preferences, accessible by clicking on the Apple Menu, top left of the screen and choosing 'System Preferences').

The ability to understand multi-buttoned mice coupled with forcing developers to assume that only a single button is being used has led to a very powerful yet easy to use interface which is a joy to use for novices and powerful enough for seasoned pros, all at the same time.

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.