everything is pixelated

Apple Mac news, tips and tricks

The Apple Core
Latest technical news

• Apple have released what could very well be the last update to Mac OS X v.10.5 "Leopard". Version 10.5.7 includes many bug fixes as well as all security updates since 10.5.6. You can download it by choosing the 'Software Update' command from the Apple Menu (top left of your screen).

You can read more about it by visiting this link: *http://support.apple.com/kb/HT3397*.

• Apple's WWDC (Worldwide Developer Conference) will be taking place in San Francisco on the 8th of June. We're all expecting them to showcase the next version of Mac OS X - code named "Snow Leopard", as well as version 3.0 of the iPhone/iPod touch operating system. I'll let you know what happened in the next issue...

• Don't forget that you can download this article as well as all previous ones by going to the Writing section of *www.machelp.co.nz*. As a bonus, they're all in full colour and the latest issues have clickable links.

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		
iMac		
MacBook Air	14/10/2008	Mid product cycle
MacBook		
MacBook Pro	6 Jan 2009	
iPod shuffle	12 Mar 2009	Buy now
iPod nano	9 Sep 2008	Approaching end of product cycle
iPod classic		
iPod touch		
iPhone		

The Help Desk
Answering your most pressing technical questions

Q: Macs are amazing computers but they sure are expensive. Is there any way of getting them cheaper?

A: You can't compare the cheapest Mac with the cheapest PCs: they're not in the same league. If however, you were to customise a PC so that it matched the Mac as closely as possible, including any bundled software, you'd find that the two are very similarly priced.

Being a premium brand means that sometimes, you just can't justify the price difference though, especially in the current economic climate.

However, the prices displayed at your local Mac reseller aren't your only options: visit the Apple Store - *www.apple.com/nz/store* - and scroll down to the bottom of the page. To the left is a "refurbished" link.

These Macs have been returned to Apple either because they were faulty or the purchaser changed their mind. They have then been repaired if need be and manually checked to make sure they work as well as can be expected. They not only come with a full one-year warranty but with anything from 10% to 25% discount over the current price.

What's available changes daily but it's well worth checking it out if you're looking for a bargain.

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

Safeguarding your Digital Life

Computers are so powerful and we can do so much with them that we tend to forget how vulnerable they can be. If your photos, documents, music or home movies are important to you, you should seriously consider backing them up.

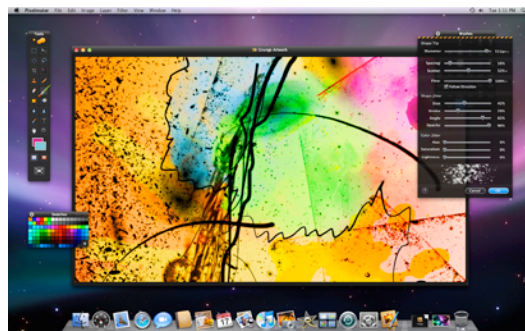Don't wait until it's too late. Contact me to find out how.

Mac Gems : *A brief look at a feature or application designed specifically for the Mac*
Pixelmator

When it comes to image editing, most of us would only think of Photoshop. Sadly, that program's price is well beyond the reach of most mortals and even though a less expensive version exists in the form of Photoshop Elements, it's still not that cheap at just over NZ$200.

But image editing doesn't have to revolve around Adobe - the makers of Photoshop. The Mac has a thriving community of programmers and one group has come up with an alternative: Pixelmator. This program gets updated constantly (a new free update is expected in June) and offers nearly all the tools that designers expect to find in an image editor. On top of this, the interface looks fantastic (it's always good to have something nice to look at when staring at a computer screen for hours on end), takes advantage of many features present in Mac OS X to speed up your workflow and costs only US$59 - just over NZ$100.

To sweeten the deal, you can even download a fully functioning demo copy from *www.pixelmator.com*, giving you the opportunity to explore the program and find out if it's right for you.

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**.