

WAMUG



Whittier Area Macintosh Users Group

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Apple News

After all the news at last month's Macworld Expo, this month has been spent evaluating the different products Apple introduced. Apple TV and Macbook Air have both received favorable reviews. The software upgrades for the iPhone, Touch, and Apple TV have been warmly received. The iPhone and iPod Touch have also been made available with increased memory, but at a higher price.

Time Capsule was introduced last month, but hasn't shipped yet. It is a backup appliance that automatically and wirelessly backs up everything on one or more Macs running Leopard. Time Capsule combines an 802.11n base station with a server grade hard disk in one small package. Simply plug it in, then easily set up automatic wireless backup for every Mac in your house to a single Time Capsule with just a few clicks. Time Capsule offers the benefits of a full-featured 802.11n Wi-Fi base station, and comes in two models: a 500 gigabyte model for US\$299 and a 1 terabyte model for \$499. It looks like it is a good deal, because an Airport Extreme base station, by itself, costs \$179. Time Capsule has one of them and a hard drive.



Security upgrades have been released for Tiger, Leopard and Quicktime. You can get them through Software Update under the "Apple" menu bar.

Finally! Good Speech Recognition for Mac

www.tidbits.com

A most welcome brain transplant.

MacSpeech has been working with a good, but not world-beating speech-recognition system in their iListen product for years, before scoring the deal that they apparently

wanted all along: a license to use the engine that drives Nuance Communications' Dragon NaturallySpeaking; Nuance's software is and has been available only for Windows. (David Pogue wrote up how this came to be in his New York Times column last week.) It's going to play extremely well, because many Mac users were running Windows simply to use Dragon NaturallySpeaking. I saw a short but effective demo of the pre-release MacSpeech Dictate software at the Expo under extremely noisy conditions and was suitably impressed. The software is slated to ship in February 2008, with a lot of improvements to come within six months, including learning from corrections and specialized medical and legal dictionaries. MacSpeech Dictate will cost \$199 with a headset; upgrades from iListen 1.8 will cost either \$79 (for purchases made in 2007) or \$29 (for purchases in 2008). [GF]



Tips for Better iPhoto Cards

by Adam Engst [Tidbits.com](http://www.tidbits.com)

While working on our holiday card this year, I became annoyed by the fact that the body text in the Year In Review theme was centered, making it ugly and hard to read. I spent a few minutes searching and found an iPhoto Hot Tips page from Apple that gave me the answer.

If you format text in TextEdit (or presumably many other word processors), you can paste that fully formatted text into the card's text field in iPhoto and have the card retain all your original formatting. This is true even of fancier formatting options like line spacing and text alignment, and you can also set and use tab stops. So for my card, I simply copied the text out of iPhoto, pasted it into TextEdit, changed it to left alignment, copied it again, and pasted back into iPhoto.

The same trick works for text in iPhoto books, so there's no need to be frustrated by text formatting options there either.

The iPhoto Hot Tips told me something else I didn't know, which is that you can Option-choose a background color from the Background pop-up menu to set the color of the inside of a card to be different from the outside. I don't see myself needing this often, but it could come in handy.

The rest of the tips on that page, save one, are pretty much obvious from looking at iPhoto's interface. The one remaining non-obvious tip is that Apple recommends using

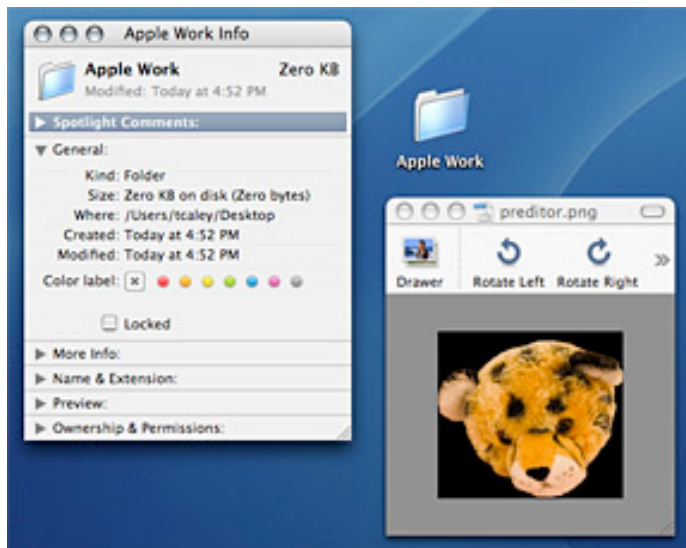
the Sharpness slider in the Adjust panel as the last thing you do, in order to end up with the best image quality. No explanation is given for why this is the case; my only caveat is that you want to use the Reduce Noise slider as nearly the last thing because it's so CPU-intensive that further edits can become sluggish.

Create Your Own Icons

Apple's Pro Tip of the Week

You don't have to live with the icons your Mac displays by default. Instead, personalize your folders, files, and drives with custom icons using just about any graphic file you desire, whether it's a jpeg, gif, png, Photoshop or Illustrator file, or even a PDF.

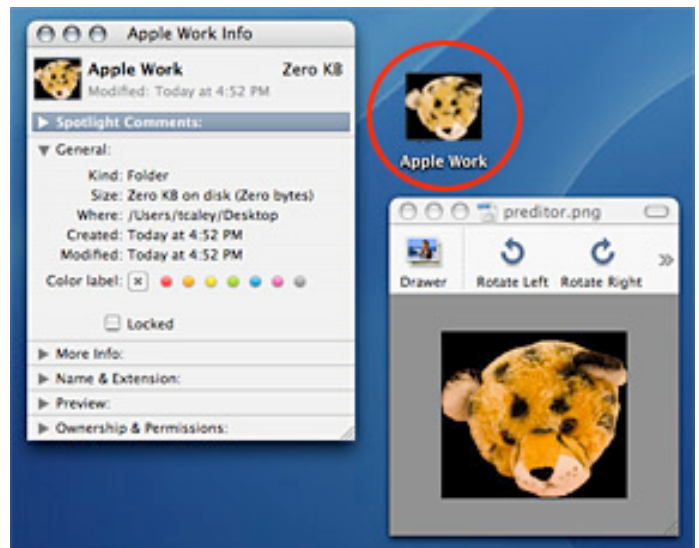
First, choose an image you want to use and open it in Preview. If the file doesn't open in Preview by default, select the image in Finder, select Open With from the File menu and then select Preview from the drop-down list.



Once your image has opened in Preview, press Command-C to copy it.

Next, select the file, folder or drive whose icon you want to change, and press Command-I to show its Info window.

Click the file, folder, or drive icon at the top left corner of the Info screen, then press Command-V to replace this icon with your chosen image.



Close the Info window. The new image should appear in place of the old icon on your desktop or Finder window — even in List view.

To make your icons appear larger or smaller, go to the Finder and select View Options from the View menu. Use the slider in the pop-up window to change your icons' display size on the desktop or in Finder windows.

You can also copy icons from the Info window of one file, folder, or drive to another. Just select the desired icon, copy it, then select the icon you want to replace and paste. Want to revert to the default Mac icon? Select your custom icon in the Info window and press the Delete key.

More Icon Tips: The most successful icons are clear, small images without too much de-

tail, like a close-up photo of a face or a flower. You may want to crop an existing image down to a single detail in an image-editing program to create a better-looking icon — or use one of the thousands of purpose-made icons available in various on-line collections.

Keep in mind that using a large image as an icon increases the file size of your destination folder or file. For example, using a 3.4 MB photo as an icon for a 36 KB document increases that document's total file size to 92 KB. Try creating a lower-resolution or smaller version of your image instead.

Cheap RAM

Chris Breen

I was listening to your podcast about Macworld's holiday gift guide and I heard the guest say he was able to upgrade his laptop's RAM for \$27. I was wondering what site that was, or if you know of a good website to find cheap RAM. I have a PowerBook and am looking to upgrade the RAM.

Take a gander at the Ramseeker website. Here you'll find RAM prices from a variety of popular memory vendors. Just look in the Ramseeker Mac section and choose your Mac model from the Select Macintosh Model pop-up menu.

Update: Dan Frakes, the guest who performed the upgrade on his laptop, wrote in to also suggest DealRAM, which is where he found the RAM he mentioned.

Converting video for iPod

I have videos on my Mac in QuickTime and WMV formats and I would like to load them

onto my iPod touch. Drag and drop doesn't want to work. The error message says that the videos are not viewable on the iPod. Is there a way to convert these files to an MPEG-4 file?

Sure. For QuickTime movies you'll find a solution within iTunes. Just drag your QuickTime movie to the Library entry in iTunes' Source list and it will appear under the Movies heading. Select it there and, from the Advanced menu, choose Convert Selection for iPod/iPhone. Once you've invoked the command, iTunes will do exactly as it promises and convert the movie to an H.264-encoded MPEG-4 video file, playable on your iPod.

Windows video files can't be converted for playback in iTunes. Apple's \$29 QuickTime Player Pro in league with Flip4Mac's free Windows Media Components for QuickTime can do the job, however. After upgrading QuickTime to the Pro version and installing WMCfQT, open the movie in QuickTime Player, choose File -> Export, and in the Save Exported File As window that appears, choose Movie to iPhone from the Export pop-up menu. Your file will be saved as a .m4v file, suitable for playback on your iPod.

Senior Editor Christopher Breen is the author of Secrets of the iPod and iTunes, fifth edition, and The iPod and iTunes Pocket Guide (both Peachpit Press, 2005).

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