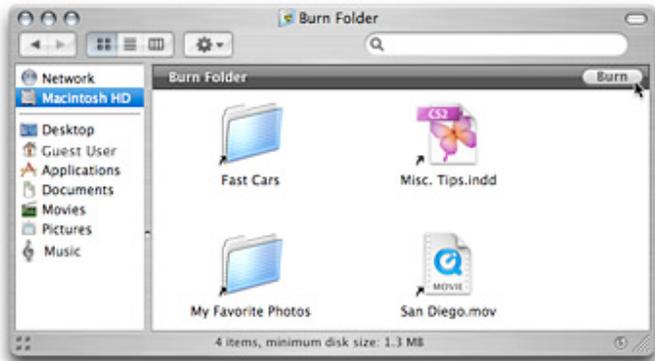# WAMUG

Apple News

Well, Macworld came and went. I don't know why Steve Jobs just doesn't go to the Consumer Electronics show in Las Vegas to do his keynote address, because he really hasn't talked about Macintosh computers at the past several Macworld shows. In fact they have changed the company's name from Apple Computer to Apple Inc. to "reflect the fact that Apple has matured from a computer manufacturer to a full-fledged consumer electronics company".

The iPhone is nifty and it is like a hand help computer. It even has a version of OS X in it. Apple claims- "iPhone combines three products — a revolutionary mobile phone, a widescreen iPod with touch controls, and a breakthrough Internet communications device with desktop-class email, web browsing, maps, and searching — into one small and lightweight handheld device. iPhone also introduces an entirely new user interface based on a large multi-touch display and pioneering new software, letting you control everything with just your fingers. So it ushers in an era of software power and sophistication never before seen in a mobile device, completely redefining what you can do on a mobile phone." It is scheduled to be available in June.

The Burn Folder Isn't Burning Aliases

When you create a burn folder in Tiger (which you do by either choosing New Burn Folder from the File menu or from the Action menu [that's the button with a gear icon on it in Finder windows]), if you look inside that folder, you won't see your original files. Instead, you'll see aliases to the originals (you can tell they're aliases because they have a little curved arrow on them). But don't let that throw you — when you do finally click the burn button (in the upper right-hand corner of the burn Folder's window), it actually gets the original files and burns those to disk, so you don't have to worry about having a CD full of aliases pointing to files you no longer have.

So why all the aliases in the first place? Because it points to your files (rather than copying them into the folder), which makes burning discs much faster than in previous versions of Mac OS X.

To Skype or Not to Skype

For all too long now I have listened to my brother, a reluctant PC user, tell me about the wonders of communicating over the Internet using an application called Skype. Last week, while visiting him, I asked for a demo and was very surprised by how simple and effective it is. He has used it for more than a year now for communicating with business associates in Cairo, Egypt, Africa, and beyond. What is amazing is how clear the voices are over the computers sound system -- much better than most phones.

So we began a demo on his PC by typing in my email address for the primary address, then we added my home phone numbers as a secondary contact. Since I hadn't authorized him to use me as a contact, we used my home phone number instead just to see how it worked. One click on the phone logo that is part of the Skype setup, and my home phone answering machine was talking to us!

Filled with enthusiasm as well as considerable doubt as to whether I could actually make this thing work and as soon as I could get to my faithful G4, I went to the Skype web site (using Google) http://www.skype.com/helloagain.html and downloaded Skype Version 2.0.0.6 for Mac. WOW! They had just finished testing the Skype software for Macs on October 23, 2006, and had this glowing report:

"Skype for Mac 2.0 goes gold today, which means that we've tested it, you've tested it and we all agree that it does a pretty good job. Download it now and video call your friends, family, colleagues or anyone else you'd like to see face to face. Remember not only does it work with other Mac users but it also works with Windows users too. That means even more people for you to video call with. We've improved the video quality and

made changes so that video calling can now work on older systems allowing more of our Mac community can use it.

Thanks for all your feedback and help to improve the quality of video throughout the beta. A lot of you have sent in your stories on how you're using Mac 2.0 to get face to face with far flung friends and relatives and we're delighted we can help to bring you all closer together. Many of you also told us that you're using video calls with business colleagues across the globe or to see your family back home when you're away with work."

With this reassurance, I followed the very simple install instructions and I was ready to go! NOT YET- the install had left a window that is needed to make all this work. In this window, there was a practice phone icon to click on to dial the system to see if it is going to work. Sadly I followed the practice instructions and quickly found that I needed a Microphone to make it work.

No problem. I went over to CompUSA and got a Logitech microphone especially designed for Skype (about $33) and plugged it in to a USB port. Instructions included with the microphone direct you to the sound icon in the preferences panel to assure that the sound panel recognized the Logitech item number. It did and all I had to do was put my brothers email address in the "contacts" list and Skype sent him an email to ask if he would authorize the contact.

When he did, I just clicked on his contact icon, the Mac dialed his email address and he answered! Just like picking up the phone receiver at home except clicking icons in the Skype window does it. We talked for nearly an hour discussing how much easier it was to

talk AND hear clearly over our computer system speakers - and gave credit to the nifty Logitech microphone. Of course! Both being of Scottish decent, we also marveled that the cost is zero!!

The application has all kinds of convenient settings such as how to change your status -- i.e. I'm not available, on line, off-line, do not disturb or invisible. It gives options like start a conference call or chat or organize contacts or block calls.

I have heard that Google either has or wants to buy Skype out, and they have added, as a possible moneymaker, the ability to call landline numbers from your computer. How landline connections would be priced is unknown to me so far, but should be cheap since the voice would be over the net for the most part and only the tail end of the connection would be charged. In summary, Skype works better that I ever thought possible and my brother has found that even overseas calls are very seldom dropped.

Of all the members of MacNexus, I'm probably close to being one of the least technically informed people when it comes to how to set up and use this type of application and I was concerned that I would never be able to make it happen. But it did and I hope this review will encourage all members to take advantage of Skype!

John H. Fraser MacNexus.org

(ebay bought Skype and it costs $30 unlimited calls to any phone in U.S. or Canada for a year..Alan)

iTouched an iPhone

by Glenn Fleishman <glenn@tidbits.com>

Come, feel the hem of my garment, ye lowly. Or at least that's what it felt like at Macworld Expo when I would mention, offhandedly, that I had iFondled an iPhone. As a bona fide member of the print press - representing The Seattle Times at the show - I received an executive briefing, and spent 10 minutes with the iPhone. I joked to Macworld editorial director Jason Snell, who also touched an iPhone, that we could put up a sign that read, "Hear about what it's like to play with an iPhone: 25 cents." I didn't realize then that Apple allowed only select press and partners to touch an iPhone. Samples were encased in glass pillars on the show floor. Demonstrations were continuous at Apple's booth with a specially equipped iPhone that had its display inserted into a mockup on screen.

The iPhone feels like a device that fell through a wormhole from the future. I can safely say that I've never held anything but certain sculpted art objects that had the feel and nature of the iPhone. It's definitely a work of art. [Writing about the iPhone on a current Macintosh feels a bit like this photo I took in the lobby of the W hotel. -Adam]

The touchscreen works as somewhat breathlessly promoted by Steve Jobs. Gestures result in almost instant responses. Learning to pinch and expand (or my preferred terms of "pucker" and "bloat," suggested by a colleague) takes a matter of seconds. Navigating a Web page requires a little more effort because you have to sort of grab the page and move it around, and then pinch to zoom in on a story. I didn't have a chance to try typing, which several colleagues who'd used the iPhone said was rather satisfying. It offers predictive and what I'd dub "postdictive" suggestions. If you typed, for instance, "t" it might add an "h" as a suggestion, but if you followed the "h" with an "f" - typing "thf" instead of "the" - the iPhone would helpfully recognize you probably meant "the." (I don't know if it prescriptively changes it or just offers the change, however.) The built-in speakers provided good sound, and navigating iTunes libraries was pretty straightforward. I'm not sure the navigation method of being able to scroll by throwing your finger - sliding it rapidly off the edge of the screen - is perfect, but it has a kind of artificial gravity to it that seems to work. There's also friction, so the speed at which you throw the page doesn't continue in pure Newtonian (the scientist, not the late Apple PDA) terms. The iPhone would sell remarkably well as an iPod with no Wi-Fi and no phone capability. But based on reports following its announcement, a phone sold for $500 by a cell provider and with a required two-year commitment would retail for as much as $1,000. It's likely the touchscreen represents a significant portion of that - perhaps a few hundred dollars. (Cancellation fees might require many hundreds of dollars to be repaid.) Those that don't opt to switch to Cingular and buy an iPhone may be waiting some time for costs to drop enough for the touchscreen and interface to make its way into the regular iPod lineup.