WAMUG

Apple News

Steve Jobs gave the keynote address at the World Wide Developers Conference June 11th. Mac OS X Leopard "near final" version was released to developers. The final version is not scheduled to be released to consumers until October and will cost $129. Steve demonstrated some features of the new OS

Mac OS X 10.5 Leopard introduces over 300 new features, including a new Desktop and Dock with Stacks, an intuitive new way to organize files; an updated Finder featuring Cover Flow and a new way to easily browse and share files between multiple Macs; Quick Look, a new way to rapidly preview most files without opening an application; Time Machine, a new way to easily and automatically back up and restore lost files or a complete Mac; Spaces, a powerful new feature to create groups of applications and instantly switch between them; and enhanced iChat and Mail applications, which easily allow users to communicate even more creatively. Subscribers to .Mac can also use the new "Back to my Mac" feature to browse and access files on their remote Macs over the Internet.

It is hard to believe that it has been more than six years since OS X was first released and two and a half years between the release of Tiger and Leopard. Leopard looks to be a substantial upgrade.

Safari 3 for Mac and Windows

Apple introduced Safari™ 3, the world's fastest and easiest-to-use web browser for Windows PCs and Macs. Safari is the fastest browser running on Windows, based on the industry standard iBench tests, rendering web pages up to twice as fast as IE 7 and up to 1.6 times faster than Firefox 2. Safari joins iTunes® in delivering Apple's legendary user experience to both Windows and Mac® users as well as full support of open Internet standards. Safari 3 features easy-to-manage bookmarks, effortless browsing with easy-to-organize tabs and a built-in RSS reader to quickly scan the latest news and information. Safari 3 public beta is available today as a free download at www.apple.com/safari.

"We think Windows users are going to be really impressed when they see how fast and intuitive web browsing can be with Safari," said Steve Jobs, Apple's CEO. "Hundreds of millions of Windows users already use iTunes, and we look forward to turning them on to Safari's superior browsing experience too."

Destroying CD or DVDs

You are backing up your precious files to a CD or DVD aren't you? Well you should. But, what do you do with that disc when you have a stack of newer backups? It is too risky to throw it away with your personal information on it. It must be made unreadable.
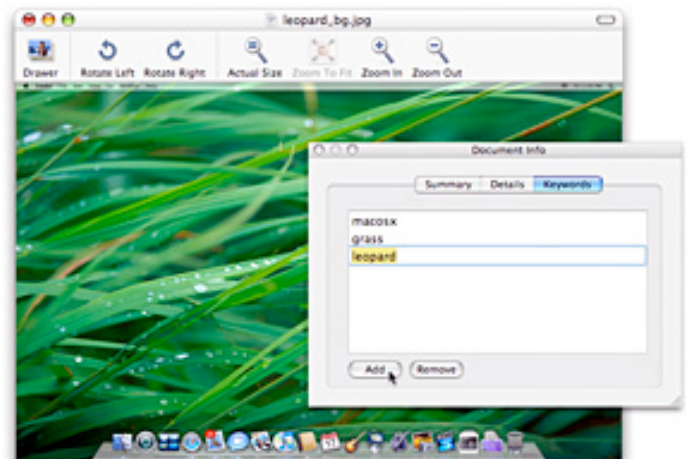
Do not bend it to break it. Some of CD/DVDs will shatter into many small and sharp pieces. Unless you have a shredder that can shred CDs, I find the easiest way is to take a

heavy pair of scissors and just cut the CD in half. Unless you are a secret agent with state secrets on your CD, this will be more than secure enough to protect your personal info...Alan
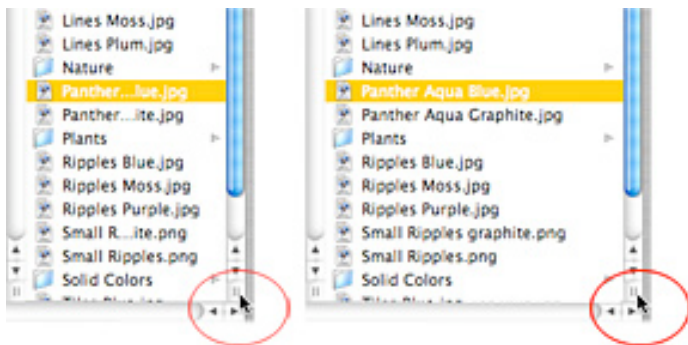
Giving Your Photos Keywords

If you're using Preview to sort your digital camera images, here's another helpful feature — the ability to add keywords to your photos. These keywords will even show up in Spotlight, so if you want to search your hard disk for images using keywords, you can.

Here's how it works: When you have an image onscreen that you want to rate, just go under Preview's Tools menu and choose Get info. Click on the Keywords tab, then click the Add button to add a field. Enter your keyword in the highlighted field, click in the white space to finalize your keyword, and you're done.

One-Click Long-File-Name Fix

If you're working in a window set to Column view, you're going to run into this all the time — files with long names have the end of their names cut off from view, because the column isn't wide enough. That doesn't sound like that big of a problem, until you start working with more descriptive file names, and you can't see which file is "European Front End Silver Car" and which is "European Back End Silver Car" because everything from "European" to "Silver Car" is cut off.

Luckily, there's a quick fix — just double-click on the little tab at the bottom of the vertical column divider bar, and the column will expand just enough so you can see even the longest file name of any file in that column. Option-double-click on the tab, and every column expands to show the longest name in each column. Pretty darn sweet!

From VHS to DVD

Q: *I have a lot of old home videos I want to transfer to DVD. What software or hardware do I need, and how do I get the process up and running?--Jerry Nichols*

A: Usually, the first step in burning your videos to DVD is to transfer them to your Mac.

There are a few ways to do that. If you have a Mini DV camcorder, it likely has a pass-through mode, in which the camera will take care of the conversion for you. Plug your VCR's outputs into the camcorder's inputs, string a FireWire cable between the camcorder and your Mac, enable the camera's pass-through mode, and capture your movie in Apple's iMovie. Note that your results may be less than perfect--some cameras perform better than others (and some, I'm told, don't work at all).

Alternatively, you can purchase an analog-to-DV converter box such as Datavideo's $185 DAC-200 or Canopus's $229 ADVC55 (). Plug the VCR's outputs into the analog input jacks on one of these boxes, string a FireWire cable between it and your Mac, and then capture your video in iMovie.

And if you have a Mac that sup-ports USB 2.0, you can use an EyeTV- compatible video-capture device such as Elgato's $200 EyeTV 250 (), which has an MPEG-2 hardware encoder. If you need to make only minimal edits--simple cuts to lop out extraneous material, for example--the included EyeTV 2 software will do the job, but it doesn't let you add transitions or effects.

Once you've captured the video (by any of these methods) and opened it in iMovie, you can edit it and then export it to Apple's iDVD to burn it to disc.

If you're simply looking for a way to archive your video on a more durable medium and don't want to bother with all those steps, you can skip your computer altogether. A number of manufacturers, including Panasonic, Toshiba, and Philips, sell VHS-DVD decks for under $200--your local electronics store is

sure to have at least one of these units on the shelves (Amazon.com is another good source). These decks can dub tapes to writable DVDs (and vice versa)--and as a bonus, they operate like traditional VCRs.

Later, if you decide you want to edit the video you've burned to DVD, you can always extract it from the disc with a tool such as the free HandBrake. Then pull it into iMovie and edit to your heart's content.

Keeping up-to-date with iPhoto

Q: *I've noticed the calendar icon that appears in iPhoto 6's lower left corner, but I'm not sure how to put it to good use. Any recommendations?-- Dale Carson*

A: You've discovered the much-overlooked calendar feature in Apple's iPhoto 6 (), part of the $79 iLife '06 suite. Click on this icon, and a list of months appears in the lower left corner of your iPhoto window. Select a month and then click on the small arrow to the left of the year to see a calendar view of that month.

The calendar provides some helpful ways to locate pictures in a crowded iPhoto library. For example, you can use it to find out in which months you shot pictures.

In year view, if the name of a month appears in black type, you shot pictures that month. If the name is in gray type, you didn't. The same idea applies to month view--days on which you took photos appear in black type; days on which you didn't appear in gray. Click on a date or month to reveal all the photos associated with that time period in the main iPhoto window.

You can also use the calendar to tally the number of pictures you took in a certain month or on a certain day. Hover your cursor over a month's name to reveal a tool tip indicating the number of pictures tagged for that month and year. For example, when I hover the cursor over April 2006, I see that I shot 217 photos that month. When you're in month view, hover over a date, and a tool tip reveals how many pictures you took that day (see "Photos by Date").

Here's a handy way to gather all the pictures you've taken for a recurring event--say, the winter holidays. Click on the triangle to the left of the year to reveal the month view. Then use the up arrow (next to the word Calendar) to move to December 2006. Click on the dot to the left of the week that includes your holiday event. This highlights that week. Move back to December 2005 and 1-click on the same special week. The past two years' worth of holiday pictures will now appear in iPhoto's main window.

Choose File: New Album From Selection and you've collected all your holiday photos in one place. If you want to be even more precise, choose specific days each month with this 1-click technique.

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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