WAMUG

Apple News

Since the release of the new MacBooks in October, Apple news has been slow. The sales of the new MacBooks have been good and Apple's third quarter sales were excellent. Apple did forecast that the upcoming quarter would be slower with the recession.

However, Apple doesn't have much to worry about looking ahead. It has $25 billion in the bank and zero debt, which Jobs said would help the company in-novate its way through a rough economy. In fact, Jobs even pointed out that Apple customers' loyalty means they're likely to delay purchases instead of buying a less expensive brand.

When asked about whether Apple would offer its products at lower prices (citing the iPhone and MacBook as examples), Jobs delivered a quintessential answer that re-flects the company's overall attitude. "There are some customers which we choose not to serve. We don't know how to make a $500 computer that's not a piece of junk," he said. "And our DNA will not let us to ship that. But we can continue to deliver greater and greater value to those customers that we choose to serve - and there's a lot of them."

Netflix now on a Mac

Doug McLean TidBITs.com

A few weeks ago I reported on Netflix's blog announcement that the company hoped to make its Watch Instantly feature accessible to Mac users by the end of 2008 (see "Netflix Mac Support News and More," 2008-10-08). Netflix has now backed up their claim by un-

veiling their new media player – based on Microsoft's Silverlight technology. While it may seem surprising that the long-awaited solution to this Mac-access problem comes by way of Microsoft, you probably won't be surprised to learn that the root of the problem lies in digital rights management (DRM) technology requirements from the studios. According to Netflix:

"Apple does not license their DRM solution to third parties, which has made this more difficult, but we are working with the studios and content owners to gain approval for other solutions. As soon as a studio-approved DRM for the Mac is available to us, whether from Apple or another source, we will move quickly to provide a movie viewer that enables you to watch movies from Netflix instantly on your Mac."

The new Netflix player will use Microsoft's PlayReady DRM – new in Silverlight 2.0 – to prevent users from doing anything but watching the content. Netflix's current player relies on a Windows-only DRM system.

For those hearing about Microsoft Silverlight for the first time, it's a technology akin to Adobe Flash in that it's embodied in a Web browser plug-in and can display animations, audio and video, and interactive applications. Silverlight was first put to the test this past summer in streaming the Beijing Olympics for NBC. The player streamed thousands of hours of live coverage with generally successful results.

Unfortunately, as Mac users attempting to watch Olympic video discovered, the new Netflix player works only on Intel-based Macs, leaving older PowerPC-based Macs in the lurch. Netflix claims that Intel-based Macs account for about three quarters of

the company's current Mac-based subscribers. So while a fix for the majority of Mac users is certainly better than nothing, it's a shame for that remaining 25 percent to be denied access. It's hard to imagine that Microsoft will extend Silverlight back to PowerPC-based Macs in the future.

Although Netflix initially limited access to the beta of the new player to new subscribers, the company has since opened the beta program to anyone who wants to sign up. Have at it, but remember, since it's a beta, you shouldn't expect perfect performance out of the gate.
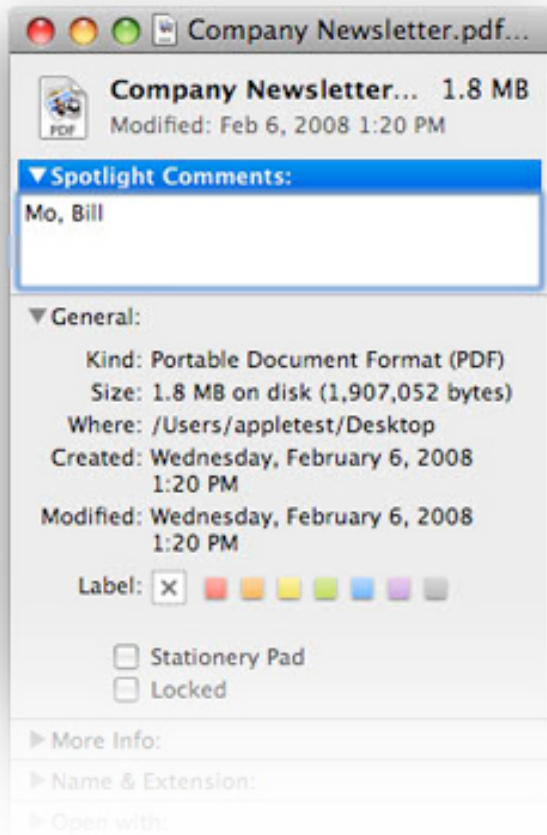
Find Files Faster with Keywords
MacPro Tip

Savvy web surfers know that web pages, blog entries, and images posted online are often tagged with keywords: terms that help identify and locate relevant content via web searches. These keywords might not even appear in the text or file names—they're simply attached as metadata, so search engines can "see" them.

 In a similar sense, you can use keywords on your Mac to help you find any file when conducting searches via Spotlight. In Mac OS X Leopard, you can add your own keywords to text documents, audio files, images, or any other type of file.

For example, let's say you've received a PDF of the latest company newsletter, which features an amusing photo of your boss, Mo, and the CEO, Bill. You've saved the newsletter on your computer, and you'd like to be able to locate this document in future using a Spotlight search.

But the names Mo and Bill don't appear anywhere in the newsletter—instead, the two men are identified in the photo as Mauricio and William.

Fortunately, you can easily add the key–words "Mo" and "Bill" to the document yourself. Select the document in the Finder and choose Get Info from the File menu, or just type Command–I. At the top of the Get Info window that appears, there's a blank field titled Spotlight Comments. (Click the disclosure triangle to reveal the data field if it's not already visible.) Simply type your desired keywords here, separating the terms with commas, then close the Get Info window.

Now when you search for these keywords in Spotlight, your newly tagged file will ap–pear.

Document Switching Shortcuts

Reader David Utts has recently emigrated from the Land of Windows and poses a question about Macintosh windows management. He writes:

I have a hard time moving between open Microsoft Word documents on my new Mac. In the Windows environment I am used to going between open documents with a keyboard command. Can you offer any suggestions for more easily switching between documents?

Sure. Start by memorizing this keyboard shortcut: Command-` (that's the Tilde key next to the 1 key at the top of the keyboard). This is a universal Macintosh shortcut for moving through open windows within an application or the Finder. Just hold down the Command key and bang the Tilde key each time you want to move to another open document. Press Shift-Command-` and you'll move in the opposite direction through those open windows.

Or you can use your mouse. Word lists all open documents in its Window menu. Regrettably, it doesn't assign keyboard shortcuts to these open documents as does a program like Bare Bones Software's BBEdit. Still, you'll find them listed in this menu so feel free to mouse up and choose the one you want.

Or you can click and hold on the Word icon in the Dock. Do so and at the top of the contextual menu that appears you'll see a list of all the open documents. Choose the one you like and it becomes the active document.

Finally, locate the F10 key on your Mac's keyboard and give it a press (or Fn-F10 on a laptop). This invokes Exposé's Application Windows function, a handy feature that exposes all of an application's open documents (except for those you've minimized). To select a different document, just drag the cursor over the window you want. Its name will appear when the cursor moves over it. Let go of F10 and the document you were hovering over will come to the fore.

This feature is so useful that I've assigned my mouse's scroll button to invoke it. You can make that kind of assignment in the Exposé & Spaces system preference.

Custom print sizes in iPhoto '08

iPhoto '08 user David Bahssin longs for a feature found in iPhoto '06. He writes:

In my earlier versions of iPhoto '06 I used to have wonderful printing templates called N-up and Sampler. Both these templates were very useful and made the most of my space on my paper. Now with iPhoto '08 using their standard print size or contact sheet I cannot get six photos on the page nicely without wasting a lot of paper space thus making my images smaller. What's more iphoto seems to crop the boarders of my images now when it used to print to the edge. Any suggestions?

Like you, I mourn the loss of these helpful presets and, as you suggest, the Contact Sheet template isn't the same thing. Fortunately, you can get darned close the the results of those presets but it takes a little digging.

Specifically, select your images, click the Print button at the bottom of the iPhoto window, and take a stern look at the Print Size pop-up menu. I found that I was able to place six images in landscape orientation on a single piece of paper by choosing Custom from that pop- up menu and entering dimensions of 4 x 3 inches. The images filled the entire sheet of letter-sized paper without leaving a lot of white space, though I did lose the left and right edges of the image.

If you're unwilling to sacrifice any portion of your images, you're welcome to tweak the settings of the image size so that the resulting images more closely track with the original dimensions.

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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