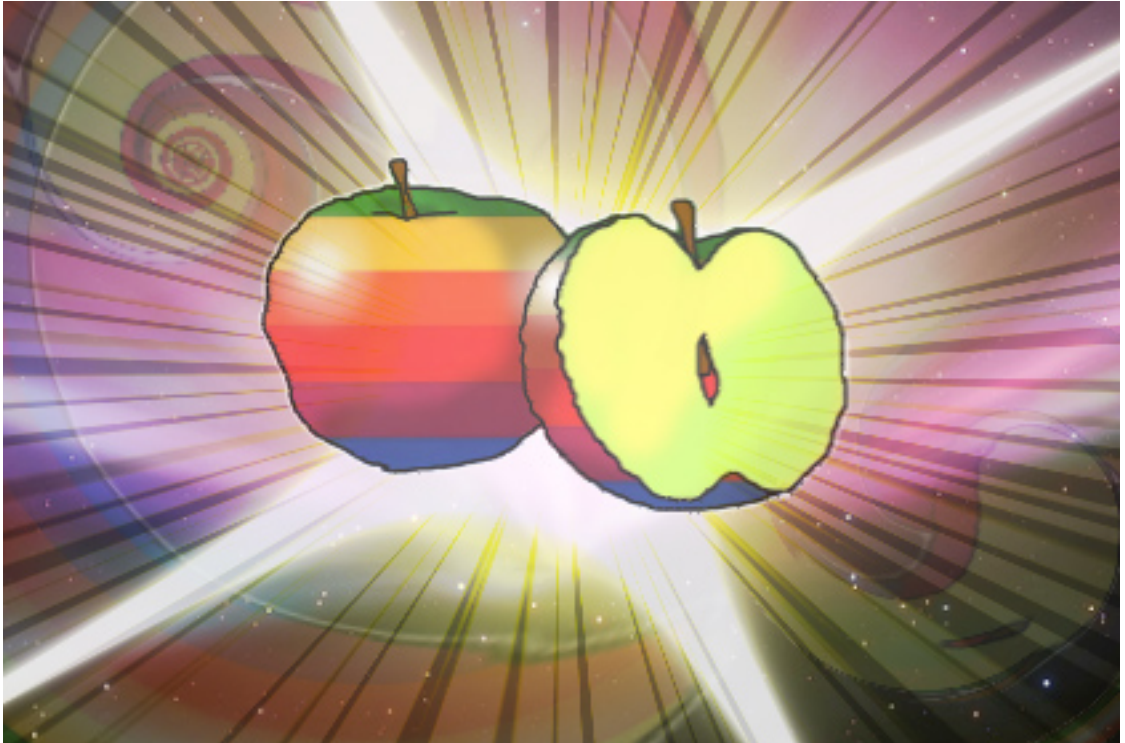


# ATPM

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*About This Particular Macintosh: About the **personal** computing experience.™*

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# Welcome

by Robert Paul Leitao, [rleitao@atpm.com](mailto:rleitao@atpm.com)

Welcome to the March edition of *About This Particular Macintosh*. We're at the edge of winter, and we will end this month in the first few days of spring. The economy's fallen off the edge, and both consumers and enterprises are on edge as to when a return to economic growth might happen. Apple's shareholders are edgy about the well being of the company's co-founder and CEO. This makes for the first official "At The Edge" edition of your favorite Apple-focused and Web-based monthly magazine.

## Stock Prices Over the Edge

In the final day of February trading, Apple's share price ended the session at the lowly price of \$89.31 per share, a more than fifty percent fall off from its all-time high. In today's trading environment, even the iPhone and iPod maker gets little respect. It doesn't help matters that the world's #2 PC maker, Dell, reported less than satisfactory results for its most recent quarter. Revenue and earnings were off sharply from the year-ago period, and the company has continued to view cost-cutting as the most viable means to improve its profit picture. Sony has announced yet another reorganization with the company's CEO and chairman taking on the additional title of president to push through its own cost-cutting plan.

For Apple, the current economic climate means a slowing of the pace of Macintosh unit sales and moderating forecasts for sales of the iPhone and all components of the iPod product line. Meanwhile, many Apple watchers think the company has pushed the longevity of the current iMac and Mac Pro models past the edge of sensibility.

## Apple: Stepping Back From the Edge of Innovation?

The 3G iPhone is a leader in its class. The iPod touch is setting a new standard as a handheld gaming device and entertainment center. The recent laptop refreshes are attractive, a pleasure to use, and are highly functional mobile computing devices. Snow Leopard promises to enhance Mac OS X's performance and provide developers with an avenue to exploit the unique nature of the Mac.

But if innovation is the name of Apple's game, where are the breakthrough computing products? Is Apple currently focused on delivering competent and evolutionary upgrades to its existing products rather than pushing innovation to the edge? Has the current economic situation impacted Apple's product release plans, or is the company methodically developing its next generation of revolutionary devices on the quiet? Sound off in our monthly mailbag. Send your view on the matter to [editor@atpm.com](mailto:editor@atpm.com).

## Blog Posts From the Edge

There's a place in this world that looks like the edge of creation. Its time-chiseled rock formations have the appearance of a pre-historic wasteland. It's a place that was thrust from

the ocean depths when the Pacific and North American tectonic began their cataclysmic collide. It's a place at the edge of a great American metropolis, and it's the place that's been chosen to test Apple's iWeb component of iLife '09.

Is iWeb on the cutting edge of Web creation tools for creative hobbyists seeking to tell a story or showcase their personal celebration of life?

We invite you to follow the creation of an iWeb-based site and its evolution from a few modest pages to a site that tells a story about life at the edge of America's largest population center and at the edge of where the greatest of natural disasters might occur at any moment of any day. With iWeb and the other elements of iLife '09 used exclusively as the content creation tools, this site is being crafted for a hands-on review of iWeb that will appear in our May issue. You can follow the site's progress at <http://web.me.com/robertpaul>.

## **Taking the Edge Off the News**

If the old axiom "bad news sells" was true, right now we'd all be millionaires by selling a bit of our individual economic stories. The good news is that the editors of ATPM have crafted a March issue to help you take your mind off the news with interesting reviews and a few "slice of computing life" stories. We'll be back again in April to continue our chronicle of the "personal computing experience."

Our March issue includes:

### **Mac About Town: Life in a Post-Apple World?**

The news of Steve Job's extended absence from One Infinite Loop has some in the tech world atwitter. *Mac About Town* muses on a post-Apple world.

### **MacMuser: Eating the Elephant**

Mark Tennent muses the condition of job hunting in his field.

### **MacMuser: Mötley Crüe**

Mark Tennent wonders if the paperless office has any hope of ever existing.

### **How To: Time Travel: Introduction to Time Machine**

Sylvester Roque shares a primer to Time Machine.

### **Desktop Pictures: Tanzania Safari**

David Siebecker offers this month's desktop pictures from a 2006 safari in Tanzania.

### **Captain Qwerty**

How do you backup your data?

## **Review: ChronoSync 4.0.1**

With ChronoSync, pre-Leopard Mac users can backup data almost painlessly the Time Machine way.

## **Review: Eye-Fi Explore**

Given the right scenario, the Eye-Fi Explore card shines. The only challenge: many situations probably don't fit the shining scenario.

## **Review: PED3 iPhone Stand**

A \$40 dock alternative for people who like watching movies and don't need the fancy outputs that Apple's docks offer.





## Thank You

I stumbled upon your Web site this evening and thoroughly enjoyed what I found.

Many thanks.

—*Chris Harris*

## Phone Bills and Forms

For filling in PDFs (which aren't actually editable forms), I prefer [PDFPen](#) to the alternatives.

—*Matt*



[Formulate](#) is excellent for typing on PDFs, and you can even print to PDF to produce an electronic filled-out form.

—*daiya*

## Cricket Laptop Stand

Nice review! I want one.

You said:

The two front legs expand outward, and a prop pivots down from each of the legs.

It is important to note, however, that the Cricket is slightly too small to hold a 17-inch laptop all that securely.

On Innovative's [Web site](#) it looks like there is an extension that pulls out of each leg so that the tri-pod gets bigger to hold larger laptops. Is it still too small if you pull them out all of the way?

—*David VanDuzer*

This is the advantage of social knowledge: ensuring that an individual who makes a mistake is corrected. Indeed, the two legs of the Cricket extend further. I had failed to notice this feature, because I was using the device primarily with my Modbook. However,

it makes the unit suitable for a larger laptop. While I'm an idiot for failing to discern this fact, I admire the subtlety of the design, which does not make it obvious how to slide out the extra pieces. I can't be blamed for failing to read the manual, because there isn't one. The manufacturer likely assumed the average user would be smarter than this reviewer!

—*Frank H. Wu*

## **Next Actions: February 2009 Master List**

Great job keeping track of this fast moving space! I personally use Things to manage my tasks, but I use Curio for idea capture and management—and it does at least as good a job managing tasks as many you've listed here—and tasks can be spread across the physical idea spaces and even different files, yet be managed through a central hub. Powerfully elegant.

Curio also has a wonderful integration with Evernote, which I use as my knowledgebase.

I use Things because of its iPhone sync. Both sync with iCal, and I'm looking for a way to seamlessly sync across all three—so my tasks can be played with among the ideas they help bring to fruition.

—*Patrick Jones*



Thanks for the updates.

I just downloaded Chandler and really like it. I had been watching it since its first release and thought it had potential, but was not usable. Now, however, Chandler shows signs of maturity, stability, and ease of use. It may become my default for to-do and calendar work.

—*Rich Shields*

## **Freeway Pro and Freeway Express 5.3.1**

Nice well balanced review.

Comparing Freeway and Dreamweaver is always going to be difficult because they are completely different animals. The biggest difference being Dreamweaver is an HTML editor with a GU interface, and Freeway is a compiler and therefore cannot edit HTML.

I use both, and both have there advantages. For example, I like the way I can highlight a word in Dreamweaver and it pinpoints its position within the code. I also like new preview in CS4 plus its general feel. In fact, there is a lot I like about Dreamweaver, but—and it's a massive “but”—in reality I wouldn't swap it for Freeway for anything.

In real world scenarios as a designer, I am forced to make changes which clients throw at me constantly, which include: design, positions, tweaks, colour changes, etc. In fact, sometimes

wholesale layout changes need to be incorporated, and this is where Freeway wins hands down. I can just do it. I don't need to recode anything—in fact, I can keep on designing rather than worrying about if the code I had created four days ago is relevant or even valid. So for that reason alone I tend to create 99% of my Web sites with Freeway. It really is a fantastic designer's tool.

—*Max Fancourt*

## **Qaptain Qwerty**

Cool! I remember going to AUSOM meets (Apple User Society of Melbourne), and everyone brought their Macs and copious volumes of SyQuest cartridges (you couldn't fit much on those 44 MB ones).

Of course, the inverse size rule even applies within the Syquest family—the larger size being 44 or 88 MB and the smaller size being 105 or 270 MB.

Nice reminder in this 25th anniversary era!

—*Mark Aufflick*



“Conformity palpitates only vexation” is the Goreyesque title one might apply to CD, DVD, Blu-ray, multilayer and fluorescent, mixed-session/burned-over-quickly media. Perhaps our humble lanky-armed USB keyfob is like that as well.

One is reminded of interstitial fun made on Star Wars where the Death Star Command has a single, well-labeled USB port and R2 makes off with his goods on a 2 MB stick.

I had SyQuest Orbs at 20 GB. Now that's the size for 2nd grade homework.

—*Steve Nordquist*

*We'd love to hear your thoughts about our publication. We always welcome your comments, criticisms, suggestions, and praise. Or, if you have an opinion or announcement about the Macintosh platform in general, that's OK too. Send your e-mail to [editor@atpm.com](mailto:editor@atpm.com). All mail becomes the property of ATPM and may be edited for publication.*



## Life in a Post-Apple World?

One of the technological loves of my life is the 50" Pioneer plasma that sits in our TV room. It was not good news recently to hear that Pioneer was leaving the TV business. Though my plasma is relatively new, one of these days I will want to replace it with the best picture I can find (within the approval limit of the family "finance committee" naturally—have to put that in as she reads this occasionally). Now, however, in light of their departure from the market, that replacement will not be another Pioneer.

The Pioneer news came as I was also thinking about the news last month that Steve Jobs was taking a leave of absence and, more specifically, my wrestling with a comment made by John Dvorak on [TWiT](#) that Jobs' departure spelled the beginning of the end for Apple as we know it. Dvorak's comment, as I remember, was that Steve's departure would result in a decline in the products offered and that within five years Apple would be gone.

Dvorak is an acquired taste to be sure, but the point he raises is not totally off base. It is fair to ask, how much of what Apple has done and become in the past few years is solely the result of the fierce determination and focus of Steve Jobs? It is not unreasonable to wonder if Apple can maintain its culture of excellent innovation and laser-like focus without him. If you have any doubts regarding how people feel about that, consider past announcements on Steve's health and note the resulting movement in the value of Apple stock price.

I have no intention of joining the tasteless gaggle speculating about Steve's health and whether he will be able to return to work. I hope we all wish him the very best—not because we're worried about Apple share prices or products, but because he is a fellow human being who has also contributed to our lives in some delightful ways. (Care to list your favorite Apple products here?) But it is an undeniable fact of life that no product or company is immortal. None of the things that we imagine immunize companies is any guarantee that tomorrow will not see their demise. Quality? I submit Pioneer plasmas. Longevity? I submit Montgomery Ward. Size? I offer into evidence General Motors. There is no guarantee.

All that is to say that to take Apple's continued health for granted and dismiss Dvorak's reaction as nonsense doesn't do justice to the concern of the marketplace that Apple *is* Steve Jobs and that his departure would be the end or at least the beginning of the end of Apple as we know it. Which leads me to think about what a not-healthy Apple would look like post Steve...

Would it be a company that started making bargain basement versions of its products to expand the market? Would it be a company that decided to re-do the cloning concept and

concentrate on the OS? Would it be a company that was more attentive to its customers' desires than to the desires that its customers don't yet know they have? Would it be a company that lost a radical focus on user experience and decided to go with the flow? (Two mouse buttons, anyone?)

There are many, many ways it seems to me, for Apple to go off the rails. There are many reviewers waiting for the day that they can begin a review by saying, "If Steve were still in charge..." as they explain the failure of a new Apple product. There is no guarantee, and yet...

There is something about Apple. There is something about this particular Mac that I am typing on. There is something about the community of Macintosh users and Apple devotees that suggests to me that it is not just about one personality. It is not just about one product. It is not just about one community. It is about those things and more. There really is a delight in using technology that *fits* into life rather than demanding that life fit *it!* I can't imagine what it would be like to wake up one day and hear that Apple is getting out of the computer business or that Apple was abandoning what appears to be an expansion into the entertainment space in our homes.

So, John C., I'm not buying your assertion. I wish Steve the very best, but with or without Steve at the helm, those of us who have come use to computers that are designed for us rather than designed for the guys from the IT department will not go quietly into a Mac-less night—or a post-Apple world.

Stay well all (especially you, Steve),

—*Mike Chamberlain*

P.S. Feel free to leave a comment sharing the one thing that your Mac or other Apple product does that you cannot imagine living without.

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## Eating the Elephant

It is job hunt time. Book design is apparently as dead as a dodo since the US publishers of my books have embargoes on commissioning new work. Consequently it's back to a role I spent 15 years in, albeit 18 years ago.

A quick trawl of the Web shows two things: the pay has shot up, and there are vacancies all across the country. This is completely the reverse for design jobs where, as computerisation took hold, designers have had to take on an ever increasing load for a decreasing amount of money. The majority of appointments are in London, Oxford, or Cambridge.

18 years ago there were typesetters, layout artists, proof-readers, indexers, a designer for the cover, another for the inside pages, an illustrator and a photo-manipulator. That is plus the experts at the repro and print stage who were scanner operators, film wizards, and colour specialists. Now, one person is supposed to take on all those roles for the same fee we used to get for designing the inside pages.

Not so in my returning field where workloads have shrunk, specialism has taken over from generic, and holistic is the buzz word.

### 15 Inches of Flickery Luminescence

I've been to a few interviews now, and without exception the working environment has been depressing. You park and wonder how many wheels will be left on the car next time you see it. The offices are usually accessed by tatty entry phones where the local kids have scratched their names across the steel front. Inside, a lick of paint and a tidy-up would help, but I'd soon be pining for my own office overlooking the garden and, in idle moments, watching the wildlife scampering around.

Worse was to follow. At one, I was sat down in front of a computer to compose a written answer as part of the interview. Probably the worst computer I have ever used, with nasty clickety-clackety keyboard, running unknown versions of Windows and Word on a CRT monitor. That machine was 15 inches of flickery luminescence showing 12-point Times New Roman. Each letter displayed on screen as half an inch high and formed from rectangular blocks. No anti-aliasing or font smoothing here. Windows is a dog at the best of times; this version was a pitbull/pug mongrel cross, which kept prompting to update various components before it would save the file.

At one interview they apologised for the top salary they could offer but quickly added they would fast track me for the next grade and another ten grand a year. I didn't like to tell them I hadn't earned that much since the early 1990s when I used to sell large quantities of

print. I thought regretfully of the pension I'd have built up had I stayed in the work rather than throw money at a black hole in Edinburgh controlled by a fat Chief Exec. His annual rise in pension is more than my total lifetime income.

The interviews themselves are quite fun. They all ask the same questions, and each time I come away with a better answer for the next interview. For example: "How do you handle stress?"

Now, I'm not normally stressed out (as a designer, anyway), so I talked a load of bollox the first time. They said I should have answered "I'd talk to my manager."

Next Interview: "Can you tell me what you would do if you found the job was making you feel stressed-out?" Answer: "I'd talk to my manager." They seemed to expect more so I added the load of bollox, to which they nodded sagely.

With practice one can answer questions with a single word: money, manager, legislation, holistic, team work (or multi-agency), progression, bollox (for the last questions, which are always nebulous).

## Throwing the Pizza

My sister-in-law who trains people in Officespeak suggested I drop in some buzz bollox such as: blue sky thinking, eat the elephant, brown bag lunch, brainstorming was out but it's in again, paint the picture blue, turning the fine line, throw the pizza, play the pink piano, tickle the frying pan. These are on top of all the technical jargon and acronyms which didn't exist 18 years ago.

One thing the whole experience has shown is the state of working conditions people accept. The offices are offshoots of wealthy organisations who pay good salaries for staff yet have continual recruitment problems. The working conditions are insalubrious and the tools supplied to do the work are simply dreadful. I'd prefer an old Mac IIci, circa 1989, to any of the PCs I've been sat in front of.

Apparently Obama felt the same when he got to the White House. His computer-savvy, Internet-embracing team found nothing they wanted to use and hardly any computers, anyway. I can empathise with that. Meanwhile I've got to tickle the pink elephant with the best of them.

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## Mötley Crüe

The British workplace is apparently split into two camps: one where modern communication methods such as e-mail, video conferencing, and the like enable fast, collaborative work across the globe. The other is where little has changed since the turn of the century. That is, between 1899 and 1900, not the more recent one. It is this camp where local government seem to be firmly entrenched.

Just a few minutes ago, we needed some information from Summer, our incredibly efficient [employment agent](#) in London. She replied to our e-mail within 20 seconds, query answered, problem solved. We can get on with work knowing everything is underway in the background. But this is the exception.

Recently, we have had a lot of contact with local authorities at borough, city, and county levels. Almost without exception, contact has had to be via telephone message, days waited for a reply, and more messages, before getting answers to simple questions. Or, with the more switched-on employees, e-mails sent and messages returned saying they are out of the office for the next ten days, accompanied by promises to reply on their return.

All very well except the dates in the auto-reply are for last month. Presumably the recipient has returned from holiday/sick leave, neglected to turn off the auto-answer in their e-mail package, and put the lack of correspondence down to the recession. On the subject of sick leave, why do so many delicate people work in local government and need to have days off sick? We know one authority where staff even get an allotted number of days to be off sick, and naturally they take them, ill or not.

### Papering Over Cracks

The paperless office is still a long way off and many, us included, use paper backups for important documents such as invoices and receipts. We will be forced to make electronic value-added tax returns in the near future, making one less form to complete. The last time we investigated, HM Customs and Excise required us to register for electronic filing by getting confirmation of who we are from the Chamber of Commerce or some such nonsense. At least it appears this is no longer the case.

However, local government is still wedded to pieces of paper for just about everything. Complete the wrong form and watch it disappear into limbo, waiting for you to ask where your request has disappeared to. Even forms completed online are no guarantee of success. Spend some time compiling the information the form needs and click on Send, only to get an error message. Worse still, the form requires Internet Explorer, yet doesn't say so. Instead,



some of the fields don't appear in non-Microsoft browsers. That is assuming the council's Web site doesn't also require Internet Explorer to run properly.

David Cameron's mötley crüe want to pass over even more of government to local authorities; best not mention the mess the NHS makes with computerisation. It's all too depressing, and we haven't got the time to get treatment, nor the money to pay for it. Unless we work in banking or for the local authority.

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# How To

by Sylvester Roque, [sroque@atpm.com](mailto:sroque@atpm.com)

## Time Travel: Introduction to Time Machine

My first computer was an Apple IIGS purchased in the late 1980s. Two decades and several systems later, I've lost data numerous times to power failure, hard drive failures, and, yes, sometimes to operator errors. Experiences like that have made me realize the need for an effective backup strategy. I've even written about [cloning your Mac](#) as a means of recovering quickly from disasters. Even though I'm aware of the need for frequent backups, I don't always practice what I preach. Like most users, I can always find more interesting things to do with the Mac than back up my data.

I'm sure Apple has been aware of folks like me for a long time. So much so that with the advent of Leopard they introduced a backup utility called [Time Machine](#). Their goal was to create a program that made backing up and restoring your data an intuitive, seamless process. If you think backing up your data regularly is too time consuming or confusing, this program is aimed squarely at you and your unprotected data. So, let's take a look at Time Machine's capabilities and see if it meets your needs.

### What Time Machine Does

Time Machine is a very basic program at heart. In essence, it copies files from your system to the backup destination of your choosing. Once the program is properly configured and the initial backup is complete, updates occur once every hour that the system is on. As long as the chosen destination is available, updates occur in the background without user intervention. On modern systems you probably won't even notice that a backup is taking place. It's a bit like having a personal assistant writing down everything that has happened to your system in the last hour.

### How It Works

If that's all there were to Time Machine, I probably wouldn't find it very interesting. After all, at this level it's essentially performing hourly, incremental backups throughout the day. The ingenious trick is using the hourly backups as the basis for a file archive. At the end of a day, hourly backups are combined into a daily backup. Let's suppose I accidentally delete an important paragraph from this article just before the backup is executed. Later, when I realize the mistake, I can revert to a version...which still contains that brilliant missive.

Time Machine's hourly backups are kept for 24 hours before it starts deleting older versions to save space. The first backup of the day is generally kept for an entire month. The first backup of the week is kept until your chosen backup location is almost full. In a further attempt to save space, Time Machine makes use of "hard links." Rather than repeatedly

copying files that haven't been modified, Time Machine uses a "hard link" to point back to the original copy of a file (or folder). A new copy of a file is only written when that file is modified.

## What Time Machine Does Not Do

Perhaps as a concession to simplicity and ease of use, Time Machine has a few limitations. There are some things it was never designed to do, and these limitations must be considered if it is to be used effectively. Some of these limitations can be addressed with a little thoughtful preparation, but other issues must be addressed with additional software. The most important of these limitations include:

### ***Backups Are Not Bootable***

By default, Time Machine copies all of the files on a source disk except for some temporary files which are not needed to boot the system. However, in the event of a disaster, you *cannot* boot directly from a Time Machine backup, even if that backup includes all system files. There are solutions to this problem, but we'll address those in a moment.

### ***Backups Are Not Compressed***

Despite its space saving efforts, Time Machine backups can consume a significant amount of disk space because the backups are not compressed. This is something of a trade-off where transparent operation wins out over disk space considerations.

### ***Backups Are Not Secure***

Time Machine does not encrypt your backups, nor does it play nice with File Vault. Individual files, or groups of files, are only encrypted if they were saved/created with encryption. The backups as a whole are not encrypted. User folders protected by FileVault do not get backed up until the user logs out of that account. If your user folder is protected by FileVault, the only way to recover single files is to mount the disk image and copy the needed files using the Finder.

### ***Limited Control Over Backups***

"Out of the box," Time Machine backups occur hourly. Adjusting that schedule requires some Terminal geekery or third-party software. Time Machine also presents limited options for excluding files from backup. It's easy to exclude individual files or folders from backup but impossible to exclude files based on a pattern.



There are [other limitations](#) to Time Machine backups. These are the issues that stood out in my mind as important. Some have relatively easy solutions while others do not. If you've decided that Time Machine meets your needs, let's dive right in.

## Setting Up Your First Time Machine Backup

One of the first decisions you will have to make when setting up a Time Machine backup is where to place the files. Time Machine will back up to almost anything except optical drives,

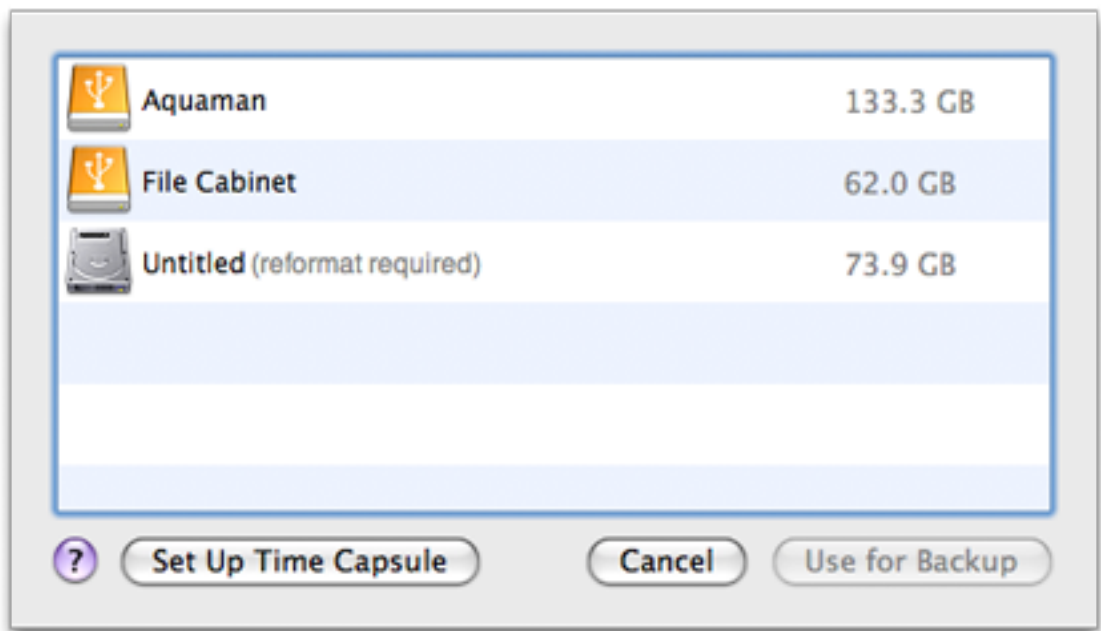
iPods or iDisks, and hard drives connected to AirPort Extreme Base Stations. External hard drives, Time Capsules, even network shares are all fine as far as Time Machine is concerned. Whatever your chosen destination, make sure it has plenty of space and is formatted as HFS+ with journaling enabled. You can also watch a [visual guide](#) to the setup process.

Although Time Machine can share space on the same drive with other files if you like, it won't let you place a backup on the same drive partition that your Mac boots from. If your boot drive has a second partition, Time Machine can make use of that space, but I don't recommend it. Any failure of the drive could not only compromise your ability to boot the Mac, but also your ability to restore files from your backup.

Now that you've got that hard drive connected, launch Time Machine via the Time Machine application or via the Time Machine preference pane. In a moment you are presented with the main Time Machine screen.



Click the “Choose Backup Disk” option. This brings up a sheet that allows selection of the desired backup drive. All storage devices attached to your Mac are listed here. If a drive is not properly formatted for Time Machine's use, the message “Reformat Required” appears beside that device. Choose a location, then choose “Use for Backup.”

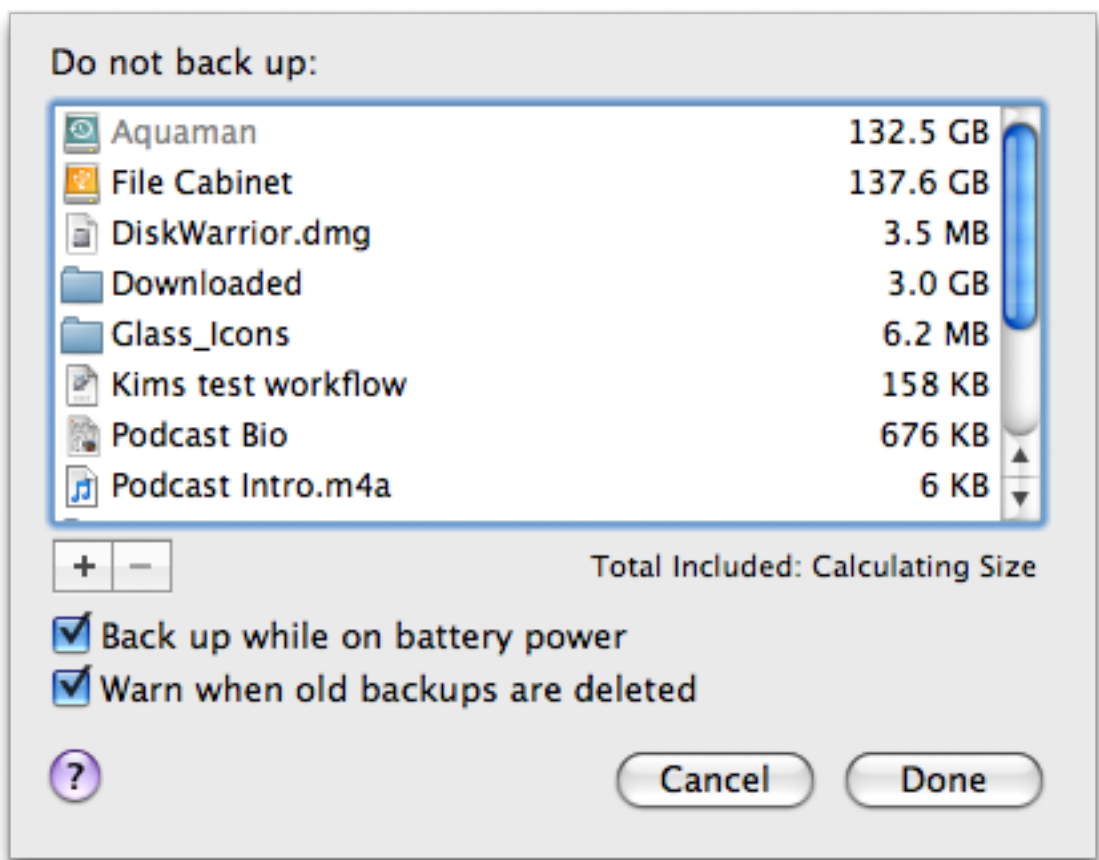


Once a useable destination is selected, Time Machine takes you back to the original configuration screen. Notice that the right side of the screen now shows the name of the device, the available space, the date of the oldest backup, and the date of the latest backup. The time before the next backup is also shown here. There's also an option to put a Time Machine status indicator in the menu bar. With this indicator, you have an easy means of forcing an immediate backup, launching Time Machine, or opening Time Machine's preferences.

## Putting Time Machine on a Diet

Now that we are back to the main screen, our configuration of Time Machine is almost complete. Remember when I said that by default Time Machine backs up the entire source drive? If that's what you want to do, your configuration is essentially done. If, on the other hand, you'd like a little control over the size of your Time Machine backup, now is the time to address that problem. Controlling the size of a backup is a little bit like trying not to gain weight. It's much easier to keep the extra weight off in the first place than to take it off later. Although you cannot exclude files from a backup based upon rules, it is possible to exclude files and folders.

Now that you've designated a backup disk, you should be back to the Time Machine preference pane. Click the "Options" button to bring up a file selection sheet. Click the "+" sign to select a file or folder to be excluded. Continue doing this until all unneeded files are excluded.



Since I tend to keep a reasonably current system clone around to boot from in an emergency, I didn't worry about having Time Machine back up system files. I also excluded the Applications and Developer Tools. Keeping a current clone means I didn't really need another copy of the Applications folder and the Developer folder, which includes roughly [3 GB of files that are not updated often](#). Following these steps, my current Time Machine backup currently extends two months into the past and takes up just under 84 GB of drive space.

Other types of files can also cause the size of a Time Machine backup to explode. The Entourage e-mail database and disk images used by virtualization software are good examples. Not only are these often large files, in some cases several gigabytes of data, but changes are made almost every time these programs are used, necessitating a backup of the file rather than creation of another hard link.

## Overcoming Limitations—The Bootable Backup

I must admit to being a little disappointed to discover that Time Machine backups were not bootable. This creates a situation that limits Time Machine's usefulness. As long as your boot drive is OK, restoring from a backup is easy: launch Time Machine and locate the file that you want to recover, select the file, then click the "Restore" button.

If your boot drive has had a meltdown, though, this slows down the recovery process. In that case, Apple seems to expect you to boot from the OS X install DVD to perform the restoration, which can be quite time consuming. The solution is to make sure your designated backup drive is bootable.

If you are starting with a fresh drive, try installing and updating a copy of the OS before designating that drive as your Time Machine volume. In theory, other utilities could be added as well to create a “recovery drive” that has everything necessary either to get the existing boot drive hale and hearty or to move the data to a new drive via Time Machine. I’ve taken that one step further by keeping a current system clone on one partition of the drive that has my backup. In an emergency, I can boot from that drive and have ready access to the software I need as well as current data.

If you are using a drive that already has data on it, you can still create a bootable backup. This process involves using a cloning tool such as [Carbon Copy Cloner](#) to clone your install DVD onto the drive that contains your Time Machine backup. Set it to copy everything, and *not* erase the target volume. This provides all the benefits of booting from a DVD with the speed of a hard drive.

## Overcoming Limitations—Creating Encrypted Backups

As far as I can determine, there isn’t an efficient way to create an encrypted backup of your data. About the best you can do at the moment is to encrypt files or folders and let Time Machine back up the resulting data. You cannot restore these files from directly within Time Machine. In a February 2008 article, [Macworld](#) concluded “...you can manually mount a Time Machine disk image and use the Finder to copy a single file if you wish.”

## Overcoming Limitations—A Matter of Timing

By default, Time Machine backups occur hourly as long as the computer is on and the target device is available. That time frame suits my needs well, but what if you want to follow a different schedule? Apple doesn’t provide an option for setting the backup interval through the normal Time Machine interface. By now, you must know me well enough to know that I wouldn’t have broached the subject if I didn’t have a possible answer. If you like to use Terminal for such tasks, fire it up and enter the following command. Since you are using `sudo`, be prepared to enter an administrator password.

```
sudo defaults write /System/Library/LaunchDaemons/com.apple.backupd-auto  
StartInterval -int 1800
```

The number at the end of this command represents the time interval, in seconds, between backups. Executing the command as written above would change the interval between backups to 1800 seconds, or 30 minutes. Thanks to [Cory Bohon](#) at *The Unofficial Apple Weblog* for that tip. If you’re a bit leery of Terminal check out [Time Machine Scheduler](#) as one possible alternative. I haven’t tested it yet.

## Overcoming Slow Backups on Wireless Networks

Let's suppose you are backing up your favorite laptop via Time Machine and something like Apple's [Time Capsule](#). Some users have reported that the backup is incredibly slow. This is particularly true for the initial backup, when a large amount of data is being copied. For the initial backup, seriously consider using a wired connection. If updates over a wireless network are still slow, it may be due to a mixed wireless 802.11b/g/n network.

## Restoring Files From a Backup

Restoration from a Time Machine backup is about as simple as these things get. Launch the Time Machine application. When the application opens, it consumes your entire screen with a time line on the right side of the screen. Restore and Cancel buttons dominate the bottom of the screen with a window representing the state of the drive in the center of the screen.

Restoring a file is simple. Click the time line on the right to get to the date you are interested in examining. Windows representing your drive will fly by until the correct one is reached. This is a cool effect that's almost worth having to restore a file. Select the file you wish to restore in the window and click the Restore button. If you are not sure you have chosen the correct file, select one and tap the spacebar. Quick Look comes to the rescue, making it possible to preview the file before completing the restoration. Should you need to cancel a restoration, either choose Cancel or press Escape.

## Final Thoughts

For a few months, I had an occasional [error](#) where Time Machine would inform me that a backup could not be completed. When the error occurred, the next backup usually completed without incident, regardless of whether it was initiated automatically or manually. I haven't experienced this error recently, but I'm not sure if that is a function of recent system updates or my switch from the Mac Pro to the MacBook Pro as my main machine.

Time Machine has worked nicely for me during the last several months, partly because I've integrated it into a larger strategy that includes cloning my primary drive to get back up and running a bit quicker than if I needed to boot from the Leopard DVD for a restoration. For most users, Time Machine can be an effective component in a backup regimen that includes consideration for off-site backup and booting quickly in an emergency.

If you don't have a current backup strategy, Time Machine may meet your needs. It can't back up to optical media, and restoration requires either a little advance planning or a convenient bootable OS DVD. Available disk space may also be a concern, but Time Machine almost makes backup and restoration fun.

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# Desktop Pictures

by David Siebecker, <http://www.sidekickr.com>

## Tanzania Safari

We need new desktop pictures each month. [Write](#) to us!

### This Month's Desktop Pictures

This month's photos were taken by [David Siebecker](#) on a safari in Tanzania in 2006.



[View Pictures](#)

### Previous Months' Desktop Pictures

Pictures from previous months are listed in the desktop pictures [archives](#).

### Downloading All the Pictures at Once

Some browsers can download an entire set of desktop pictures at once.

**iCab** Use the Download command to “Download all linked files in same folder” and configure the limits to download only the linked images.

**OmniWeb** Choose “Save Linked ▾ Images...” from the File menu.

**Safari** Use [this Automator workflow](#).

### Contributing Your Own Desktop Pictures

If you have a picture, whether a small series or just one fabulous or funny shot, feel free to send it to [editor@atpm.com](mailto:editor@atpm.com) and we'll consider publishing it in next month's issue. Have a regular print but no scanner? Don't worry. E-mail us, and we tell you where to send it so we can scan it for you. Note that we cannot return the original print, so send us a copy.

# Placing Desktop Pictures

## **Mac OS X 10.3.x Through 10.5.x**

Choose “System Preferences...” from the Apple menu, click the “Desktop & Screen Saver” button, then choose the Desktop tab. In the left-side menu, select the desktop pictures folder you want to use.

You can also use the pictures with Mac OS X’s built-in screen saver. Select the Screen Saver tab which is also in the “Desktop & Screen Saver” System Preferences pane. If you put the ATPM pictures in your Pictures folder, click on the Pictures Folder in the list of screen savers. Otherwise, click Choose Folder to tell the screen saver which pictures to use.

## **Mac OS X 10.1.x and 10.2.x**

Choose “System Preferences...” from the Apple menu and click the Desktop button. With the pop-up menu, select the desktop pictures folder you want to use.

You can also use the pictures with Mac OS X’s built-in screen saver. Choose “System Preferences...” from the Apple menu. Click the Screen Saver (10.1.x) or Screen Effects (10.2.x) button. Then click on Custom Slide Show in the list of screen savers. If you put the ATPM pictures in your Pictures folder, you’re all set. Otherwise, click Configure to tell the screen saver which pictures to use.

## **Mac OS X 10.0.x**

Switch to the Finder. Choose “Preferences...” from the “Finder” menu. Click on the “Select Picture...” button on the right. In the Open Panel, select the desktop picture you want to use. The panel defaults to your ~/Library/Desktop Pictures folder. Close the “Finder Preferences” window when you are done.



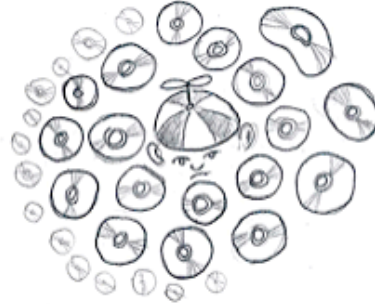
# Qaptain Qwerty

by Linus Ly, <http://qaptainqwerty.blogspot.com>

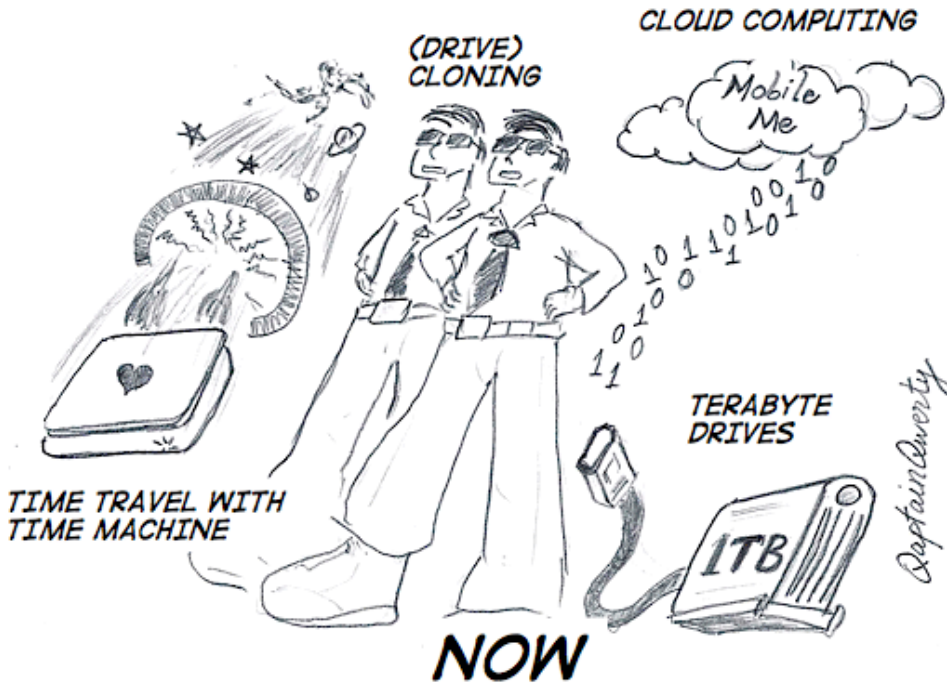
## Backup Grows Up



FLOPPIES BABY



CD KID



Copyright © 2009 [Linus Ly](#).



# Software Review

by Linus Ly, [lly@atpm.com](mailto:lly@atpm.com)

## ChronoSync 4.0.1

**Developer:** [Econ Technologies](#)

**Price:** \$40

**Requirements:** Mac OS X 10.3. [Universal](#).

**Trial:** Feature-limited; time-limited demo available upon request.



I take pictures with a digital camera and organize the photos in iPhoto. I share the photos online via Picasa and occasionally print out some of them. I buy songs from Amazon and the iTunes Music Store and occasionally burn them to discs. I maintain an extensive family tree with many photos, dates, notes about the more colorful relatives, etc. At any given moment, there is a chance I would lose all the information I have collected on the computer. The fact that the computer is a laptop makes the disaster even likelier. I know the importance of having backups and have tried a few backup solutions. Only recently did I decide that ChronoSync is the backup solution for me.

### Backup Background

I used to back up my data onto CDs or DVDs via [Toast](#) or DragonBurn. Having to be present to feed the blank discs when prompted and the occasional bad discs are just two of many reasons the process is such a drag. Labeling the discs, whether with a marker or some fancy stamping tool, is another reason.

I thought moving to a more structured tool like [Apple Backup](#) would help. In addition to discs, Backup can write to MobileMe or to an external device like a FireWire drive. Unfortunately, it takes a long time to calculate the files and folders to be backed up. I have no patience for such delays.

When my wife got a MacBook Pro, I quickly fell in love with the ease with which Time Machine works with the [Time Capsule](#). After the initial complete backup over Ethernet, the whole backup process really happens on its own without any further intervention. That is exactly how I want to do backups—painlessly and in the background. Too bad Time Machine is not available for my PowerBook G4 running Mac OS X 10.4. Enter ChronoSync, which I had high hopes for as a way to make use of the Time Capsule in a painless backup process for my G4 laptop.

### Installation

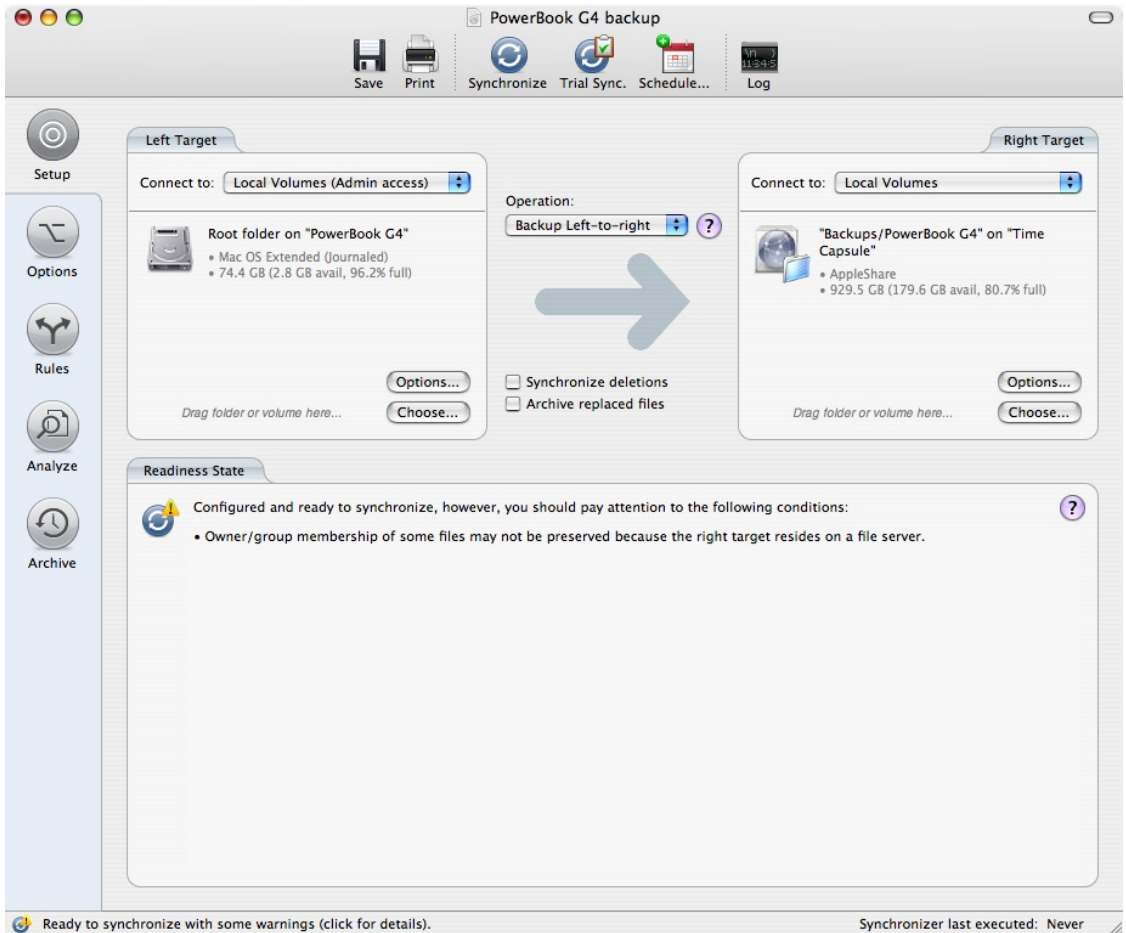
Instead of the typical drag-and-drop installation, ChronoSync uses an installer and asks for the password of an admin account. It is necessary for ChronoSync to have the password

because one of its advertised features is being able to back up anything on the computer, including files and folders that the current account does not have access to. In fact, you can make a bootable backup of your entire hard disk. In this age of computer viruses, some people may find it scary to let an application know the admin password, but I think you have nothing to worry about as long as you don't carelessly download software off the Web.

## Usage

ChronoSync comes with comprehensive online documentation that explains all the basic features. It also includes a PDF, which explains in more detail the various ChronoSync terminologies, the kinds of backup, and advanced concepts like metadata and triggers.

I did not need to consult the documentation when I went about selecting a source and a target, left the default Operation option of Backup left-to-right alone, then clicked Synchronize. Many hours later I had a complete backup of my laptop's hard drive. There were errors with some cache files, and ChronoSync prompted me for action. I told it to ignore and to skip all future errors. If it was the old backup routine with Toast or Apple Backup, the entire job would have been unceremoniously stopped by the program.



Just select the source and the target, then click Synchronize.

The end product of the backup is another set of files and folders identical to whatever you chose to back up. You can get to them directly in the Finder, so even if you lose your computer, restoring the files is just a matter of copying them back via the Finder. There is no need to rebuild a catalog or re-install ChronoSync first. ChronoSync does save information about each job as a file in its own format. After a disaster, once you regain access to the ChronoSync document and have ChronoSync reinstalled, you can restore data more gracefully via ChronoSync instead of the Finder.

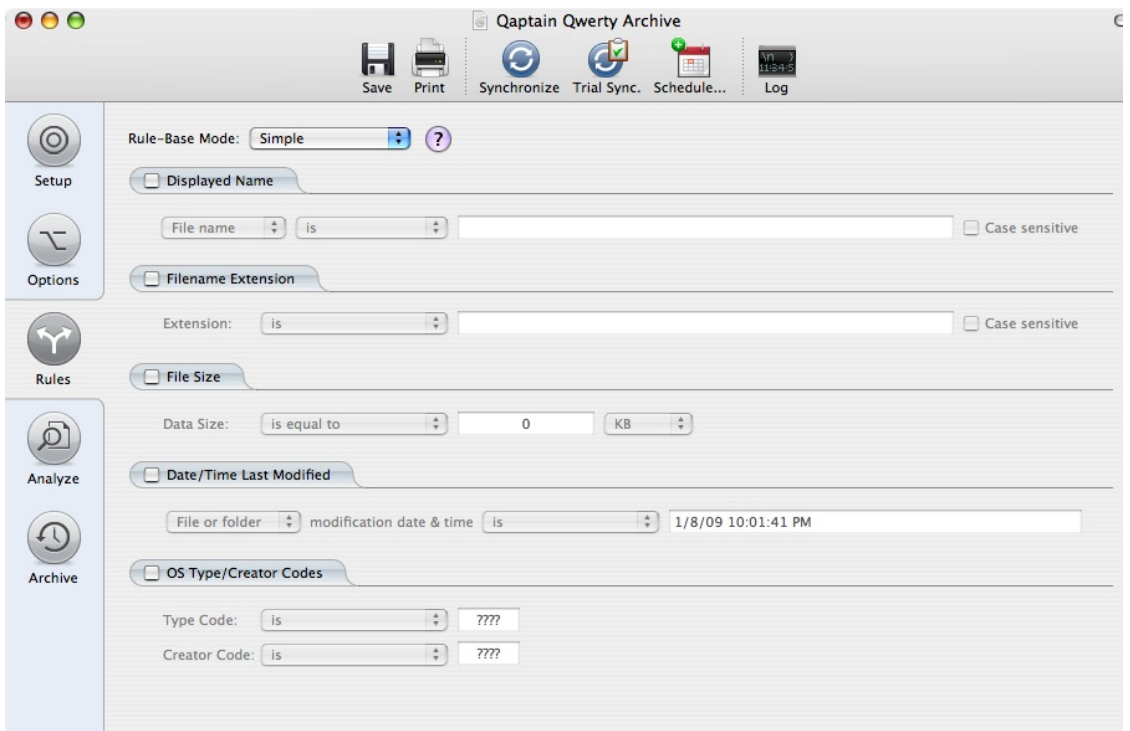
Note that in this simple example, I am backing up from a computer to a network drive. The computer is the source and happens to be on the left, while the network drive is the target on the right. Should I want to, the computer can be on the right, but still considered the source, while the drive is on the left. With that scenario, I would do a right-to-left backup.

I could also do a bi-directional sync if I make changes on two computers and need to have all the changes seen on both computers. [Other backup options](#) include Blind Backup and Mirroring. In Blind Backup, only changes in the source are monitored. If a file in the target is modified or deleted, it will be left that way because the change is not in the source.

Mirror synchronization involves making sure the target becomes identical to the source, so that if you delete or make changes to the target at the next sync the file would re-appear or the changes undone. A scenario where mirroring can be useful would be a computer lab where at the end of the class the admin can reset all the student computers back to a virgin state.

## Features and Functions

If all ChronoSync did was create a set of files accessible via Finder then nobody would buy it. After all, you can do almost the same just by dragging and dropping in the Finder. However, ChronoSync comes with many other features and functions. You have the option to verify files after they are copied. You can exclude files and folders by explicitly selecting them, by their extensions, and even by their type and creator codes. If you are handy with scripts, you can have ChronoSync run certain scripts before and after syncing.

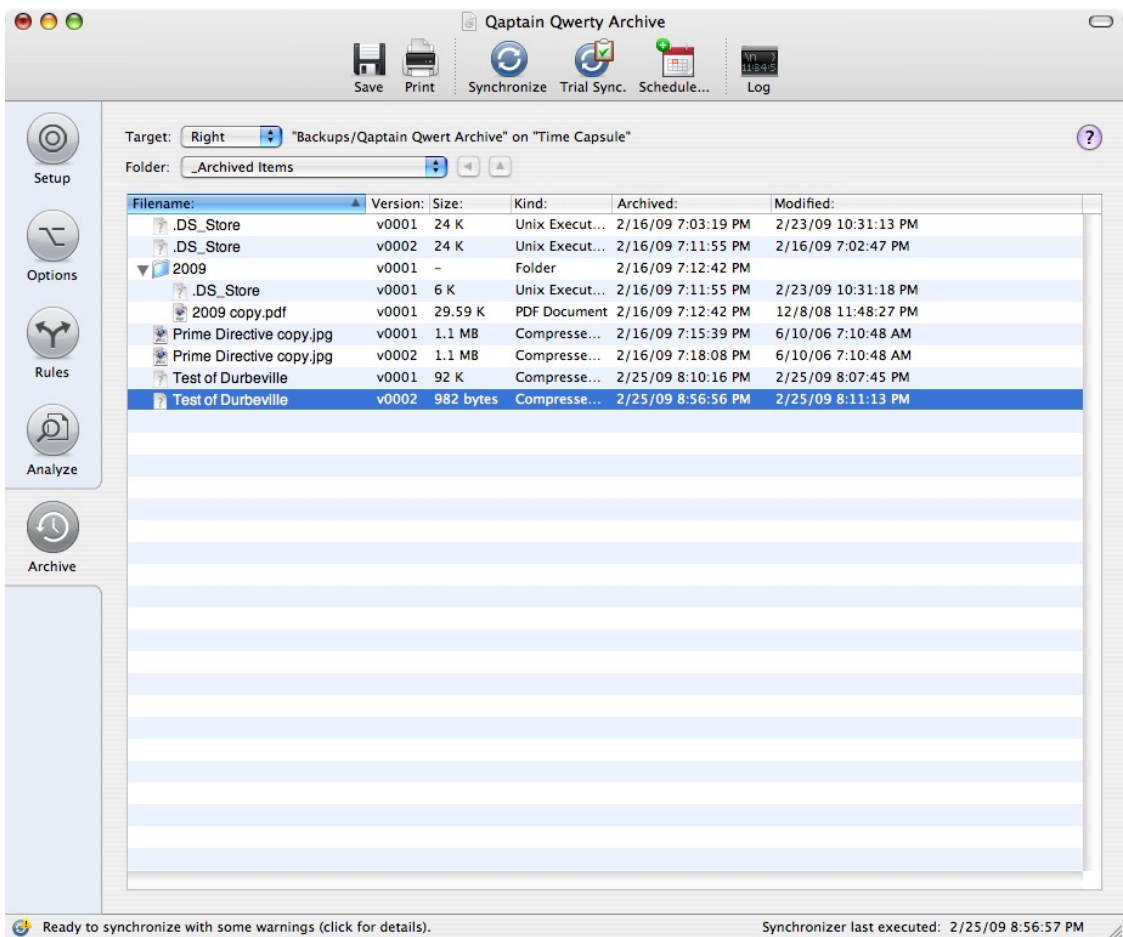


It is easy to get started with ChronoSync, but there are also many functions to explore once you are comfortable with it.

For me, the two most useful features are archiving and scheduling. Archiving means that instead of being replaced, older or deleted files are stored elsewhere in the target location. In the case of replaced files, version numbers are assigned. To restore a file, you go to the Archive page, highlight the version you need, if applicable, and select Restore from the Action menu. It pales compared to the fancy visual effect of space travel that Time Machine sports, but it is nonetheless effective.

Note that if a folder has deleted files, the folder is shown in the Archive just like a typical Finder folder with a disclosure triangle to expand it. However, if an entire folder is deleted, the item is not even recognized as a folder. When I restored the Test folder, it worked as expected; you just don't have the choice of restoring an empty folder, part of the folder, or the entire folder.





You don't get to travel back in time, but older versions of deleted or changed files are still within reach.

Backup should be as transparent as possible, and scheduling is one of the ChronoSync features that works toward that goal. As with other facets of ChronoSync, you again have many options to customize its behavior. You have the standard daily, weekly, and monthly; then you also have events like right after ChronoSync launches or before the program quits.

What works for me, though, is “when volume mounts.” As I am a laptop user, I usually compute on battery and don't use the power strip that also powers the Time Capsule. If I used any of the other scheduling options, the job would fail when the Time Capsule is not available. With the “when volume mounts” option, the job will run only when the Time Capsule is present. Maybe it is just me, but I like things to run on their own as much as possible. I do not like to be nudged by the computer to turn on the power strip. Instead, I like ChronoSync to work for me and do its job without any intervention from me, other than when I turn on the strip as the need arises.

Together, archiving and scheduling give my old PowerBook G4 a backup experience almost the same as my wife's MacBook Pro on Time Machine. I probably will still burn a bunch of discs every few months, but I am happy to have a very accessible backup every day.

## Some Small Issues

Much as I like ChronoSync, there are some small issues to discuss. As feature-rich as ChronoSync already is, it lacks one thing that Apple Backup has: preset jobs. While it is a no-brainer to locate iPhoto's folder or iTunes' music library, files related Mail, iCal, and keychains are in a variety of folders. ChronoSync's PDF documentation on advanced topic mentions using ChronoSync to backup the Mail folder, but why not go all the way and have some preset jobs?

The other issue is also a small quibble. While ChronoSync can check for updates, to actually install the update you need to visit the Econ Tech Web site, download the disk image file, etc. It would be nice if updates could be done right within ChronoSync, as in many other Mac applications. Just install and relaunch to spare the users the hassle of going through the entire routine.

## Conclusion

Thanks to ChronoSync's ease of use and many features, I can now back up my old PowerBook G4 more regularly to the Time Capsule. ChronoSync works quietly in the background according to the schedule I gave it. It archives replaced files so, should the need arise, I can go back to older versions of whatever it was I changed.

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# Hardware Review

by Lee Bennett, [lbennett@atpm.com](mailto:lbennett@atpm.com)

## Eye-Fi Explore

**Developer:** [Eye-Fi](#)

**Price:** \$130

**Requirements:** Digital camera that accepts SD memory cards, Mac OS X 10.4 and Internet connection for setup, access to DHCP-enabled wireless Internet to upload photos from camera. [Universal](#).

**Trial:** None.



On initial observation, an Eye-Fi card appears to be nothing more than a standard SD format camera memory card. It is the same size and virtually the same weight, and it gives the same in-camera performance as any other SD card. The difference is that engineers have managed to find space for a wireless Internet transceiver within the card's confines.



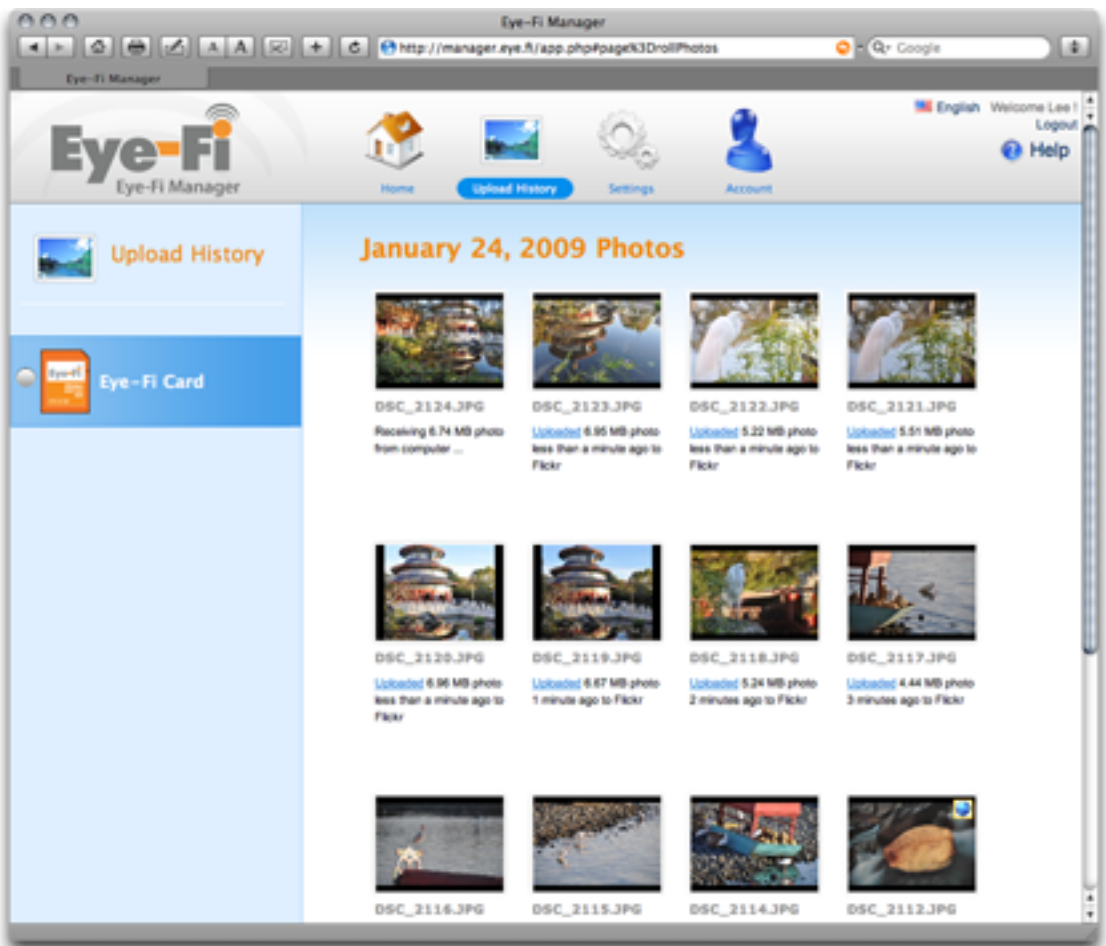
Yes, Eye-Fi squeezed 2 GB of flash memory *and* a Wi-Fi transceiver in this standard-size SD memory card.

## Before Eye-Fi

Historically, when photos were posted to online services such as Flickr, Webshots, Picasa, Shutterfly, Facebook, [and more](#) while on the go, it was a pretty sure bet that the photos were taken with cell phone cameras so they could be immediately uploaded. Thanks to the Eye-Fi card, this stunt is no longer limited to cellular network-enabled devices.

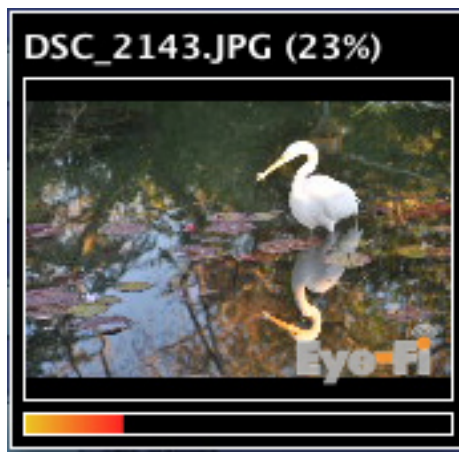
## After Eye-Fi

Once the card is configured to a free Eye-Fi Manager account, any time a photo is taken while the Eye-Fi card is in use, the card begins uploading the photo to Eye-Fi's server as soon as a usable Wi-Fi signal is detected.



The Eye-Fi Manager interface. Eye-Fi does not retain full-resolution copies of uploaded photos (at least not that I could tell), however there is a record of all photos that are processed.

Once the transfer is complete, the photo is then passed on to whatever destinations are configured to be used. In addition to more than 20 online services such as those named above, a computer can also be designated to receive a copy if it is running the Eye-Fi Manager software. Each time the computer receives a photo, the software briefly displays a Quick Look-style window with a thumbnail, the filename, and a progress indicator. All the photos are saved into a common folder defined in the Eye-Fi Manager.



This indicator is displayed while a computer receives a photo from an Eye-Fi card.

## Now Featuring Geotagging

This year, Eye-Fi announced a new version of this card. Dubbed the Eye-Fi Explore, photos that are uploaded are optionally geotagged with location data provided by the wireless Internet connection. This means that, when used with services such as Flickr which can automatically read geotagging data in a photo, those who view your photos can not only see them almost immediately after they are taken, but can also see where they were taken.

## Camera Support

To make Eye-Fi use even simpler, the company is working with camera manufacturers to improve interaction with the Eye-Fi card. On cameras such as the Nikon D90 that I used to test the Eye-Fi card, Nikon included an option in the camera menu to easily turn automatic uploading on or off.



Enabling automatic uploading on a Nikon D90.

For cameras without this new feature, automatic uploading can still be done, but requires [a set of steps](#) that differ for each camera. As Eye-Fi continues to work with camera manufacturers, it stands to reason we'll see even more camera models with this feature, and possibly even firmware updates to existing cameras.

## Whither Wi-Fi

Don't mistake me—the whole concept of the Eye-Fi card is amazing. But the one challenge it faces is that, as popular as Wi-Fi has become, it is still a long way from being ubiquitously available everywhere. Plus, even where it is available, it is either encrypted or proxied. If the encryption password is unknown, that access point is unusable. If the access point is proxied (that's when a Web connection is redirected to a different page, usually one where a user would log in or purchase Internet time before any other pages can be opened—common at hotels), once again, the access point is unusable.

My tests of the Eye-Fi Explore centered around an evening of photography at Disney's Epcot resort. Sure, there are countless access points in use throughout the Disney property, but every one was locked down, and none of my photos uploaded until I came home and turned on the camera within range of my own wireless router. It probably goes without saying that a popular desire of the Eye-Fi card is likely to auto-upload vacation pictures—especially out in nature. But again, are open access points really common enough? Even at hotels, if the Internet connection is proxied and access is purchased on a computer, the Eye-Fi card—a separate device—is still locked out.

Possibly helpful to many is that Eye-Fi has partnered with Wayport to provide wireless access. Eye-Fi cards are able to upload pictures through a Wayport hotspot, bypassing the login proxy. Of course, this means we may see lots of photos online that are geotagged at various Starbucks, McDonald's, etc. locations instead of the actual photo spot!

## Ideal Scenario

There is, however, a type of scenario where I think the Eye-Fi card can shine. For example, I am involved in a quinquennial business meeting where hundreds of workers from around the world converge to the chosen location. Moreover, since the sessions are open, thousands of people who are affiliated, though not necessarily employed, with the organization also arrive at the meeting, which is generally held in a stadium setting of the chosen city for that term's meeting. It is an enormous, week-long event, and there are dozens of photographers who must cover the event. I am fairly sure photographers at the 1995 session (which I did not attend) still used film. The 2000 session was a transition time that saw roughly half film use and half digital. But, in 2005, not only was virtually everyone shooting digital, but photographers also came to the media room after an event to upload their photos to a gallery and add cutlines (captions). Photos were available for viewing by the end of the day.

We're now approaching the 2010 session, and I'm hoping the media team act on my suggestion to assign Eye-Fi cards to all the photographers. Unlike someone roaming around taking vacation pictures, this business session has full access to Wi-Fi within the venue.

While the media team may not utilize an online service such as Flickr, I envision a computer in the media room receiving photos as they are shot and photos posted to the session's official gallery within minutes. If this isn't proof of the transition from industrial age to information age, I don't know what is.

## What's Really Up With Geotagging

Besides the condition of open access points not being as widely available as Eye-Fi may wish, another important factor to consider pertains to the geotagging feature. Let me be clear: there *is not* a GPS receiver built into Eye-Fi cards. In other words, a picture shot in the middle of the Amazon rainforest not only isn't going to upload, but also is not going to be geotagged. The geotagging feature relies on [Skyhook Wireless](#), which has undertaken a project to map the coordinates for millions of access points around the world.

The Skyhook project isn't perfect. Most (though not all) of my photos taken at Epcot were geotagged, but they were all tagged with a spot a mile or two east of the park. Thus, the geotagging feature is certainly helpful for giving a ballpark vicinity for the location of a photo, but it won't be exact unless you manually update the geotag (as I did for my Epcot pictures).

## Configuring the Eye-Fi

As for the Eye-Fi Manager software itself, there's not a lot to it—and that's a good thing. A menu bar application must be running for a computer to receive uploads. This menu bar application also avails quick access to the Web-based configuration site. From this site, the Eye-Fi card is configured, desired online photo services are defined for receipt of uploaded pictures, and a folder on the local computer is specified for receiving copies of the pictures. Additional options include enabling or disabling geotagging and the ability to set up SMS text message notifications of upload progress. The Eye-Fi Manger is also where thumbnails of past uploads can be browsed.

## Caveats

The only quirk I encountered with the Eye-Fi Manager was when a few photos (as in, less than five out of more than 100 total) didn't successfully transfer from the card. It wasn't an enormous problem because the Eye-Fi card tried again soon after and was successful, however it did so after one or two other pictures finished uploading first. Even though the photos did eventually get processed, they were processed out of the order they were originally shot. Again, not a huge program, except that services such as Flickr don't exactly work in terms of rearrangeable albums. Rather, Flickr accepts photos as a stream. The main stream is *always* reverse chronological to the time they are uploaded.

There are two other possible “gotchas” with the Eye-Fi card. It's only available in SD format. Eye-Fi's forums are full of queries about a Compact Flash version (among other formats), but Eye-Fi seems somewhat tight-lipped about anything other than SD. Another big topic in the forums is the lack of support for the Camera RAW format—only JPEGs can be uploaded. Personally, I can understand not supporting RAW or TIFF format. These



files tend to be huge, and trying to transfer them through a Wi-Fi connection just doesn't seem practical. As it is, JPEGs out of a Nikon D90 at full resolution can weigh upwards of 6–8 MB. RAW and TIFF files might be many times that size.

## **The Eye-Fi Family**

There are currently four models of Eye-Fi cards available. Possibly confusing is that the differences between the cards are essentially the services each includes by default. The technology in the cards is, from what I can tell, identical. All four include the ability to wirelessly send photos to a computer. The other differences are as follows:

### ***Eye-Fi Explore***

This is the card I was sent for review. At \$130, this 2 GB card includes lifetime service for uploading images to a supported online photo service, lifetime geotagging service, and one free year of access to Wayport hotspots. Wayport access is \$15 per year after the first year.

*Note:* while Eye-Fi cards (except the Home edition) include unlimited uploads through the Eye-Fi server to a chosen service, some services will limit how much data can be transferred, especially on free accounts. For example, Flickr allows up to 100 MB per month and no more than 10 MB per photo, but offers unlimited monthly transfers and up to 20 MB per photo for \$25 per year.

### ***Eye-Fi Share***

At \$100, this card also has 2 GB of memory, but it does not include geotagging or Wayport access. Both can be purchased individually to use on the Eye-Fi Share for \$15 per year. Uploads to online photo services is free through other access points.

### ***Eye-Fi Anniversary Edition***

\$130 buys a card identical to the Eye-Fi Share (geotagging and Wayport access available for the annual fee), but with 4 GB of space and SDHC compatibility. (SDHC can allow for a camera to write photos to the card more quickly, in addition to transferring them to a computer through a card reader more quickly.)

### ***Eye-Fi Home***

At \$80, this is the least expensive Eye-Fi card. Its bundled service only allows for wireless uploads to a computer. This is certainly the card to choose if computer uploads are truly the only desire. As with the Eye-Fi Share, geotagging and Wayport access are available for \$15 per year. Also, for \$10 per year, the Eye-Fi Home can be enabled to also upload photos to online services. My opinion: if there is even a remote possibility that online photo service uploads will be needed, go ahead and buy the Eye-Fi Share instead, since the \$20 difference which buys unlimited online service access only pays for two years of the same access on the Eye-Fi Home.

## **Final Thoughts**

My recommendation: carefully consider the environments that will most commonly be entered before choosing whether to purchase an Eye-Fi card. If uploads are likely to not

occur until the card is in range of a home or hotel open access point, the best option may be to stay with a standard card reader to transfer photos to a computer, then upload them to a photo service. But, in situations where availability of an access point is frequent, the Eye-Fi card is certainly a well-priced solution for quickly posting photos online, directly from a camera.

## Two Footnotes

1. The Eye-Fi company easily deserves a prize for one of the coolest packaging designs ever created. To see it in action, check out Cali Lewis' GeekBrief show number [264](#).



Simply give the tab on the right side a tug to slide it out, and a tray with the Eye-Fi card seemingly magically pops out of the left!

2. Even though the actual photos I took at Epcot with the Eye-Fi card in my camera are somewhat immaterial to this review, they can be perused [in my Flickr set](#).

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# Accessory Review

by Chris Lawson, <http://chrislawson.net>

## PED3 iPhone Stand

**Developer:** [Thought Out](#)

**Price:** \$40

**Requirements:** iPhone or iPhone 3G.

**Trial:** None.



Been to a cellphone store lately? There's a dizzying array of accessories available for almost every phone. Apple's iPhone is no exception, of course. The iPod-accessory market was already a billion-dollar business even before the iPhone was introduced, and the enormous market developed almost overnight.



Thought Out has jumped into that market with both feet, and its latest offering is a desk stand for the iPhone and iPod touch called the PED3. The PED3 is a powder-coated steel stand that offers two main features: cable management and a rotating design. The former keeps your desk organized, while the latter lets you watch movies with ease—if you’re the sort of person who enjoys sitting at a desk, presumably near your computer, watching movies on a screen approximately 1/20th the size of your computer’s screen.

That criticism is perhaps unnecessarily sarcastic, because the PED3 has a nice heft to it that would make it useful, for example, on an airliner’s tray table. It’s certainly not something that absolutely has to sit next to your computer, though its awkward shape makes it less portable than some stands. Many third-party cases have a built-in kickstand feature that accomplishes the same thing.

Speaking of cases, the PED3 is really designed to fit the bare iPhone or iPod touch sans case or “skin.” However, Thought Out does officially endorse gently adjusting (read: bending) the “fingers” on the stand to fit devices enclosed in a protective case. The fit with a bare iPhone is very good; the fit with an iPhone in a case or silicone skin requires some minor adjustments and still isn’t ideal—though it’s far better than just tossing the cased phone on a desk.



I've seen similar designs for iPod stands (usually for use in vehicles) that were more adjustable without feeling as if you were going to bend something too far, and I prefer those designs to the bend-and-check method.

Other than the fit with a case, Thought Out seems to have, if you'll pardon the phrase, thought out the design fairly well. The fingers are spaced so as to allow easy access to the Dock connector, headphone jack, volume/silent buttons, and power button. In a pinch, you can even use the PED3 as a (very) cheap camera tripod. This is a welcome relief after seeing several iterations of PowerBook stands from various manufacturers that blocked one or another important port on the laptop. It's definitely a design principle that other accessory makers could stand to emulate more often.



I know, I know, you're thinking, \$40 is a lot to pay for a little bit of 1/8-inch mild steel. And if you think about it that way, it is. But think about this: Apple's iPhone dock is \$30 and doesn't allow rotation. The Apple dock does, however, have line-level audio output and a nice speakerphone feature.

If you talk a lot on speakerphone or use your iPhone as your primary music device, maybe Apple's dock is a better choice; I personally just leave a USB cable plugged into my external keyboard and hook up the iPhone whenever I'm home, and my laptop—not my phone or iPod—is hooked up to the stereo system. If you watch a lot of video on your iPhone or iPod touch, or have other reasons to use it in widescreen mode often, the rotation feature will probably appeal greatly to you, so it's probably worth the extra ten bucks.



While the PED3 hasn't yet met my very high standards for stuff I take with me everywhere, it has become a semi-permanent fixture on my desk in just under a month. It's far from perfect, but it's definitely useful. And if you don't care about a line-out audio port, it's a viable alternative to Apple's various docks.

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