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

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²³<http://mjtsai.com>

²⁴<http://hypertexthero.com>

²⁵<http://www.cornstalker.com>

²⁶<http://qaptainqwerty.blogspot.com>

²⁷<http://www.atpm.com/subscribe/>

²⁸<http://www.atpm.com>

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About This Particular Macintosh has been free since 1995, and we intend to keep it that way. Our editors and staff are volunteers with *real* jobs who believe in the Macintosh way of computing. We don't make a profit, nor do we plan to. Our aim is to produce a fiercely independent magazine, with multiple formats designed for easy reading rather than showing ads. The views expressed in these pages have always been our own, and to help prove it we do not accept direct sponsorships or advertising. We do, however, need to pay for our Web site and other expenses, so we rely on minimal advertising, sold indirectly via Google and Yahoo, as well as the support of ATPM readers who shop at [Amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com)¹ using our link.



¹<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/redirect-home/aboutthisparticu>

Welcome

by Robert Paul Leitao, rleitao@atpm.com

Welcome to the October issue of *About This Particular Macintosh!* It's the first month of the holiday quarter and the first month of Apple's new fiscal year, FY 2011. In less than three weeks, the maker of Macs, iPhones, and iPads will report record revenue and record earnings for the three-month period that ended in late September and the fiscal year that ended on the same day. This is, beyond doubt, The Apple Era.

The iPad: An Overwhelming Global Success

The editors of ATPM celebrate what we call the "personal computing experience." If there's a product that exemplifies the personal nature of today's computing, it's the iPad. This device unchains us from the constraints of the desktop PC and can be taken places beyond where Wi-Fi can be found. With a handsome display that offers much more than can be viewed on a smartphone, the iPad is the ideal product for our increasingly mobile society.

Retail sales data suggest that the iPad is impacting sales of netbook PCs as consumers continue their migration to ultra-mobile and always connected digital devices, such as smartphones and now touchscreen tablets. We are at the early stages of a revolution in personal computing not seen since the mass adoption of the PC itself in the early 1980s.

There's scant competition for the iPad as of this writing, and its early success has taken both PC makers and smartphone makers by surprise. But the iPad was not developed overnight. It's a product that's been in development since before the iPhone. It came to market in early April with a selection of over 200,000 apps from which to choose, and the iTunes music and movie stores and a new iBook store to support its release. In short, the iPad is a digital iceberg. What one sees is magnificent. But it's what's below the surface that buoys its movements and keeps it afloat.

To put the iPad's importance to Apple in perspective, it's possible that the revenue generated by Apple from iPad sales and iPad-related sales in fiscal year 2011 may equal or exceed Apple's revenue from all sources only four years ago. Although the iPad is a

personal digital device, it is already a star performer on the technology industry's global stage.

In one of last month's *Segments* articles I wrote about [My \\$1,000 iPad Purchase Odyssey](#)¹. But today the lines are gone, and iPads are in ample supply. In early October, distribution of the iPad will expand to additional national retailers, and both enterprise and education adoption of the iPad are on the rise. We are in the early days of a new personal computing revolution.

The Apple Continuum

In fiscal year 2011, Apple may reach \$100 billion in revenue. This would represent a fourfold increase in revenue from four years before. Fiscal periods are a construct that may belie the magnitude of Apple's continuing success. Apple's success has become a continuum with a performance score-card released each fiscal quarter.

At the close of fiscal year 2010, Apple had over 300 retail stores open for business and more store openings on the way. Apple will continue to innovate and release new products in part to keep store traffic high and consumers interested in the company's products. As a major bricks and mortar retailer, Apple saw its store revenue increase 73% in the three-month period ended in June and witnessed a 57% increase in store traffic. Apple must innovate, and innovation fuels continued growth.

In September, Apple released a new line of iPods, including a new iPod touch with [FaceTime](#)² functionality. Based on the same processor technology as the iPhone and the iPad, the new iPod touch furthers the company's iOS-based multi-product paradigm. For the holiday quarter, the new iPod touch may invigorate sales for the iPod line. With new stores, new products, and a continuum of innovation, the Apple Era may have just begun.

The ATPM Continuum

About This Particular Macintosh has been in continuous publication since 1995. On a monthly basis, we have chronicled the good times, the bad times, and

¹<http://www.atpm.com/16.09/ipad.shtml>

²<http://www.apple.com/ipodtouch/features/facetime.html>

the ugly times that comprise Apple's storied history. We thank you for joining us this month and every month as our work continues.

ATPM Wants You!

The editorial staff of ATPM is comprised on talented writers who started their relationship with our publication as readers of our monthly issues. When we say that we "celebrate the personal computing experience," we mean it. If you've ever had the urge to share your personal computing experiences with a large and influential readership, please contact us at editor@atpm.com.

Each issue of ATPM, in its variety of formats, is read by tens of thousands of Apple product enthusiasts around the world. Join us today.

Our October issue includes:

Bloggable³

Wes Meltzer is taking a new approach to his *Bloggable* column in order to streamline the chore of publishing news from the blogosphere as well as offer it to readers in real time as well as in each monthly issue of ATPM.

MacMuser: aTV Flash, Almost Essential⁴

Mark Tennent shares his experience installing and using aTV Flash, "a gentle hack" of the first-generation Apple TV.

The iPad Chronicles: On the Road⁵

Robert Paul Leitao goes on the road with his iPad with pleasing results, and he shares what he considers the iPad travel essentials.

How To: Record a Skype Conversation⁶

ATPM's August 2010 issue described how to record a Skype conversation in its [review](#)⁷ of Ambrosia Software's WireTap Anywhere. This follow-up repeats the same example with Audio Hijack Pro, Rogue Amoeba's thriftier take on sound capture.

How To: Networking Overview, Part Two⁸

Sylvester Roque continues the networking overview he started in August.

³<http://www.atpm.com/16.10/bloggable.shtml>

⁴<http://www.atpm.com/16.10/macmuser.shtml>

⁵<http://www.atpm.com/16.10/ipad-chronicles.shtml>

⁶<http://www.atpm.com/16.10/record-skype.shtml>

⁷<http://www.atpm.com/16.08/wiretap-anywhere.shtml>

⁸<http://www.atpm.com/16.10/networking.shtml>

Desktop Pictures: Daytona Beach Sunrise⁹

Lee Bennett shares photos taken of sunrises during his honeymoon in Daytona Beach, Florida. All the photos were taken with an iPhone 4 (HDR in the latest iOS was not yet released at the time). Three of the pictures are set up to be used as iPhone wallpaper photos.

Out at Five¹⁰

Matt Johnson's new series, *Out at Five*, looks at the workplace and its boundaries from all angles, revolving around many of the same characters from his former series, *Cortland*.

Review: NewerTech 7 Port Powered USB Hub¹¹

Is there a USB hub that provides ultra-portability with ultra-power? Your silver-and-black-clad knight may have arrived.

Review: Parachute 1.1¹²

Ed Eubanks Jr. finds Parachute to be a pleasingly simply backup utility but laments the lack of compression and/or packaging and that it must remain running for scheduled backups to occur.

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⁹<http://www.atpm.com/16.10/desktop-pictures.shtml>

¹⁰<http://www.atpm.com/16.10/out-at-five.shtml>

¹¹<http://www.atpm.com/16.10/newertech-usb-hub.shtml>

¹²<http://www.atpm.com/16.10/parachute.shtml>

¹³<http://www.postsateventide.com>

¹⁴<http://www.theipadchronicles.com>

E-Mail

[A Fine Pair of Dragons](#)¹

When creating instructions or help files, I set up my iPad in portrait mode, open Dictation, tap the screen, speak as I go through steps, tap the screen when I'm done, and in seconds I have the instructions typed out. To tidy it up, I copy it to a Word file in DocsToGo, or e-mail it to myself and, on my Mac, copy the e-mail to a new Word document. Just for grins, I made a Voice Memo on my iPhone, and later held it near the mic of the iPad and used Dictation to transcribe it! Faster than my typing!

—*Don Seher*

[Life With an EeePC and Ubuntu Linux](#)²

As a long-time (25 years behind the mouse, good grief!) Mac user who bought one of the first eeePCs, I also enjoyed your detailed take on it, and the software recommendations. For Bluetooth, there are various tiny USB dongles that barely break the line of the machine—so they can be left in place—and that might give you the functionality you need. I have one by Rocketfish that lets me pair and transfer files by Bluetooth file transfer between my Macs and eeePC running the default Xandros or EasyPeasy Linux, although I have not tried to run a mouse or keyboard off it.

—*Alison*



Great article. Like you, I feel the need for a smaller Mac for traveling, but I went the Hackintosh option (Lenovo S10-2) to accompany my obligatory company Dell PC. The Lenovo duals boots into Windows as the camera does not work for Skyping my kids when I am away, but it is the perfect machine for working on planes, in the Mac environment, and then for personal use when I get “there.”

—*Keith Veitch*



I ran a 10" netbook for a while with Mandriva Linux, but I always despised the 1024×600 resolution. By the time you subtract the screen real estate for the taskbar, menu bar, etc, there isn't much left for

¹<http://www.atpm.com/16.09/macmuser-dragons.shtml>

²<http://www.atpm.com/16.09/eeepc.shtml>

real work. So I switched to an 11.6" “Thin and Light” with a single-core Pentium. Not only did I get 1366×768 resolution, but the horsepower made all those heavy office-type applications run a little better. I still had an acceptable 6 hours of battery life. I would recommend this to anyone looking for something smaller, lighter, and less expensive than Apple's offerings.

One more note: if a large part of your computer experience necessitates the use of office-type software, it might make sense to revisit Windows 7 with Microsoft Office. 7 is much more efficient and stable than its predecessor, and Office is still the benchmark for all other office-type software. I dual-boot my MacBook for that reason.

—*mobilemail*

[My \\$1,000 iPad Purchase Odyssey](#)³

I'll tell you what...I'm \$700 in on my iPad purchase myself. I'm heading to Thailand in three weeks. I've got my 32 GB Wi-Fi model packed with books, movies, and music. If that isn't enough to do on a 17-hour flight over the Pacific, I've got my old black 2007 MacBook with 349 MPEG 4 movies and 36 GB of music ready to be transferred right at my seat. It blows me away that every time I take this thing out in public a crowd gathers. And this is only the first generation of the device! I can't wait for the next model.

—*Grover Watson*

It looks like you're set for your trip! Please send us a note on how well your Apple iPad performed on the excursion.

—*Robert Paul Leitao*



I feel almost the same about the iPad.

I opted for the 64 GB 3G/Wi-Fi model, but I will *only* resort to the 3G at gunpoint! I think they would be able to do something like Amazon does for the Kindle with a dedicated link to the iTunes store. That would make it (almost) perfect. The price per month for 3G really chafes me.

³<http://www.atpm.com/16.09/ipad.shtml>

I've even tried a couple of subscriptions (*Macworld* and *National Geographic*)—good but zooming leaves graphics something less than what I expected.

I feel that they can make a few improvements, and no doubt will. When that happens, there goes another 800 bucks.

—*Michael Koreiwo*

AccountEdge and FirstEdge⁴

I use AccountEdge and support QuickBooks for a non-profit. If your business needs to track inventory, get AccountEdge. I have over 1,000 SKUs, and they change often.

I much prefer the payroll module in Accountedge. It is much easier and more intuitive to set up, use, and print tax reports. QuickBooks payroll is much harder if your staff does not have a strong accounting background. Customizing reports in QuickBooks is a bit better.

My biggest complaint with AccountEdge since the beginning is that account names print alphabetically, and I prefer to do it by zip code. You can work around it, but it should be a simple choice. Secondary and tertiary sort options would be nice.

Next complaint is that when entering a new sales or purchase order, the screen presents you with an invoice form as opposed to an order form or just a quote. You have to manually change to the other forms. This should be pre-set in a preference file.

I believe that QuickBooks for Mac is not available in a network edition. AccountEdge Network works fine, but it could be faster. I have never had more than three users on it at once, and it does slow down. A true server—client setup should improve speed.

Periodically I look at getting a new accounting program and have decided that for my needs I cannot justify spending a lot more money. The feature set would be much greater and the annual support costs really go up. I also dread the time needed to migrate all that data to a new accounting program.

I pay \$25 per month for support (phone and e-mail), and this includes annual upgrades with payroll updates. It is much cheaper than just paying \$199 for support and buying the upgrade later.

As a side note, the current network version for 2010 requires an Intel processor. Since my office and laptop are older Macs, I still use the 2009 version.

—*Tim Vetang*

⁴<http://www.atpm.com/16.09/accountedge-firstedge.shtml>

OmniFocus, TaskPaper, and Things⁵

I stumbled across your review today and am extremely grateful for your thoroughness and guidance. I will now look into each of the programs with your experiences in mind and feel confident that I can assess the best way for me to go.

—*curt*

Axio Backpacks⁶

I've been looking into the Hybrid pack by Axio, and I like it a lot, but there's also the Hybrid XL. It's the same design but can hold more than a thousand more cubic inches. The load that you described that you carry (couple text books, lunch, binders, laptop, reading books) is pretty much what I carry as well, so I was wondering if the XL would even be necessary. Plus, you thought the regular Hybrid was nearly too big for you, and I'm also 5'10"-ish but only 140 pounds. Would the Hybrid XL be too large for my needs and/or frame? Please give me some input on this. Thanks.

—*Alex Stephens*

I'd say the XL is probably overkill for most people (you and me included). However, if you can find a local retailer of these packs, it might be worth checking them out in person.

—*Chris Lawson*

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. All mail becomes the property of ATPM and may be edited for publication.



⁵<http://www.atpm.com/15.04/gtd.shtml>

⁶<http://www.atpm.com/11.04/axio.shtml>

Bloggable

by Wes Meltzer, wmeltzer@atpm.com

There comes a time in every reporter's life when he has to set down his pen and move on to something else. I first started writing [Bloggable](#)¹ for ATPM when I was a sophomore in college, and for the last seven years it's been my pleasure to round up the news from around the Internet for you. A lot's changed since 2003, hasn't it?

But don't fear, dear reader! I'll still be following the news and collecting it for you, both in real time via the Delicious shared-bookmarking service delicious.com/bloggable² and reverse-published into ATPM once a month. You'll still get the news and links you love. It'll just have less bloviating from me!

You can follow me using my [Delicious RSS feed](#)³, via Twitter at [@atpm_bloggable](https://twitter.com/atpm_bloggable)⁴, or just pick up a copy of ATPM from the proverbial newsstand. And you can always e-mail me at wmeltzer@atpm.com.

So long, and thanks for all the fish!

[Ars Technica](#)⁵: **By end of 2010, Android will have more users than BlackBerry, iOS**

If you were looking for evidence of how much Apple could really use a partnership with Verizon, this is it: Verizon sells more phones than anyone else, and a preponderance of their phones are Android.

Apple's not a market-share company, as we Mac users know. But ending the exclusive agreement with AT&T would probably mean *millions* of extra iPhone sales.

This news is also a sign of how far RIM has fallen: not only behind the iPhone, but now behind an upstart OS without any major hardware manufacturers.

¹<http://www.atpm.com/Back/bloggable.shtml>

²<http://www.delicious.com/bloggable>

³<http://feeds.delicious.com/v2/rss/bloggable?count=15>

⁴http://twitter.com/atpm_bloggable

⁵<http://arstechnica.com/gadgets/news/2010/09/android-to-challenge-symbian-for-1-market-share-spot-by-2014.ars>

[Ars Technica](#)⁶: **Is the iPad cannibalizing netbook sales?**

Best Buy CEO Brian Dunn told the *Wall Street Journal* [last week](#)⁷ that the iPad was responsible for decline in laptop and netbook sales, to the tune of almost 50 percent, in his stores.

Wow.

Ars has some solid analysis on this, and suggests that some of this might be that the mobile-PC market in the US is relatively finite, i.e., that rather than creating a completely new market for the iPhone, Apple is (unsurprisingly) getting the sales of people who might have bought low-end laptops instead.

It also hypothesizes that the economy might play a role here, but frankly I don't see it. This time last year, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, private-sector layoffs were close to 250,000 per month all 2009, and we're at about 140,000 in 2010.

I wrote about [life with a netbook](#)⁸ (and how you might prefer an iPad) last month.

[Business Insider](#)⁹: **Verizon could steal 23% of AT&T's iPhone users if Apple ended exclusive contract**

Speaking of how badly AT&T needs Apple (and *not* the other way around) *Business Insider* reports that a Credit Suisse survey found that 37% of iPhone users said they would leave AT&T if the exclusive deal were ended. Of those, 23% said they'd go to Verizon, 3% to Sprint, and 2% to T-Mobile. (The rest were unsure.)

Holy cow. Those are some insane numbers.

Now, remember that that's *just* current iPhone users. This is not to mention the Verizon customers who would, I imagine, buy an iPhone if they could, and not have to settle for the latest BlackBerry POS device.

⁶<http://arstechnica.com/apple/news/2010/09/ipad-vs-netbook-direct-cannibalization-and-collateral-damage.ars>

⁷<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703376504575491533125103528.html?mod=e2tw>

⁸<http://www.atpm.com/16.09/eeepc.shtml>

⁹<http://www.businessinsider.com/iphone-att-credit-suisse-2010-9>

[WSJ](#)¹⁰: Verizon to begin capping data, introducing tiered plans

Ever since AT&T announced the tiered, data-capped plans for the iPhone, we've been waiting for the other shoe to drop. This was it: the other big boy in the market, Verizon, is making the same move for its smartphones, according to CEO Ivan Seidenberg.

This sets up an interesting dynamic: the two mid-major carriers (T-Mobile and Sprint) have been running ads extolling all of the various and sundry unlimited things you can get with their plans. And at the bottom end of the market, unlimited usage has long been a feature.

I wonder if some of the underlying dynamic will shift with this move, with some customers moving to other carriers, or if T-Mobile and Sprint will begin to cap usage and charge plans.

It's also worth note that the data costs them practically bupkis to transmit; the data network infrastructure is a sunk cost. So this is a virtually pure profit center for Verizon.

[Macworld](#)¹¹: Is the Apple TV worth it? Point-counterpoint debate.

Is the Apple TV worth the \$99? *Macworld* hosts a debate from contributor Lex Friedman and senior editor Jonathan Seff. They consider whether its lack of TV recording, or third-party application support, or even the fact that you can't rent from Amazon like on a Roku or TiVo device, is a problem. (My opinion? If you want a DVR, get one from the cable company—or better still, buy a TiVo. Why reinvent the wheel? Apple's forté is selling and renting media, not letting you record it.)

[Macworld](#)¹²: Adobe adds HTML5 controls to Illustrator

For all the hubbub around HTML5 vs. Flash on mobile devices, a lot of people were talking about Flash like it was dead. It's not (yet), but it looks like Adobe can read the writing on the wall. They're announcing an extensions pack to Illustrator to allow users to develop HTML5.

¹⁰http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748703384204575509640930858752.html?mod=ITP_marketplace_1

¹¹http://www.macworld.com/article/154016/2010/09/appletv_counterpoint.html

¹²http://www.macworld.com/article/154033/2010/09/illustratorcs5_html5.html

[PCWorld](#)¹³: AT&T On Loss of iPhone Exclusivity: What, Me Worry?

The guys at *PCWorld* opine that they don't understand AT&T's "What, me worry?" stance on the rumors that they're going to lose their exclusive on the iPhone. We noted last week that some 23% of iPhone users would jump ship if given the opportunity (plus the Android/Windows Mobile/BlackBerry users who might get an iPhone if it were on Verizon)—seems like Apple is ready to put that to the test.

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¹³http://www.pcworld.com/article/206020/atandt_on_loss_of_iphone_exclusivity_what_me_worry.html

aTV Flash, Almost Essential

Our biggest complaint with the otherwise excellent Apple TV is the limited number of video formats it will play. Our Mac Pro spends many hours converting films into a format our Apple TV can use. The conversions often take as long as the recording takes to play, which can mean all-night sessions. We also want to stream BBC iPlayer videos, so we were keen to try [aTV Flash](#)¹.

This is a gentle hack of the Mac OS X 10.4 running the first-generation Apple TV, opening it for adding extra video codecs, Web browsers, and adding other applications to play on the Apple TV. After all, an Apple TV is basically a [cut-down Mac](#)², running a 1.0 GHz Pentium M. Plus an 802.11n wireless chipset, fast Ethernet, and an Nvidia GeForce Go 7300 graphics card.

There are various free ways to delve into the Apple TV such as [atvusb-creator](#)³ and [atv-win](#). The Apple TV is Windows-compatible as is aTV Flash. The drawback being that you need to be nifty at typing commands. On the other hand, aTV Flash has a simple point-and-click installer.

First, we watched the very helpful screencast video, which shows installation step-by-step. It really is a case of downloading the software, double-clicking to install on a USB memory stick, then bunging that into the back of the Apple TV. The rest is nearly all automated, and aTV Flash will even download most recent versions of some things from the Internet.

Looks Familiar

Once installed, the Apple TV looks almost the same but with many more options along the menu bar. These include access to the built-in Web browser or to install Firefox, being able to play ripped DVDs, creating playlists, and much more. The aTV Flash Web site lists [the extras](#)⁴. Better still, aTV Flash ac-

tivates the USB port so that you can add a keyboard and mouse, external hard disk, or other peripheral.

You can also add files to the Apple TV by FTP. When you connect to the Apple TV via FTP it shows that it is just another computer complete with System, Applications, and Documents folders. This takes some of its magic away but also means you don't feel daunted by trying some of aTVFlash's other functions. As you are only messing with software you can always reinstall the system and start from scratch.

In use, aTV Flash fits neatly into the Apple TV menu setup. With many more options and some, like Web browsing, needing text entry, Apple's little remote controller quickly becomes inadequate.

Luckily, there is a free iPhone application called [Remote](#)⁵, which must be the easiest way to exhaust an iPhone battery. The application can control the Apple TV via an iPhone's screen, turning dragging and tapping into "mouse" control, and adding the iPhone's virtual keyboard for text entry. Remote will also control and mirror an iPhone library.

After installing aTV Flash, we are able to play many more types of videos than the standard Apple TV software. Ripped DVDs play as if a real disk, complete with all the options. Web browsing on a large screen TV is an entirely new experience. Copying files by FTP is very fast, and all the other aspects to aTV Flash are easy to select and operate, including changing the iTunes library from the built-in disk to an external one plugged into the back of the Apple TV.

We haven't streamed directly from the BBC iPlayer yet. You have to install Flash and Firefox, then use an alternative input device such as the [Air Mouse](#)⁶ iPhone app or a real one connected via the USB port. This is simply due to lack of time rather than a failing in aTV Flash.

As there is no ROM flashing or anything which would invalidate the guarantee, I wish we had got aTV Flash when we bought the Apple TV. Apple

¹<http://firecore.com/atvflash>

²http://www.appleinsider.com/articles/07/03/28/whats_inside_an_apple_tv_tear_down_reveals_almost_all.html

³<http://code.google.com/p/atvusb-creator/>

⁴http://www.aTVFlash.com/products_new.php

⁵<http://www.apple.com/itunes/remotes/>

⁶<http://itunes.apple.com/us/app/air-mouse-pro-remote-trackpad/id289616509?mt=8>

should stock it in the Apple Store or, better still, buy the idea from the developer and upgrade Apple TV's software.

Copyright © 2010 [Mark Tennent](http://www.tennent.co.uk)⁷.



⁷<http://www.tennent.co.uk>

The iPad Chronicles

by Robert Paul Leitao, rleitao@atpm.com

On the Road

I'm attending an off-site conference for work and brought along my iPad as an all-in-one productivity solution.

For the first time since purchase, I activated the 3G service. The process was almost uncomfortably easy. I need to remind myself to cancel the service before it automatically renews 30 days from today. The 3G service is fast and responsive.

Equipped with the iPad keyboard dock, I'm able to quickly respond to e-mails, and I'm using the keyboard to type this. I've also been using the iPad and keyboard dock at work for the past few weeks. At first, I thought moving between the touch screen and the keyboard in the absence of a mouse would be awkward. Quite the contrary. Pinch and zoom is a decided benefit in reading correspondence and in composing responses. If I have a lament, it's that the keyboard dock cannot be used while the iPad is enclosed in the Apple case; portrait positioning is the only option.

Just for sport, I want to see how far I can stretch the 250 MB 3G data quota for \$14.99. No media-rich Web sites or apps until I'm back on Wi-Fi.

A Road Warrior's Toolkit

I don't know if it's one of Murphy's Laws, but work crises tend to rise in degrees of severity proportional to one's distance from the office. The phone calls started yesterday about 8 PM. By 9 PM today, there was a second problem that needed immediate attention.

I had desired to relegate checking office e-mail correspondence to the late evenings in order to focus on the content of the multi-day conference at which I'm in attendance. Circumstances denied me that choice.

This morning I was sitting in the front row of a conference workshop session while configuring my iPad to send and receive office e-mails rather than use the Web interface for correspondence. In less than five minutes, about 50 e-mail messages came streaming into my inbox. It was the 24 messages about a singular issue that captured my attention. Within 15 minutes, while listening to the workshop speaker, I had dispatched responses.

Following this early morning session, I learned that the iPad is a wonderfully stingy device. I set myself up in an open area by the conference exhibits and the free Wi-Fi service kicked in. The iPad is programmed to switch to Wi-Fi from 3G whenever it's available. It saved on the data quota on the monthly AT&T 3G plan while I kept working without interruption.

By early afternoon, it was beyond doubt that the best road warrior toolkits include an iPhone and an iPad. I was talking on one of the devices while reading and sending e-mails on the other. The PDF files that were sent my way were read and forwarded to the office for immediate follow-up.

I'm now used to having my iPad at the office all day. Today proved that the iPad can amply assist with crisis management from remote locations as well.

I'm seeing fewer notebook PCs at meetings and conferences these days, but smartphones are in abundance. Smartphones are good for quick notes and e-mail replies. I'm preparing this entry using the Pages application for the iPad. For the things I want to do, and for those things that just have to get done while away from the office, a smartphone is good. But an iPhone and an iPad in combination is simply better. Enclosed in the Apple iPad case and stowed in my bag, the iPad is lighter than any laptop I've ever carried and can be used to get at least as much done.

iPad Travel Essentials

In my travels with the iPad, there are three items I now consider to be essentials. The first item is [iKlear](http://www.klearscreen.com)¹. It's no secret that the iPad's screen becomes quickly smudged. Don't even think of using a hotel towel to clean the face of your favorite Apple device. It's a safe and effective cleaner for your digital gear. The cloths that come in the package pick up anything that's been left on the screen.

The second item is the [Apple iPad Case](http://store.apple.com/us/product/MC361ZM/B)². Both my backpack and my business carry bag have laptop compartments that shield the contents from jostling and shock. The case is an extra layer of protection

¹<http://www.klearscreen.com>

²<http://store.apple.com/us/product/MC361ZM/B>

and assists in setting the iPad in a number of different positions for work or display throughout the day.

The third item is [AppleCare](#)³. The 90 days of initial phone support pass quickly. I rely on the iPad at work, at home, and when away from both work and home. If an issue comes up, I want answers quickly. I consider AppleCare a necessary investment for Macs, iPhones, and iPads.

Over the next few weeks, I will be using the iPad VGA Adapter for Keynote presentations. I'll provide feedback on the uses of the iPad as presentation device in a future issue.

Copyright © 2010 Robert Paul Leitao. Robert Paul Leitao is a contributing editor at [ATPM](#) and is author of the [Posts At Eventide](#)⁴ and [The iPad Chronicles](#)⁵ blogs.



³<http://store.apple.com/us/product/S3791LL/A>

⁴<http://www.postsateventide.com>

⁵<http://www.theipadchronicles.com>

How To

by Matthew Glidden, mglidden@atpm.com

Record a Skype Conversation With Audio Hijack Pro

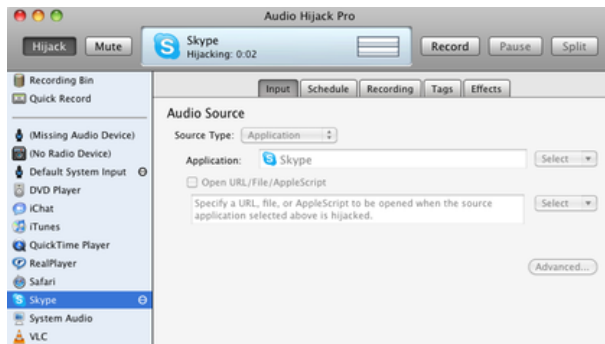
ATPM's [WireTap Anywhere review](http://www.atpm.com/16.08/wiretap-anywhere.shtml)¹ (August 2010) included one recording example, mixing my Mac's mic input and a Skype conversation for editing in [Audacity](http://audacity.sourceforge.net/download/)², an open source audio editor. I use that combo to record podcasts, live music, business calls, and so forth.

A reader asked about more casual options, since WireTap Anywhere covers a much wider range of features than Skype recording and its \$129 license isn't peanuts for home users. [Audio Hijack Pro](http://www.rogueamoeba.com/audiohijackpro/)³ offers a single package for capturing any Mac audio (hardware and software), so that's one to try if you don't need WireTap's more sophisticated source mixing.

This article repeats my review example, substituting Audio Hijack Pro for WireTap Anywhere. Find its trial version at developer Rogue Amoeba's [download page](http://www.rogueamoeba.com/audiohijackpro/)⁴. (Registration costs \$32 and removes a 10-minute usage limit.)

Audio Hijack Pro's Interface

Audio Hijack Pro's main window lists your audio sources (hardware and software) along the left side, basic controls along its top edge, and advanced options in the middle.



Audio Hijack Pro's main window.

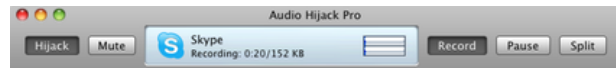
¹<http://www.atpm.com/16.08/wiretap-anywhere.shtml>

²<http://audacity.sourceforge.net/download/>

³<http://www.rogueamoeba.com/audiohijackpro/>

⁴<http://www.rogueamoeba.com/audiohijackpro/>

We want to capture Skype audio, so we need Audio Hijack Pro's two main features. The first, Hijack, takes control of a selected hardware or software source. I snapped the above screen shot after starting Hijack on Skype (note its timer at two seconds). The second is Default System Input. Audio Hijack Pro added a small circle icon next to both names, showing they're ready to go. Choose Record to start the audio capture.



Recording the Skype conversation.

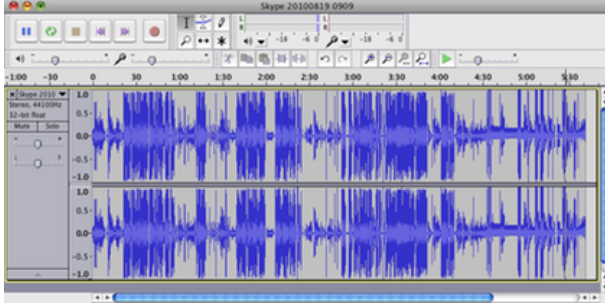
Skype recording in progress! Audio Hijack Pro counts both elapsed time and total space used. If you're using multiple sources, remember to choose Record for each one. I captured my mic input on its own for later editing.



Audio Hijack Pro's Recording Bin.

Once you stop capture, Audio Hijack Pro drops your audio into the Recording Bin. Each source gets its own file, named by source and time. You have to rename them from an Inspect sub-window, which breaks tradition with the Mac OS X Finder, but that's a minor quibble.

If you don't need to modify your audio, that's it! For further work, choose "Open In Editor" from the Recording Bin menu. On my Mac, that sends the file to Audacity.



Editing my Skype conversation in Audacity.

As mentioned above, Audio Hijack Pro's trial version includes a limit—it adds static to your conversation ten minutes after the hijack starts. I kept my example under six minutes to avoid that extra noise.

Have other examples or software to nominate? Feel free to mention them in [the comments](#)⁵.

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⁵<http://www.atpm.com/16.10/record-skype.shtml#comments>

How To

by Sylvester Roque, sroque@atpm.com

Networking Overview, Part Two

I've [previously mentioned](#)¹ a few things I wish someone had told me about networking, but I didn't go into a lot of specific detail. There's a good reason for that. Most of what I have learned about networking has been self-taught, with the assistance of a few Web sites here and there. As a consequence, there are many areas of networking that I have very little experience with and many questions which, frankly, give me an enormous headache.

What I would like to do this month is take looks at a few of the issues you need to consider when setting up a network. Many of the same considerations will apply if you are expanding an existing network.

Things To Think About Before You Buy Anything

Before you set up and configure a network, there is some information that you will need to know. Pay particular attention to the protocol that your Internet service provider is expecting you to use. In the United States, the most commonly used protocols are probably DHCP and PPPOE, with PPTP being used in European countries. Make sure you know which method your provider uses, as well as any other configuration information, such as any user name and password that you need to connect to their service. You will need to enter that information into the router that will form the basis of your home network.

As we've discussed before, a typical home network setup consists of a modem, which is connected to a [router](#)², and one or more connected devices. Essentially, the router takes information from your modem and distributes it to the device that requested it. The devices can be connected to the router via Ethernet, wirelessly, or some combination of the two. As you begin building your home network, there are some basic questions that need to be answered before you buy a router.

¹<http://www.atpm.com/16.08/networking.shtml>

²http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Residential_gateway

Does the Router You Want Work With the Gear That You Already Have?

Because modern Macs use standard networking protocols it should be easy for any router on the market to "play nice" with your existing gear. Sadly, this is not always the case. Peruse your favorite Mac-related user group forum, and you are likely to find horror stories about the lack of knowledgeable Mac support from some vendors. Although many routers offer some type of "setup wizard," don't be surprised if this feature only works if you have access to Windows and Internet Explorer. One alternative that usually works on a Mac is accessing the router's configurations settings directly using a Web browser. This will get the job done but can appear a bit daunting if you don't like adjusting networking settings.

Another thing to consider before purchasing any gear is how the connections will be made from the router to your computers and other gear. How many devices will connect to the router via Ethernet? Make sure the router has enough wired Ethernet ports to support that number, or you may need to purchase additional gear just to have enough wired ports. If your devices support connecting wirelessly, make sure that your router also supports that option.

Speaking of wireless connections, now is the time to check the manuals and find out what types of networks your existing devices support. You may find a veritable alphabet soup of acronyms being used to describe the device's capabilities. This is especially true when discussing wireless security: names such as WEP, WPA, and WP2 are common.

Help is available, so don't feel too bad if you don't know what all of these acronyms mean. At this point, your main concern should be what your devices are expecting. Take my Series 2 TiVo as one example. With the wireless adapter that I am currently using, the TiVo expects to find either no security password or one encrypted using the WEP protocol. Since my Time Capsule does not support WEP encryption, I must either connect the TiVo by wire, connect it to a second router, or leave my network without a password.

Once you have found a router or two that look interesting, check the manufacturers' Web sites. Download the manual and have a look at it. Even if you don't understand everything in that manual, the bulk of it should be somewhat comprehensible. A certain amount of jargon is almost inevitable, but most users shouldn't walk away so lost that they don't know what questions to ask of friends, relatives, or tech support.

What About Security?

It seems that everyone is concerned about network security today and with good reason. What's stored on your network should be your business, not your cyber neighbor's. When it comes to security, here are a few things to consider. It's not an exhaustive list, but it should give you enough information to begin asking the right questions.

One of the first things you encounter when manually setting up most routers is a page asking for a password before any settings can be changed. Check the manual to find out the default password. Once you know the password and can access the router's configuration screens, seriously consider changing that password. Router manufacturers often use the same default password for an entire line of routers. These passwords are well-known on the Internet, so leaving the password to the factory default makes things easier should someone want to change router settings without your permission.

Setting a password for your router is not the same as setting the password that users must enter to access your network. That is a different matter entirely. Other than choosing your network security protocol carefully, choosing a password to access the network may be one of the more important security decisions you can make. Although it is tempting to use something memorable, such as a spouse's nickname, this is usually not a good idea. These types of passwords can usually be cracked more quickly than one would expect.

Strong passwords generally use a combination of numbers and letters with some combination of uppercase and lowercase characters. If you are using AirPort Utility to configure one of Apple's networking products, go to the "Wireless" tab. Click the icon next to the box where you enter the password that you want to use. The software will either tell you how strong your password is or suggest alternatives. The longer the password the better, though the tradeoff

is that this makes the password harder to remember unless you store it in something like [the keychain](#)³.

Most current routers on the market have some level of firewall capabilities. A firewall's basic purpose is to [control access to your network and its contents](#)⁴. The help files describing firewall settings in the last few routers I've used have been decent, so don't feel too intimidated. The goal of the firewall is to hide your computer from the outside world as much as possible. Ports on your computer should only appear as "open" if you are using a program that needs that port open. Once the firewall is configured, you can use any one of several online sites to test its effectiveness. Although these sites are often geared more toward testing Windows machines than Macs, they can still give you a good overview of how well your firewall is doing its job. I have used [this site](#)⁵ several times, but there are a number of other sites that perform a similar function. If your firewall is doing its job your computer will appear as hidden or in stealth mode during the tests.

Why Bother With This Stuff in the First Place?

This article barely scratches the surface of some of the configuration settings that are possible. Even some relatively inexpensive routers allow users to tweak the basic settings to improve the performance of certain games and other Internet-dependent applications.

I spent a little time configuring my router so that some devices always retain the same IP address from the router. My motivation was simple: with the TiVo set to get its address dynamically from the router, every time we have a power failure the TiVo would reboot. Its IP address was dependent upon how many other network devices had requested IP addresses when it finished rebooting. The base IP was the same, but the last number would change, causing me to have to determine that number and reconfigure the software I was using with it.

My solution was rather simple, though not one I thought of on my own. The router is set to assign addresses dynamically using a last number of, let's say, 20 for the sake of argument. Any devices such as the TiVo, which benefit from fixed (static) addresses, are manually assigned IP addresses where the last number is less than 20.

³[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Keychain_\(Mac_OS\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Keychain_(Mac_OS))

⁴http://www.webopedia.com/DidYouKnow/Hardware_Software/2004/firewall_types.asp

⁵<https://www.grc.com/x/ne.dll?bh0bkyd2>

That's it for now. Unless there is a great clamor for additional information, this will probably be the last networking article I write for a while. I did mention how much I hate explaining network settings, didn't I?

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Desktop Pictures

by Lee Bennett

Daytona Beach Sunrise

We need new desktop pictures each month. [Write](#)¹ to us!

This Month's Desktop Pictures²

This month's desktop photos feature sunrise images taken by Lee Bennett during his honeymoon in Daytona Beach, Florida. All the pictures were taken with an iPhone 4 prior to the iOS update that added the HDR feature, and they are largely unaltered besides a slight saturation boost in Adobe Photoshop CS4. Three of the pictures are sized to be used as iPhone wallpaper photos.



[View Pictures](#)^a

^a<http://www.atpm.com/16.10/daytona-beach-sunrise/>

Contributing Your Own Desktop Pictures

If you have a picture, whether a small series or just one fabulous or funny shot, please send it to editor@atpm.com and we'll consider publishing it in next month's issue.

Previous Months' Desktop Pictures

Pictures from previous months are listed in the desktop pictures [archives](#)³.

Downloading All the Pictures at Once

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

Safari Create a workflow in Automator with these three actions:

1. Get Current Webpage from Safari.

¹<mailto:editor@atpm.com>

²<http://www.atpm.com/16.10/daytona-beach-sunrise/>

³<http://www.atpm.com/Back/desktop-pictures.shtml>

2. Get Image URLs from Webpage. Get URLs of images linked from these webpages.
3. Download URLs.

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.

Placing Desktop Pictures

Mac OS X 10.3.x Through 10.6.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

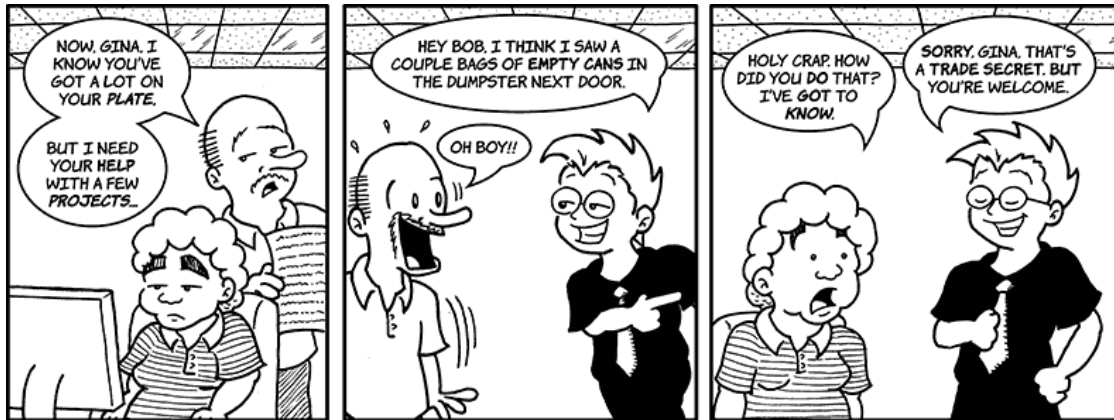
desktop picture you want to use. The panel defaults to your ~/Library/Desktop Pictures folder. Close the “Finder Preferences” window when you are done.



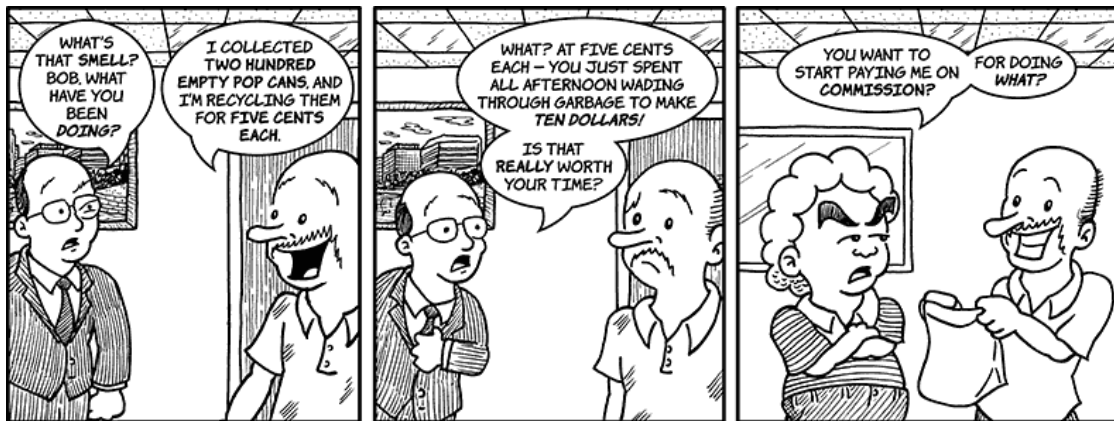
Out at Five

by Matt Johnson, mjohnson@atpm.com

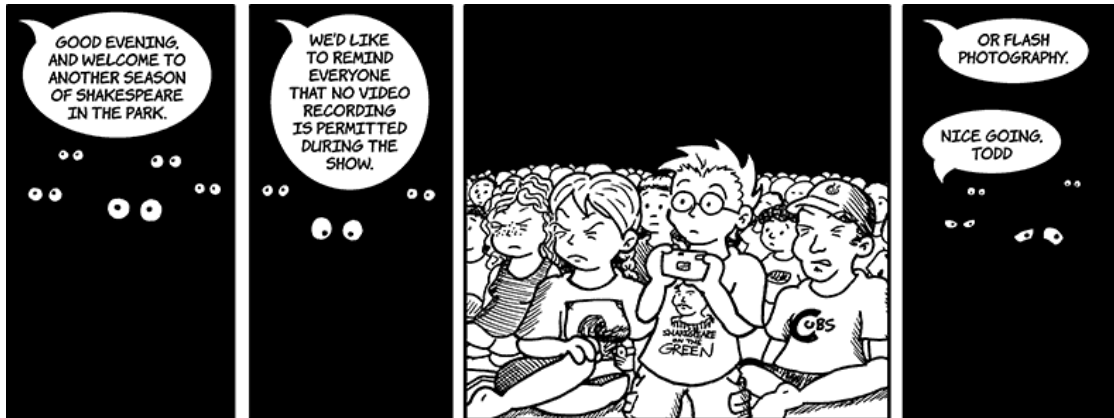
Recycling: Part 2



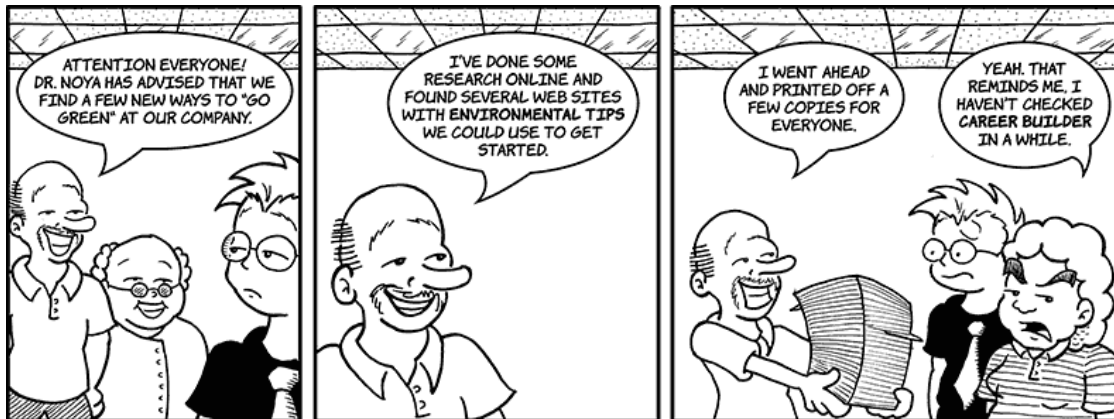
Recycling: Part 3



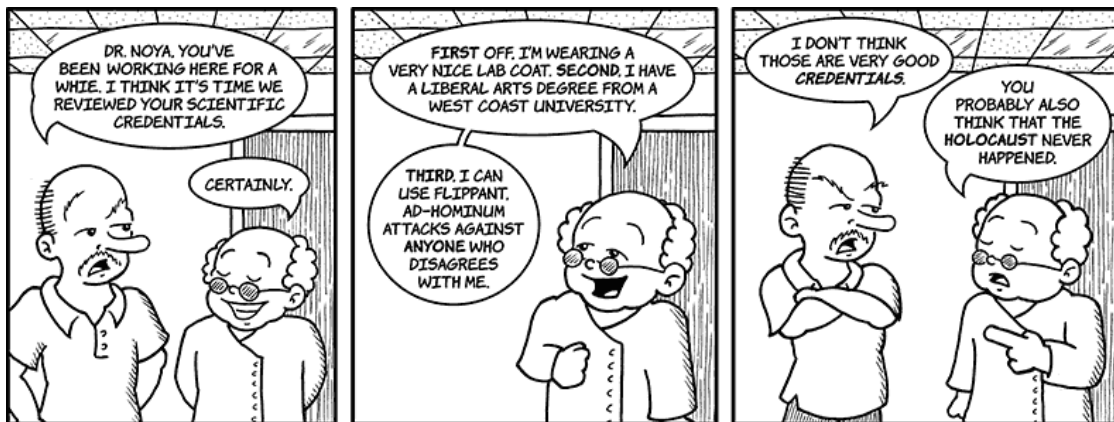
Shakespeare in the Park



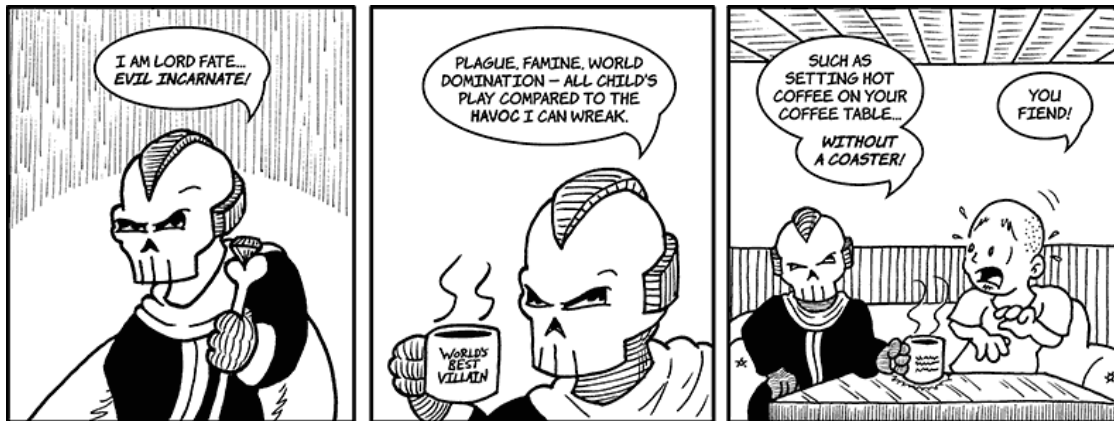
Going Green



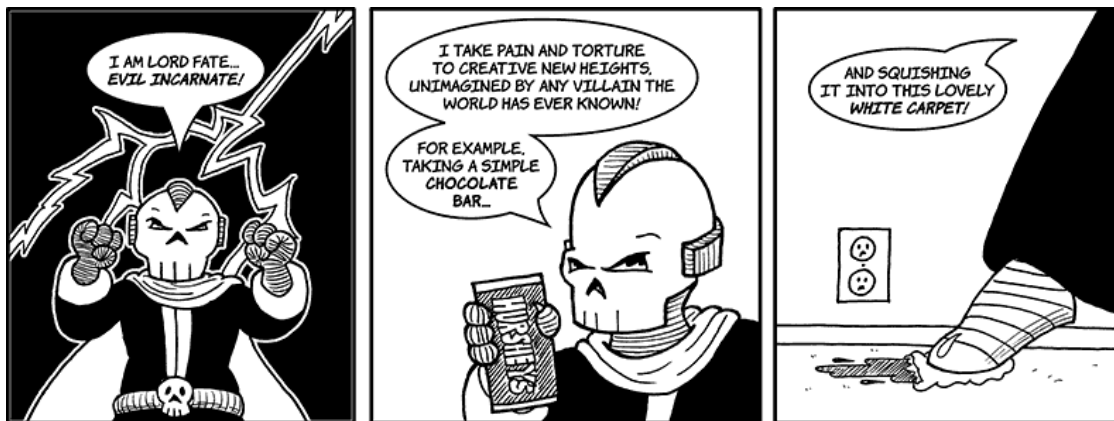
Credentials



Lord Fate: Evil Incarnate



Sinister Fiend



Anti-Customer



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Hardware Review

by Christopher Turner, cturner@atpm.com

NewerTech 7 Port Powered USB 2.0 Hub

Function: Powered USB 2.0 Hub.

Developer: [NewerTechnology](#)¹

Price: \$28

Requirements: Mac with USB.

Trial: None



Once upon a time, there was a USB 2.0 hard drive plugged into a black MacBook. With the aid of [SuperDuper!](#)², this little drive merrily kept the contents of the MacBook backed up on a regular basis.

Then, one day, what should appear on the horizon but a newcomer to this USB land of the MacBook. And lo! The newcomer did not, through no fault of his own, play nice with the well-established backup drive already plugged in. For the newcomer's shape, bestowed upon him by his creator, a shape which gave the newcomer his utter uniqueness, meant that two USB devices could not be plugged in to the MacBook side-by-side.

¹http://newertech.com/products/7_port_powered_usb2_hub.php

²<http://www.atpm.com/12.04/superduper.shtml>



Kind of hard to use that fancy-looking flash drive when you can't plug it in with your other devices.

One might make the argument that the newcomer and well-established backup drive could come to an agreement, where one would give up his space for the other as each was needed in turn. This, however, defeated the point of having more than one USB slot on the MacBook in the first place. Was there any hope of the two living in mutual harmony? Could anyone in the MacBook's USB land be of assistance?

Alas, it was yet *another* newcomer riding to their aid. Clad in silver steel and black, diminutive in stature but grand in power, the NewerTech 7 Port Powered USB 2.0 Hub stepped boldly into the fray. (OK, OK, so the hub is actually encased in aluminum, with plastic, but that doesn't exactly roll off the tongue like "silver steel." And we're going for something here. Just play along, k?)



My only complaint with this product is the packaging.

Surely there were other knights, er, hubs, who would have performed as gallantly as the NewerTech. Yet none could match it in its compact size while still providing seven USB ports *and* 3.5 Amps of electrical power, thanks to its external AC adapter.



Everything that was encased in the plastic above.

And with five ports on one side of the device, and two upon the other, the Mimobot newcomer and the well-established backup drive could reside on the

MacBook in harmony, while still leaving a free port on the fruit-crested portable.



Harmonious external device mounting.

Not only that, but one would be able to attach one's iPod, iPhone, and card reader as well, each device drawing 500 mA of power from its respective port. The MacBook had never known such rapture, at having *five* devices connected to it all at once. What's that? *More?* A full-size USB keyboard? An external mouse? There was great rejoicing throughout the land.



Sure, it's a lot of wires. But it's nice to know you can do it if you need to. (And you can hide the wires better on a desktop setup.)

It was so noted that, weighing slightly over eleven ounces, including its power supply, the NewerTech 7 Port hub was an ideal USB hub for a knight errant to pack in his saddlebags. It takes up little space, and

doesn't weigh one down, while providing great benefit for those travelers perhaps stuck at an inn who wish to get *lots* of work (and/or play) accomplished.

One might find many USB hubs amongst the Kingdom of Mac, yet NewerTech's 7-port offering stands out, offering lots of advantages in a tiny package.



Copyright © 2010 Christopher Turner, who realizes he may have pushed the whole knight/kingdom/fantasy analogy too far in this review. If you're interested, write to us at reviews@atpm.com.



Software Review

by Ed Eubanks Jr.

Parachute 1.1

Function: Selective local/server backup utility.

Developer: [Dare to be Creative Ltd.](http://dareto.be/creativebe.com)¹

Price: \$25

Requirements: Mac OS X 10.5 Universal².

Trial: Fully-featured (15 days)



Statistics about computer data backup have always been miserable. For years, we've heard numbers ranging from 70% to as much as 90% or more of all computer users not backing up their data at least once a month.

Almost anyone you ask has a personal story about backing up. They've lost family photos, or important banking information, or the presentation they needed the next morning, or every piece of data they had. When I used Windows systems for a season, I performed a total wipe of my system and full re-install three times in one calendar year, because of corruption. Each time I lost some data, despite efforts to back up. And when my iBook was stolen in 2007, I was grateful that I had backed it up completely the weekend before, and incrementally just a day and a half before it disappeared.

So there should be more interest in backing up than there is, and there probably should be a lot more money to be made in the backup business. Yet, as attentive as I usually am to new software, I rarely see a new backup application emerge; nor do I see frequent updates to most of those that are there.

Apple has had a relatively simple backup application, cleverly named [Backup](#)³, for years. It's free for download when you join MobileMe (and was a part of .Mac before that). And Apple brought out a huge push to solve some of the backup problem with [Time Machine](#)⁴, introduced with Mac OS X 10.5 Leopard.

But what if you don't want a total backup as Time Machine offers, and don't have a MobileMe membership? Or what if Apple's Backup doesn't do the

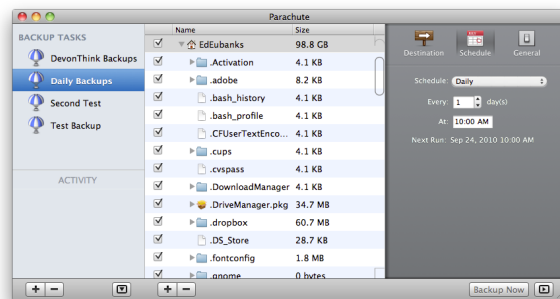
trick for your needs? There are some large and complex backup solutions available, such as Roxio's EMC [Retrospect](#)⁵ and Econ Technologies's [ChronoSync](#)⁶, but while these offer a lot of power and control, they are also elaborate and, at times, complicated to configure and use.

Dare to Be Creative's Parachute aims to fill the void here. A simple (and affordable) solution, Parachute aims to be an alternative tool for selective backup. The big question is, does it do the job?

A Replacement for Apple's Backup?

I have a MobileMe membership, and I have used Backup for years. While it has always done an acceptable job for me, there have been annoyances (like that it can't recognize on its own that a backup drive is absent, and cancel the operation) and its limitations (I've wanted for years to try to set it up to work on a non-MobileMe server, such as an SFTP server through my Web host). So I'm open to a switch, if an application will offer me similar simplicity while filling the bill on Backup's shortcomings.

Does Parachute do the trick? It looked like it might when I first began poking around on it. It certainly has a simple, though not simplistic, interface: a three-pane view, with one pane showing all of the backup tasks you have set up, the middle (and largest) pane listing the contents of each task, and the far right pane displaying the settings for each task.



¹<http://parachute.creativebe.com>

²<http://www.apple.com/universal/>

³<http://support.apple.com/kb/DL1025>

⁴<http://www.apple.com/macosx/what-is-macosx/time-machine.html>

⁵<http://www.retrospect.com>

⁶http://www.econtechologies.com/pages/cs/chrono_overview.html

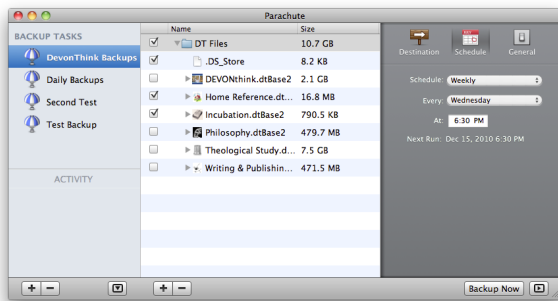
The settings suggest some good solutions, as well: three tabs allow you access to destination, schedule, and general settings. Schedule offers manual, hourly, daily, weekly, and monthly options. And General gives three options: “keep the last [x] backups,” “perform smart backups,” and “warn before deleting remote files.”

The rest of the pane offers a brief, but helpful, definition of smart backups, as well as suggestions for when they are useful. It turns out that a “smart” backup copies only the changes to the source files (which is faster), but a smart backup also eliminates the possibility of an incremental backup, as only a single copy may be saved.

So far, so good. I begin to put Parachute through its paces to see if this will be my new backup solution.

Choosing Files

This process goes about as you would expect it to. You set up a backup task, then select through a typical Finder-style window which file (or folder) you wish to back up. Once you have selected a file, it is added to the large middle pane. You may add as many files or folders to each task as you wish.



Once a folder has been added to the task, you may open it (with the standard disclosure triangle) and select or de-select files within it to include in the backup. This is a great option, especially if you are trying to back up a large collection of files to a remote location. I’ll put this to the test in a minute.

Destinations

Next you must choose your destination. There are a number of options presented to you.

On This Mac Naturally, one option for a backup’s destination is a local drive. I tried this option for a couple of backups, one of which was fairly large. Parachute handled them without any

trouble. I was also able to use this option to set a task to back up to my iDisk, again with no issue. Parachute will recognize a USB thumb drive as a viable backup location, so it may be a great way to keep a portable backup on-hand.

On Server Parachute also offers a handful of options for backing up to a server. It will back up to MobileMe via iDisk (which seems redundant to me, since “On This Mac” allowed it as well). It will also connect to a server by FTP, FTP/SSL, SFTP, WebDAV, or WebDAV/SSL.

Next I tried to get Parachute to back up to a remote server. My Web hosting service provides me with access to a backup server, with up to 20 GB of space, and I’ve been looking for an easy way to get some of my data backed up there. While my server supports both SFTP and FTP with a Secure-Socket Layer (SSL), I was unable to get Parachute to recognize and connect with the server through those protocols.

Finally, Parachute successfully connected to the server via straight FTP. Unfortunately, despite a number of attempts over several days, I still haven’t been able to get Parachute to back up my data to this server. Perhaps it is because the data are large database files, and they are simply too big to transfer in this way? (I had similar trouble using a service like [Mozy](http://mozy.com)⁷.) At any rate, I tried again, this time selecting a backup task that had smaller files (and was smaller overall, as well). This time, I was able to successfully back up my data to my backup server.

“Scheduled” Backups

After that, I set out to schedule my backup routines. So far, I’m fairly pleased with Parachute. It handles backups fairly expediently, and it seems to have most of the options I’m seeking. Scheduling, too, seems like a straightforward operation, too: simply select the options I wanted in the Schedule tab and I’m good to go.

Not so fast. I did set up some schedules for my tasks, and felt I had reasonable expectation to quit the application at that point. This is apparently where I went awry! The scheduling of these backup tasks only works if the application is running.

While this isn’t an impossible problem, it does present an obstacle that I don’t prefer. Yes, I could schedule an iCal event to open the application at a certain time every day (or whenever I want the

⁷<http://mozy.com>

backup to run); I could even set up the same event to quit the application after it had run for a particular length of time. But Apple's Backup has me spoiled: I want the application to be able to launch on the schedule included in the task!

So I count scheduling as a mark against Parachute. It's not the deal-breaker that it would be without the iCal option, but it's certainly a hassle.

Resulting "Backups"

Next I take a peek to see what sort of backup was created of my data. Having used Apple's Backup for years, I was expecting some sort of packaged data, maybe zipped up into a compressed file.

To my surprise, I see that Parachute creates a straight duplicate in the backup. In fact, for "incremental" backups a complete set of duplicates is created for each scheduled event. In other words, if you schedule Parachute to back up your data hourly, and to keep the last 48 backups, in the end you will perpetually have 48 distinct copies of data on your backup drive!

There are no options in Parachute for compression of backup archives; nor are there any encryption options, or choices about whether to back up meta-data (such as resource forks or extended attributes). There is not even a verification of the backed-up files, other than a message in the Activity panel stating that the backup succeeded. In fact, there is not even a command to restore from back up.

I suspect that this is because of Parachute's ultra-simplistic approach to backing up: it simply makes a duplication, and if you need to "restore" then it is merely a matter of replacing lost or corrupted files from the fully-duplicated copies that Parachute generated.

There are obvious advantages to this. For one, it provides something of an alternative to Time Machine: at any point that you wish, you could immediately revert to a copy from the backup without having to uncompress anything or use any proprietary software to access it. Folks who want to use Parachute as a way to transfer files onto a portable drive and then make use of those files may find this very helpful. (Though let's be clear: as soon as you make use of the data on the portable drive, those are no longer "backup" files but are active files.)

In my case, however, this is a significant problem. As affordable as hard drives are these days, mine still have limitations. And I want to back up to remote locations, too, like my iDisk and Web host server; these

are much more limited in size. Running Parachute in any mode other than "smart backups" will quickly fill them. (On the other hand, running only smart backups forces me to lose the incremental backup that I prefer for much of my data.)

I was expecting a true incremental backup: only data that had changed since the last iteration would be saved. If Parachute were to offer this—even if it copied the entire file that had been changed—then it might be my new backup application. As it is, I won't find Parachute as the replacement for Apple's Backup that I had hoped. In fact, I might even reconsider describing Parachute as an alternative or competitor to a product like EMC Retrospect; in some ways, it is more like an application like [SuperDuper!](http://www.shirt-pocket.com/superduper/)⁸—essentially offering selective duplication with some options that are similar to Apple's Backup.

Nice Touches

Parachute does include a few nice flourishes along the way. To start, the whole application is laid out pleasantly, in a style and function that clearly conforms to Apple's user-interface guidelines. It's clean and plain to use, without any difficulty figuring out "what's next." Even the icon is well-designed.

The bottom of the far-left pane, which includes mostly the list of backup tasks, also has a small Activity pane on the lower left corner. (It reminds me of the Activity window in Mail.) There you'll find a summary of what is actively happening during the backup process. If there are problems, this pane can help you trouble-shoot them.

I mentioned above that Parachute describes a smart backup as not being able to be incremental. One helpful touch here is that the General settings will not let you select both "perform smart backups" and "keep the last [x] backups." These would be contradictory, and therefore these options are not simple checkboxes. When "keep the last [x] backups" is checked, "perform smart backups" is greyed out, and vice-versa.

Wrap-Up

Parachute is a capable backup application, and it offers a clean and simple interface. It accomplishes the job of backing up data more than adequately, and offers several features that Apple's Backup doesn't, while being easier to use and less intimidating than high-powered tools like Retrospect. If you're looking to replace Apple's Backup with a similarly easy-

⁸<http://www.shirt-pocket.com/superduper/>

to-use application, Parachute won't quite meet the mark: there are a few key missing pieces to make Parachute a true replacement for Backup.

If, however, you simply want a basic backup program with the capacity to regularly secure your data on a server or second drive, Parachute may be for you.

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