

Website: <http://www.miniapples.org>

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From the Editor:

Since this is the first issue under my editorship, I thought I'd make a comment about my involvement with our much beloved (and hated) Apples and Macs. I've now owned an Apple computer of some form or other for 26 years. My first Computer was an Apple //e and it cost more in 1983 than my MacBook Pro did in 2007. It has been an interesting experience going through all the variations of hardware and software. I have thoroughly enjoyed the experience and look forward to what will happen to the Mac Platform in the next 26 years.

Tom Ostertag, Publications Director

Meeting Calendar

At the right is a list of mini'app'les meetings for July 2010. The information was compiled as this newsletter was being assembled and is subject to change. As always, confirm the Special Interest Group (SIG) date, time, and location with the SIG Leader or the mini'app'les website: www.miniapples.org.

Meeting Calendar – July 2010			
Tuesday	July 6	7:00 pm	Mac OS X SIG
Wednesday	July 7	6:30 pm	Mac Applications SIG
Wednesday	July 14	7:00 pm	VectorWorks SIG*
Wednesday	July 14	7:00 pm	TC Photoshop User Group*
Thursday	July 15	7:00 am	Macintosh Consultants SIG
Thursday	July 22	7:00 pm	FileMaker Pro SIG
Monday	July 26	6:00 pm	Mac Q&A SIG

Meeting Locations and Leaders

Meeting	Location	Leader
FileMaker Pro SIG	Partners, 2250 Terminal Rd., Roseville	Steve Wilmes, 651-458-1513
Mac Applications SIG	Penn Lake Library, 8800 Penn Ave. S. Bloomington, 55431	John Hunkins Sr, 651-457-8949
Mac OS X SIG	Southdale Library, 7001 York Ave. S., Edina	Bob Demeules, 763-559-1124
Mac Q&A SIG	Merriam Park Library, 1831 Marshall Ave., St. Paul	Les Anderson, 651-735-3953
Macintosh Consultants SIG	Good Day Café, 5410 Wayzata Blvd., Golden Valley	Bob Demeules, 763-559-1124
TC Photoshop User Group*	Minneapolis College of Art & Design, Auditorium 150, 2501 Stevens Ave S., Minneapolis	Jeff Tranberry, phone number not available
VectorWorks SIG*	CJR Office, 4441 Claremore Dr., Edina	Charles Radloff, 952-941-1667

* This SIG is NOT sponsored by mini'app'les; the listing is provided as a service to members.

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Board of Directors Meeting Minutes • 7 June 2010

mini'app'les Directors Meeting Minutes for June 7, 2010

In attendance: Tim Drenk, Dave Diamont, Dave Lundin, Les Anderson, Bruce Thompson

Absent: Joel Gerdeen, Tom Ostertag, Kevin Strysik

Other Attendees: Harry Lienke (in Secretary Gerdeen's absence, Harry agreed to take minutes)

Agenda: See Directors' Reports and Old and New Business below.

Minutes: The minutes for the April 5, 2010, meeting were approved electronically and published on forumer.com on April 12.

Directors' Reports

Treasurer Dave Lundin's report: All bills are paid. A written report was distributed. The deposit of October 5, 2009, has not been identified but is assumed to be membership dues. Except for the purchase of the new

projector, the income is about equal to the expenses for the last year. A motion to approve the Treasurer's report was made, seconded, and approved (MSP).

President Tim Drenk's report: To protect against losing access to club information, the Mini'app'les Account and Password Policy is being defined as follows:

All accounts and subscriptions paid for by the mini'app'les are property of the mini'app'les.

All mini'app'les accounts and logins with associated passwords must be known by, accessible to, or controllable by at least two current mini'app'les Board of Directors (BOD) members.

Passwords for the accounts of the mini'app'les must be at least eight characters long with both letters and numbers used. This may be superseded by requirements of the account itself.

Passwords must be changed at least every twelve months or with a change of BOD members with access to the passwords.

Tim has control of the current mini'app'les website accounts and will share the access information with Vice President Dave Diamont.



Webmaster Tim Tierney has resigned and the club needs a new webmaster.

Membership Director Les Anderson's report: The club has 91 members listed on the roster but 23 have expired or are expiring in the November to May time frame. Five reminders of membership expiration were sent in May and four more in June. Discussion indicated reports of extensions for participating in the survey not being recorded and reminders not being sent out. Les indicated that some reminders sent by Sandy Foderick are bouncing but Bruce indicated the bounces are not being forwarded to him as requested at the last BOD meeting. Les will check on these matters.

Past President Bruce Thompson's report: To provide information required by Paypal to maintain our account, Bruce filed registration information with the state of Minnesota using his own address as the club address. He sent data to Paypal which should satisfy their request. A copy of the registration form was also sent to Joel and Harry to be included on the club's electronic data archive.

Old Business

Process for approving minutes – The process used in the past year will continue to be used. The Secretary will post the Unapproved Minutes on the B.O.D. Private Forum on forumer.com no later than the end of the Wednesday following the BOD meeting and send an email to the other BOD members letting them know the minutes are available for comment. The other BOD members will review the minutes and enter any comments they have on forumer.com no later than the end of the following Friday. The Secretary will update the minutes appropriately to reflect any comments and make them available for further review. On the Monday following the BOD meeting, the Secretary will post the Approved Minutes in the Member's Private Forum on forumer.com and email the Approved Minutes to the Publications Director for inclusion in the next club newsletter.

iWork '09 package to Tom – Bruce made the club's most recent version of Pages available to Tom.

Renewal notice problems – The renewal notice needs to have a reference to Paypal added; Les will see this is added. Harry pointed out the brochure also needs an update and agreed to do it.

Bylaws change for club address – The Bylaws changes were approved unanimously. They need to be updated starting from the archive maintained by the Secretary and re-posted on the web; Bruce will do the update.

Getting Main Mac and iLife Special Interest Groups (SIGs) set up – The Mac Applications SIG was started by Bruce and Harry. Les has booked a room at the Merriam Park Library for the Q&A SIG through November; he also indicated that he will retire as Q&A SIG Leader following the November meeting. Tim said the Main Mac meeting will remain on hold for a while so we can get better organized.

Saturday Workshop – The workshop occurred with about a dozen attendees—about half questioners and half experts. It was pointed out we target warm weather, holding the meeting in spring and fall. There is some new equipment at St. Charles School which may be useful in future presentations.

Insurance – Terrorist Notice – Bruce sent in the form refusing coverage.

New PO Box Form – Bruce talked to the Post Office. They indicated they are updating records of who can pick up the mail. Bruce filled out the appropriate form.

New Business

miniapples.org domain registration and hosting – The club website is now hosted by Honeycomb Internet Services who apparently acquired NetAlliance. Honeycomb did not know they were hosting our website at no charge; they now want \$15 a month. Tim

suggested moving to Blue Host who charges \$7 per month; he has previous positive experience with them. Tim also suggested we move away from mac.com to project a better image. A motion to move to Blue Host at an approximate cost of \$100 for one year including extending our domain registration for one year was MSP with no dissenting votes. Tim will create a new Dropbox account for club use including storing the website data.

Membership status review – See Membership Director’s Report above.

Next meeting: Scheduled for August 9, 2010, at the Merriam Park Library at 6:00 pm. All club members are welcome to attend.

Mac Applications SIG • 2 June 2010

by [Bruce Thompson](#)

This is a brief report from memory, as I did not take notes of what I was presenting. The June meeting of the Mac Apps (Macintosh Applications) SIG was the first as a replacement for the iWork SIG. The intent is to explore other applications, both from Apple and from others, that the “ordinary user” of the Macintosh might like to try. For the first meeting, I volunteered to show some of the features of iPhoto, the photo organizer and editor that comes with most Macs sold today. It is part of the iLife suite (along with iWeb, iMovie, GarageBand, and iDVD). The current version of iLife is ‘09.

I began by showing how to import photos into iPhoto. It can be done directly from a camera, from a flash card reader, or from images already on your Mac. When you connect a camera or flash card reader, by default iPhoto launches



and shows you what images are on the device. There is also an option to turn off display of any images you may have already imported.

Alternatively, if you already have the images on your computer but not in iPhoto, you can either use the File menu to import them or just drag the folder into iPhoto. This works well for images that have come from other sources, such as scanning.

As iPhoto imports images, it creates a grouping of them known as an “Event”. When importing from a camera, you have the additional option of having the full import as a single event or having iPhoto auto-split into events for each date encountered in the photos. And, once the images are imported, you can combine and/or split events as you desire in order to group related images in whatever organizational method you wish.

Moving on to the image editing capabilities, I showed some of the quick and easy methods to improve your photos. I have been using iPhoto since the early versions and iPhoto ‘09 has by far the best editing capabilities so far. While I used to do my editing in an external editor (Adobe Elements) now most of the basic corrections can be done in iPhoto. Besides the basic cropping and red-eye reduction (greatly improved over earlier versions), there are now slider controls for levels, exposure, contrast, shadow and highlight detail, sharpness, definition and others. iPhoto has gotten to the point that, unless you are trying to do major image manipulation, it should cover your standard image correction needs. And all of the editing is non-destructive. You can easily revert back to the original at any time. Or duplicate an image and work solely on the duplicate.

However, if you want to work in an external editor, it is easy to launch from iPhoto. And iPhoto still tracks the changes so if you want to revert, it is as though you did the editing in iPhoto.

Finally, one of the great things about digital images is how easy they are to share. And iPhoto makes it very easy. If you want to email images, you just select them and click on the "Email" icon at the bottom of the window. If you want to publish them with iWeb, there is a button for that. If you want to create a gallery on MobileMe, there is a button for that. And there is a button to print, of course. And, if you use other photo sharing sites, there are export options for Picasa and Shutterfly to upload directly to those sites.

I did not get into other sharing options such as slide shows or burning to DVD. Those topics will have to wait for a future meeting. For the July Mac Apps SIG, Pam Lienke has offered to show some of the capabilities of Inspiration, a "thought organizing" software package. I would also like to take this opportunity to encourage other mini'app'les members to volunteer to show off their favorite software. It really is a way to share among members.

After the Mac Apps SIG, most of the group visited the local Baker's Square restaurant, where we enjoyed the "Pie Rush Wednesday" offer of a free piece of pie.

OS X SIG • 1 June, 2010

by [Bruce Thompson](#)

The OS X meeting opened with a brief discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of desktop and portable external drives. While the portable drives are slowly catching up in capacity, they still don't get as large as the desktops and tend to be a bit slower. But the big advantage of the portable is exactly that – they are portable and do not need an external power supply. And, if you need to move them around, they are smaller and lighter than most desktop drives.



Bob Demeules, SIG leader, then brought up some of the recent Apple news. Apple announced they had sold 2 million(!) iPads in the first two months. And they were the fastest to a million (one month) for any portable handheld device (phones, music devices, etc). Apple's financials also are looking good after it was announced that their market value (shares x market price of a share) was now greater than Microsoft.

Of course the Developer's Conference (WWDC) was the subject of much speculation. Besides the 4G version of the iPhone and iPhone OS (a no-brainer at this point), there hasn't been much speculation about what might be announced. There was some thought that a revised tower or MacBook Air might be found but most of the speculation was around what the new phone would have.

Craig Arko then began a presentation of services and automation. On the Mac, automation can take the form of Applescript, Services, or Automator. Craig pointed out a website, <http://macosxautomation.com/> that covers all three and compares them. The site has lots of instruction and videos to demonstrate how to build automation.

Another site that Craig pointed to is Padilicious.com, a site dedicated to "Creating and Delivering Content for the iPad". Craig demonstrated how to create a single page web app to display a document. He suggested this could be an easy way for a teacher in an educational setting to present material to students.

Craig then moved into demonstrating Services. This has been made much easier in Snow Leopard. He proceeded to create a service that would open a text file in something other than the default, TextEdit. This is accessed through the contextual menu (right-click or control-click) in the finder. He built the service in Automator (found in the Applications folder). Services are normally saved to the user's library, although it could be saved to the system

library to be available to all users on a computer.

Another service he demonstrated would take an image file and post it to a Facebook page without any additional intervention by the user.

The next OS X meeting is scheduled for Tues, July 6 at The Foundation.

Q&A Meeting Report • 24 May 2010

by [Les Anderson](#)

We covered several topics at the May Q&A meeting. It started off with a discussion of RSS feeds and RSS readers. One member found that prices on computer items vary and good deals can be found by searching the internet. A couple of sites to check out are [Google.com/alerts](#) and [Dealmac.com](#)

The topic switched to Audio editing and recording. [Audacity](#) was suggested as a program to check out. Another person was interested in finding a program for journaling.

The next Q&A meeting will be June 28 at the Merriam Park Library, 6PM 'till 7:45 PM

Firefox 3.6.4 Release

by [Doug McLean](#)

Mozilla's [Firefox 3.6.4](#) release addresses a handful of security vulnerabilities and improves stability when plug-ins crash. Most notably, if the Flash, QuickTime, or Silverlight plug-ins crash, they won't take down Firefox itself. (Just reload the page to restart the plug-in.) The security vulnerabilities could result in arbitrary code execution, as usual, so it's nice to see them fixed. [Release notes](#) are available. (Free, 17.6 MB)

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Change Your Passwords • Email Account Hacking on the Rise

by [Adam C. Engst](#)

In the past month or so, I've received a number of spam messages from people with whom I've had previous email correspondence. (I noticed these because Gmail is less likely to mark messages as spam when they come from someone with whom I've already exchanged email.) What's unusual is that these spam messages were *not* spoofed to appear as though they came from my acquaintances; the messages actually did originate from the listed accounts and were sent to people in those accounts' address books.

Tracing backwards through the Received headers in each of the messages reveals that this is indeed the case; messages that purport to have come from a user's Gmail account really did originate from within Gmail. I've seen several of these spam messages from Gmail accounts, several from AOL accounts, and a few from an MSN account. Most of the ones I saw were simple links to pharmaceutical sites. Also common is a [particular type of spam](#) sent from a friend's account asking for immediate financial help after a wallet theft while travelling in London - though poorly written, it's just believable enough to fool some people.

The Received headers, along with the fact that the To lines contain alphabetized addresses that come from someone's address book, indicate to me that the accounts in question have been hacked in some way, that the bad guys are actually logging in to the victims' accounts and sending mail. Plus, although I haven't received any of this sort of spam from any MobileMe or Yahoo Mail subscribers personally, I know people who have experienced their MobileMe and Yahoo accounts being hacked and used to send spam.

What You Can Do -- To reduce the likelihood of this happening, or the damage if it does, here are a few suggestions.

Most importantly, if you use one of the major email services with a Web-based client (Gmail, MobileMe, AOL, MSN, Hotmail, Yahoo Mail, etc.), change the account's password immediately. That may not be sufficient, depending on how the accounts are being hacked, but it's worth doing.

When you change the password, make sure it's a strong one that includes letters, numbers, and punctuation if possible (not all sites allow punctuation). To see if a password is strong, open Apple's Keychain Access application from your Utilities folder, choose File > New Password Item, and watch the strength indicator as you type your password. If you can't think of a good password, click the key button to open the Password Assistant, which will create strong passwords for you. For much more information about passwords, read Joe Kissell's "[Take Control of Passwords in Mac OS X, Second Edition](#)."



Don't use the same password on multiple large sites that contain personal information. If a spammer were able to come by your information in a large number of Facebook

usernames and passwords, for instance, you wouldn't want them to use that information to compromise your accounts at Gmail, [Amazon.com](#), and Citibank. (Facebook hacking is believed to be one of the ways email account passwords were acquired.) For the ultimate in security, though it increases your reliance on a single program, try a utility like [1Password](#) that can create individualized strong passwords for every site you access, and then enter them for you (since you'll stand no chance of remembering any of them).

Remember that certain passwords, like those for Gmail, Twitter, and Facebook, are used by ancillary Web services like [dlvr.it](#), Mac programs like TweetDeck, and iOS apps like Twitterrific. Once you change the main password, certain things may break until you update the password everywhere else too.

If your email provider allows forwarding of mail to another account, check those settings. Scan your filters as well, if they could be used to forward mail automatically too. The London scammers rely on email forwarding so they can remain undetected even if you continue to use your account. More generally, although it seems unlikely, a bad guy could use forwarding to siphon copies of all your messages to another account for scanning. In one case of a MobileMe account being hacked, the scammers were not only forwarding email from it, but had also changed the password and all the security questions.

Be careful what you put in email - random bad guys aren't likely to do anything with information about your life, but passwords, bank account numbers, credit card numbers, and the like could be extracted automatically.

Prepare for the possibility that your account could be hacked by figuring out ahead of time who you can contact and how to respond. For instance, if you use Gmail, [pre-configure a mobile phone number](#) at which you can receive a verification text message to re-enable a temporarily disabled account (more on why

that might happen shortly). And if you use MobileMe, note that although there's no phone support, there is [live chat support](#).

Use Apple Mail or another POP or IMAP client, if possible, to keep a local copy of all your mail. If someone can send spam from your account, they could also delete all your stored mail, though vandalism is the only reason to do that. If you're saving a local copy via IMAP, back up that local IMAP store, since an IMAP client would likely delete its archive if all the remote messages were deleted.

Escalating Warfare and Collateral Damage -- I now believe that at least Google is increasing security based on these events. Within the last two weeks, [a number of people](#), including me and Tonya, have had their Gmail accounts disabled temporarily. We were each able to reactivate our accounts by receiving a verification code on our iPhones, entering it in Gmail, and then changing the passwords.

Working on a tip from a friend who had this happen to him as well, I went back through the email I'd sent in the previous 24 hours and found one message that Google could easily have seen as spammy - it was a single line of text followed by a URL and was sent to three recipients.

I assume that Google monitors outgoing mail for spam-like behavior, so if they had ratcheted up the sensitivity on that monitoring code to detect account hacking more quickly, that could explain why my account was disabled temporarily.

These sort of problems are less likely to occur to smaller ISPs and email providers that aren't large targets like Apple, Google, Yahoo, and Microsoft. And if problems do occur, smaller companies are more likely to provide human support, which can be extremely comforting when an account has been compromised or disabled. Of course, the large email services provide many advantages too - life is full of tradeoffs.

A good deal of what I've said here is based on observation and conjecture, of course, but regardless, it's a good idea to change your passwords every so often. And if you have suffered from having your account hacked and know how it happened, please share your experiences in the comments!

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Free and Inexpensive Wi-Fi

By [Glenn Fleishman](#)

Wi-Fi signals increasingly fill the air around us, and many of the electronic devices we carry with us support Wi-Fi. So why pay for Wi-Fi when you need to access the Internet while out and about? Occasionally, a for-fee Wi-Fi service may be the only option, but even then we can help you get the most out of a service for the lowest cost.

It has been eight years since I started writing about public Wi-Fi, where venues from cafés and airports to libraries and car-repair shops have been offering Wi-Fi-supplied Internet access. And although these publicly available Wi-Fi networks make up only a small fraction of the tens of millions of Wi-Fi networks worldwide, a few tips will help you find free or at least cheap connectivity when you need it, whether you're running errands around your hometown or are roaming the open road.

You could also use a Wi-Fi hotspot directory like that offered by JiWire, or a Wi-Fi discovery tool like Devicescape's Easy WiFi, which also manages Wi-Fi logins and network passwords for you. This article is about strategy, though: figuring out what networks you can use, rather than what's around you. JiWire offers a [searchable Web site](#) and the [free Wi-Fi Finder iPhone app](#); Devicescape has a [map-based Web site](#) for entering addresses, and the [proximity-based free Easy WiFi iPhone app](#).

(This article focuses on the United States, which I know best. Please let us know about free Wi-Fi in other countries in the comments.)

- Café and Retail Store Wi-Fi -- If you walk down a street in most cities, you'll find free Wi-Fi in many coffee shops and restaurants. But if you're in an unfamiliar part of town, or visiting a city new to you, looking for some specific stores will likely be more productive than wandering around randomly.
- Some restaurant and hotel chains went free years ago, when it was seen as a way to stand out from the deal Starbucks and others were offering at the time. Others just got the free religion and eschewed charging from the very beginning.
- Starbucks was the first chain to commit to offering Wi-Fi, and I [broke the news](#) on the very first locations to test service in Seattle in May 2001. The chain, through its first partner (which went bankrupt) and second (T-Mobile), charged for access for 7 years after the initial rollout.
- But that changed in 2008, when Starbucks switched from T-Mobile to AT&T. Starbucks said it would still charge for service, but would provide 2 hours of continuous free Wi-Fi for regular users of its stored-value Starbucks Card. The card lets you load money, like a gift card, but associates other benefits with the account, rewarding you when you reloading it with more money. Add money or make a purchase to activate 30 days of Wi-Fi service.
- Starbucks modified this in late 2009 to require just a single purchase on a Starbucks Card ever, and then dropped even that requirement on 1 July 2010. [Wi-Fi access as of that date is free](#), and requires only that you click a button to agree of terms of service. You can then surf indefinitely in any of its 6,700 company-owned stores.

- McDonald's, which had charged for Wi-Fi in its stores - \$2.95 for 2 hours - since launching 5 years ago, decided to switch off the fee in mid-January 2010. About 11,500 of 14,000 McDonald's in the United States [have Wi-Fi](#). McDonald's rolled out a coffee bar, McCafe, in many of its stores, and free Wi-Fi appears to be part of the battleground between it and Starbucks.
- Other large national chains with free or inexpensive Wi-Fi include Apple retail stores (naturally!), Barnes & Noble, Borders, and Panera Bread. For a list of all the chains with a varying amount of Wi-Fi - some in all stores, some requiring a store purchase - consult [the Wi-Fi Free Spot chain directory page](#).
- Oddly, Burger King, Jack in the Box, Subway, and most other so-called quick-service restaurants haven't adopted Wi-Fi as a chain-wide idea, although you may find Wi-Fi for free in some locations.

Other Free Location Types -- Outside of the restaurant and retail stores, you might check into a hotel - a hotel lobby, at least. Many hotels provide free Wi-Fi in the reception area or main lounge. Just as you can go into a hotel and get a drink at the bar most times, you can also pop in and use the free Wi-Fi without needing a code. (Quite a few hotels also give guests free in-room Wi-Fi or Ethernet-based access, either included in the price of the room or when you are a member of a free affinity club.)

The counterintuitive rule of thumb is that the cheaper the hotel, the more likely it is to offer free Internet access. Expensive hotels, the sort that charge upwards of \$150 per night, tend to tack on \$10 to \$15 per night fees for all-inclusive Internet, calling, and faxing. ("Daddy, what's a fax?")

Nearly all airports that added Wi-Fi-based Internet access charged for it initially, but that has slowly been changing. Denver is the largest airport to date with free service - it's [filtered](#) and shows ads - but Seattle-Tacoma went free in

January 2010, and Atlanta is considering free service. Many mid-tier airports, such as Las Vegas, Phoenix, and Sacramento, already have free Wi-Fi.

Public libraries in most cities now offer free Internet access at a main branch, and commonly at regional branches, too. Some libraries restrict access to patrons, requiring a library card and ID to log in, or limit use to an hour or two. There are now so many branch libraries with Wi-Fi that sites listing such locations aren't reliably comprehensive. Consult your favorite search engine to find the library site for the city you're in or visiting, and then drill down to find which branches have Internet service.

The most glorious place in the United States to use library Wi-Fi is within the main branch of the New York Public Library, which [transformed its Beaux-Arts Edna Barnes Salomon Room](#) in July 2009 into an Internet reading room with capacity for 128 people. (Oddly, there are no AC outlets!)

Cities and towns and community groups have also unwired public parks, squares, and downtown areas to make those locations more attractive to resident and visitor use. California and a few other states have even put Wi-Fi transmitters in campgrounds, assuming that a few minutes without Internet service might make vacationing Silicon Valley techies lose their minds.

One of the best-known parks with Internet access is adjacent to the New York Public Library's central 42nd Street location noted above: [Bryant Park](#). Once the epitome of neglect in Manhattan, and a haunt only of drug dealers and prostitutes, Bryant Park was reborn in 1992, and has become one of the loveliest parts of midtown Manhattan. Free Wi-Fi access was put in place by a community wireless group in 2002, and has changed hands a few times since.

The town or city hall in many municipalities may also offer free Wi-Fi access, although your

ability to sit down and plug in a laptop could be limited.

Free Wi-Fi Networks from Broadband Providers -- AT&T, Cablevision, Qwest, and Verizon all offer their wired broadband customers free access to certain Wi-Fi networks, most of which are typically for-fee services. In addition, AT&T gives iPhone, BlackBerry, and laptop data users access to the same networks. (Comcast and Road Runner remain the biggest broadband firms that don't currently bundle some kind of Wi-Fi service, but Comcast is rumored to have a plan in the works.)

- AT&T: If you subscribe to nearly any AT&T fixed or mobile broadband service, Wi-Fi access at over 21,000 U.S. locations is thrown in at no additional cost. That's nearly 40 million subscribers in all. Any AT&T DSL or fiber (U-Verse) customer is included, as well as most of its business subscribers. Mobile broadband subscribers who use 3G laptop USB sticks or cards are also included.
- For smartphone users, only access via the iPhone, BlackBerry, or Windows Mobile phone is included. This is also true for 3G iPad owners with an active AT&T 3G subscription. Software updates on each platform try to make the login process automatic, switching from 3G to Wi-Fi without requiring any user intervention. AT&T's deal may not seem as sweet as it once did, because the majority of its locations now have no fee: Starbucks, McDonald's Barnes & Noble, and a few others. However, AT&T operates or has deals in most North American airports that feature for-fee Wi-Fi, where you would otherwise pay from \$5 to \$10 for a 24-hour session, as well in hotels that charge \$10 to \$15 per night for service.
- Verizon: A few months ago, Verizon made Wi-Fi hotspots available to some of its customers in a highly restrictive way. First, you have to have Windows (one of several versions). Second, you must run the VZAccess Manager

software to connect to hotspots. Third, it works only on laptops, not desktops. Fourth, only a few thousand hotspots are included. Fifth, only customers paying for 3 Mbps or faster DSL and 20 Mbps fiber qualify. A few days ago, Verizon added laptop 3G customers, but not smartphone users. Mac OS X users are left out in the cold.

- **Cablevision:** The Connecticut, New York, and New Jersey cable provider has long pushed hard to offer fast cable modem speeds, but the firm surprised a lot of its customers by announcing it would build a huge outdoor Wi-Fi network covering much of its territory in cities and towns. The network is complete in many areas, and free (and only available) to its cable broadband subscribers. (Cablevision built this network in part to challenge Verizon's fiber FiOS network by providing something Verizon didn't offer until recently.)
- **Comcast and Time Warner Cable:** Two other cable giants have launched small efforts of their own, with the clear impression that larger networks are coming. Subscribers on Cablevision's, Comcast's, and Time Warner Cable's broadband networks can use hotspots on any of the other cable networks at no charge.
- **Qwest:** Piggybacking on AT&T's network, Qwest offers its DSL customers the same 21,000-hotspot network. Again, this perk isn't as valuable as it once was given that most of the included locations are free.

Inexpensive Subscriptions -- You can also opt to pay for a pool of Wi-Fi via an aggregator, a firm that signs agreements with thousands of separate Wi-Fi network providers and bundles this into one account and one recurring bill.

This used to be hugely expensive for average users who couldn't write off Internet access as a business expense, ranging from \$30 to \$60 per month, often with a one-year commitment or other fees. Now, with the iPhone data plan costing \$15 or \$25 per month in the United

States, and more routine use of 3G laptop cards that carry \$60 per month data plans, those rates don't seem so bad - but subscription prices have also dropped.

- **Boingo Wireless:** Boingo, founded by long-time friend of TidBITS Sky Dayton - also the founder of EarthLink - provides unlimited North American hotspot access for \$9.95 per month on a laptop or global access for \$7.95 on a smartphone, billed on a recurring basis, but without a contract required beyond each month. A combo plan with the same account is \$17.90 per month - no discount, but less to manage. (Boingo's Global account is \$59 per month and includes 2,000 minutes of use anywhere in its worldwide aggregated network.)
- **To use Boingo on a laptop,** you install a lightweight software package that notifies you whenever a Boingo hotspot is nearby and gives you the option to log in. On a smartphone, you install software that manages the login process. The [Boingo software for iPhone OS](#) (which works with the iPod touch, too) requires that you launch the program at the hotspot to establish a connection. As I noted in regards to AT&T's network earlier, with Starbucks and McDonald's no longer charging, Boingo might seem less useful. However, I've found that there are plenty of locations, including hotels, airports, cafés, and conference centers, where I'm happy to have the subscription instead of paying a one-time hourly or day rate or having no access.
- **iPass:** iPass primarily provides single-bill connectivity for corporations with traveling employees, where hundreds to thousands of users can be centrally managed. iPass also allows users to use their corporate logins and can require the use of a VPN and firewall software when connecting remotely. However, the company also has an iPhone connection app. (iPass sold laptop access for individuals

directly not long ago, but now you have to turn to a reseller for that service.)

- The iPass plan - either \$6.95 per month with a one-year contract, or \$9.95 per month with no contract - includes 1,200 minutes of access per month and costs \$0.20 per minute thereafter anywhere in its worldwide network. The problem at the moment? The company is updating its iPhone software, and has pulled a previous release, although [the Web site doesn't mention this](#). Check back later.

Wait! There's More -- I can't pretend this is a comprehensive list, with tens of thousands of known hotspots in the United States, and likely tens of thousands more that aren't documented. Still, this should help you find some cheap connections while you travel about this holiday season and beyond.

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Hot Links of the Month

Compiled by Tom Ostertag

[Apple, Inc.](#)

[Apple gives Mac users vulnerable Flash Player plugin](#) | ZDNet

[Apple Piles More Patent Infringement Claims On HTC](#) | Infinite Loop

[Odds and Ends: Apple outlines HDMI uses, VLC updated](#) | MacFixIt



[Mac Computers](#)

[Apple - Mac mini - The Most Affordable Energy-Efficient Mac](#) | Apple

[Mac mini \(mid 2010\) review](#) | engadget

[Kimmel Tapes Episode on MacBook Pro...](#) | Low End Mac

[Mac Software](#)

[Troubleshoot The Spinning Beach Ball](#) | Computerworld

[Apple Releases Safari 5](#) | Apple

[iPod/iPhone/iTunes](#)

[Week in Apple: iPhone 4 antenna, iOS 4 review, white iPhone delays](#) | Infinite Loop

[Apple Presents iPhone 4](#) | Apple

[iPad](#)

[The iPad Is Boosting Apple's Market Share in a Big Way](#) | Low End Mac

[Miscellaneous](#)

[Has Google Already Lost the Mobile War?](#) | Low End Mac

[The Fastest ISPs In the US](#) | Slashdot

[Intel, NVIDIA Take Shots At CPU vs. GPU Performance](#) | Slashdot

Members Helping Members

Need Help? Have a question the manual doesn't answer? Members Helping Members is a group of volunteers who have generously agreed to help. They are just a phone call or an email away. Please call only during the appropriate times, and **only if you are a current mini'app'les member** and own the software in question.

Apple II / IIGS Software & Hardware	1	Mac OS X	NV
AppleWorks / ClarisWorks.....	3, 4	Microsoft Excel.....	2, 5
Classic Macs	NV	Microsoft Word	2, 5
Cross-Platform File Transfer	2, 3	Networks	NV
FileMaker Pro	NV	New Users	1
iMacs	NV	PhotoShop	NV
Intel-Based Macs.....	NV	QuarkXPress.....	5
iPhoto	3	Quicken.....	NV
iMovie	6	QuickBooks and QuickBooks Pro	NV
iWork	4	VectorWorks	NV
Mac OS Classic.....	3		

1. Les Anderson	651-735-3953	anderslc@usfamily.net	DEW
2. Tom Ostertag	651-488-9979	tostertag@usfamily.net	DEW
3. Bruce Thompson	763-546-1088	bthompson@macconnect.com	EW
4. Pam Lienke	651-457-6026	plienke@aol.com	DEW
5. Ron Heck	651-774-9151	ronheck@comcast.net	DEW
6. Dave Diamont	952-232-8868	ddiamont@mac.com	DEW

D = Days, generally 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

E = Evenings, generally 5 p.m. to 9 p.m.

W= Weekends, generally 1 p.m. to 9 p.m.

NV = No Volunteer

Please call at reasonable hours and ask if it is a convenient time for helping you. By the way, many of these volunteers can also be contacted on our forums. We appreciate your cooperation.

Mini'app'les needs more volunteers for Members Helping Members — If you are willing to be a Members Helping Members volunteer, please send an email message to Membership Director Les Anderson or contact him on our forums with your name, telephone number, contact hours, and the software and hardware areas you are willing to support.

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_____ Check if this is a change of address notice

_____ Check if you want to volunteer

_____ Check if you want to be added to "Members Helping Members"

_____ Check if you were referred by a club member (if so, please give member's name)

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mini'app'les

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Hopkins, MN 55343-0796

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- Access to our Members Helping Members network of professional and advanced users of Apple technologies. These members volunteer their time to help other members with software, hardware, and other Apple related issues.
- A variety of Mac Special Interest Groups (SIGs) that meet each month.
- Multi-SIG meetings and workshops to help members with computer problems. You can bring your equipment to these events and receive support from knowledgeable Mac users to help diagnose your problem(s).
- Participation in drawings for computer hardware, software, and other computer related materials.
- Discounts from vendors and manufacturers. Refer to the on-line forums for current offers.

mini'app'les

the minnesota apple computer users group, inc.

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Submissions — We welcome contributions from our members. Perhaps you're using new software that you just can't live without. Maybe you have a new piece of hardware that you find extremely useful and of high quality. On the other hand, you might be struggling with problematic software or hardware. Why not share your experience with other members by writing a product review? Doing so may steer others towards quality products or help them avoid the problems you may be having.

Submissions must be received by the 15th day of each month to be included in the next month's newsletter. Please send contributions directly to our post office box (mini'app'les, PO Box 796, Hopkins MN 55343), or email them to miniapples@mac.com.

The deadline for material for the next newsletter is the fifteenth of the month. An article will be printed when space permits and, if in the opinion of the Newsletter Editor or Publications Director, it constitutes material suitable for publication.

This newsletter was produced using Apple's Pages word processor.

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