

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

Forums: <http://miniapples.7.forumer.com>

Email: miniapples@mac.com

From the Editor:

I was off playing boy scout this last month (National Jamboree and a weekend camping) so the vaunted G4 has seen little action. There are several articles that have useful tips such as the one on Five Essential Safari Extensions. I personally am using the Temperature Monitor and Right Zoom applications. Apple has released a couple of updates for security and graphics and there is an article about using Spotlight.

As an aside, maybe we should have a picnic like we did several years ago.

[Tom Ostertag](#), Publications Director

Meeting Calendar

At the right is a list of mini'app'les meetings for September 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 – September 2010			
Thursday	September 2	6:30 pm	Mac Applications SIG
Tuesday	September 7	7:00 pm	Mac OS X SIG
Wednesday	September 8	7:00 pm	VectorWorks SIG*
Thursday	September 16	7:00 am	Macintosh Consultants SIG
Thursday	September 23	7:00 pm	FileMaker Pro SIG
Monday	September 27	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	Helen Young Room, Southdale Library, 7001 York Avenue South, Edina	Tim Drenk, 952-479-0891
Mac OS X SIG	The Foundation, 311 7 th Ave North, Minneapolis	Bob Demeules, 763-559-1124
Mac Q&A SIG	Merriam Park Library, 1831 Marshall Ave., St. Paul	Chuck Hauge, 612-963-5064
Macintosh Consultants SIG	Good Day Café, 5410 Wayzata Blvd., Golden Valley	Bob Demeules, 763-559-1124
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 9 August 2010

In attendance: Tim Drenk, Dave Lundin, Joel Gerdeen, Kevin Strysik, Bruce Thompson

Absent: Dave Diamont, Tom Ostertag, Les Anderson

Other Attendees:

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

Minutes: The minutes for the June 7, 2010, meeting were approved electronically and published on forumer.com on 14 Jun.

Directors' Reports

Treasurer Dave Lundin's report: All bills are paid. A written report was distributed at the meeting. A deposit on July 2 is being investigated further. The budget status for 2009-10 was reviewed and a proposed budget for new fiscal year starting Aug 1 was proposed. [Note that we did not discuss approval.]



President Tim Drenk's report: Tim suggested that we consider organizing an iOS Devices SIG. This would focus on Apps for handheld iOS devices, excluding those apps covered by the Mac Apps SIG.

Secretary Joel Gerdeen's report: Joel met with Harry Lienke on July 11 and reviewed the group files and secretarial responsibilities.

SIG Director Kevin Strysik's report: Kevin sent an email message to all SIG leaders, requesting better communication. If a meeting date change, they should let Kevin know.

Past President Bruce Thompson's report: When necessary, Bruce will update the group calendar published through the groups MobileMe account. The Dropbox used for newsletter share will be transferred to the main Dropbox used for sharing other group files.

Old Business

Process for approving minutes – Tim / Joel: We agreed that a draft of the minutes would be posted by the Wednesday following the BOD meeting. The

BOD would then review and comment by Friday and the minutes would be published on the mini'app'les forum by the following Monday. (See last months minutes for more details.)

Renewal notice problems – Bruce: Bruce reported that the problems with the membership renewal process have been resolved. He is now being notified about bouncing email renewal notifications. The membership form was also updated to reference PayPal payments which are now coming through.

Bylaws change to Joel – Bruce: Joel received the updated Bylaws from Harry.

miniapples.org domain registration and hosting – Tim: The miniapples.org domain has successfully been moved to Bluehost.com. Dual hosts were used for a while until the internet name server changes propagated. Tim will also set up email accounts for the BOD members at miniapples.org. For example, president@miniapples.org and other officer accounts will be established. The account info@miniapples.org will be used for announcements and forwarded messages from the current mac.com accounts.

Possible Fall Saturday workshop – Bruce: The BOD agreed that this is still a good idea, but we still need to decide on a date and location. The Penn Lake library has good access. This venue is good for older systems that are not supported by Apples Genius Bars. Bruce reminded us that the forum has a Buy & Sell section and that this meeting would not be used for that purpose.

New Business

New SIG leaders and SIG changes – Tim: Tim proposed an iOS SIG as discussed above. Tim is leading the Mac Apps SIG which has been moved to the first Thursday of the month. The Q&A SIG leadership is being transferred from Les Anderson to Chuck Hauge.

New Webmaster – Tim: Dave Diamont will be the new Webmaster. Tim will get him the info and files for the web site.

Next meeting: Scheduled for October 11, 2010, at the Merriam Park Library at 6:00 pm. All club members are welcome to attend.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:20 pm.

Q&A SIG Report • 26 July 2010

By [Les Anderson](#)

A few of the topics from the July Q&A SIG dealt with EXCEL and custom templates.

A member had some old templates that were no longer needed and could not remove them from his template menu. There were also questions dealing with an upgrade from EXCEL 4 to EXCEL 10.



A visitor had some floppies with files she needed but could not read them with a floppy drive she bought. It turned out that they were 800K floppies, and the newer drives only read 1.4 meg floppies. A good point to remember if you have old files you need to access. Another reason to keep that older MAC in the basement.

Another member wanted to draw an electronic diagram and needed to have arrows in a circular pattern. Lucky for us, PAGES expert, Pam, was there to do a short demo of the graphic options in PAGES.

Back in June I stated that I would step down by the end of the year as the SIG leader. Chuck Hauge will be taking over the SIG.

The Q&A SIG meets on the fourth Monday of each month at the Merriam Park Library at 6PM.

OSX Meeting • 6 July 2010

by *Bruce Thompson*

For the August OS X SIG, Bob Demeules was out of town and our illustrious President, Tim Drenk, volunteered to substitute. As usual, discussion started off about the latest Apple hardware. Of note to video and graphic professionals, the Mac Pro can now be ordered as a 12-core machine. Talk about super computers for your desktop!



Tim then displayed the new Apple battery charger. As with all recent Apple developments, it is a “green” device. Its power consumption drops significantly after the batteries are charged. And the batteries are of a nickel-metal hydride construction that holds its charge for an extended period of time.

One of the reasons for the battery charger is the new Magic Trackpad, a Bluetooth trackpad designed to be used with desktop computers. It provides the same Multi-Touch capabilities as the recent laptops. It has the same profile as the latest Bluetooth keyboard. And, we have been told, there are ways to make it work with Windows, should one be compelled to use that platform.

Tim then began an examination of Finder alternatives. One option is Macintosh Explorer. This is a fairly old program that has a look similar to the Windows Explorer. But there are several limitations, including losing the functionality of the Finder sidebar. One of the primary reasons to consider it previously was that it had image preview when Finder did not. It also has some tools for changing file information, including the ability to do batch changes. But it has not been updated for some time.

The other Finder replacement Tim demonstrated is Path Finder. This is a current

application that replicates most of the Finder and then adds additional capabilities. Among its many features are tab Finder windows, a dual window setup (great for moving or copying files), the ability to empty the Trash on a volume by volume basis, a bookmark bar for favorite file and folder locations, configurable file and folder listings, and the ability to show hidden files on either a global or folder by folder basis. While the configurations are somewhat scattered, the capabilities are extensive.

At the conclusion of the demonstrations, Tim gave away a copy of Path Finder. The lucky winner was Joel Gerdeen.

The next meeting of the OS X SIG is scheduled for Tuesday, Sept. 7. As a reminder, there is a Twins game that night and parking could be at a premium, so plan your travel and arrival time accordingly.

Apple User Group Bulletin - August 17, 2010

From The mini'app'les Forummer

Recent Highlights from the Apple User Group Resources website:

<http://appleusergroupresources.com>

- Save the Date: User Group Reunion
- Bellarine Mac User Group: Troubleshooting Guide
- iMUG and iPad: A Winning Combo
- History... History... Is Your Group on the List?
- Macintosh Computer Expo: Be there
- Amsterdam Final Cut Pro SuperMeet 2010
- Special Offer: 15 percent off Computer Memory, Flash Drives and Hard Drives
- Special Offer: 25 percent off Home Inventory
- Special Offer: 20 percent off All Eltima Mac Products
- Special Offer: 38 percent off iMedia Converter for Mac

- Private: Ambassador Offer: Computer Memory, Flash Drives and Hard Drives
- Private: Ambassador Offer: Home Inventory
- Private: Ambassador Offer: iMedia Converter for Mac
- Private: Leaders Offer: IGG Software iBank 4

Be sure to visit the special offers link to find offers and codes on one page.

http://appleusergroupresources.com/?page_id=653

password: resource

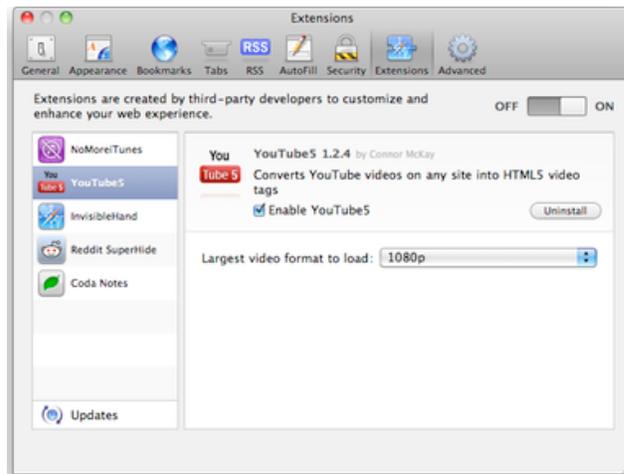
Five Essential Safari Extensions

by [Lex Friedman](#)

Web browsers like Firefox, Chrome, and even Internet Explorer have offered support for add-ons and extras since soon after their respective releases. Apple's own Safari browser, however, took seven and a half years to gain support for extensions, which arrived with the recently released Safari 5.

Apple launched [its own directory of Safari extensions](#) last month; before then, Jonas Wisser's [Safari Extensions blog](#) was the easiest place to find new extensions - but both sites can feel a bit overwhelming. There are hundreds of Safari Extensions, with more arriving every day, so it can be hard to find the signal in the noise. I've already dug up several extensions that vastly improve my own daily Internet surfing - perhaps they can help you, too.

YouTube5 -- Connor McKay's [YouTube5](#) is one of my favorite Safari Extensions - but don't judge the extension by the creator's Web site. Enabling this extension dramatically reduces the number of Flash videos you'll encounter on the Web. YouTube videos, whether on YouTube itself or embedded elsewhere, will no longer use Flash; rather, they will leverage the magic of HTML5, which should mean much lower processor demands (and thus less power consumption) for your Mac.



The YouTube5 extension includes a single preference: you can choose the largest video format the extension should load when available: 360p, 720p, or full high-definition 1080p.

InvisibleHand -- Created by the eponymous shopping site, the [InvisibleHand](#) extension makes me happy because I love saving money. Before I make a purchase online, I spend considerable time searching to make sure I'm getting the best deal possible. Or, at least, I used to.



With InvisibleHand installed, you see a small yellow bar across the top of some shopping sites. That bar tells you how much you could save if you instead purchase that product from another source (it also tells you if you're already at the retailer with the best price). For example, when I looked at the iPod touch on Amazon.com, InvisibleHand suggested that I could buy it elsewhere for \$37 less - a savings of more than 20 percent.

When InvisibleHand works, it's awesome, and can save you some serious coin. Unfortunately, the extension does have a few weaknesses: You can't configure which other online retailers it

should search, so if you'd prefer not to see, say, eBay price comparisons, you're out of luck.

NoMoreiTunes -- Another Safari extension that works to eliminate one major Web-browsing annoyance goes by the catchy name of [NoMoreiTunes](#). Whether you're clicking on an iPhone or iPad app link, or an iTunes song or movie, you always know what to expect: After the Apple-hosted preview page loads, then iTunes opens, and it (slowly) loads the content you were after.

Well, that's what happened in the era *before* NoMoreiTunes. Now, when I click those links, I see Apple's preview page for the given content (like [this one](#)) - and iTunes remains undisturbed. It's delightfully refreshing. It would be nice if Apple would code its iTunes Preview Web site so it doesn't pop open iTunes anyway, but until Cupertino comes to its senses, NoMoreiTunes makes a great sanity restorer.

[Editor's note: It appears that Apple has indeed come to its senses and changed this behavior on the iTunes Web site after the initial publication of this article, so there's no need for NoMoreiTunes any more. -Adam]



Ultimate Status Bar -- Safari's status bar - the strip at the bottom edge of your browser window that displays a URL when you hover the cursor over a hyperlink - is off by default, but once you turn it on, it's always there. In some browsers, like Google Chrome, the status bar appears only when necessary when you move your cursor over a link.

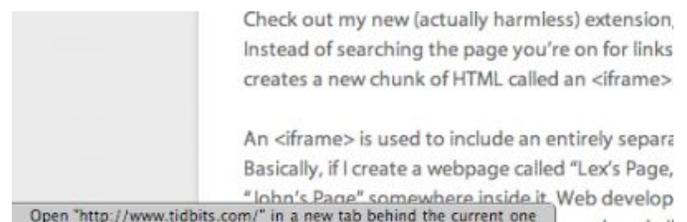
[Ultimate Status Bar](#) emulates that behavior, freeing a few precious vertical pixels to show you more of your Web pages. On top of that, the extension offers numerous benefits over Safari's default status bar. For one thing, you can change its appearance; the extension includes

ten themes, from the subtle Classic to the technicolor, unicorn-laden Sparkle. Beyond that, it shows the destination URL's favicon and even expands shortened URLs like those you'd find on Twitter, so you can know where you're going before you click. And the extension can even show the size of a linked file to download.

A promising competitor called [Gentle Status Bar](#) offers similar functionality, but hews much more closely to Safari's own design aesthetic, with the added benefit of reflecting when you're holding down keys that will make the clicked link open in a new window or tab. But it lacks some of Ultimate Status Bar's niceties, like revealing the favicon or file size for the link in question.

AutoPagerize -- Many Web sites break their articles into separate pages, to encourage extra page views (which lead to extra ad impressions). [AutoPagerize](#) magically makes that extra clicking (and waiting for pages to load) go away. Subsequent pages of the article you're reading simply load right into the page, waiting for you to scroll down and read them. The Japanese developer's Web site is a bit tough to parse, but I needed only to install the extension to start using it successfully.

But Wait, There's More -- While those five extensions are the ones that most regularly impact my daily Web surfing, there are plenty of others. John Siracusa's standalone [Reload Button](#), an unofficial [Instapaper](#) button called [Instafari](#), the [Reddit](#)-improving extension [Reddit SuperHide](#), and Panic Software's [Coda Notes](#) all provide handy features and are worth trying out. [Apple's own directory](#) includes new extensions from big partners like Twitter, The New York Times, and Major League Baseball; those are certainly worth a look, too.



In another, not-too-distant life, I was a Web developer. Since Safari Extensions just use familiar bits of Web code - like HTML, CSS, and JavaScript - I realized that I could create some for my own purposes. To date, [I've built two](#). The first, [Facebook Improved](#), removes considerable amounts of cruft from that social networking site - invasive ads, unnecessary elements (that ever-present callout to create an event), and the like. It also changes the site's font to Helvetica, and makes subtle changes to the placeholder text on certain fields to ensure you never get confused about whether you're posting on someone else's Wall or your own.

My other extension, [Affiliatizer for Safari](#), automatically rewrites Amazon links across the Web so that they include the Amazon affiliate code of your choosing. The extension, which affects only links that don't *already* include affiliate codes of their own, accepts up to three affiliate codes, and picks one at random on each page view. It's a nice way to reward yourself, or a friend who has an affiliate code. By default, the app includes my affiliate code and those of our friends John Gruber and Jason Snell, until you save your own preferences instead.

But ounce for ounce, no extensions benefit my day-to-day Web surfing as much as YouTube5, InvisibleHand, NoMoreiTunes, Ultimate Status Bar, and AutoPagerize. Try them out, and you'll see for yourself how handy these tools are when you're on Safari. And of course, if you decide you don't like what a particular extension does for you, just visit the Extension pane in Safari's Preferences window to uninstall it.



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VMware Fusion 3.1.1

by *Lex Friedman*

VMware Fusion, which lets you run Windows and other operating systems on your Intel-powered Mac, has been updated to version 3.1.1. The maintenance-focused update now supports VMware vSphere 4.1 as a guest operating system, enabling you to run ESX without needing spare hardware - though this feature is currently labeled as experimental and the company warns against using it in production environments. The update also addresses an issue with some iSight cameras, removes an incorrect disk error message after a host crash, and corrects an issue where audio recording worked only at 44.1 kHz. VMware Fusion requires Mac OS X 10.4.11 or higher, and of course a copy of Windows if you plan to install that operating system. The download is accessible from within VMware Fusion itself, or from the VMware Web site. (\$79.95 new, free upgrade, 434 MB)

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GraphicConverter 6.7.4

by *Lex Friedman*

Lemkesoft has updated its flagship image-manipulation tool GraphicConverter to version 6.7.4. The significant 6.7 update earlier this year added the capability to import a variety of new image formats, including scrap files, HMR, dm2 and dm3, and direct SVG via PDF. Also new in 6.7 was added support for the AppleScript command "search with spotlight." Since that release, GraphicConverter has seen a few minor updates, adding more support for exporting QuickTime movies, importing larger TIFFs, exporting GIF animations as filmstrips, importing FUJI files, integrating with the Google Earth Safari plug-in, and the ability to

undo actions even after changing your selection.

The recent update to 6.7.4 adds an option to scale after crop, PDN preview display, and a sepia batch action. Issues with color profiles, Unicode support, and 1080p and animation scaling were also addressed. See Lemkesoft's Web site for full release notes on all that has changed since 6.7.

Multiple versions of GraphicConverter are available for download; you can choose English-only editions, PowerPC-only editions, or the standard universal and localized edition. (\$34.95 new, free upgrade, 100 MB)

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Find Files More Easily in Mac OS X

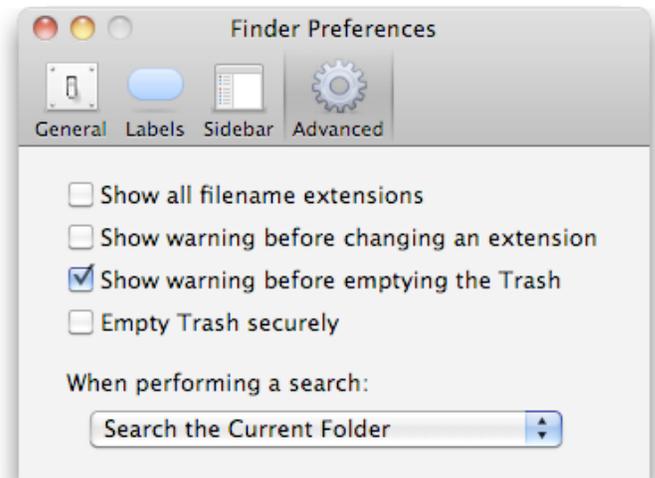
by Adam C. Engst

For some people, Apple's Spotlight technology is a great boon, shining bright light into the dark nooks and crannies of a hard disk. For others, particularly those who want to search primarily by file name, Spotlight can be annoying to use. I fall into that latter group - I know what my documents are called, for the most part, so if I'm looking for a document, I almost always search by file name (when I do search by "contents" - all file metadata, including textual content - I'm usually disappointed).

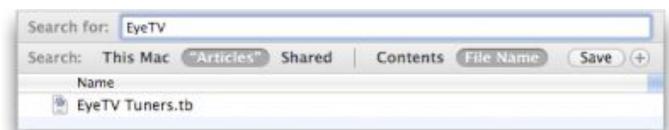
One frequently mentioned solution to the Spotlight problem is the freeware EasyFind from DEVONtechnologies, which Matt reviewed in "EasyFind 4.0: It's Easy, It Finds, It's Free" (11 October 2007). But EasyFind is relatively slow, since it doesn't index your hard disk, and Spotlight can be tweaked to work more the way many of us want, with a few simple settings. There's nothing new here, but lots of Mac users still aren't aware of these options.

First, if you usually know roughly where the files you're looking for are located, you can restrict

Spotlight to search the current Finder folder by default, instead of This Mac. To do this, choose Finder > Preferences, click the Advanced button, and choose Search the Current Folder from the pop-up menu. From then on, when you invoke the Finder's Find command by choosing File > Find (Command-F), searches will be limited to the current folder showing in the frontmost Finder window. This option first appeared in Mac OS X 10.6 Snow Leopard.



Second, if you usually want to search by file name instead of the file's contents, you can make sure the Search bar at the top of the Finder window is set to File Name without requiring an additional click. Hold down the Shift key, and choose File > Find by Name (Command-Shift-F). This command is available in both Mac OS X 10.5 Leopard and 10.6 Snow Leopard.

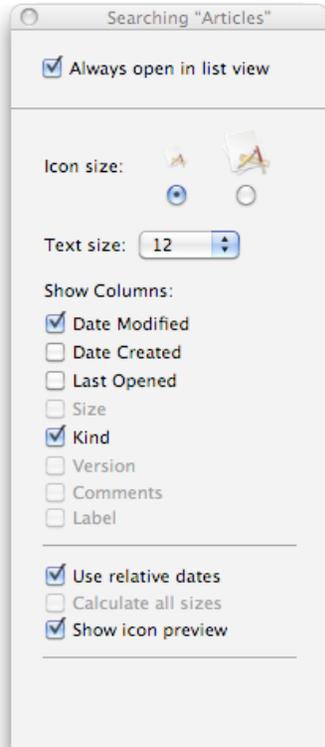


If you want Find by Name to be your default action, you can switch the keyboard shortcuts using the Keyboard Shortcuts view of the Keyboard preference pane. Just click the + button, and add entries for "Find" and "Find by Name..." (note the three periods - not an ellipsis - after the name) with the appropriate keyboard shortcuts. You may have to log out or restart for the new shortcuts to become active, and I've found remapping shortcuts in this

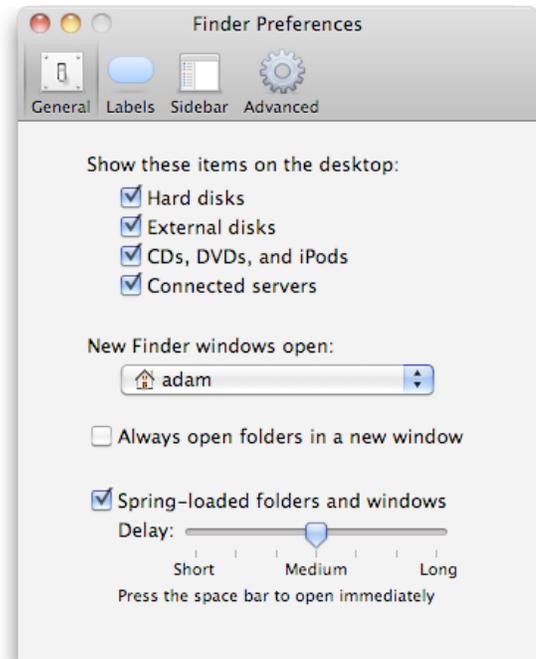
fashion to be a bit finicky, sometimes requiring multiple tries. Again, you can do this in both Leopard and Snow Leopard.



One last suggestion. You can adjust the look of the search results window just like any other Finder window, and once you've done that, the Finder remembers it for subsequent usages. To do this, first start a search. Once the Finder window has search options in it, switch to the desired view (I prefer List view - choose View > as List or press Command-2) and choose View > Show View Options to reveal the View Options window. In it, you can select the "Always open in list view" checkbox if you desire, and you can pick which columns appear. I prefer Date Modified to the default of Last Opened, and yes, it's a darn shame that not



all columns are available - notably Size. I have no idea why Apple won't allow us to see the size, version, comments, and labels of found items. You can also resize columns by dragging their column separators and rearrange columns by dragging their headers. Once you get the window looking the way you like, close it, and the Finder should remember its layout next time.



A few quick caveats. If you have "Always open folders in a new window" selected in the Finder's General preferences, using either of the Find commands will create a new window that defaults to whatever location is set in the "New Finder windows open" pop-up menu, which will likely be confusing. I recommend deselecting the "Always open folders in a new window" option. Also, these settings apply only when you start the search from the Finder, not if you use the Spotlight menu or Command-Spacebar.

If you find yourself changing Spotlight's Search bar settings every time you look for a file, perhaps these settings will make your life just a little bit easier.

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TidBITS Watchlist: Notable Software Updates

Adobe Acrobat/Reader 9.3.4 and 8.2.4 -- Adobe has released updates to Adobe Acrobat and Reader - for both the current 9.x versions and the previous 8.x versions - to address a critical security vulnerability related to TrueType font handling. You can update using the programs' automatic update mechanisms, but many people, including us, have trouble with them, so use the links provided to download the latest version manually if need be. That said, be warned that many people are having trouble with the update to Acrobat 8.2.4 rendering the program unusable - Adobe is aware of the problem. Until a fix appears, users of Acrobat 8.x should hold off on the update or, if it's too late, revert to 8.2.3. (Free updates, various sizes)

Pear Note 2.0.1 -- Hard on the heels of the major 2.0 release, Useful Fruit Software has released Pear Note 2.0.1 with two notable changes to the multimedia note-taking software. A crashing bug that could occur when Pear Note was updating its search cache has been fixed, and the Web sharing layout has been improved for very long recordings. (\$39.99 new, free update, 5.0 MB)

TextExpander 3.1.1 -- Smile - née SmileOnMyMac - has upgraded its typing shortcut utility TextExpander to version 3.1.1. The maintenance release fixes a couple of serious bugs, including a potential crash and an issue that could cause you to lose all your saved snippets (the customizable shortcuts that you type to trigger longer text strings). The update also includes a fix for the Adapt to Case option. (\$34.95 new, free update, 4.4 MB)

Typinator 4.1 -- Typinator 4.1 brings a slew of fixes and improvements to the text-expansion utility. Among them are speed boosts for Quick Search and text file imports, clearer behavior during installation and in-application updating, and corrections for text expansion with Gmail

in Firefox, Amazon's Kindle for Mac, Komodo, and Apple Mail. Developer Ergonis Software offers more detailed release notes. (€19.99 new, free update, 3.2 MB)

Interarchy 10.0.2 -- Nolobe's file transfer client Interarchy, which recently saw a major revision to 10.0, has now been bumped to version 10.0.2 to fix more bugs discovered after the main release. The latest bug fixes address various issues with Net Disks, and also correct problems with dragging and editing bookmarks, installing the Interarchy command line tool, and using the Open menu items. Also included in the latest upgrade are numerous improvements to Interarchy's Amazon S3 support. Note that this release also disables SSH ControlMaster, which was reportedly causing performance issues; a hidden preference key can be used to turn it back on. See Nolobe's blog for full release notes. (\$49.95 new, free update, 6.5 MB)

Snow Leopard Graphics Update -- Apple has released the Snow Leopard Graphics Update to address graphics problems in games and graphics applications. In particular, the update addresses frame rate performance problems in Portal and Team Fortress 2 on certain Macs, and fixes a bug that could cause Aperture 3 and StarCraft II to crash or freeze. Macworld is now reporting that the update can significantly improve graphics performance in other games as well. It's available via Software Update or the Apple Support Downloads page. (Free, 65.65 MB)

Keyboard Maestro 4.3.2 -- Stairways Software has upgraded its flagship Keyboard Maestro utility to version 4.3.2. The minor update addresses aesthetic and functional issues alike. On the visual side, the new version improves the look of disabled keyboard actions to make them more obviously disabled. On the usability side, various tweaks improve typing performance, correct issues with rogue characters, and fix a crash that could occur when referenced files were removed.

Additionally, the release adds a configurable command for `osascript`, which enables you to execute AppleScript plug-ins as 32-bit.

Keyboard Maestro requires Mac OS X 10.5 or higher, and a free trial is available. (\$36 new, free upgrade, 9.0 MB)

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RightZoom • Blazing Tools Software

Requirements: Mac OS X 10.4 or later.

The RightZoom utility is created for people who don't like the default behavior of the green Zoom button in Mac OS X programs. This small program changes its behavior, so a green button will always maximize your windows to all available screen space instead of inconvenient resizing. You will also be able to maximize the active window with Command + Option + E keys (can be customized).

The program changes the most annoying examples of inconvenient zoom button behavior (Finder, Safari, MS Office, Pages etc). You can easily extend this list with your own applications.

Search for RightZoom on MacUpdate.

Temperature Monitor • Marcel Bresink Software-Systeme

Requirements: Mac OS X 10.4 or later, Universal

Temperature Monitor is an application to read out all accessible temperature sensors in Macintosh computers. The program can visualize the history graphs of the readings, display measured values in a large variety of fashions, or announce readings by speech output. It can also store and export values.

Temperature Monitor is the small gratis version of the application Hardware Monitor. Hardware Monitor can additionally display "non-temperature" sensors and artificial operating system probes, or control external LCD panels. Temperature Monitor is part of a software suite of 9 different monitoring applications which can be used for numerous purposes.

Temperature Monitor is electronically distributed software. You can download the product free of charge here.

Recording TV to iTunes with Elgato's EyeTV Tuners

by Julio Ojeda-Zapata

I don't TiVo - if you'll forgive my use of the word as a verb - but I do timeshift my TV watching. I can't recall the last time I watched anything live on the tube. All my favorite shows - from "60 Minutes" and "Frontline" to "Doctor Who," "The Big Bang Theory," and "The Daily Show with Jon Stewart" - are recorded and archived for future consumption.

And being a Mac nerd, I do this the Mac way.

I am a longtime user of EyeTV-tuning gizmos, which are made by Elgato for use, primarily, with the Mac. For years, I have depended on my Apple computers and my EyeTV-tuning gadgetry to convert my programs into digital bits so I could watch them whenever and wherever I wanted.

EyeTV devices plug into a Mac's USB port and essentially turn the computer into a TiVo-style device. They detect analog (NTSC) and digital (ATSC) signals and display them on the Mac's screen, which becomes a TV. Users then record what they want, using EyeTV software on their Macs to change channels, set up automated recordings (via online TV Guide listings) and more. Once recorded, the programs are normal video files that can be viewed in iTunes or other software, converted to formats that can play on

iOS devices, or even fiddled with in video editing software.

My love affair with Elgato's EyeTV products has grown gradually as they have matured. There was a time when they were awful - crude and unreliable, with video quality that was uniformly terrible. Much of this was not Elgato's fault - Macs (and computers in general) were not powerful and dependable enough to handle the necessary video processing properly, unlike a modern 27-inch iMac that makes a jaw-dropping television when Elgato-ed up. A detailed timeline of Elgato's hardware and software products can be found on Wikipedia.

Though Elgato products are now fantastic, using them can result in annoying moments. Every so often, I will overlook some little setting or detail and a favorite program won't be recorded. The use of Elgato gear is a decidedly geeky kind of TV timeshifting, and not for technophobes.

However, problems with the Elgato experience are, once again, not always Elgato's fault. These days, Elgato has been in a running technology battle with the likes of the cable giant Comcast, which is changing how its programs are fed to viewers. Comcast's changes have forced Elgato to adapt - which it has done very nicely.

Despite the Spanish-sounding name, Elgato is based in Munich, Germany, but has offices in San Francisco. The company has sterling credentials - its founder, Markus Fest, is the creator of the Toast disc-burning software for Mac, and the company's product evangelist for years (the aptly named Mike Evangelist), was one of the key minds behind iDVD while at Apple. (He recently took a job at Minnesota-based Code 42 Software - creators of the frequently lauded CrashPlan online backup software and service - as vice president of marketing. In the interests of full disclosure, Mike is a friend and fellow St. Paul-area resident.)

QAM, I Am -- Older EyeTV tuners, like the EyeTV EZ and EyeTV Wonder, recorded only analog signals. Later tuners, starting with the EyeTV 250, went digital in a variety of ways. As the age of high-definition over-the-air broadcasts dawned, for instance, I could connect an EyeTV tuner to a simple indoor antenna and pull down pristine digital signals.

But I now have an even cooler trick up my sleeve.

The roughly two dozen digital channels available over the air are also available via my Comcast feed, in digital form (and often in high definition) at no cost. The channels include all the network affiliates as well as other digital options. My wife's beloved Spanish-language Univisión channel is on the list, for instance.

These channels, right there for the watching by any Comcast user who knows where to look and has the correct gear, are known as "clear QAM" or "in the clear" channels. Other cable providers offer similar ones.

Getting all this free digital goodness, in my case, is easy. All I have to do is:

1. Plug an EyeTV Hybrid tuner into a USB port on one of my Macs.
2. Connect the coaxial cable with my Comcast feed into the other end of the EyeTV Hybrid.
3. Fire up the EyeTV software.
4. Initiate a setup assistant to look for all those digital channels via the coax hookup.

Like magic, the EyeTV tuner and software sniff out all the free QAM channels and deposit them on the channel-list section of the EyeTV 3 application. I can then associate them with TV Guide's terrific online listings in order to set up automatic recordings of my favorite programs. (Only later-model EyeTV tuners, starting with the EyeTV 500, are able to perform this trick.)

As I write this on a MacBook Pro on a Sunday evening, "60 Minutes" in high definition is about to begin. The EyeTV Hybrid tuner will record it, and the EyeTV software will then

export it to iTunes for my MacBook Pro or iPad enjoyment. Every weekday evening, I do the same with my wife's fave Univisión soap opera, "Hasta Que el Dinero nos Separe" ("Until Money Do Us Part"... don't ask).

Tuning Me, Tuning You -- This great TV-recording technology is not unique to Elgato, to be clear. There are other Mac tuners (from the likes of Equinux) as well as a gazillion tuners for Windows (I like the Hauppauge ones). Older Elgato hardware was derived from tuners designed for Windows, in fact. Certain PC-centric tuners can even be used with Macs in tandem with the EyeTV software.

To complete this little circle, Elgato's latest tuner, the EyeTV Hybrid that I'm using, is packaged with Windows drivers so it can be used either with a Mac or in tandem with Microsoft's Windows Media Center.

What sets Elgato apart is its Macintosh-flavored elegance and its attention to detail. The EyeTV software has evolved into a masterpiece of interface design, with massive flexibility. For instance, its Smart Guides feature lets me do with TV recording what iTunes does with its Smart Playlists, giving me fine control over what gets recorded. Exporting to iTunes is, of course, killer, since I can then do whatever I please with the video, including transfer it to an iPod or an iPad.

For these and other reasons, EyeTV is my preferred means for keeping track of my favorite programs. I can't rave about it enough.

I'm reminded from time to time, though, that I'm doing all this TV stuff on a computer instead of a simplified, idiot-proof set-top box. With so many hardware and software variables - not to mention the occasional kernel panic - recordings occasionally won't happen as intended and I'll be deprived of my latest show. Failing to record my wife's latest soap-opera episode makes me feel awful, even though she's sweet about it.

To be fair, this will usually happen because of user error. The complexity of managing EyeTV 3 recordings means I'll inevitably make a mistake. So when there's something important that I want to ensure gets recorded, I've been known to set up multiple Macs, each with an EyeTV tuner, at different locations, to minimize the possibility of coming up empty. Crazy, I know, but I'd hate to screw up and miss a "V" episode.

Adapt, Adapt, Adapt -- Elgato has had to muster all of its ingenuity amid changing times in the cable- and satellite-TV realms. Old ways of recording programs using EyeTV gear are rapidly being rendered obsolete, so Elgato has to come up with new approaches.

Comcast, for instance, is in the process of phasing out most of its old-style analog service and nudging its customers toward digital offerings. In other words, those long accustomed to using Comcast service with a coaxial connection directly into their TVs now have to get cable boxes.

This creates complications for me, and for other Elgato users.

For the longest time, I've been able to get a full roster of analog channels, about 100 in all, the same way I accessed those QAM channels - with my Comcast connection jacked directly into my EyeTV Hybrid tuner.

Now Comcast has forced an unpleasant choice on me:

- Do QAM as usual, with the capability to set up automated recordings via the EyeTV application, but give up analog channels entirely. Boo!
- Get the full roster of analog channels on a Mac via a set-top box, but give up QAM entirely, along with automated EyeTV recording. Double boo!
- Use a physical switcher to shift between the two previous options. I loathe this since it creates a mess of cables that is a far cry from

the older, one-cable-into-the-EyeTV approach, and because it puts even more burden on me to avoid making mistakes.

Elgato, thankfully, has come up with an alternative solution for those who have cable or satellite set-top boxes.

Its latest device, the EyeTV HD, is not a tuner. Instead it plugs into composite and (if available) component ports on a set-top box to record whatever channel the box happens to be set to. Channel switching is done via an IR blaster, a zapper that sits in front of the box and works as a remote. IR blasters tend to work well, but are prone to error, when something is placed between the blaster and the IR receiver, for instance, or if the blaster is knocked out of alignment.

Your Mac becomes the brain of this Rube Goldberg system, running the EyeTV software, and connecting to the EyeTV HD via USB and to the TV via DVI or HDMI (essentially using the TV as the display). Recordings are deposited onto the Mac's hard drive and exported to iTunes, as usual.

The ideal Mac for this is, of course, Apple's new unibody Mac mini with an HDMI port for HDTV use. I tested the EyeTV HD and Mac mini with a big, beautiful LG plasma set.

The EyeTV HD is not the most elegant approach to TV recording and requires a bit of fiddling, but it works for the most part. And it goes a long way to answering the question, "Why in the world would I connect a Mac to my HDTV?"

The EyeTV HD solution is great in one key respect: All shows, HD or not, on all channels, are available for recording (limited only by the channel packages to which you are subscribed). The device even bypasses copy protection associated with some programs, since recording does not occur over the HDMI connection that enables this annoying impediment.

Elgato has recently started supporting iOS 4 with its iPad- and iPhone-savvy iOS app, which functions as an extension of an EyeTV user's Mac setup. You must first set up your Wi-Fi router to permit EyeTV access on that network, or via 3G or a Wi-Fi network at a separate location. Once this is done (which is a bit of a headache, largely due to router-configuration complexities), EyeTV 3 recordings and even live TV magically become viewable as Internet video, streaming from your Mac to your iOS device (not always smoothly, alas). You can access record settings and show listings from afar, too.

Elgato keeps working on the encoding end, too. It provides a separate USB-stick device called the Turbo.264 HD, which dramatically speeds up video conversion (from EyeTV's format to iTunes-friendly form, say), especially on older Macs. A software-only Turbo.264 HD version without hardware acceleration has just been released.

What's next, Elgato? I am dying to know what Elgato will come up with next.

I dislike the remote that Elgato bundles with its tuners, for instance, and have long lobbied for a cooler one. The logical approach to this problem nowadays, is, naturally, an iOS 4 app to turn one of Apple's devices into an EyeTV remote. I'll wager Elgato is cooking up something like that.

What about EyeTV software for Windows? Hey, that could happen. Apple created a version of iTunes for Windows, didn't it? I'd welcome a Windows-based EyeTV program since most of my Macs run Windows 7 as well as Mac OS X, via Boot Camp. It would be fantastic for my Macs to be fully EyeTV-capable regardless of which operating system I happened to be using.

As I've worked on this article, I have become increasingly amazed at how Elgato products (I must have used a dozen or more different EyeTV tuners over the years) have permeated my digital existence. It's one of the reasons I feel

so lucky to be a Mac user. TiVo does have its fanatics, but given a choice, I'll go with a Mac and EyeTV tuner every time.

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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.

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