

The South Bay Mug MACINTOSH

A Monthly Cupful For South Bay Apple Mac User Group Members, Jan. 2005

MAChinations

A personal view from Bob

Streaming Audio

There's a ton of music on the Internet, both as files and streaming audio. iTunes let's you listen to free Internet radio programs. Click the Radio icon in the iTunes sidebar, select from many genres, pick a station and enjoy. It helps to have a high-speed Internet connection for best quality but many stations work at dial-up speeds. Many broadcasts are archived on the Internet and can be played using your browser and a media player. Two of my favorites are "Prairie Home Companion" (NPR) and "Take the Floor" (BBC).

There are several streaming audio (and video) formats. Most popular is Real Audio, followed by Windows Media and QuickTime. We all have QuickTime and you can download the free RealPlayer 10 and Windows Media Player 9.

Audio Hijack Once you can listen to streaming audio, wouldn't it be nice to record it. You can hook up a tape recorder, but since we live in a digital age, copy it digitally and add it to iTunes or an iPod or burn it to a CD. There's a couple of programs that do it. I've been using Audio Hijack (\$16), and more recently, Audio Hijack Pro (\$32). (There's also WireTap Pro (\$19). I understand earlier versions were free and still work.) Tell Audio Hijack the application you want to capture (hijack) audio from (e.g. iTunes, Safari, RealPlayer or DVD Player) and it records all audio from that application alone. Audio Hijack Pro can save it as AAC or MP3 as well as AIFF. It can import into iTunes, burn a collection of tunes to a CD or put it on your iPod. Audio Hijack also works as an audio recorder from a line input (tape/records) or microphone, but it's not as full-featured as other audio recording programs.



On-line Music Apple is Mr. Big in on-line music sales and uses the "buy it and keep it" model. RealNetworks and others are trying to cash in on music sales using a subscription model. Apple uses AAC encoding, while others use Microsoft's WMA. Each uses different content protection schemes (known as digital rights management, or DRM), and are not compatible.

Rhapsody. RealNetworks just announced Rhapsody.com, a browser-based streaming music subscription service for broadband users that now works with Macs. It's "all-you-can-eat" for a monthly fee. Subscribers paying for the Rhapsody Unlimited service can stream as much audio as they like for a \$10 per month, but if you stop paying you can no longer listen. At the present time it doesn't let you save songs to your Mac or iPod. Audio Hijack can record them, but it's in violation of RealNetwork's license agreement.

With the launch of Rhapsody.com, users can, for free, stream up to 25 songs a month on-demand, as well as listen to 25 commercial-free streaming "radio" stations classified by theme and genre. Rhapsody carries over 1.4 million tracks from the five major music labels as well as independent distributors, so RealNetworks has enabled free streaming access to a big library of commercial music. They hope you'll like it and subscribe and that they will earn enough advertising revenue from the browser-based player that they'll eventually come out ahead.

Sign up with an email address, zip code and year of birth but you don't have to give them a credit card number. Install the RhapsodyPlayerEngine.plugin. I signed up using Safari and found the service to work well and to be easy to use.



Bob Brooks

Helping Beginners

310-545-8060

Bob@SBAMUG.com

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More on iTunes music

Apple keeps adding features to iTunes, along with new iPod models, and I keep discovering new tricks. For the inside story I recommend the book "iTunes & iPod," part of the Missing Manual series.

To get music into your iTunes library:

- Download it from Apple's music store (\$\$)
- Rip (import) your own CDs
- Download legal, free stuff from the Internet
- Digitize your tapes and LPs

Storing music in AIFF or WAV format takes 600 MB per hour, so most people import it as AAC or MP3 files that are about 1/10 the size. Although AAC is used by Apple's music store and is claimed to be superior, MP3 is more widely supported. My tin ears can't tell any difference.

Insert a CD in your Mac and iTunes will automatically open so you can play it. If you are connected to the Internet, iTunes will access the CDDB database and assign track names and other information (tags) to the tunes. Click the Import button and the tracks will be ripped to your library along with the tags, according to your preferences. Easy as pie.

Tags: Along with the audio, MP3 and AAC files contain the tune name, artist, album name and cover art and a lot of other information. iTunes lets you add and modify much of this information, but to really to manipulate the tags efficiently get Media Rage (\$30) from chaoticsoftware.com. The program is particularly useful if you're getting tunes from the Internet where tags may be missing or confusing.

Audio Books: My favorite source is gutenburg.org and literalsystems.org which carry an large collection of

audio books, free of copyright. I particularly like the stories of Sherlock Holmes. Librivox.org is a volunteer organization that is recording a large number of books. These are available in MP3 format. I import them to iTunes and then put them on my iPod so I can listen in the airport or while relaxing at home. If I'm too relaxed I often go to sleep and then wake up wondering where I left off. It's a great insomnia killer as it takes your mind off the worries of the day.

Stanford University gives you access a wide range of music, lectures, speeches, debates and other university content through iTunes. (<http://itunes.stanford.edu/>). There's even a video of the Steve Jobs 2005 Commencement Speech at Stanford.

Get iTunes Publisher (free) to create and print a customized list of tunes in your iTunes playlists. These can be in tab-delimited text or HTML format.

iPod to iTunes. You can easily copy tunes in your iTunes library to an iPod. Going the other way is harder since the files on your iPod are in hidden folders, probably to prevent piracy. If your Mac's hard drive crashes you can restore your music from your iPod to the iTunes library with iPod2Mac (free) or the superior iPodRip (\$15).

If you have music on your iPod that isn't in the iTunes library, be careful NOT to synchronize the two or you'll lose the iPod music. Synchronization is the default, so change it in the preferences before you start.

Internet Radio: Clicking the "Radio" icon in the source folder of iTunes lets you listen to hundreds of radio stations? It's satellite radio without the satellite.



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310-545-8060

Bob@SBAMUG.com

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MAChinations

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Passwords

I've got hundreds of them. Everyone on the web wants me to sign in with a user name and password. Their importance ranges from the benign to critical.

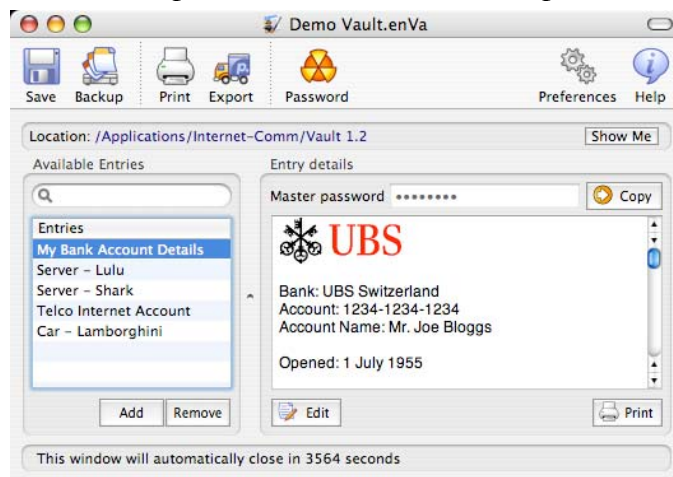
- Benign: These are nuisance passwords required to read the NY Times, etc. Use something simple.
- Medium strength: These are for shopping sites where any damage would be minimal. Use a simple, but different, password for each.
- Critical: These include banking, credit card, ebay and financial sites where damage could be serious. For each site I use a different, strong password, like !->w`l~&cAzxcZ[T. It's also a good idea to change the password every now and then.

Now the fun begins. How do you keep track of all these and enter them without making mistakes. For years I've used an excellent program called Web Confidential (\$20), a specialized database for all my account information. Open it using a password or pass phrase you've memorized. Do not write it down. Once open, all your stored passwords are displayed. It offers different categories such as www sites, ftp servers, login, newsgroups, email, banking, credit cards, etc. For each you can enter the URL, user name, password and notes. It can automatically open the log-in web

A screenshot of the Web Confidential login form. It has fields for Name (top secret), URL (http://www.web-confidential.com/bond/), User ID (james), and Password (masked with dots). There is an 'Open with:' dropdown set to 'Safari (default)' and a checkbox for 'in a new window'. At the bottom are buttons for 'Copy Password', 'Cancel', and 'OK'.

page and paste in your user name and password. It can also create passwords of different strengths.

I like finding good, FREE stuff, and uncovered a little gem called Vault, similar to Web Confidential, but without the categories and auto login. You can use it for more than passwords. It stores text and photos.



Your new Macintosh

When you get a new Mac, the first thing you do is walk through some screens to set up your user account with your name, a short name and a password. If you are Reginald Edgerton Arbuckle III, Ph.D., don't use that for your name. Use something shorter and something really short, such as reg or reggie, for your short name. The strength of your password depends on where your Mac is used. In the home it isn't too critical, but DON'T FORGET IT, because you need it each time you install software that accesses the System. In System Preferences>Accounts you can select to log in automatically or manually. I log in automatically at home, but manually "on the road" where there's a risk of theft or compromise.



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310-545-8060
Bob@SBAMUG.com

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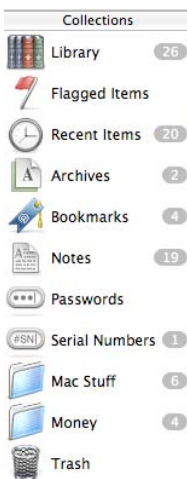
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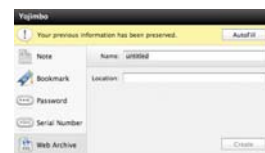
Snippet: A small piece of anything. Something that has been snipped off. Our lives are full of snippets — notes, addresses, phone numbers, passwords, serial numbers, PDF documents, graphics, web pages and bookmarks. Everybody needs a snippet manager, a place where you can store, organize and find these disparate bits and pieces. Here's three snippet managers I use. All are cocoa programs and support styled text, lists, hot links, graphics and can be searched.

Yojimbo means bodyguard or protector and is the name of a new software program from one of my favorite, Mac-friendly companies, Bare Bones Software (www.barebones.com). It sells for \$39.

At first glance it works like a text editor or word processor. But on second glance, it looks more like Apple Mail with three panes, a sidebar on the left containing collections (like mail boxes - see right), a list of snippet titles above and the snippet content below. Like Mail, there is no Open or Save. Everything is automatically saved to a database file in your user library and it opens automatically when Yojimbo is launched. It's beauty is the way it handles a great variety of snippet types. Collections are folders of similar snippets. Yojimbo comes with 6 collections and you can add your own. Collections are smart. Archives (web pages, complete with graphics and links), bookmarks, notes, passwords and serial numbers are automatically stored in their respective collections. Entries can be password protected. Yojimbo stores multi-page PDF files that can be read and searched within the program.



Adding to the library is easy. Drag a file into the Library collection. Yojimbo has a "Drop Dock" tab (right) that flies out so you can easily drop files. Or, press F8 and a new entry window opens to create snippets of different types. You can auto-fill anything on the clipboard and hot links are preserved. Paste a URL into a Web Archive location, give it a name, and the page will be downloaded, complete with graphics and links, and added to the library.



Journier is a donation-ware program that is calendar-based, ideal for someone keeping a journal. Each new entry is tagged with the current date. It's integrated with Apple's address book, iPhoto and iTunes and can even create audio recordings that are added to your iTunes library. You can import any iTunes file into an entry and can encrypt the entire library but not individual entries as you can in Yojimbo.



Caboodle is a free snippet manager that uses a hierarchal arrangement for entries instead of collections. It supports tables, something the other two do not.

Subject	Date
Welcome!	9/4/05 10
Taxes	11/10/05
To Do List	11/21/05
Recipes	9/4/05 10
Serial	9/4/05 9:5
Pictures	9/4/05 10
Gifts	9/4/05 10
Other	9/4/05 10
Oregon	11/25/05
Magazines	10/18/05
Mac stuff	9/23/05 6
iData	9/16/05 4
FireWire ..	3/15/06 1
iPod	9/21/05 8
Rebates	10/29/05
Purchase	10/8/05 2
Java	10/29/05
Refurb	11/20/05
Turbotax	11/8/05 9
Subscription	11/10/05

Summary: I use all three programs. Yojimbo is the most recent and my favorite because of it's many features. Still, I have a wish list for future releases — tables, multiple Library files and hierarchical collections.



Bob Brooks

Helping Beginners
310-545-8060
Bob@SBAMUG.com

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Now Up-to-Date & Contact 5.1

Also known as NUDC, this is a tightly integrated pair of programs to manage your appointments and contacts. Purchase it from NowSoftware.com for \$120 (download) or \$130 (boxed). Both install menu-bar icons — QuickDay and QuickContact — to view today's events and access your contact list without opening the programs. Both print calendars and contact information in many formats. There are Mac and Windows versions and both can publish to a server so a cross-platform workgroup can access shared calendars and schedule meetings.

Now-Up-to-Date: I first bought it 14 years ago — no kidding — and it's the best calendar program I've used. It's easy to add and edit events and to-dos and displays in month, week, multi-day and day modes. You can set reminders. It imports iCal events, but that involves a little trial-and-error as the iCal files have cryptic names. NUD is ideal for a workgroup where people have both private calendars and a public calendar that is shared on the network.

Calendar files become bloated over time but I'm reluctant to lose my record of old events. NUD lets you archive and delete events older than a specified period, so they no longer clutter your calendar but are still available when you write your memoirs.

Now Contact is a contact manager, or address book. It has some tough competition, including Apple's Address Book (free with OS X) and Microsoft's Entourage (part of Office). Now Contact will synchronize with Address Book but it seems a little quirky. Now Contact has only two fields for email addresses and which goes in which field is a puzzle. Now Contact has changed little over the years and needs an over-

haul. A valuable feature is the large number of formats that you can use to print your addresses, including many "day planners".

There were reports that the previous version, NUDC 4.5, was incompatible with Tiger, but it turned out that only QuickDay and QuickContact were incompatible. I deleted the startup files and continued to use it. Version 5.1 is Tiger-compatible and adds new features and a facelift. The calendar and contact file formats are unchanged so I can open them with either version of the program. That's convenient, as I prefer some of the calendar printing formats in Version 4.5.

iWork '06 - Initial impressions

iWork '06 (\$79) comprises Pages 2.0, a word processing and page layout program, and Keynote 3.0, a presentation program. Both seem more sluggish, create somewhat larger files than before and now require a G4 or better processor. There goes my G3 iBook that I use for presentations. The file formats have changed, but you can't tell by looking until you try to try to open a file. Older versions can't open the new files, although you can save in the old format. iWork '06 adds new, editable shapes and allow masking of images by a shape. Table cells can include formulas and formatting, although it's very limited compared to a spreadsheet. Charts are improved and are more flexible.

In summary: Keynote is my favorite presentation program, but for word processing I use AppleWorks or Word. Although AppleWorks is dated, it's fast and includes good spreadsheet and database modules. If you have an old version of iWorks, stick with it and save your money. There's no upgrade price.

	Bob Brooks Helping Beginners 310-545-8060 Bob@SBAMUG.com
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Word Alternatives

Microsoft Word is the undisputed standard for word processing in business. It's usually bought as part of Microsoft Office, which also includes Excel, Powerpoint and Entourage, all very good programs. Still, some who only need Word may balk at its high price. Fortunately, there are many Word alternatives that open and save in the Word format. I'm going to give my initial impressions of three open-source programs, all available as free downloads.

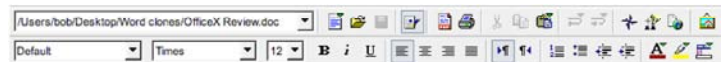
In September 2002 I wrote a review of Microsoft Word X, using Word, with the same layout as my other articles, two sections with both in-line and floating graphics, and an initial drop cap, like the "M" at the beginning of this article. Now I did the same thing, writing my article in OpenOffice, NeoOffice and AbiWord.

OpenOffice 2.0 is the most advanced, receives the most attention and has an excellent spreadsheet (Excel alternative), but is the least comfortable to Mac Users with no Linux or PC experience. It requires Apple's X11, which must be installed with the System. Menus, key commands and Open/Save dialogs are very PC-like. It has a limited set of fonts, although it did import fonts from converted Word documents. Drop Caps are supported but I had trouble using them.



The article you're now reading was written using **NeoOffice 1.2.1**, another open-source (free) alternative to Microsoft Word. It's part of a suite of Office-compatible programs that includes Spreadsheet, Presentation, and Drawing components. I found it easy to use and it converted my Word documents most accurately.

It's very Mac-like except for the Open/Save dialogs that are reminiscent of the PC.



AbiWord has the most Mac-like interface but did the poorest job converting my Word documents. Floating graphics were missing and it didn't support drop caps. Although it's a light version of Word, it's the easiest to use and may be best for those with simple needs.



AppleWorks (OS 9 and X) was bundled free with consumer Macs. It opens many Word files, as well as those in many other formats. Although it's a bit long in the tooth, it's fast and has an amazing number of features. It includes good spreadsheet, database, drawing and painting modules. I still use it a lot.

A year ago Apple introduced **Pages**, a cocoa-based word processing program (bundled with Keynote, \$79). I now use it for my articles. Pages is modern in its handling of text and graphics and does a good job converting Word documents, but doesn't support drop caps and some other advanced features.

TextEdit is a basic text editor/word processor that is included with Mac OS X. It opens and saves simple Word files but doesn't handle graphic and is otherwise fairly limited.

Summary: Nothing beats Word, but NeoOffice is my favorite open-source alternative. I'm sure if I spent more time with it I'd become fluent in its use.



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Helping Beginners

310-545-8060

Bob@SBAMUG.com

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It's All Free

I collect freeware and frequently write about it in my articles. LJ and Glen did a great job describing some of their favorites, so I thought I'd add a few of my own, grouping them into categories. These are programs I use and like, skipping the more well-known ones that you may already know. Use VersionTracker or MacUpdate to find them on the web.

Graphics

- Drag-N-Scale - quickly resizes photos.
- SnapNDRag - does a screen captures (regular and timed). Rename and save as PNG, JPEG or TIFF.
- ThumbsUp - creates thumbnail photos from a folder of photos.
- FreeRuler - puts a graphic ruler on the screen for measurements.
- iPhoto Buddy - lets you switch iPhoto libraries.

Web page creation

- SpamSieve - encodes email addresses on a web page.
- RBrowser - an FTP program to upload files to a web site.
- Galerie - creates an HTML slide shows from a folder of photos or from within iPhoto.
- Flickr plug-in - lets you post photos to flickr.com directly from within iPhoto.

Audio and Media

- SoundSource - lets you change your audio input and output from a menu-bar icon.
- Metronomica and Metronome - two metronomes.
- Audacity - an audio recording/playback program.
- MacRecorder - a very simple audio recording program that saves in mp3, mp4a as well as AIFF and WAV formats.

Helpers

- FileWrangler - renames groups of files.
- FinderPop - gives single click access to your favorite files and folders. It was my favorite in OS 9 and now it's come to OS X.
- Butler - helps to navigate the web and your drive.
- Mousepose - puts a bright halo around the cursor.
- WClock - adds a drop-down calendar to your menu-bar clock.

Utilities

- TinkerTool, Onyx and MacJanitor - clean up your disk and make system changes. Especially for techies.
- SilverKeeper - backs up data files.
- Carbon Copy Cloner or the free version of SuperDuper! - clones your entire disk and System.

Applications

- TextWrangler - a text editor for the technically inclined. that has lots of text manipulation capabilities. It's the little brother of BBEdit, without the web authoring features.
- NewsMac - my favorite RSS reader.
- Journier - for creating journals and storing bits of information.
- Remember? - a calendar program I use to keep track of birthdays and anniversaries.
- Vault - secure storage for passwords and other sensitive information.
- Yum - a program for storing recipes. It imports MasterCook and Cooking Light files from OS 9 days.
- SBook - billed as an address book, it can be used as much more. It imports from Apple's Address Book.



Bob Brooks

Helping Beginners

310-545-8060

Bob@SBAMUG.com

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Garbage Is Your Friend

I read an article in the June 26 Issue of TidBITS by Derek Miller about securing information on your computer. It described a procedure I've been using so I decided to use it as a basis for my article.

Computers are wonderful for storing all your information, but what happens if sensitive information falls into the wrong hands due to loss or theft. Laptops are especially vulnerable.

Apple includes FileVault, a feature built into Mac OS X 10.3 and later, that encrypts your entire Home folder, but most experts agree that FileVault is overkill. You really don't need to encrypt your movies, music and photos. Backing up is more difficult and a software glitch can lock you out of everything.

What's the alternative? With Apple's Disk Utility, you can easily create an encrypted disk image that behaves just like — and can be backed up just like — a regular Mac folder. You can even set it to open automatically (with a password) whenever you restart or log in to your account. You can protect only those files that are important, while leaving your music, photos and less sensitive documents alone.

1. Figure out which files you want to protect, and consolidate them in a single folder. Subfolders are fine, but make sure not only that you have everything you want to protect in one place, but also that you don't miss anything.

2. Launch Disk Utility (in /Applications/Utilities). Click the New Image button in the toolbar to create a disk image. Choose the Sparse Image format. (A sparse image is like a balloon that expands to fit the data inside but doesn't waste any space.) Under En-

ryption, choose AES-128 (the only choice) and a maximum size from the Size pop-up menu that makes sense, e.g. a backup CD (700 MB) or DVD (4.7 GB).

3. Name your encrypted disk image and save it (e.g. to ~/Documents/). Click the Create button.

4. Choose a strong and secure password that you will never, ever forget. Leave the Remember Password checkbox unchecked, because otherwise anyone who gets at your computer while you're logged in can also access your encrypted files.

5. Disk Utility saves the disk image where you specified, with the name you gave and opens it as a virtual disk on your Desktop. It's as if you had a huge Zip disk that you kept under lock and key and inserted in your computer whenever you needed it.

6. Add the encrypted disk image file to your login items. Choose System Preferences > Accounts and drag the file into the Login Items tab. Now, whenever you restart or log in to your account, your Mac will ask you for your decryption password and mount the virtual disk on your Desktop. You can eject the virtual disk to protect the files if you're putting your computer to sleep, or even just stepping away from your desk.

7. For extra convenience, put an alias to the virtual disk in the Dock.

8. Check that everything works and erase the unencrypted originals. Choose Secure Empty Trash from the Finder application menu.

9. Finally, make sure you have a backup strategy that includes regularly copying the encrypted disk image to other media, some of which are stored offsite.



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Helping Beginners
310-545-8060
Bob@SBAMUG.com

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Mail

In July I gave a presentation on Mail at our Beginners Q&A session. I learned a lot doing this and I hope you did too. Here are some highlights.

Your ISP (Internet Service Provider), the outfit you pay each month for *Internet Access*, has a server connected to the Internet that stores mail addressed to you.

POP Mail (post office protocol) is the protocol used by most email programs to retrieve email. When you retrieve mail, you connect to the server, copy new messages to your computer, delete them from the server and then read them. You set up your account in the preferences of your mail program so the server can validate who you are. Your ISP will give you the settings or may do it for you.

Web Mail is a way to read your mail on the server using a web browser. In this case you don't download them, but read them directly on the server. It lets you access your mail anywhere in the world, but it's slower and more cumbersome than POP mail. Eventually you may have to delete your mail so your mailbox doesn't overflow. You access the server by logging in with your username and password so it knows who you are.

Many people open a free Web Mail account with a third party, such as Yahoo, Google, or Hotmail. You access Web Mail here the same way as mail on your ISP's server, except it's stored on a different server under a different user name, e.g. user123@yahoo.com. Use an account to email people you might not trust. If you start getting a lot of spam, delete the account and open another one. Some third party Web Mail services, like Google, will forward your mail to your regular POP mail account for free. Others may charge.



Members of SBAMUG can get a mail account on the SBAMUG server. Mail can be forwarded to your POP account or read on the server. Details are on our web site, www.sbamug.com.

Google's G-mail accounts offer free Web Mail with over 2.5 GB of mail storage, so you can leave all your mail on their server. If you use Tiger, install the Gmail widget to quickly see unread message headers and with one click you log into your account. Google also lets you access your mail using your mail program, blurring the distinction between Web Mail and POP mail.

Spam: When you send an attachment, such as a photo, it's a separate file that accompanies the message. Many companies (and spammers) send messages encoded with HTML that resemble a web page. When you read the message (page) graphics are retrieved from their server and embedded in the page. This tells the sender that you are reading the page and confirms your email address. I recommend that you turn off (in Preferences) automatic downloading of images. You can individually turn on images for pages you deem safe.

I like to scan message headers and delete spam before downloading messages to my computer. In Entourage configure your account in Account Options.

☒ Allow online access (shows account in folder list)

In Mail 2.1 (OS 10.4) control-click the Inbox and select "Get Info."

When emailing questionable recipients, go to www.jetable.org and get a temporary email address that forwards to your actual address. The anti-spam address is deactivated after a specified length of time, leaving any spammers out in the cold.

Email continues to evolve. This is just a small slice.



Bob Brooks
Helping Beginners
310-545-8060
Bob@SBAMUG.com

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Phone for Free

People are increasingly using the Internet to make phone calls. I've been using Skype, now owned by eBay, for a couple of years. Phoning between computers for free. Phoning to landlines (regular telephones) in the US, Canada and most major countries is about 2.3¢ a minute. You can also send text messages, transfer files, and now do video chats using an iSight and other web cam. All you need is the free Skype software and a free account. Skype is similar to iChat, except it works with Macs, PCs and Linux computers, and even some handhelds.

Like other instant messaging programs Skype uses a "buddy list", except the list can include regular telephone numbers as well as your Skype friends. A buddy's icon tells you its status — online, away, not available, etc. If they're online, double-click the name to call and they can answer or decline. If they accept your call, you're connected. Just start talking. You need a microphone, but most iMacs and laptops have one built in. Skype does not have it's own servers so the audio quality can vary, depending on the connection. Usually it's good but sometimes it sounds like you're talking in a barrel. For best results get a microphone-earphone headset to minimize echoes. I got mine at the swap meet for a couple of dollars, but they're available many places, including the Skype store.

Landline Calling (Skypeout). To call a regular telephone or mobile phone, type in the phone number and ring them. It costs about 2.3¢ a minute to call most major countries. For landline calling you need to buy a block of Skype credits for about \$12 using a credit card. That gives you about 8 hours of calling to North America, Europe, and most of Asia.

Skypein (optional) costs \$38 a year and gives you a phone number that friends who don't use Skype can use to call you. If your family lives in Chicago, get a local Chicago phone number they can use to call you from their regular phones. Skypein comes with a Skype Voicemail subscription (otherwise \$18/yr.). When someone calls and you're away or busy they can leave a voicemail message. You can also have your incoming Skype calls forwarded to your regular phone for about 2.3¢ a minute. (Until the end of 2006, calling and forwarding in the U.S. and Canada is free.)

Conference Calling. I haven't use this feature, but you can talk with up to five people in a conference call. (As you add more people, you get more communication delays and you may get people talking over one other)

Recording your chats. Ecamm.com sells a \$13 program, Call Recorder, which can record both sides of a Skype conversation. Audio Hijack Pro (\$32) also lets you record your chats as MP3 files and does many other nice things. I highly recommend it if you use your Mac for audio.

Video. Skype now supports video chatting. Although it's still beta it's working well for me.

Skype has become so popular that there are now cordless phones that let you make Skype calls without being chained to a computer. A Belkin model looks like a cell phone and only needs a wireless connection to a hotspot to make calls.



Bob Brooks

Helping Beginners

310-545-8060

Bob@SBAMUG.com

The South Bay Mug MACINTOSH

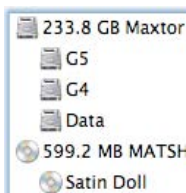
A Monthly Cupful For South Bay Apple Mac User Group Members, Nov. 2006

MAChinations

A personal view from Bob

Disk Utility

A versatile and essential program that comes with Mac OS X is Disk Utility. It's in the Applications/Utilities folder and also on your bootable install CD/DVD. What I describe below pertains to OS 10.4 (Tiger). Other versions of the OS (operating system) vary slightly. Disk Utility shows all mounted volumes — disks, CDs and partitions, their capacity and available space. The utility's functions are organized using different tabs and menus.

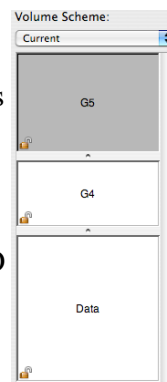


First Aid: Select the volume containing the OS to Verify/Repair disk permissions. It's recommended you repair permissions before and after backing up your System or a major update. If you're having problems, verify and repair your drive. Disk repair requires you to boot from the install CD/DVD or another bootable drive (e.g. an external FireWire drive). The install disk also has a utility for recovering your password.

Erasing disks: Erasing a disk or volume removes the information needed to access the files, but doesn't actually remove the files. If you want to erase the actual files, click Security Options.

Partitioning disks: You can use Disk Utility to divide a drive into partitions or "volumes" so it looks like more than one drive. Partitioning a drive erases everything, so be sure to back up any important files first. If you buy a large external drive for backup, and they are all big these days, you can partition it to match the various volumes you want to back up. You CANNOT back up more than one system to a volume. When I recently bought a new computer I first partitioned the

drive, shown at the right, and used Apple's Restore DVD to reinstall Apple's software on the first partition. This makes backing up the OS much easier.



RAID: For critical application that requires high-speed data access or data redundancy, Disk Utility can set up a RAID scheme. This uses several hard disks instead of one to store files (the reverse of partitioning) and is probably something only more demanding users will want to use.

Disk Images: Use Disk Utility to create a "disk image," a virtual volume that stores other files or folders of files. You can create it using a folder or disk, or create an empty image and add files later. Use a disk image to move files from one computer to another, to send in emails, or for encrypted storage (see: Aug 2006). Burn a disk image on a CD or DVD disc as a backup copy of your files. I prefer to use a "sparse image" which, like a balloon, expands to fit my data.

Restore: If you back up your files using a disk image or another disk, you can use Disk Utility to restore your files.. To start, click Restore then specify the source and destination for the files. This is similar to using SuperDuper or Carbon Copy Cloner to backup/restore.

Burn a CD/DVD: Use Disk Utility to burn data onto a blank disc, or erase and reuse a rewriteable disc. You can also perform multisession burning: burning items to a recordable disc in multiple sessions until it's full. Disk Utility will also unmount and eject stubborn CDs. Get familiar with Disk Utility; it's very useful.



Bob Brooks

Helping Beginners

310-545-8060

SBAMUG@gmail.com

The South Bay Mug MACINTOSH

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MACHinations

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The Spaminator

There are many excellent spam filters, like Spam-Sieve, that filter your email based on its content, although it's a cat and mouse game. A current scam is to put innocuous text in the message to fool the spam filters and put the spam text in a graphic attachment.

I'm an advocate of eliminating spam and unwanted mail directly on the server rather than downloading it first. With Entourage and the latest version of Apple Mail you can view the message headers on the server. I can usually spot spam easily and delete it directly. A free program called MyPopBarrier goes further. In addition to the headers it lets you view the message content in case you're not quite sure. Then purge it.

Set up each account with your user name, password and server. Click the Pick Up button to see messages waiting on the server(s). In the upper window you'll see the account, sender and the subject. Each message is flagged according to a list of words in the "block" and "pass" dictionaries, to which you can add and remove words. A red dot flags it as undesirable, green

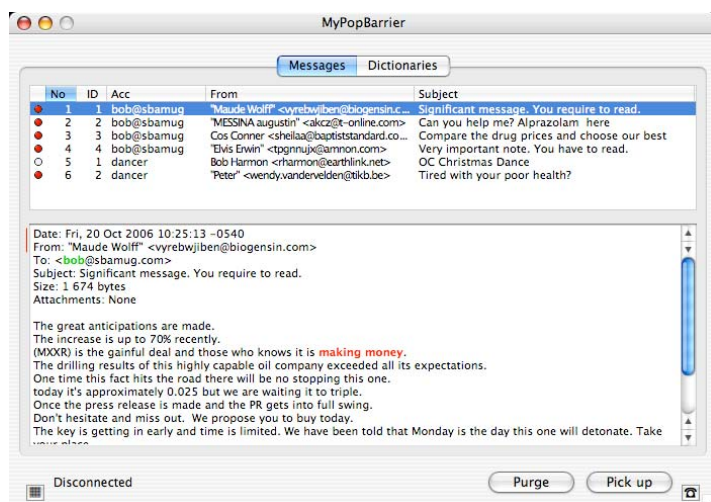
means a known message and white is unknown. Click a message to see the body text, highlighted dictionary words and other information. Command-clicking shows the source code. Change the flag using the arrow keys or double-clicking. When you've flagged all the spam, click the Purge button and it's deleted.

Jetable.org (a free service) creates a temporary email address for you to use with questionable web sites that require an address before accessing their content. Give them a "jetable" address. When someone sends a message to your jetable address, it is forwarded to your "real" address that's hidden from the sender. The beauty of a jetable address is that it expires after an hour, a day, week or month. If someone puts your jetable address on a spam list it's not going to last long.

Plus Addressing is a feature available if you have a free Gmail (Google mail) account. When using your gmail address in situations where you're not sure how carefully it's going to be handled, add a plus sign and an identifier. E.g. on the membership roster of my tennis club I'll use myname+tennis@gmail.com as my address. Any message sent to that address will go to my regular gmail account, myname@gmail.com, but will be identified with the plus appendage. If the list falls into the wrong hands, any spam will have the plus address so I'll know where it came from. I can set a filter in gmail to send such mail to the spam folder.

Go Blind: Sending mail to a group of recipients can cause a problem if the address list falls into the wrong hands. Many people email to a list with all addresses exposed. Be sure to send them as a Bcc (blind carbon copy).

To:	
Cc:	
Bcc:	grouplist





Bob Brooks
Helping Beginners
310-545-8060
SBAMUG@gmail.com