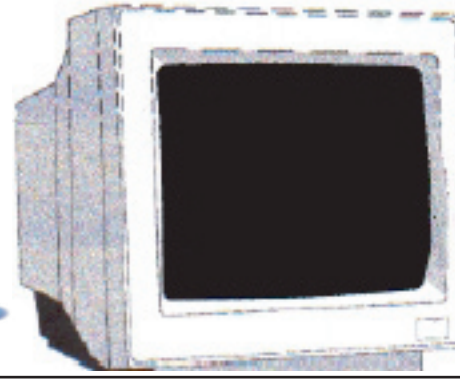


CVAUG Monitor



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A Word From the President

By Gregg McFarland

This month's newsletter was a breeze to assemble. I recently joined a service where members of Mac/Apple user groups from all over the world can submit articles that they've written for distribution (free of charge) to all the members of that service to include in the newsletters they publish. It works out really well in that you won't be subjected to one person's opinions about Apple related news. More importantly, you won't be subjected to me constantly asking you to write content for the newsletter. However, if you would like to write and submit an article I'd love to include it in the next newsletter. Anyhow, enjoy this month's Monitor and I look forward to seeing you at the next meeting.

Apple Releases a Multi-Button Mouse

By Gregg McFarland

This week Apple finally began selling a mouse with multiple buttons and a scrolling device. Apple's mice since 1984 have always had (dispite the public's outcry) one simple button. With Apple's clever software, that is all anyone really needed. But once someone tries a multi-button mouse they usually end up wanting one. They just make using your computer a more efficient experience.

Apple's "Mighty Mouse" still looks like their standard single button mouse except for the addition of a pencil eraser sized scroll button. This scroll button is used to scroll windows up and down as well as right and left. The clicking is done with "sensors" on the right and left sides of the scroll button. There are also squeeze buttons on the sides of the mouse for further customization.

All these buttons are programable with the Mouse Control Pane (OS X only) to perform just about any function imaginable.

Finally Apple jumps into the high performance input device game.

This Month's Presentation

Remote Control with VNC

eBay Buying and Selling

by Alan Webster

Whittier Area Macintosh User Group

I have been using eBay since 1998. I have both bought and sold items and have learned some things I would like to share.

Buying

Just because you are using eBay, it doesn't mean you are going to get a good deal. If it is a popular item, it can easily get bid up too high. You could buy it at a store for less. Check a seller's "feedback rating" before bidding. This is what past buyers have to say about their experience with the seller. This gives you an idea what your experience will be like. If a seller hasn't sold many things or recent buyers have left bad feedback, it probably is not a good idea to send money to this person. Check the shipping cost before bidding. Some sellers will set this real high. You were wondering why they were selling the item so cheaply? Use PayPal or a credit card when possible (see below). This gives you added protection. If the seller

doesn't ship the item, you can get your money back. Ask the seller questions before bidding. You will find out if they are responsive and helpful. This is a good indication that they will ship fast and the item will be as advertised. Also, you should be sure the item is what you want. Pictures can only tell you so much.

Selling

Take good clear pictures of the item you are selling. It is very important to make a good first impression. Write a good headline that describes what you have to sell and its features. Make the buyer want to look at your ad. Put your ad under the right product category. There are so many of them. What I do is run an eBay search for the item I am selling, to see where other people have placed theirs. Do another search of "completed auctions". This is really valuable. You can see where the people that made the most money placed their ad and what they said in that ad. You can also get an idea what your item is worth. Write a clear description. List all the features-model number, how old, used or new, tested or not. Also, make sure you tell what is wrong with it (scratches or damage). You want

the buyer to know exactly what they are getting, so there will be no hard feelings later.

Shipping.

Make sure you charge enough. Weigh the package before listing (include packaging). An example of what to place in the listing- "Buyer pays shipping from zip code 90604 on package weighing 5 pounds." There are automatic shipping calculators you can use in your ad for UPS or USPS. Use the selection "Only ships to the United States" until you get more experience. You have to deal with customs forms if you ship outside the U.S.. Pack well so there is no breakage. There should be no "rattles" when the box is shaken. Ship it soon. No one likes to wait until you get around to it. Get a PayPal account (see below). It is very handy. You can get the money instantly. No waiting for a money order or check to be sent. The seller does have to pay a 3% transaction fee though.

PayPal

PayPal is now the standard for exchanging money over eBay. Sellers that are large enough to have a store, can let customers use a credit card to buy their wares. It is too hard for us little guys to qualify for a credit card merchant

account. Paypal lets buyers use their checking account or a credit card to send money to the seller. Paypal acts like a bank. Once the buyer sends the seller money, PayPal sends an e-mail telling the seller a deposit has been made. The seller builds up a "savings account" at PayPal until they withdraw it or use it to buy things. If you are a buyer, you can sign up instantly to use PayPal. To become a seller (receiver of money) takes a bit longer. You have to link to a checking account so you can add or withdraw from your PayPal account. PayPal also checks to make sure you are you. This took a week for me.

WARNING use a tough password with letters and numbers. No names, words or phrases that a computer with a dictionary, phrase book, and common passwords list can hack. When you are a seller, this account is linked to a credit card and checking account. Make sure it is secure by using a hard password (I have to look mine up). PayPal or eBay will NEVER e-mail or phone you asking for your password. Don't fall for that old trick of the criminal.

I enjoy the convenience of using PayPal. It is well worth it to me.

Hard disk corruption

by David Empson

It has happened to many of us, and is not a pleasant experience: the computer starts to behave strangely and some files seem to have mysteriously disappeared. If your computer is showing these

symptoms, it might be suffering from a damaged file system on its hard disk. There can be many causes of this, including faulty hardware in your computer or a power cut at a critical point while the disk is being updated, but the most common cause is software bugs, either in the operating system itself or in an application

or other piece of software on the computer. If you think the file system on your hard disk might be damaged, you should stop using the computer as soon as possible, as any data written to your hard disk might cause further damage to the file system, possibly resulting in loss of files. Use disk repair

software to check for and repair any problems before you resume normal operation.

Mac OS X has improved the reliability of the file system considerably over Mac OS 9, simply by preventing applications from being able to write data to arbitrary locations on the hard disk, and from overwriting critical system files. In addition, Mac OS X 10.3 (and later) supports a scheme known as “journaling”, which allows it to recover from the computer crashing, restarting or losing power, restoring the file system to a consistent state. Unfortunately this system isn’t perfect, and it is still possible to get minor problems occurring on rare occasions. Sometimes these minor problems can grow into major ones, and once the file system has major damage, you are at risk of losing a lot of files on your hard disk. So, how does one deal with these problems, and hopefully catch them before they get too serious?

Disk Utility: First Aid

The primary tool on Mac OS X is the Disk Utility application. It includes a “First Aid” component, which can check your hard disk for any file system damage, and repair simple problems. It is a good idea to regularly run Disk Utility and do a “Verify” on your computer’s hard disk to check for any problems. Hopefully this will catch any minor issues before anything serious happens. If you are running Mac OS X 10.3 or later, I’d recommend doing this every few months. You should do it more often if you are running an earlier version of Mac OS X.

Unfortunately, you can’t use the Verify (or Repair) function of Disk Utility unless you start up your computer from another disk. Apple have provided a method of doing this, by including a copy of Disk Utility on the Mac OS X installation CD/DVD which was supplied with your computer (or a retail copy purchased separately). They hid it a little, so you need to know where to look in order to find it.

Insert your Mac OS X installation CD/DVD into the drive, and run the Mac OS X Installer. If you have more than one such CD, make sure you use the latest one, e.g. a 10.4 (Tiger) install CD should be used in preference to a 10.3 (Panther) one. This will involve restarting the computer from the CD (which is done automatically when you run the installer by double-clicking its icon). The Mac OS X installer starts by asking some introductory questions such as which language you want to use. After the first question or two you should see a standard Mac OS X menu bar at the top of the screen, with a blue apple menu, and an “Installer” menu. If you look in the “Installer” menu, you will find a “Disk Utility” item. Select this to run Disk Utility. In Disk Utility, you need to select your hard disk from the list on the left side, then make sure you have the “First Aid” tab selected, and click on the “Verify” button. This will check your disk for any problems. It displays progress information and a summary of what it found. If there are any problems, they will be shown in red, and it will say that you need to repair the

disk. You can do this by clicking on the “Repair” button. Assuming the problem was minor, Disk First Aid should be able to fix it. When finished, you can quit from Disk Utility, and quit from the Installer (you don’t need to proceed with reinstalling Mac OS X), then restart your computer to return to normal operation.

Third-party Disk Repair Tools

If there is a serious problem, Disk First Aid may not be able to repair it. This is when you need to call in the heavy guns, in the form of specialist third-party disk repair programs. These are all relatively expensive, and it is important to ensure you are running the latest version. There have been cases where an old version of a disk repair utility has done serious damage to a file system which has been modified by newer system software. In the past, the main disk repair was Symantec’s Norton Utilities. This program is no longer being developed, and more importantly the latest version is not compatible with Tiger (10.4), so I cannot recommend its use, and I would discourage anyone from buying it now. In my experience, the best program for dealing with a corrupted file system is Alsoft’s DiskWarrior. It takes a while to rebuild the directory on your hard disk, then gives you the option of previewing its results (including being able to copy files elsewhere, such as an external hard disk) before it actually modifies your hard disk. If it has not succeeded in recovering files you know were lost, you can cancel DiskWarrior’s repair attempt, and try other repair tools first. DiskWarrior is

certainly a lot easier to use than Norton Utilities, as it doesn't ask mysterious technical questions whenever it encounters a problem. Another major disk repair program is TechTool Pro, which also provides a wide range of other tests for your computer hardware. I have this, but I've never needed to use its disk repair functions because DiskWarrior has always done a good enough job, so I can't comment on its reliability or usability. Another useful program is Data Rescue. This concentrates on recovering files from a damaged hard disk, rather than trying to repair it. If you have files on your hard disk which have been lost, are absolutely critical and you

must recover them at all costs, I'd recommend trying this one before anything else, though I haven't had need for it myself. All of these programs cost around US\$80 to US\$90.

The Aftermath

If you were suffering from major damage to your file system, then you may find that the computer is still misbehaving after the damage has been repaired.

The most likely explanation is that some critical system files were partially damaged, and they need to be reinstalled. You should try doing a fresh installation of your operating system, and preferably all your applications as well, or restore everything from a known

good backup.

Optimization?

Some disk tools offer a method of optimizing your hard disk in order to improve performance. If you are running Mac OS X, I'd recommend avoiding this. The speed gains are temporary, and the optimization process is risky: if the file system is already damaged, optimizing it is likely to cause serious damage.

David Empson is currently the President of the Wellington Macintosh Society in New Zealand and works as a full time computer programmer.

First Impressions of Verizon's Fiber Optic Internet Service

By Phil Shapiro

Last night I had a chance to try out Verizon's new fiber optic Internet service which is being rolled out in several towns in the Northern Virginia suburbs of Washington DC. A Mac client of mine decided to sign up for the service. This client had been using America Online at \$24/month. The Verizon fiber optic plan she chose costs her \$35/month. This plan has a downstream speed of 5 megabits per second and an upstream speed of 2 megabits/sec. So for an extra \$11/month she is getting an Internet connection that is roughly 100 times faster.

You can feel the speed when you fire up Safari. First thing I did was go to the bandwidth speed test at Speakeasy. <http://www.speakeasy.net/speedtest>.

[//www.speakeasy.net/speedtest](http://www.speakeasy.net/speedtest).

In less than a minute, Speakeasy confirmed that the fiber optic bandwidth was for real. The downstream clocked in at 5 megabits/sec. The upstream clocked in at 1.7 megabits/sec. Here is where the fun part started. This client's computer is a Snow iMac, with a 600 MHz G3 processor. The computer has 128 megabytes of memory and is running Panther (Mac OS 10.3). Theoretically, this computer doesn't meet the minimum requirement for iChat videoconferencing. I was fully cognizant of that when I plugged in my iSight and said, "Let's give this a try."

Sure enough, the iChat videoconference worked well, even with this low-memory G3 iMac. I asked my friend on the other side to view our video stream full screen, and he told me that it looked good -- without much

pixelation at all. (He was using a G4 Powerbook on his side.)

While the blazing fast downstream is what makes Verizon FIOS (fiber optic service) desirable to most people, it's the upstream speed that attracts me most.

Verizon FIOS is not available in the Maryland town where I live. I settle for using a cable modem whose upstream speed is 128 kbps. I upload QuickTime files to the Internet pretty often, and it takes me a minute to upload a megabyte. That doesn't sound so bad, except I need to upload 480 megabytes to the Internet Archive this week -- and I'm not looking forward to it. The Verizon FIOS upload speed is about 12 megabytes per minute. That means I could upload almost an entire CD-ROM in one hour. That's more my speed. Here in the Washington DC-area, the traffic on the highways around town is often gridlocked. I can't help but

think that iChat videoconferencing is one way for people to not have to travel so much. It's predicted that 5 million more people will be moving to the Washington DC-area over then next 10 years. I can't imagine the traffic nightmares that will ensue. One thing is for sure -- it's cheaper to buy Mac Minis for everyone than it is to build new highways. I wonder if the Federal government might one day require half of its workforce to work at home -- videoconferencing via iChat when needed. Not every job can function in this way, but many could.

All in all I'm impressed with Verizon's fiber optic service. I forgot to mention, the service plan I tried out is the lowest speed plan. There are higher speed plans you can get. If you go that route, just make sure your seat belt is securely fastened and your chair is in the fully upright position. The author works as an independent Macintosh consultant in the Washington DC-area.

Tiger Upgrade Procedure (Clean Install Best Practices)

By John Nouveaux, NCMUG member

With all the hoopla over Apple's newest OS, Tiger, one issue which seems to be getting scant attention is the proper way of saying goodbye to the Panther and hello to the Tiger.

Apple provides several choices for upgrading from Panther to Tiger: A simple upgrade, archive and install, or a clean install. Although any of these methods can

lead to problems, there is a lot of anecdotal evidence which suggests a clean install tends to produce fewer problems and a smoother upgrade path.

The problem is a clean install wipes your entire system drive, and so unless done properly, can be catastrophic. As I'm so fond of saying, "You can never do too many backups!"

Before I set out to update three PowerBooks and a dual mirror door G4, it occurred to me it might be useful to generate a checklist representing the safest way, the "Best Practices" for upgrading from Panther to Tiger -- or I suppose from any previous OS to a newer major release.

Keep in mind, no upgrade path is entirely foolproof. This is why good backups are essential. Without them you risk losing everything: your business records, your family photos, all those iTunes you bought at the iTMS, everything.

This procedure takes time and a lot of extra disk space. Typically I'd suggest you plan for an afternoon and have at least 2 1/2 times the space of your system disk available for backups as you proceed. For example, if you are upgrading a PowerBook with an 80GB drive, you should have two 80GB FireWire drives (or a larger drive partitioned into two 80GB partitions) and another drive or partition big enough to hold your entire home folder.

With this in mind, the following is my recommendation for upgrading from Panther to Tiger, giving the greatest chance of success, minimizing the chance of disaster.

Part I: Disaster Prevention, Verifying System Disk Integrity

Step 1: Quiesce the System

Quit all running applications. Running applications while you perform the following steps is asking for trouble.

Step 2: Repair Permissions

Using Disk Utility, Repair Permissions on your current system disk.

Step 3: Repair the Disk

Run DiskWarrior (if you have it) on your current system disk (this requires booting from the DiskWarrior CD) and fix any problems which DiskWarrior finds. Lacking DiskWarrior, you can boot from your Mac OS X (Panther or Tiger) install disc and run Disk Utility's Repair Disk. DiskWarrior is more thorough, but Disk Utility will work if it's all you have.

Part II: Disaster Prevention, Backing Up Your Files

Step 1: Clone the System Disk

Reboot your system and clone your system disk to an external FireWire drive (my preferred tool is SuperDuper!, though Carbon Copy Cloner, Disk Utility and other cloning tools will work as well). This clone is intended primarily as a fail-safe backup in case the install becomes a complete fiasco. Ideally you want to use a cloning tool which is supported in both the old version of the Operating system (Panther) as well as the new version (Tiger). Check the clone software manufacturer's web site to check for compatibility. As the clone is intended primarily as a fail-safe backup, it's not critical the clone program be compatible with the new version of the OS you are loading, however.

Step 2: Test Boot the Clone Disk

Test boot the clone you just made on your FireWire drive (if it doesn't work, it's useless). This step is very important. Any backup which you can't read is not a backup. After a successful test boot, reboot from your original system disk.

Step 3: Backup Home Folders

Back up your system's home folders to a separate backup disk (or partition) than you used in the clone steps above using a different backup program. Note we are now using two separate backup disks (or two separate partitions on one disk) and two separate backup programs. No one said Best Practices was Cheapest Practices. Remember, it's your data, your business. For this step you might use a backup program like Retrospect, Data Backup X, or the like.

Part III: Perform a Clean Install of Tiger**Step 1: Disconnect External Devices**

Disconnect all unnecessary peripherals. This includes USB thumb drives, printers, mice, bluetooth keyboards & mice, disk drives, CD/DVD burners, iPods, etc. Get your system as close to its factory delivered state as possible.

Note: If you want to take advantage of Tiger's install feature which automatically copies all home folders and applications from another system disk, you may choose to leave the FireWire clone from above connected. "Installing" applications this way is not strictly Best Practices (see below) and entails some minor risk of losing your clone if an unforeseen

disaster strikes.

Step 2: Read "Read Before You Install"

Insert the Tiger install DVD in your drive and read the Read Before You Install file. Pay attention to any caveats or special procedures Apple may recommend.

Step 3: Perform a Clean Install

Perform a clean install. Do not upgrade, update, archive & install or choose any other install choice. You are intentionally and deliberately wiping your drive and installing from scratch. This installation method has proven the most reliable over the last several Mac OS X releases.

Note: A clean install will completely wipe your system disk. Make sure you have a good, workable, proven backup first! You have been warned.

Step 3: Use Tiger's Copy File Feature to Install Applications (Optional, Not Best Practice)

To save time, you can use Tiger's built-in install feature of copying all your applications from your previous system onto your new installation. This requires you leave the FireWire clone drive connected to your Mac during the installation. The Tiger install will see the clone OS and offer you the choice of copying the applications and home folders to the newly installed OS drive.

This method, although faster than manually reinstalling applications, can lead to applications which won't start, or won't work properly. If you choose this method and have applications which are uncooperative, you will have to reinstall them manually anyway.

Part IV: Post-Install Cleanup**Step 1: Repair Permissions**

After the upgrade has completed, you have filled out the registration forms and the system is up and running Tiger, use Disk Utility to Repair Permissions.

Step 2: Bring the System Software Up To Date

Run Software Update to get the system back up to date (10.4.1 as of this writing, for example).

Step 3: Repair Permissions

Repair Permissions yet again.

In general, you should Repair Permissions after adding any new applications or system software updates to your Mac.

Part V: Reinstall Applications and Data Files**Step 1: Reinstall Applications from Original Media**

If you chose not to use the installer's built-in application copying feature, you will need to reinstall all your applications manually. This is Best Practice. Reinstall all your applications from their original media (CD, DVD, or downloaded file). As mentioned above, this has been shown to cause the fewest problems with applications running properly in the new OS.

Step 2: Repair Permissions

Using Disk Utility, Repair Permissions on your system disk.

Step 3: Bring Your Applications Up To Date

Using the appropriate application software update tool (some applications have built-in software update check tools, for others you should check the vendor's web site), bring your application software up to date following the manufacturer's recommendations.

Step 4: Repair Permissions

Yes, Repair Permissions -- again. Hey, when in doubt, Repair Permissions.

Step 5: Install Your Home Folder

Connect the FireWire clone drive and manually copy all important data files and folders over to Tiger from your old system disk. Typically these files and folders will all be in your old home folder.

Part VI: Backup, Backup, Backup**Step 1: Clone the Newly Installed System Disk**

OK, so now that you've spent the better part of a day getting this done right, you'd probably rather not have to do it again -- well at least until the next cat is let out of the cage, right?

Clone the newly installed OS using a cloning tool which is safe for the new version of the OS. Bear in mind the tool you used to clone the old OS may not be work properly yet with the new OS. Sometimes software tools take time to "catch up" with new OS releases. Check the manufacturer's web site to make sure the clone software you will be using is certified for use with Tiger!

Put this clone on a different disk or partition than the one you used to back up your old Panther system disk. You should keep the old Panther clone for at least as long

as it takes for you to feel sure all your applications are working to your satisfaction. Without the old OS clone, there is no easy way to go back if you find you need to. If you're real paranoid, you might even want to burn the old Panther clone to DVDs.

Step 2: Backup Home Folders

Using a backup program which is certified to work with Tiger, start a new backup set of your home folder(s). Do not write over your old Panther home folder backups, create new ones! This of course, requires yet another disk or partition on a disk.

Part VII: Miscellaneous**Step 1: Customization**

Perform any other customizations you need to do. Set your desktop background, your screensaver, whatever other little things you like to do with your system or apps to make it "yours."

Enjoy Tiger!

Updates, changes, and corrections to this procedure will appear on the NCMUG web site.

Happy upgrading!

Appendix A: Disk Space**Requirements**

Proper upgrading requires several different clones and backups be maintained. Proper disk planning is essential to make the backup process smooth and easy.

In the guide above, four separate

backup locations are discussed.

These can either be on four separate disk drives, or four partitions on a single large disk drive, or any combination of the two. Assuming you have a large external FireWire drive (say 250GB or larger), the following four partition scheme would work well for upgrading a PowerBook with an 80GB internal drive.

If you have a larger drive, or a system with more than one drive, you will have to modify the following to suit your needs. One large FW drive can be used if you want:

Partition 1: Panther Clone

This partition should be equal to or larger than the drive you are cloning.

Partition 2: Tiger Clone

This partition should be equal to or larger than the drive you are cloning.

Partition 3: Old Home Folder Backup

This partition should be large enough to handle your normal home folder backup needs.

Partition 4: New Home Folder Backup

This partition should be large enough to handle your normal home folder backup needs.

I'd love to change the world, but they won't give me the source code! -- Unknown