

# ATPM

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

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# Welcome

by Robert Paul Leitao, [rleitao@atpm.com](mailto:rleitao@atpm.com)

Welcome to the August issue of *About This Particular Macintosh!* It's been a hot summer, so the editors of ATPM have spent much time in the comfort of air conditioned environs slicing and dicing the state of all things Apple. Our collective analysis has come to one conclusion: there are two types of people in America—those that use an iPhone and those who choose Verizon for cell phone services. It's a new digital divide.

We're looking at the numbers in a uniquely ATPM kind of way, and our applied math techniques have earned their own issue. This August issue is now known as the ATPM New Math edition of your favorite monthly Internet magazine.

## The Gap in GAAP

For the fiscal quarter ended June 27, 2009 Apple reported GAAP revenue of \$8.34 billion and GAAP earnings of \$1.23 billion or \$1.35 per diluted share, surpassing Apple's guidance (no surprise) but also besting Wall Street estimates by the ATPM New Math version of a country mile. But GAAP results leave a gap in the viewing the company's performance in the quarter. Non-GAAP results show revenue from the sale of products and services of \$9.74 billion and non-GAAP earnings of \$1.94 billion.

Why the gap in GAAP? Because Apple recognizes the revenue and earnings on certain products and services (such as the iPhone and Apple TV) over the estimated economic life of the product (essentially two years from the time of purchase). The GAAP results record iPhone sales under the subscription accounting method. Non-GAAP results recognize iPhone revenue at time of sale. We've covered the subscription accounting method in ATPM before, but as iPhone sales rise the gap between GAAP performance and non-GAAP performance becomes more pronounced. During the quarter Apple sold 2.6 million Macs and 5.2 million iPhones.

The company's June quarter non-GAAP performance caused Apple's share price to "gap up" the day after the numbers were released, with some suggesting the gap between the stock's current trading price and the stock's all-time high may close within the next few to several months.

## The iPhone's Audacious Appetite

During the quarter ended June 27, 2009, iPod sales fell in both sequential comparisons (the previous quarter) and year-over-year comparisons as the popular iPhone cannibalized iPod sales. Not only is the popular iPhone winning customers for Apple and AT&T, but it's also reducing demand for the iPod. But Apple knew this would happen, according to company executives. Looking at the matter in an ATPM New Math kind of way: iPhone = iPod<sup>2</sup>. In other words, each iPhone sold has a value far greater to Apple's bottom line than a few iPods sold. Considering the retail value of each iPhone and the potential for App

Store sales, an iPhone has much greater economic weight than an iPod. Better for Apple to cannibalize its own product sales than allow a competitor to do the same.

## O Sole Mio

The term is from the Neopolitan language and is the name of a popular song recorded by many famous artists including rockers, crooners, and opera singers. Elvis Presley used the song's melody but had the lyrics changed. His recording entitled "It's Now or Never" became an international hit. It also has absolutely nothing to do with Apple except this writer saw a relationship between the title of Elvis Presley's hit and the market's view on AT&T's wireless services success while the iPhone is under an exclusive deal. In other words, once the exclusive deal ends, AT&T may have trouble both keeping and acquiring new wireless customers.

The ATPM New Math equation is:  $\text{iPhone} = \text{ATT}^2$ . Translation: the iPhone makes it easier for AT&T to acquire new customers and reduces customer acquisition and retention costs while the exclusive deal for the iPhone remains in force.

## If-Then

ATPM New Math creates a powerful statement:

$$\text{If iPhone} = \text{iPod}^2, \text{ Then iPod}^2 = \text{ATT}^2$$

In other words, the iPhone's impact on both Apple's iPod sales and AT&T's cellular services sales is far greater than the handheld products and services offered previously by the respective companies. In the second calendar quarter, AT&T reported acquiring a net increase of 1.37 million wireless customers and activations of 2.4 million iPhones. One doesn't need to have a scholarly ATPM New Math understanding to see that the iPhone is AT&T's wireless customer acquisition driver while the company continues to lose residential phone line customers, an industry trend accelerated by the increasing use of cell phones at home and while on the go.

## No Solo Mio

With 2.6 million Macs sold in the June quarter and [estimates](#) that Apple has secured 90% or more of domestic PC sales in the \$1,000+ price category, as Mac users we are no longer alone. Each of us are members of a global group of users that is expanding by the day. As a universal group, our members speak many different languages but share a similar digital dream: using the best digital lifestyle products available to enhance our computing life and stay connected with friends and family. Each month ATPM chronicles what we call the "personal computing experience." We thank you for joining us this month as we explore the world of Apple and share our work with our readers.

Our August issue includes:

## **Bloggable: A Bird in the Palm Is Worth. . .**

Wes Meltzer mulls the topic of whether the Palm Pre represents a threat to the iPhone—or even the BlackBerry.

## **MacMuser: Blinking Cursors**

“In my experience, if the monitor is alive so should be the computer.”

## **MacMuser: Faster, Cheaper, Better?**

Mark Tennent has a three-sided look the shift from traditional analog technology to digital technology.

## **How To: Tethering a Mac to Your Cell Phone**

Sylvester Roque shares detailed thoughts about whether to choose a wireless broadband modem or to use phone tethering.

## **Desktop Pictures: Travels**

Reader Rob Colonna shares this month’s desktop photos featuring images from his travels around the world.

## **Out at Five**

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

## **Qaptain Qwerty**

Relax at home with a Mac, or not.

## **Review: Juice Pack Air**

Great for hardcore iPhone users, less so for others, and noticeably bulky.

## **Review: LapDawg X4**

A fantastic desk stand that can go from your bed to your desk to your couch and back without batting an eye.

## **Review: OWC USB 2.0 Display Adapter**

The USB 2.0 Display Adapter can be a worthy means of adding additional monitors to your computer, provided you don’t require hardware acceleration.

## **Review: Typinator 3.5.1**

Insert repetitive text, even pictures, into documents with Typinator. As long as you remember the keystrokes, that is.



## The Game is Afoot!

Ten years later, and we're still pining for a sports sim for the Mac.

—*Jeff Wong*

## Harman Kardon Soundsticks II

Great review and write up. But, hey, I ran across a set of these speakers at a thrift store, problem is, no power adapter, and I can't find one anywhere. Can anyone help guide me in the right direction?

—*Cork*



Thank you for a most entertaining review. I will add Sarah Vaughan's "Crazy and Mixed Up" to my collection.

—*Sidney Vincent*

## Secrecy Boils Over

Seems that Palm is trying to take advantage of Apple's ecosystem without the time and expense of having to build their own and not pay a dime for Apple's time and expenses to build the iTunes store into a major music retailer. Kind of sleazy. Maybe Apple should start charging heavy licensing fees to companies that attempt to do this.

—*JS*

## Freeway Pro and Freeway Express 5.3.1

Compliments to the writer.

I've been using Windows/Dreamweaver for a fair amount of time and just bought my first Mac hoping Apple won't give me the dreaded blue screen of death Windows seems to give me now and then. Luckily, I'm like a cat but down to my last life.

Back to the software, I just love how Freeway does things on the fly. Sometimes the client wants changes to the Web site done yesterday, and Freeway lets you do it and do it easily.

But, and it's a pretty big but, the lack of code manipulation really does limit such a great piece of software, in particular for things like SEO. I would pay extra to get this functionality, but the designers are obviously going for another market.

—Nat

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## A Bird in the Palm Is Worth...

This month's hot topic: does the Palm Pre represent a threat to the iPhone, or to the BlackBerry? Could it revive Palm's fortunes?

I remember when the Palm platform was the only platform anyone wanted to use for their PDAs. My Pilot was a terrific little device, and later I had a Handspring Visor Deluxe that kept me organized and scheduled all the way through high school. They lost their way by letting the Treo line and the OS stagnate, but shoot, my dad had a Palm VII, a great device that even supported wireless network data connections in 1999!

Ever since Palm announced the Pre, there's been a lot of discussion about what it means for Palm and what it means for the rest of the field. The webOS has been in development for more than two years, and the concept of a Linux-based Palm OS dates back to 2004. It's based on a striking user interface concept, compared to the spectrum from "most conventional" (Windows Mobile, which even includes a task manager) to "most unconventional" (iPhone)—webOS is off the charts. The system is based on the concept of "cards," in which each instance of an application has one card, and you can shuffle between them depending on what you want in the foreground. Switching between cards looks a little like a mobile version of Exposé. (*Caveat: I have not been able to get my hands on a Pre to use yet.*)

From what I hear the Pre is really impressive. It seems clear enough to me that the field is divided into basically three classes of smartphones: multimedia devices, e-mail devices, and enterprise office devices. The current Big Three are the iPhone, the BlackBerry, and the Treo and the whole other classes of PalmOS ("Garnet," etc.) and Windows Mobile phones and handhelds.

I've used Windows Mobile, the BlackBerry OS, PalmOS, and my iPhone's OS X. Each of them has various positives and negatives: the iPhone is easily the easiest to use, but my Palms supported multitasking on a 68380. Windows Mobile even has a task manager, but using it just like Ctrl-Alt-Del to get rid of a hung application left a bad taste in my mouth. The old-school BlackBerrys with the scroll wheel make browsing through long e-mails or long lists a breeze, but to say that the BlackBerry OS goes beyond the absolute, bare minimum with multimedia stretches the truth to the point of breaking.

So, I think the question is, what will the Pre become? Will it lead a category, and if so, which? The iPhone's, as a multimedia device that happens to be a PDA and phone? The BlackBerry's niche as the device of people who really need to send e-mail standing on the El ride home? The Windows Mobile phone's enterprise category, where the ability to edit Microsoft Office documents and even do a PowerPoint presentation without a computer is

first and foremost? (Seriously. My Dell Axim X51v could drive a projector at 1024×768 with a simple, \$30 adapter cable, and could view PowerPoint files natively.)

John Gruber calls the Pre a “[bet the company](#)” product, and I think he’s right.

Because it has a hardware keyboard, the two most obvious comparisons are to the iPhone and the BlackBerry. I think the iPhone’s gotten an unfair rap as not-for-professionals: Mobile Safari saves my bacon all the time, and I use mine for work e-mail every day. Although there are some things about the e-mail handling I wish were different, I don’t miss the hardware keyboard at all. And the BlackBerry is a fantastic device as long as you have access to an e-mail account using the BlackBerry Enterprise Server, and as long as you’re willing to let the BlackBerry do its thing—text—the Web browsing experience is just fine.

The Pre does a little of both. It’s not really just a multimedia device, whether that means “iPod” or “Web browsing device,” because the entire OS is based on Web development. It’s not just a handheld e-mail reader, because Palm can’t compete with the experience of a company whose entire business model is “voice + e-mail.”

I’m open-minded. What did everyone else have to say? Let’s go to the reviews. I’ve split them into three categories: two comparing the Pre to (1) the iPhone and (2) the BlackBerry; and a third discussing the Synergy feature.

## Compared to the iPhone

**Justin Blanton** thinks that the much-discussed idea that the Pre is going to compete principally against the BlackBerry is wrong-headed. He writes, “Palm is looking for *customers* anywhere it can find them. The delineation between corporate users and everyone else is slowly but surely disappearing, and I’m fairly certain it’s going to be either Palm or Apple that bridges the gap.” More to the point, he’s very impressed with the card UI metaphor:

For me, the big thing about the Pre is the ability to run multiple apps simultaneously; you know, like pretty much every other smartphone in the world except the iPhone. (Despite Apple’s insistence that simultaneous apps would tax the battery too much, etc., I really wish they’d let me make that determination.) The card metaphor that brings the Pre’s multitasking functionality to fruition is fantastic (think cmd-tab switching on the Mac), and I especially like that each Web page gets its own card (this one-page—one-“window” thing would never work for me on the desktop, but it’s perfect for a mobile phone). Cards just [feel so natural](#) and “right.” Scroll through the “deck” to switch between open apps and flick a card up to close an application. Nice.

**Steven Frank**, of Panic Software, sees Blanton’s review and raises it a lot of details. He’s [impressed with the UI](#), and much less so with the hardware, which he says is beautiful but already showing signs of physical distress after light usage. More to the point:

WebOS would need to mature a bit before I personally could replace the iPhone with the Pre as my primary device. But for a 1.0, they've performed a minor miracle. It is a highly respectable competitor to the iPhone and other smartphones. I would rank it above Android, and miles above Windows Mobile.

**Walt Mossberg**, good old Uncle Walt, writes that he thinks the Pre's software and hardware are "elegant," and that many users will prefer a physical keyboard to the software keyboard. On the other hand:

I consider the Pre to be potentially the strongest rival to the iPhone to date, [provided it 'attracts lots of third-party apps'](#), which it sorely lacks at launch. Its design is much better than that of the two other main iPhone-class competitors: the T-Mobile G1, which uses Android, and RIM's touch-screen BlackBerry Storm.

**Claudine Beaumont**, the *Daily Telegraph's* technology editor, was in San Francisco to observe the launch. She thinks that the device "[better than the iPhone in some ways](#)," and goes on to say:

The Pre ticks all the boxes needed for a modern smartphone—WiFi and 3G connectivity, Web browser, YouTube access, 8 GB of memory, app store for downloading games and programs, Amazon MP3 access for song downloads, three-megapixel camera with flash (although, curiously, no video-recording function; this inspired-by-Apple thing is going too far), accelerometer for switching between portrait and landscape, etc etc.

But it's greatest strength is its operating system, webOS, built from the ground up by Palm, and designed to tap in to the benefits of cloud computing.

We'll have more on the Pre and cloud computing later in this column.

## Compared to the BlackBerry

**Ars Technica** is so sure that Palm's got BlackBerry makers Research In Motion in their sights they even titled their review of the Pre, "Ars Reviews the Palm Pre, part 1: the BlackBerry killer." Writer Jon Stokes divides the whole mobile-device kingdom into the same categories I use. He says that all of the successful devices do one thing well—for the iPhone, media playback; for the BlackBerry, e-mail. By that logic, he says, the Pre has to be a BlackBerry competitor: it is "as good a [messaging device](#) as the iPhone is a media device." He focuses very intently on its broader messaging capabilities:

In all, Palm put as much effort into making the webOS a first-rate messaging experience as Apple did into making the iPhone a first-rate media experience,

and with just as much success. . . [T]he Pre will do for your personal messaging what your work BlackBerry does for your business messaging. Furthermore, I'm sure that e-mail, SMS, Twitter, and IM aren't the end of it. . . [I]f it's an update or message that comes from a network service, it's likely that the webOS's Synergy component will support it eventually."

**BoyGeniusReport** finds the screen and the form factor to be excellent—"very pocketable," they write—but there's one big flaw: [the keyboard](#). This is a considerable flaw for a phone that wants to take on RIM like David and Goliath:

It's really not good. My hands aren't that big (I can type faster than you could ever dream on a BlackBerry, iPhone, or E71) and my thumb literally takes up 3 or 4 keys on the keyboard. There's less space in between each key than say, a BlackBerry Curve 8300 keyboard, and the texture takes some time to get used to. It's a rubberized coating kind of like the Centro and Treo Pro, and while the keys are a bit harder (better), the coating could possibly get irritating as usage increases. It's really such an important area that couldn't afford to be messed with and we'll admit it. . . we're a little let down. You're going after the big guns here, and this is kind of disappointing.

**Kyle Cordes** gives the Pre [high marks](#), from the perspective of a BlackBerry user, because the hardware and software are both so advanced. He was especially impressed by the webOS' full-throttle embrace of multitasking—apparently BlackBerrys can do that, he writes, but it's not commonly used. But, after using it for a few weeks, he returned it and got a BlackBerry Curve instead. BlackBerry habits die hard, it sounds like.

Last but not least, the guys at *CrackBerry.com* got their hands on a Verizon memo that shows the carrier [deliberately positioning](#) the Pre against their BlackBerry Storm, feature by feature. I think Verizon knows something we don't about whether they're ever going to get a contract to sell the iPhone. . .

## The Synergy feature

One of the big selling points of the Pre is that it rethinks some of the paradigms of modern cell phones. The biggest is the notion of breaking down the definition of the address book: for historical reasons every device has had its own, but someone at Palm came up with the idea of integrating the new vogue for social networking into your device. In effect, the Pre outsources your address book to Gmail, Facebook, etc. They call it Synergy.

The guys at **Engadget**, whose Joshua Topolsky turned in an epic, three-part review ([one](#), [two](#), [three](#)), think this cuts both ways:

The Synergy premise is simple: it will take your Gmail account, Facebook profile, AIM identity, and / or Exchange data and merge it all together on your

Pre, killing duplicate entries, joining together sources where there's overlap (creating "linked contacts"), and generally making your connected life super-duper awesome. What it actually does is dump pretty much all of your content into the phone without a second thought for what it's letting through the door... We don't know if you're like us, but we don't want every person we're friends with on Facebook in the contact list for our phone. Facebook kindly provides grouping for different contacts because it appreciates the fact that not everyone has the same kind of relationship. WebOS? Not so much.

And the *Daily Telegraph's* Beaumont calls it "impressive," and writes that it makes keeping track of conversations a sync by storing them by contact regardless of medium.

## The Pre and iTunes

One of the little secrets Palm slipped into the Pre, which you might remember from [last month](#), is the ability to synchronize with iTunes...at least iTunes 8.2.

Basically, it was a hack. They have the Pre identify itself to the computer as a USB mass storage device when it's initially connected to the computer, but when it's in media sync mode, it pretends that it's an iPod by masquerading with the iPod's device ID, so that it can connect to iTunes.

In the iTunes 8.2.1 update, Apple [disabled](#) the spoofing. They'd already warned Palm, [they remind us](#).

*Computerworld's* Matt Hamblen notes that this can't be good for Palm, the tit-for-tat game. He quotes Chris Kellihack of *Palm InfoCenter* as saying, "The sync capability was a [temporary loophole](#) by Palm at best, which left a funny taste in my mouth as a half-assed solution."

Palm has since pushed out another software update "[restoring](#)" the ability to sync with iTunes 8.2.1, by changing the USB vendor ID on the Pre to Apple's, so I guess this means war. They've also [complained](#) to the USB Implementers Forum about *Apple's* misuse of the USB vendor ID, which just screams of chutzpah (only this month's *second-most* chutzpah, if you can believe it).

As I said, I guess this means war.

## Another Meaning for "in the Palm of your Hand"

When Google announced their new Chrome OS, a platform mostly intended for running Web applications like the ones they happen to excel at writing, a thousand analogies blossomed.

Was this a play at Apple? Microsoft? Sun? (Remember that Java's *raison d'être* was thin computing!) Some other, convoluted computing history analogy?

I remember the late 90s, the last time "thin computing" was in vogue. The idea was that servers were becoming so powerful that you could reduce the hardware cost to the client by making their computers less powerful terminals and running the software over the network.

At the time, this was all about CPU, RAM, and hard drive space—form factor wasn't an issue yet—but somebody forgot to tell Sun about Moore's Law. By the time I was a sophomore in high school, in 2000, my desktop had a 733 MHz Pentium III and Intel introduced the 1.5GHz Pentium 4. My dad's computer, with the 1.5GHz P4, had as much raw clock speed as 1997's Sun Ultra 450 (although less effective speed), and significantly more hard drive storage space.

So the explosion of cheap RAM, cheap enormous hard drives, and very fast desktop CPUs negated the benefits of thin computing to non-institutional customers.

Fast forward to today. Google wants to build their own interface on top of the Linux kernel and their Chrome Web browser. So the Chrome OS is Google's play at being the principal software provider for the netbook category. These are very small laptops with cheap, low-speed CPUs from Intel (rather than Intel's more expensive, low-power-consumption chips, these are just small and slow) and a seven-year-old OS (Windows XP). I didn't know there was such a category until I saw one at a Radio Shack, where I was buying some batteries, and realized that it was about the size of the Kindle DX when closed.

It's certainly an interesting category. At the same time, I paid more for my iPhone than for Dell's Mini 9 (which, by the time you read this column, likely won't be on sale any longer), which (a) has astonishingly similar specs and (b) is only very slightly larger than the Kindle DX.

(An aside: to me, it's fascinating that these devices are converging so rapidly toward each other. The iPhone's screen has 25% of the resolution of the Mini 9 display, versus just 6% of the 17" MacBook Pro and 20" iMac displays. I wouldn't be surprised to see an eventual iPhone with a display resolution in the 1/4-WVGA neighborhood (640×512) and a netbook with a 6.1" diagonal screen (5.25" wide by 3.1" high) and a BlackBerry Pearl-style predictive keyboard.)

Now, Chrome OS doesn't exist yet. All it is so far is a concept Google is saying they will deliver. I'll believe it when I see it. But it's actually strikingly reminiscent of this month's other topic, the Palm Pre. (See below, if you're already bored.) Both the webOS and Chrome rely on "the cloud" for storage, which means that some portion or all of your data is stored on servers at Google or elsewhere on the Internet rather than on your hard drive.

I think this makes more sense for the webOS, with its always-on EV-DO data connection, than for a netbook that relies on WiFi and the stupidity of strangers with unlocked networks.

(For the reverse perspective, read Tom Spring in *PC World*. He thinks they won't succeed, but, unlike me, he thinks it has the potential to [transform personal computing](#)—and for Google to dethrone Microsoft.)

So then, the question is, what does the Chrome OS mean for the big players in the computer software market? There are currently three big players with a feet in both software and OS camps: Microsoft, Apple, and the open-source Linux/BSD folks (principally Ubuntu, Red Hat and Firefox).

John Gruber takes the position that Google would have been smarter to leverage the development work on Android, sort of like OS X in reverse, starting from the [mobile end of things](#). He suggests that supporting two distinct platforms for two applications very nearby on the computing spectrum communicates a lack of confidence in the underlying Android OS to scale beyond cell phone-sized devices. More to the point, he thinks it would have been easier to have one platform, if they intend to get users to expect something other than the conventional computing platform. (*IDG's Elizabeth Montalbano* found plenty of [analysts who agreed](#): “Others wondered why Google felt the need to create two OSes targeted at the netbook market, especially since Android is still relatively new and does not yet have a strong position in the mobile market against Apple’s iPhone and other smartphones.”)

But Glenn Fleishman and Adam Engst at *TidBITS* take exactly the opposite view, arguing not only that the two should remain separate, but that it is a distinction rooted in logic—[using the same facts!](#) It’s so much fun when writers play this game:

Google said that Android won’t be affected by Chrome OS. Android is tailored for devices that have small screens, a variety of input mechanisms, extreme battery requirements, and processors that are *even lower-powered than those in netbooks*. It’s possible that Android and Chrome OS could at some point converge into a single platform, but we can see the advantages of developing a netbook operating system separately from a mobile one. (*Emph. mine*)

As far as the big stakeholders are concerned, Dan Frakes and Dan Moren agree on one thing: [Microsoft](#) should be scared about Chrome OS, and [Apple](#) should just shake it off. The risk to Microsoft is obvious, because it’s not just a play for Windows customers; it’s a play to replace the whole Microsoft software suite with Google’s, and anyone else’s on the Internet.

Apple, on the other hand, is selling MacBooks like there’s no tomorrow, and the difference between a \$300 cheaptacular netbook and a \$1,000 MacBook or \$2,000 MacBook Pro is so dramatic that Microsoft’s “Laptop Hunters” campaign doesn’t even touch on netbooks. (Speaking of laptop hunting, the Macalope is loving that John Dvorak’s [son bought a Mac](#).)

*Ars Technica*, bless them, took a longer look at what the issues surrounding the current crop of operating systems are, and what’s interesting (and what isn’t) about Chrome OS. They think that there are [two big issues](#) that Google is trying to solve:

- First, the data and the applications will run as Web services. This means that the software is always up to date, and storage space is only limited by how much you get or pay for.
- Second, all that runs on the computer is an OS with a network stack and minimal hardware support, and a Web browser. You can say goodbye to the five minutes it

takes me to get Windows XP to boot on my work computer, in this world. The flip side of this is that you'll have a lot fewer peripherals to choose from; but maybe that's passé in the post-1990s world. My little sister, who at 18 is on the cusp of the netbook crowd, only carries her iPhone and a Canon pocket camera. I don't doubt she'd ditch the pocket camera if the iPhone's were better.

They also think that Google supporting ARM is going to give Intel nightmares. ARM is probably better for a device in this class, with much better (read: lower) energy consumption, but as long as real Windows only runs on Intel-compatible chips there's never been competition. If the Chrome OS is a success, Intel might lose the whole sector of subnotebooks—ARM already has the handhelds and phones sewn up.

We'll have to wait until 2010 to see what happens. All of this is merely prelude. But I can safely say it's an interesting time to be a computer user.

## Odds and Ends

iPhone OS 3.0's new WiFi features mean it [excels at hot spots](#)—including any AT&T hot spots. If you've set your iPhone so that it [will automatically connect to one](#), like at a Starbucks, then as soon as you pull up a Safari window it will log you in automagically. From there, it's hello, sweet WiFi. Occasionally AT&T does make things not suck.

- Nokia's market share is suffering due to their poor marketing of smartphones (and the Symbian OS, neither BlackBerry nor Windows Mobile). Some analysts are predicting it may not take more than a few years for Apple to [pass Nokia](#).
- It seems Psystar ([remember them?](#)) is attempting to get out of *bankruptcy* on what may be the biggest pile of chutzpah ever constructed. In May, they entered Chapter 11 bankruptcy so they could have protection from fighting Apple's legal bills. But it seems that they couldn't reach an agreement on a payment plan to their legal counsel *for their bankruptcy proceedings*, according to [Computerworld](#), and *AppleInsider* reported in June that Apple had gotten the bankruptcy court's automatic freeze on other court proceedings [lifted](#). So they've thrown in the towel on bankruptcy by claiming that fighting Apple is, I kid you not, [too expensive](#) to let them also file for bankruptcy.
- Thomas of *Just Another Mobile Monday* bought his first Mac a few weeks ago, and he wrote quite a review of it. Apparently he was pleasantly surprised that “all the applications [work well together](#)... and the UI slides into place in ways that were previously only seen with WindowBlinds on the PC.” His review is worth a read from the perspective of someone who “made fun of Mac users for most of my life.”
- If you've ever wondered why Japan has the most impressive mobile phones, but they're not available anywhere else, the *New York Times* had a really interesting look. Apparently this is “[Galápagos syndrome](#),” named after Charles Darwin's infamous finches, and it's a great read.



## Blinking Cursors

New job, day one. I sat looking up at the Dell wondering how to turn it on. On the monitor is a button that looked hopeful so I pressed it to illuminate a tiny lamp on the button. After a few moments of waiting for something to happen, nothing did, apart from adding a tiny bit extra to my carbon overhead. The Dell remained a blue-black lump of lifeless plastic.

Being a Mac user since nineteen eighty-something, this promoted a problem because, in my experience, if the monitor is alive so should be the computer. I jiggled the mouse, a large and ugly object probably made out of left-overs from the part-bins in East German Trabant factories. Then I pressed the spacebar on a keyboard made from cheap, clickety-clackety plastic.

The tiny lamp on the monitor's button kept its steady glow, but all the screen showed was fingerprints of previous users and the scrapes where they ran their nails down it in desperation. At least the screen is LCD and not cathode ray. After years of not using a flickering, luminescent monster, LCD is a definite plus, even if it is about the size of my MacBook's. Until I could coax some activity on the screen, I couldn't start work. It was time to examine the CPU box.

### You Ought to See My Floppy

I see the front has two slots, one with the initials DVD in barely discernible capitals, and an oblong button. Even a Mac user recognises this as the way to get the coffee cup holder to slide in and out. I pressed it anyway. Beneath the DVD was another thinner slot, also with a button.

Could it be...no, surely not...a floppy disk drive? Good Lord! Do they still make floppy disks? Apple abandoned the whole idea years ago, and here I am, supposed to work with a computer with a floppy drive. How old is this machine for goodness sake? I pressed the button on the floppy drive, just in case. Nothing happened.

Where next to start grabbing my share of Lotus, destined to replace QuarkXPress, Photoshop and all software which my skills have been honed to perfection over the last 20 years? The only other recognisable elements on the front of the CPU are a pair of USB ports—and USB 1 at that.

Obviously the “On” button must be on the side or maybe round the back. A large, raised, oval silver area looked hopeful but yielded no results. I saw an identical one on the other side and pressed them both out of devilment, hoping that maybe the case would open so I could see inside. Nothing happened. Nor was there a button round the rear of the

computer, only a sticker saying Windows XP2. The computer sat there “looking” at me in its oh-so-smug Dellness.

## Look at the Monkey

All I could think of was the video of Steve Ballmer doing an impression of a monkey at a Microsoft conference. His sweaty armpits leaking darkly into his blue shirt. That just about sums up this computer, old and sweaty.

No computer meant no work. Everything I needed to do in my new role was inside that computer. I asked a colleague for help, he waved his hand across the front of the CPU, pressed something, and the machine sprang to life. This is not life as we know it. A noise filled the room, sounding like an asthmatic extractor fan desperately needing a squirt of WD-40.

After waiting a few minutes and still nothing, I noticed some faint lettering on the screen inviting me to “Enter Password” followed by a blinking cursor. Time to make some educated guessing. I played at being a hacker for five or ten minutes, largely to make myself look busy before walking to the administration office.

## Curly Cords

I was walking because no one had shown me how to work the phones yet, phones which had handsets still attached to bases by curly cords. No more wandering round making calls, tucking the handset between chin and shoulder to allow secondary, often more important pursuits such as typing, kneading bread, and opening bottles of wine with one hand.

The office administrator didn’t even look at me as she said: “I haven’t put you on the system yet so you can’t use the computer. We got new ones in this year so I’ll see you on Monday next week and go over them with you.”

## Logmein Not Chowmein

I got home that evening, after a day spent being incredibly helpful, making umpteen cups of tea coffee for anyone who looked slightly dehydrated, meanwhile cleaning the kitchen area to spotlessness. My partner suggested I install the free [Logmein](#) on my Mac, and hope that I’ll be able to use it via a Web browser once the Dell lets me in. Then I’ll be able to have a Dell running my Mac Pro back in my own office. I’ll also take my MacBook in case I can pick up a wireless network somewhere, and possibly put hard, yet-to-be-earned cash, to buy into the iPhone hype.

Otherwise I think I shall try to catch swine flu in preference to going back to my new job next week.

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## Faster, Cheaper, Better?

Traditional publishing is apparently in decline as the book-buying public shifts away from paper products and moves to electronic versions instead. Dennis Publishing has digital publications such as [iMotor](#), which is arguably better and glossier than a printed magazine because of the rich audiovisual content and free cover price. It probably means the end of the line for grizzled old hacks because journalists will need to be media-friendly for their appearances in the “pages”—i.e. young, attractive, and cheap to employ.

Grizzled old tycoon Rupert Murdoch is recognising the shift from print and debating whether to start charging for the online versions of his newspapers. The problem being that there is a world of free English-language alternatives. Newspapers have already tried to charge for electronic versions of the printed newspaper but run dynamic Web versions alongside, which attract contributions from readers around the world.

E-book readers are reported to be a [hit](#) especially among long-distance travellers. Most can hold a veritable library of volumes in the space of one paperback, and even mobile phones can read some types of e-books and PDFs. Currently, e-book readers' purchase price and availability are limiting their spread, although the number of titles available is huge from sources such as [Project Gutenberg](#) and Amazon. [Audiobooks for Free](#) has similar titles for download as MP3 files.

## Not So Fast, Not So Cheap, Not So Good

Michael Mann's latest flick, *Public Enemies*, was shot and recorded entirely digitally, largely hand-held, and not to any great benefit, according to reviews. [The Times](#) calls it a “new distinctive digital aesthetic,” which it describes as “grimy and unpolished as possible.” The digital sound recording is supposed to be grungy as well.

The camera operators were surprised when Mann filmed at the actual places that the subject, John Dillinger, occupied. Many locations are now semi-ruins, complete with real bullet holes from his 1930s shootouts with the police. *Public Enemies* cost a modest \$80 million, with presumably much going to Christian Bale and Johnny Depp, the leading men. Nice work if you can get it as often as they do.

## Fastest, Cheapest, Best on Test

[The 88](#), a Los Angeles-based indie pop band, recorded their latest single, *Love is the Thing* directly into an iPhone's built-in microphone. As the finished result shows from the iTunes Store [here](#), it's not a bad sound with surprisingly full bass, even though it was also mixed on the iPhone using [FourTrack](#), which costs a measly £5.99 from the App Store.

The 88 have a long history of TV appearances in the U.S. with their tracks appearing in films and commercials. Not the least being Microsoft's launch of its ubiquitous and world-beating Zune media player (have you ever seen one?), the launch of which used The 88's track *Nobody Cares*.

A remarkably prescient choice by Microsoft.

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## Tethering a Mac to Your Cell Phone

Earlier this summer, my wife and I spent almost two weeks on an extended road trip through part of the American Southwest. In preparation for that trip, I made a remarkable discovery: my traveling habits have changed dramatically since the last time I made such a trip. I think I spent more time prepping and packing the digital gear than I did packing clothes.

As part of trip preparation, I decided to try to ensure that we had Internet access every step of the way. I was preparing a podcast episode and needed not only to pass on a few files to the rest of the team, but also stay in contact with them as well. My wife also wanted to keep in touch with a few friends via e-mail and perhaps play a bit of World of Warcraft. At first glance, this appeared to be an easy task since all the hotels we were staying in advertised “in-room” wireless Internet access, but if you’ve been following my columns for a while, you know that when it comes to technology I can’t resist asking “What if...?” In this case the question was, “What if the hotel Internet access is unavailable or otherwise unreliable?” I needed a backup plan.

I didn’t want a new dialup account as a backup. We don’t do enough extended trips to justify that; besides, it would have meant making long distance calls from the hotel. I have used my cell phone alone to access the Internet, but I hate entering data on cell phones. Besides, no World of Warcraft there, so I wanted something more.

I knew it was possible to access the Internet using your computer via a cell phone account, and that seemed like the best option. Keep reading and I’ll describe some of your options and some questions you need to have answered before making your decision. This is an overview rather than the step-by-step instructions you have come to expect, because the information needed will vary depending upon your particular cell phone, carrier, and data plan.

### Connection Options

I had never used my mobile account to access the Internet from my computer, but surely someone had created an option to make this easy for Mac users. After a little research I concluded that the most likely options were broadband access through your cell phone account and cell phones used as modems.

*Cellular-based Broadband Access* usually requires additional hardware in the form of a broadband modem that connects the computer to a provider’s cellular network. These devices are usually either USB or card slot based. Card slot based options are available for both

PCMCIA and ExpressCard slots, so choose the one that matches your computer's interface. There are some cards, such as [The AirCard 402](#) that fit either type of slot via an adapter.

*Using your existing cell phone as a modem*, often referred to as “tethering” or “phone as modem,” uses your existing cell phone to provide an Internet connection for your computer. In order for tethering to work it must be supported by your phone, carrier, and cell phone plan. As users of the new iPhone 3GS can attest, just because the phone supports tethering does not mean the provider or data plans support it as well.

## **Asking the Right Questions from the Internet and Tech Support**

Before you can decide whether to spend money on a wireless broadband modem, make sure you *know your present phone's limits*. Do it and your provider both support tethering? If tethering is supported, what speeds is it capable of attaining in the area where you will be using the phone? Some phone and network combinations appear to be capable only of 56K modem speed at best. Is that going to be fast enough to meet your needs? It's fast enough for e-mail and light Web surfing, but if you are interested in media intensive activities such as gaming, tethering may not be your best option.

You may be able to get this information from your cellular provider, but many Mac users find it easier to consult the Internet first. Try a search that includes your phone's make and model and the name of your provider. This should get you at least some of the necessary information. Once you decide to contact tech support, keep asking questions until you get the necessary information. If reports that I have read are correct, some tech support staff don't fully understand “tethering” so it may take a while.

While you are looking for the necessary information, keep an eye out for any indication that your phone needs to be manually put into data mode before you can use it as your computer's modem. Some posts may mention a particular numeric code that must be entered from the dial pad. There may also be software that will accomplish this for you. I am currently using [USB Modem](#) to connect my Palm OS-based phone. You may have to specifically ask your provider about this. I spent more than two hours on the phone with my provider trying to get this process working under Mac or Windows. We never got it working under Windows so he decided to try the Mac side. After about half an hour of that, we must have gotten “disconnected” because he never came back to the phone. I realized later that while we were testing the configuration from the Mac side I don't remember being asked to put the phone into data mode.

## **What Does the Wireless Broadband Modem Cost?**

Whether it's USB or card-based, when purchasing a broadband cellular modem from your carrier, look to spend anywhere from less than \$100 to several hundred dollars depending upon what deals/rebates are being offered. The best prices are usually contingent upon upgrading/extending your current contract. My provider was even willing to give me a free card modem if I extended my current contract an additional two years. I decided against this option because the new iPhones are calling my name when my current contract expires. Some of these cards are available cheaper through third parties, but take care to make sure

the card you are interested in will work with your carrier. Make sure your chosen vendor has a reasonable return policy.

## **Which Wireless Broadband Modem Should I Choose?**

Most U.S. cellular providers have several broadband options on their Web site, either card slot or USB-based options. If you are opting for a broadband card, find out which ones will function with OS X and fit the slot on your computer. Although some providers have this information on their Web site, the information is not always accurate. From what I have encountered, some of the modem cards which do not list OS X drivers will actually work with little or no modification.

When it comes to solving this issue, be prepared to do some independent research. There may be problems using some modems with your Mac that your provider's tech support staff may not be aware of. For example, USB-based modems avoid the issue of choosing a correct card slot, but some of those same modems would block access to both USB ports on some Macs. These modems usually work when attached to a USB extension cable, but it's nice to know that ahead of time.

## **I Decided to Use Tethering—How Do I Make It Work?**

If you have read this far, you've decided that tethering might be a viable option. Assuming that your phone and carrier support this option, you're almost home. All that is left to do is locate the correct username and password, connect your phone to the computer, configure the appropriate settings in Network preferences, and put the phone into data mode before connecting to the Internet.

Tethering your cell phone to the Mac is a bit like connecting and configuring a dialup network connection. In most cases, you are going to need to know the correct username and password. Typically the username and password used for tethering is not the same as any password you may have been given to access Web services and e-mail. Some providers leave these fields blank. If you didn't find this information mentioned in your earlier Internet search, contact your provider's tech support.

After you have chosen the method to connect your phone to the Mac, launch System Preferences and select the Network pane. In the left pane, select your connection type (Bluetooth or USB). In the right pane, enter the phone number, account name (username), and password required by your provider. While you are here, you might find it helpful to check the option to put the modem status in the menu bar. This will make connecting easier later.

The next step is to connect the Mac to your cell phone. I used a USB cable for the connection, but many cell phones which support tethering will also function via Bluetooth over short distances. If you are going to attempt to use Bluetooth for the connection, consult your phone's manual for the specific steps to follow during pairing.

Before we attempt to connect to the Internet, be aware that some phones need to be put into data mode first. Although you can often accomplish this using a dial code punched in

manually via the keypad, I chose to use third-party software. Once your phone is in data mode, all that is left to do is choose your connection from the menu bar and wait for the connection to complete.

## What's It Going to Cost?

Whether you choose tethering or broadband modem access, most carriers are going to require that you have a data plan. Make sure you understand the terms and limitations of your plan. Does your carrier require an additional charge for wireless broadband access? Do they charge an additional per-month fee for tethering? The answer in both cases is probably yes. In other words, you will likely pay for a data plan *and* pay an additional fee for either broadband access or tethering.

While you are asking about costs, be aware that some data plans have a limit or “cap” on the amount of data that can be downloaded in any given billing period. This “cap” is typically around 5 GB per month. Once that cap is exceeded, additional data usually costs a few cents per kilobyte. While 5 GB may sound like a lot of data, it can disappear quickly for heavy users. The provider may tell you that they do not charge extra for occasionally exceeding the “cap”—the bottom line is that they could.

## Final Thoughts

As you can see, tethering can be a daunting process. I spent several hours scouring the Net for the information I needed for the Palm Centro and testing the setup. Much of that time could have been saved if I had realized that my cellular provider had never added “Phone as Modem” to my data plan despite assuring me that it had been added. Tech support tried valiantly but wasn’t very helpful. We spent most of the more than two-hour-long support call attempting to get this working on my Boot Camp installation of XP. We never got that working, and the last half hour or so of Mac work could have been avoided if I had remembered to put my phone in data mode before attempting a connection to the Internet.

We used this feature a little bit during our trip, especially during the three days we were completely without WiFi access in the middle of Phoenix, Arizona. We never attempted World of Warcraft because of the speeds we were achieving. We also didn’t use it nearly enough to justify the amount of time and energy this project required. I hope you will profit from my experiences.

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# Desktop Pictures

by Rob Colonna

## Travels

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

### This Month's Desktop Pictures

This month's photos were taken by Rob Colonna during his travels around the world. He makes them available under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-Share Alike [license](#).



[View Pictures](#)

### Previous Months' Desktop Pictures

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

### Downloading All the Pictures at Once

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

**Safari** Use [this Automator workflow](#).

**iCab** Use the Download command to “Download all linked files in same folder” and configure the limits to download only the linked images.

**OmniWeb** Choose “Save Linked > Images...” from the File menu.

### Contributing Your Own Desktop Pictures

If you have a picture, whether a small series or just one fabulous or funny shot, feel free to send it to [editor@atpm.com](mailto:editor@atpm.com) and we'll consider publishing it in next month's issue. Have a regular print but no scanner? Don't worry. E-mail us, and we tell you where to send it so we can scan it for you. Note that we cannot return the original print, so send us a copy.

## Placing Desktop Pictures

### **Mac OS X 10.3.x Through 10.5.x**

Choose “System Preferences...” from the Apple menu, click the “Desktop & Screen Saver” button, then choose the Desktop tab. In the left-side menu, select the desktop pictures folder you want to use.

You can also use the pictures with Mac OS X’s built-in screen saver. Select the Screen Saver tab which is also in the “Desktop & Screen Saver” System Preferences pane. If you put the ATPM pictures in your Pictures folder, click on the Pictures Folder in the list of screen savers. Otherwise, click Choose Folder to tell the screen saver which pictures to use.

### **Mac OS X 10.1.x and 10.2.x**

Choose “System Preferences...” from the Apple menu and click the Desktop button. With the pop-up menu, select the desktop pictures folder you want to use.

You can also use the pictures with Mac OS X’s built-in screen saver. Choose “System Preferences...” from the Apple menu. Click the Screen Saver (10.1.x) or Screen Effects (10.2.x) button. Then click on Custom Slide Show in the list of screen savers. If you put the ATPM pictures in your Pictures folder, you’re all set. Otherwise, click Configure to tell the screen saver which pictures to use.

### **Mac OS X 10.0.x**

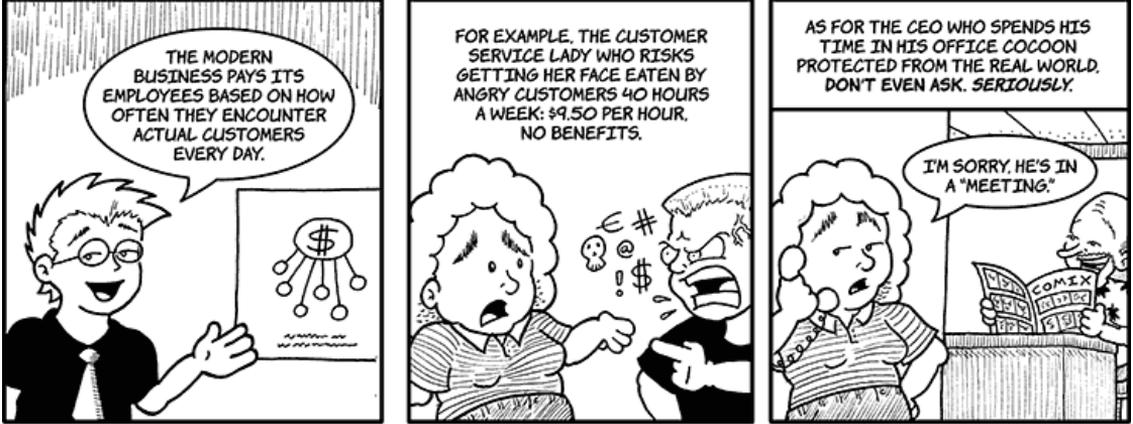
Switch to the Finder. Choose “Preferences...” from the “Finder” menu. Click on the “Select Picture...” button on the right. In the Open Panel, select the desktop picture you want to use. The panel defaults to your ~/Library/Desktop Pictures folder. Close the “Finder Preferences” window when you are done.



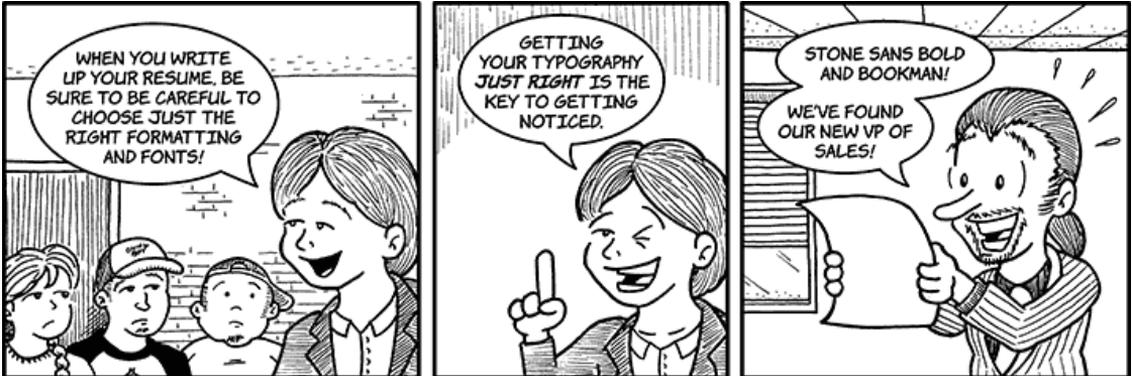
# Out at Five

by Matt Johnson, [mjohnson@atpm.com](mailto:mjohnson@atpm.com)

## Pay Grades



## Job Hunt Formatting



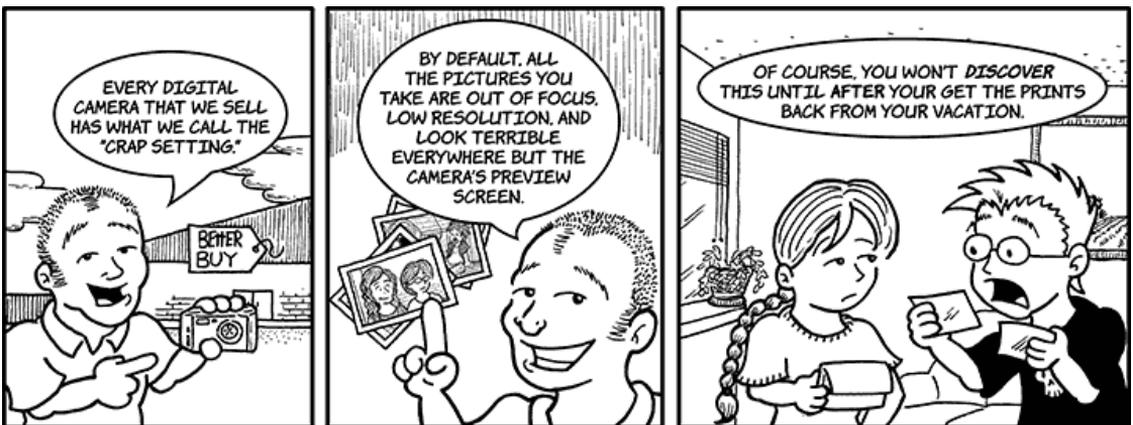
## Phone Tag



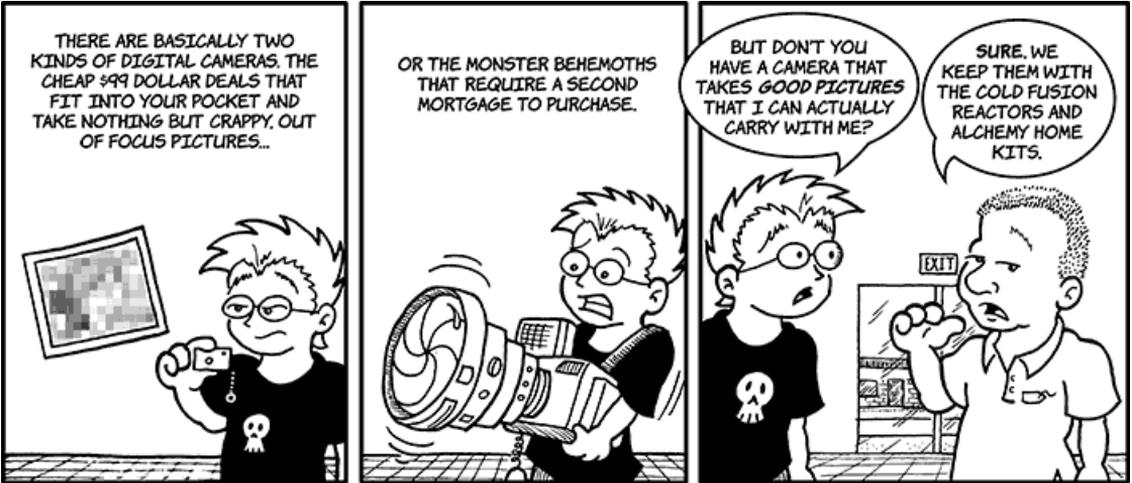
## Web 2.0



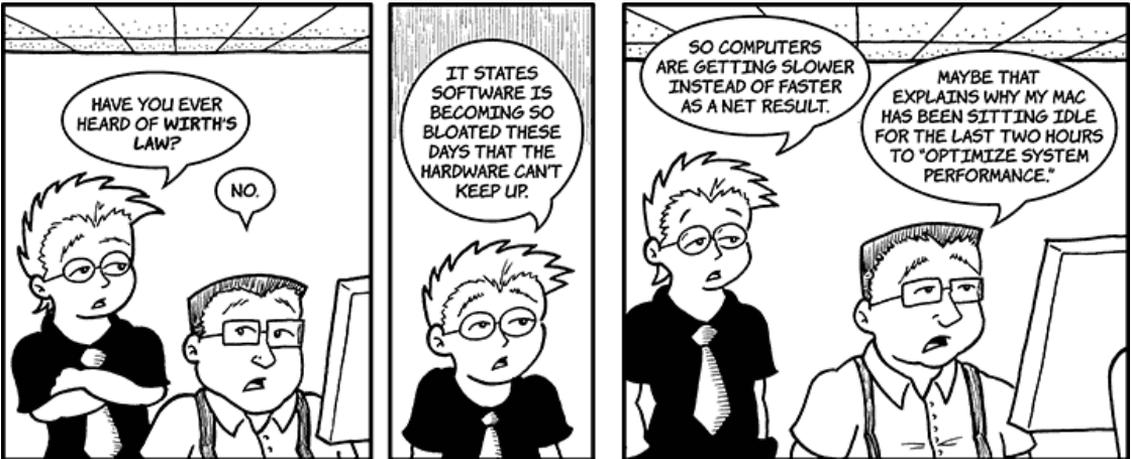
## The Crap Setting



# Digital Mayhem



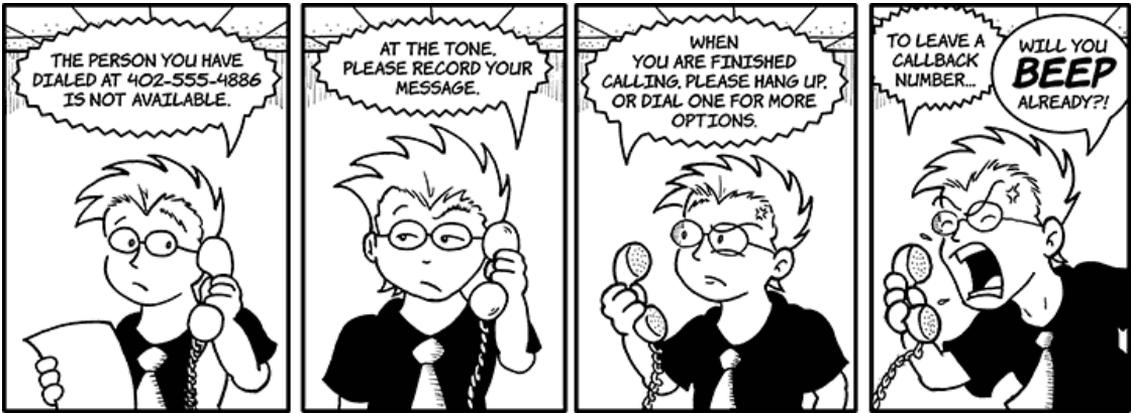
# Wirth's Law



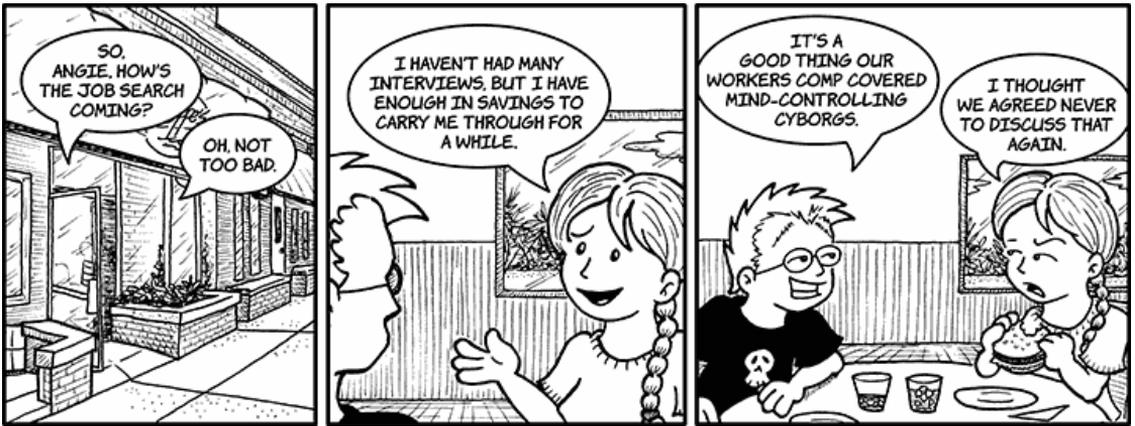
# Fresh



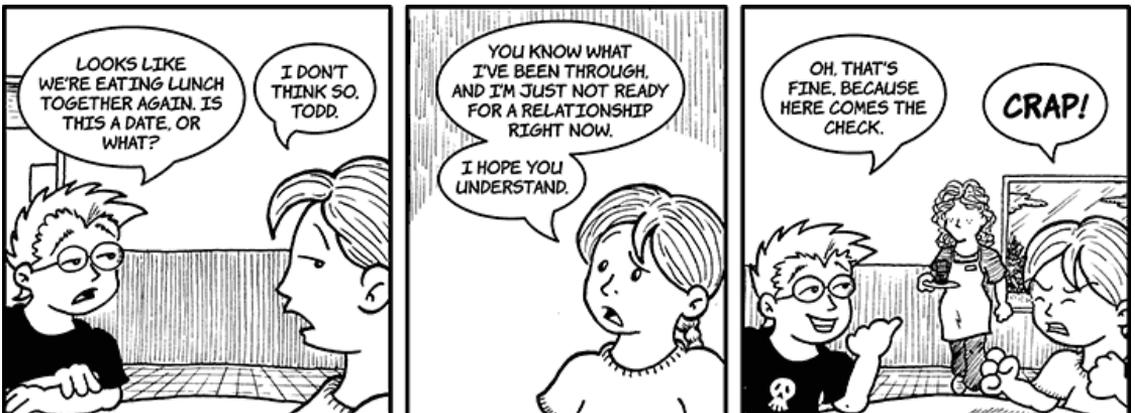
## Get to the Beep



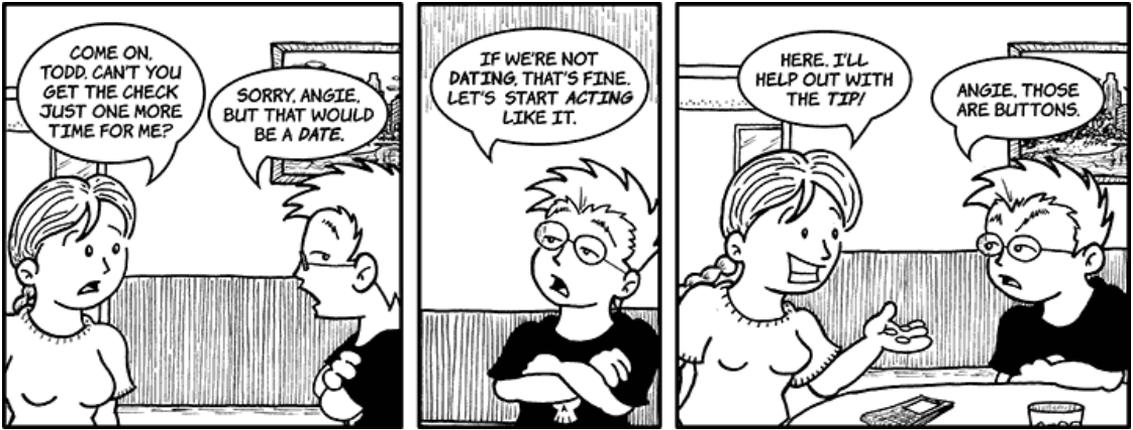
## Catching Up



## Dating or Not?



## Dating Tips



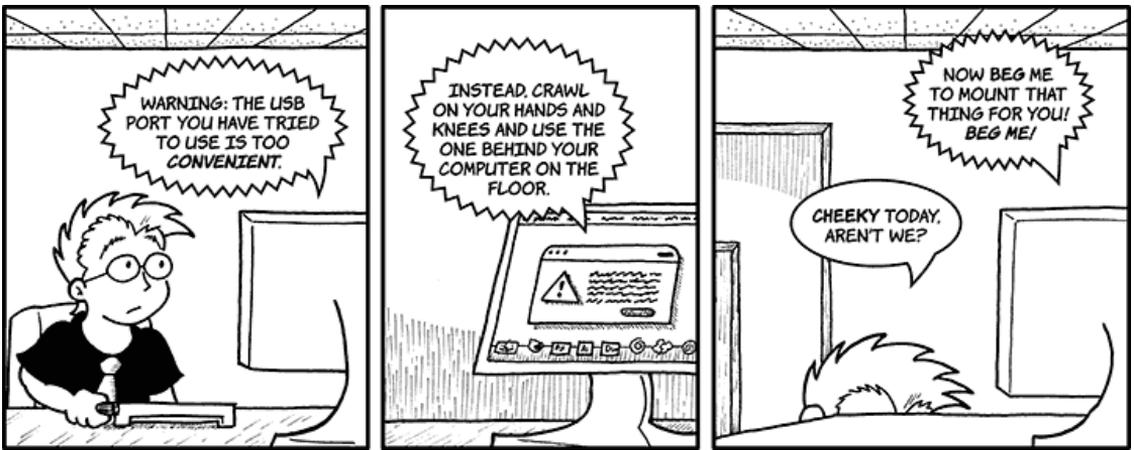
## Upgrading QuickTime



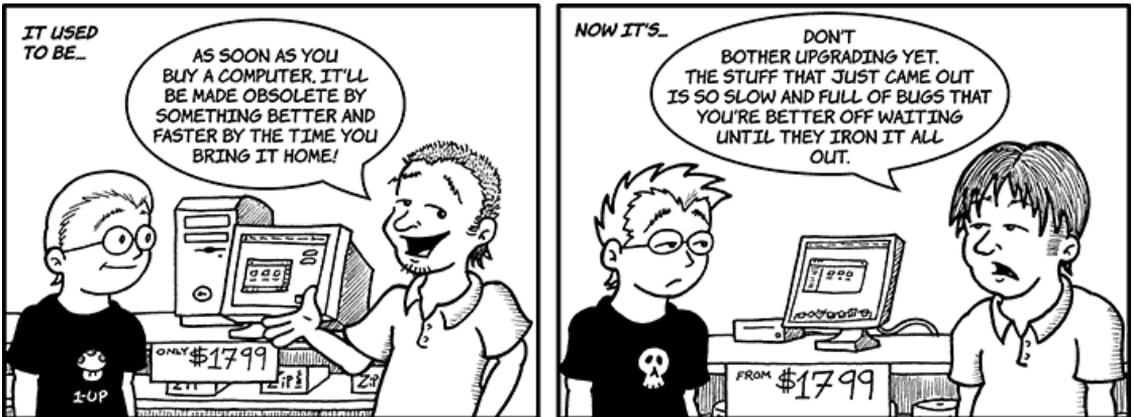
## Living in Bubbles



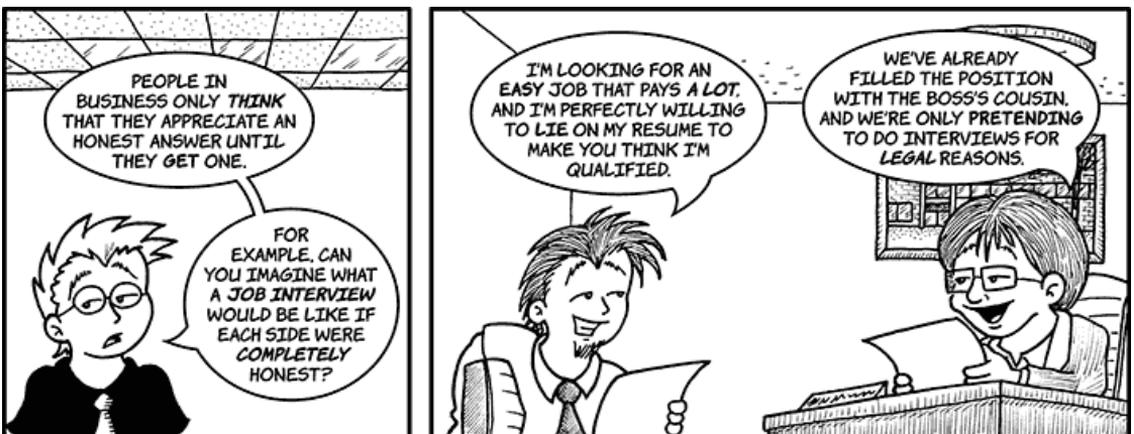
## USB Ports



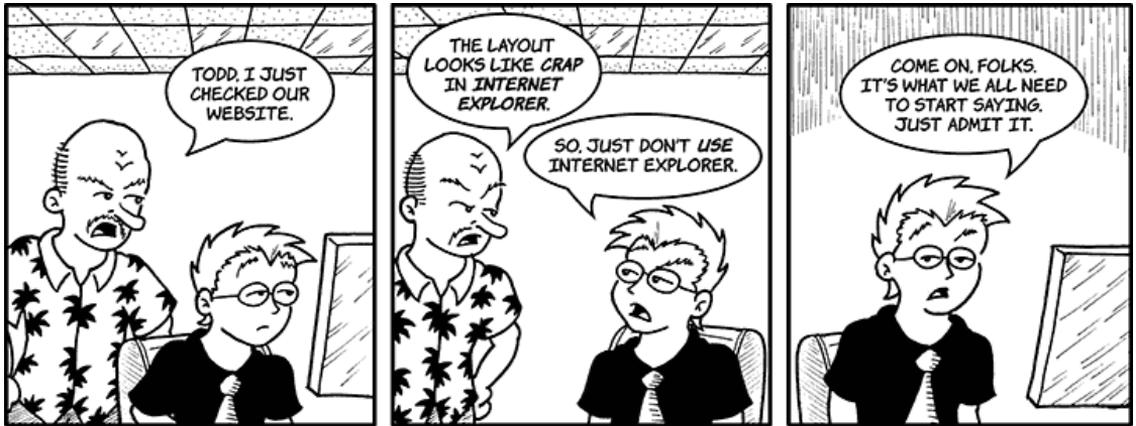
## Up Grating



## To Tell the Truth



# Simple Solution



Copyright © 2009 Matt Johnson.



# Qaptain Qwerty

by Linus Ly, <http://qaptainqwerty.blogspot.com>

## Tech Support



Copyright © 2009 [Linus Ly](#).



# Accessory Review

by Chris Lawson, <http://chrislawson.net>

## Juice Pack Air

**Developer:** [Mophie](#)

**Price:** \$80

**Requirements:** iPhone 3G or 3GS.

**Trial:** None



Almost as soon as the iPhone was introduced, pundits started complaining about the non-replaceable battery. So-called “high capacity” batteries have long been a staple of the cell phone accessories market, and with iPhone battery life in the real world as short as a few hours for very heavy users, there was immediate demand for something to supplement the iPhone’s battery capacity. Several “power pack” solutions were developed, but most of those were inconvenient and bulky, and therefore just emergency I-can’t-get-to-a-power-outlet-tonight solutions.



The Juice Pack Air snaps securely over the iPhone, encasing it on the back and sides.

Mophie's patented Juice Pack Air is what I'd call the second generation of iPhone external batteries. The slim 1,200 mAh lithium polymer battery is integrated into a hard plastic case that fully surrounds the iPhone. The top and bottom portions of the case snap together securely, and it's actually a bit of a challenge to remove the Juice Pack Air once it's installed. The bottom portion, which contains the battery, charging switch, and mini-USB connector, also contains a series of four blue LEDs and a button that function in much the same way as Apple's laptop battery LEDs have for years. At least, they do in theory; the button on my unit was a little temperamental and wouldn't always trigger the LED charge indicator. Strangely enough, passing through an airport X-ray machine would trigger it reliably *without* pressing the button.



The four LEDs indicate the Juice Pack Air is fully charged. You can check the charge status at any time by pressing the button on the left.

The case is sturdy and impact-resistant but very slippery; I've put the impact resistance to the test twice as the phone has slipped out of the breast pocket of my shirt while bending over to pick something up. The case does a fine job of protecting the phone, but it does have some dents to show for it, and at \$80, this isn't a case you want to be replacing just because it looks a little beat-up. A textured or rubberized finish, at least as an option, might actually be preferable. In addition to white and black, Mophie offers the Juice Pack Air in glossy purple, presumably for Prince enthusiasts, but not in any other textures or materials. There's no screen protection, either, so you're on your own for that. Figure another \$10 or so for a screen-protector sheet.



Your iPhone will be securely protected in a Juice Pack Air as long as you pop for a screen protector.

The added bulk of the Juice Pack Air is very noticeable at first. After a while, you sort of forget that the iPhone by itself is so light and slender—I think that the Juice Pack Air is definitely the upper limit of what most users would find acceptable for bulkiness. Maybe that explains why external “power pack” batteries are still popular, since, despite their inconvenience, they don’t add any bulk to the phone itself and they let you use whatever case design you wish. Another drawback is the case design around the “silence” switch, which is so thick that actuating the switch becomes a fingernail exercise. Finally, the Juice Pack Air uses a mini-USB connector (and includes a cable), not Apple’s standard Dock Connector, so if you want to be able to charge an iPod and an iPhone (I still keep both on hand most of the time), you have to carry two cables.



The case cutout here needs to be just a tiny bit larger, as actuating the “silence” switch is difficult.

Before delving into technical details, a brief aside for the electrically ignorant: for all practical purposes, a battery delivers a fixed voltage (though this does vary slightly as the battery is discharged or recharged). Thus, battery capacity is measured in terms of [current](#) and time, usually expressed in terms of milliamp-hours for batteries like you’d find in a cell phone. For example, the iPhone’s internal battery has a capacity of 1,400 mAh, meaning it can deliver a current of 1,400 milliamps (1.4 AMps) for one hour, or 140 milliamps for 10 hours, or one milliamp for 1,400 hours, or...you get the idea.



Here’s a close-up of the mini-USB connector and the charging switch. It would have been nice if Mophie could have engineered a Dock Connector pass-through to avoid the extra cable, but they thoughtfully include the appropriate USB cable.

It doesn't take a rocket scientist to realize that the 1,200 mAh battery of the Juice Pack Air is not going to be able to fully recharge a totally flat iPhone battery, but it can fully recharge one that's down to about 10% capacity. The way I've been using it, I let the iPhone battery get down to less than 20% (the first alert), then I flip the charging switch on the Juice Pack Air and let it recharge the phone to full. The iPhone behaves just as though it was plugged into the AC adapter—it makes the “plugged in” sound and starts charging, and once it's full, it will maintain the full charge. Because of this, Mophie recommends leaving the charging switch off when you don't explicitly intend to charge the iPhone, saying that the iPhone will waste battery capacity keeping itself topped off. In theory, assuming no charging losses and full discharge of the Juice Pack Air, it can only fully recharge a phone discharged to the 14.3% level.

That's how I used the Juice Pack Air. If it was fully charged when the process started, it had just enough left in it for an emergency when you can't find an outlet for an hour or two, but no more. If it's less than fully charged—and charging it fully takes at least four hours once the iPhone itself is charged—one full recharge of the phone is about the best you can expect.

I'm not a particularly heavy data user, so my charging habits tend to be once a day or every other day. With the Juice Pack Air hooked up, I was able to extend this to once every other day or three days. Nice, but not critical. I know some people who have to charge their iPhones at *least* once per day, and the Juice Pack Air is probably perfect for them, since it should get them all the way through the day without having to resort to a wall outlet.

A number of factors impact iPhone battery life, and in six months of using mine, it appears the biggest might be cellular network reception. The weaker the network, the harder the phone has to work to maintain reception, and the shorter the battery life. Having used the Juice Pack Air in various settings, I've developed a theory that the shorter your battery life *without* it, the more you'll appreciate it. If you can get by with only charging your iPhone every other day or every third day now, you probably won't find the Juice Pack Air to be worth it. If you're charging your iPhone at night and halfway through the day at the office, you're gonna love it.

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# Hardware Review

by Sylvester Roque, [sroque@atpm.com](mailto:sroque@atpm.com)

## OWC USB 2.0 Display Adapter

**Developer:** [Other World Computing](#)

**Price:** \$98

**Requirements:** Intel processor, Mac OS X 10.4.11.

**Trial:** None



If you happened to read our December 2008 issue, you know that I am becoming a fan of [using two monitors with one Mac](#). The more I use this feature the more I like it. Switching from an iBook SE to a 2008 MacBook Pro required buying a different set of connectors for my monitor and a presentation projector that gets less use each year. Given my recent interest in multiple-display Macs, reviewing the OWC USB to DVI/HDMI/VGA Display Adapter was right up my alley. I've used this package for more than a month now, so let's see how it measures up.

### Why Would I Want This?

If you are a frequent laptop user, particularly if you have to use multiple laptops, you have probably discovered that it can be a challenge to always have the right combination of adapters and cables handy if you want to connect an external monitor. Quick, without thinking, what kind of connector does your computer need to connect to a DVI monitor? If your Mac has a Mini DisplayPort connection, can you connect to an HDMI display? The OWC USB to DVI/HDMI/VGA Display Adapter tries to reduce this confusion. What if, rather than worrying about what type connector was on your laptop, all you had to do was connect one end of a small device to a monitor and the other end to a USB port on your Mac? I can even think of situations where some desktop owners would appreciate this product.

This adapter also make it possible to connect as many as four monitors to your Mac simultaneously if you have that many available USB ports (and purchase that many adapters). Windows drivers are also included on the disk should you need to use it in that environment.

### Minimum System Requirements

In order to make use of the DisplayLink software at the heart of this package you must be running Intel-based Mac. Our test unit shipped with version 1.1 of the software. Although this version ran fine on my MacBook Pro with Mac OS X 10.5.7, there is a beta version of a new driver that addresses an issue where some drivers may not load properly. This device and software package does not run on PowerPC-based Macs.

## What's In The Box?

Our test unit consisted of the driver CD, USB adapter with cable, a DVI-to-HDMI adapter, and DVI-to-VGA adapter. The driver CD contains manuals and quick start guides for both Mac and PC as well as the necessary driver software for both platforms. The bulk of the 27-page user guide, with each page about the size of a CD case, devotes itself to Windows installation and general troubleshooting. The Mac-specific portion of the guide covers about five pages. Normally having that little of a manual devoted to Mac-specific installation would disturb me, but in this case the information that you need is there.

One of the things that impressed me right out of the box is the size of this device. It sits on my desk pretty unobtrusively while doing its job. To give you an idea of its size, the photo below shows the hardware contents of the package with Apple's wireless Bluetooth mouse in the photo for comparison. Also note that in the photo I have already attached the VGA adapter.



What's in the Box

## Installation and Setup

Installation is pretty straightforward but contains an unnecessary step. Open the Mac folder on the CD and double-click the `DisplayLink-OSX-1.1.dmg` file. Once that mounts on the desktop, double-click the installer and follow the on-screen prompts. You will need an administrator password, and a restart will be required to complete the process.

Once the software installation is complete, attach the appropriate connector to the USB display adapter. As you can see from the photo of the package contents, one end of the included USB cable is the smaller connector typical of many cameras. Connect one end of the cable to the display adapter and connect the opposite end of the cable to a USB port on your computer. Note that the device has female DVI connections, which may plug directly into many monitors, but the length of the USB cable means that generally you will want

to attach a monitor cable to the device then attach that cable to your monitor. Due to a bad DVI cable, I performed testing using a VGA connection simply because that was the working cable that I had around. Once everything is connected and the second monitor is turned on, there is a momentary blink as the screen syncs up before the picture appears.

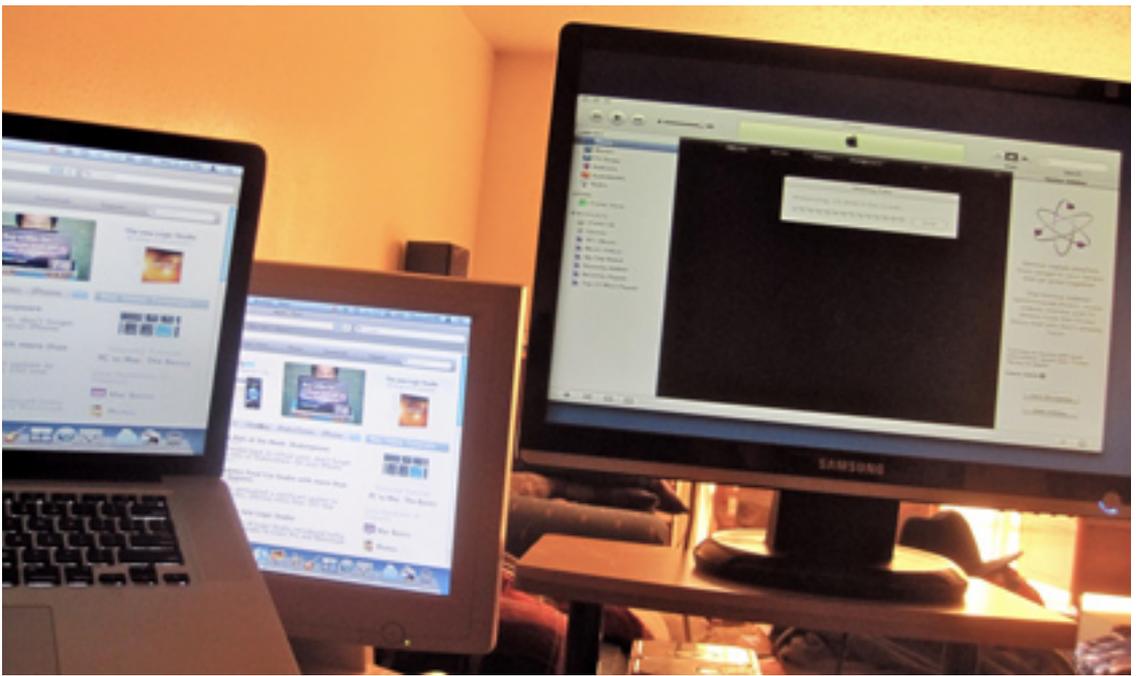
## Test Regimen

During testing I used a 24-inch monitor connected to the device via a VGA cable. On some days I connected the monitor directly to the DisplayPort and ran it without using the device to see if there was any noticeable degradation in performance. I went through many of my typical activities: playing back videos now and then, a bit of iPhoto and Photoshop here and there, some light gaming, and lots of Web surfing and e-mail. In fact, my monitor is connected to the device as I write this article. Although some of the games used during testing could use 3D hardware acceleration I didn't try anything nearly as complex as, say, World of Warcraft. Although I tested at several resolutions, most testing was performed at 1280×1024. Some versions of this device will go as high as 1600×1200 or 1680×1050 in non-interlaced modes. In testing, my monitor was recognized at 1680×1050 without any problems other than the general issues noted below.

## Does This Work

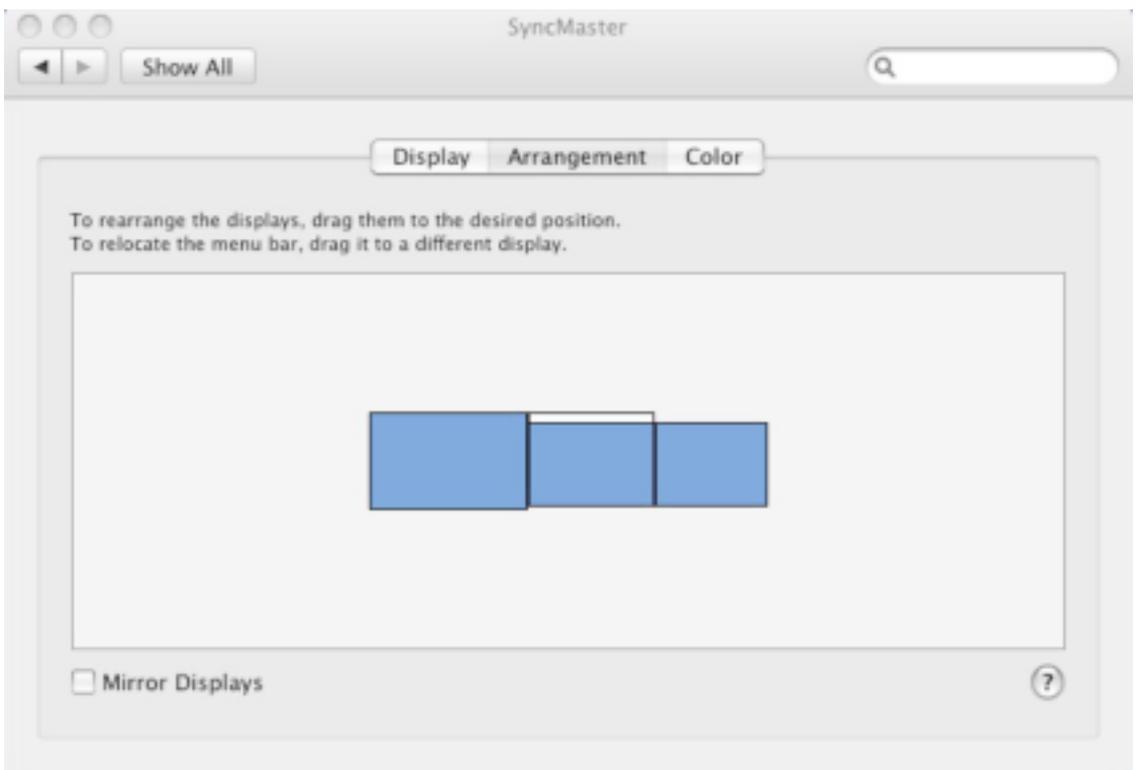
After a little more than a month of testing, you probably want to know whether this arrangement works. How does it compare to other means of adding a second monitor? The short answer is, yes this works and works with some limitations. Monitors connected to this device appear in the Displays preference pane and behave just as they would if connected to the DisplayPort on my test MacBook. I did not notice any lag when comparing the two types of connection. In day-to-day operation this device just worked. Monitors connected this way behaved the same as they did connected to the DisplayPort on my MacBook Pro. I spent time working, not troubleshooting connection/display issues.

On two different occasions, one being the initial setup, I didn't get a video signal. In both cases I traced the problem to the USB cable not being fully plugged into either USB port.



At one point during testing, purely to see if it was possible, I had the MacBook Pro's main screen, one external monitor connected to the DisplayPort, and one connected to this device all operational simultaneously. Limited desk space means this configuration isn't really practical, but it is possible. In very limited testing it seems to work well in that configuration.

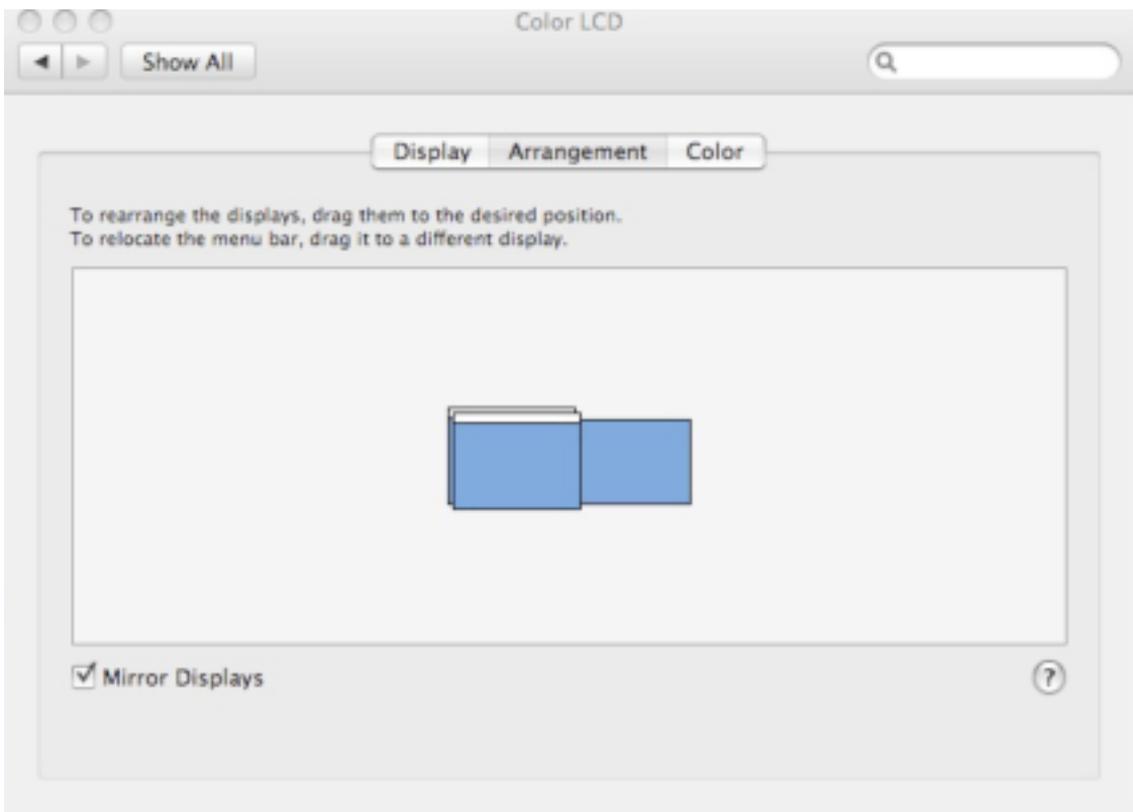
With three screens, my Displays preference pane appears as you see it in the screenshot, with one blue icon for each screen. The device defaults to extending the desktop, but you can mirror the display across three screens by choosing the Mirror Displays option in the Arrangement tab.



Displays Pane with Three Attached

That's cool enough, but I really wanted to see if a combination of extended desktop and mirrored mode could be achieved with three or more monitors attached. Actually, it can be done quite easily by completing the following steps once you have all the monitors connected.

1. Open the Displays preference pane and switch to the Arrangement tab. If necessary turn off Mirror Displays mode by clicking the checkbox.
2. While still in the Arrangement tab, press and hold the Command and Option keys simultaneously. Drag the icon for the monitor that you want to use as the “mirror” on top of the icon for the main display. If you want a monitor to continue extending the desktop, leave its icon alone. When you are successful the preference pane will look similar to the screenshot below.



Displays Pane with Both Display Modes Enabled

As you can see from the screenshot, it will appear that you suddenly have fewer monitors attached. It's now safe to close the preference pane.

## Caveats and Known Issues

There is a chink in the armor, and for some users it may be a big one. This device does not support OpenGL acceleration. This can affect some features in Quartz Extreme and Quartz Composer. OpenGL is not only used in games, but it also affects some features in many programs such as iPhoto, iMovie, and Keynote. So that is well worth consideration. I discovered this with a game that has the option to use or not use hardware acceleration. It also came back to bite me when I attempted to edit a few files in iPhoto. The program opened properly and pictures displayed correctly, but the editing mode would not engage correctly if the program was set to display on a monitor connected to this device.

While this limitation is sometimes inconvenient, it is not catastrophic in most cases. None of the programs completely crashed when this problem arose. Some, such as Zuma, simply warned me that hardware acceleration was not supported. Other programs, such as iPhoto, would function for some tasks but not others. If the program had an option to disable hardware acceleration that fixed the problem. Otherwise, you have to move the program to a monitor that is not connected to one of these devices. Obviously this could be a significant issue if you are using a laptop with a primary display that is not functioning properly.

## Final Thoughts

This package works reliably and as advertised. The device did not seem to mind whether it was plugged directly into a port on the computer or a spare port on a self-powered hub. About the only common task that I was unable to test for this review was using it to connect my MacBook Pro to HDMI-equipped devices. As soon as I can do some testing I'll let you know how that goes. I like this device well enough to give it a rating of "Okay." I'd like to rate it higher, but the OpenGL and Quartz Extreme issues cause problems more often than one would expect. There are also some issues with VMWare Fusion and Parallels installations. Although I will probably be purchasing it for my gear collection to cut down on the number of spare parts I carry, I recommend that you have a look at the [release notes](#) for the most up-to-date information on the limitations so that you can determine whether it meets your needs.

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# Software Review

by Linus Ly, [lly@atpm.com](mailto:lly@atpm.com)

## Typinator 3.5.1

**Developer:** [Ergonis Software](#)

**Price:** €20 (about \$28)

**Requirements:** Mac OS X 10.4. [Universal](#).

**Trial:** Feature-limited (five shortcuts).



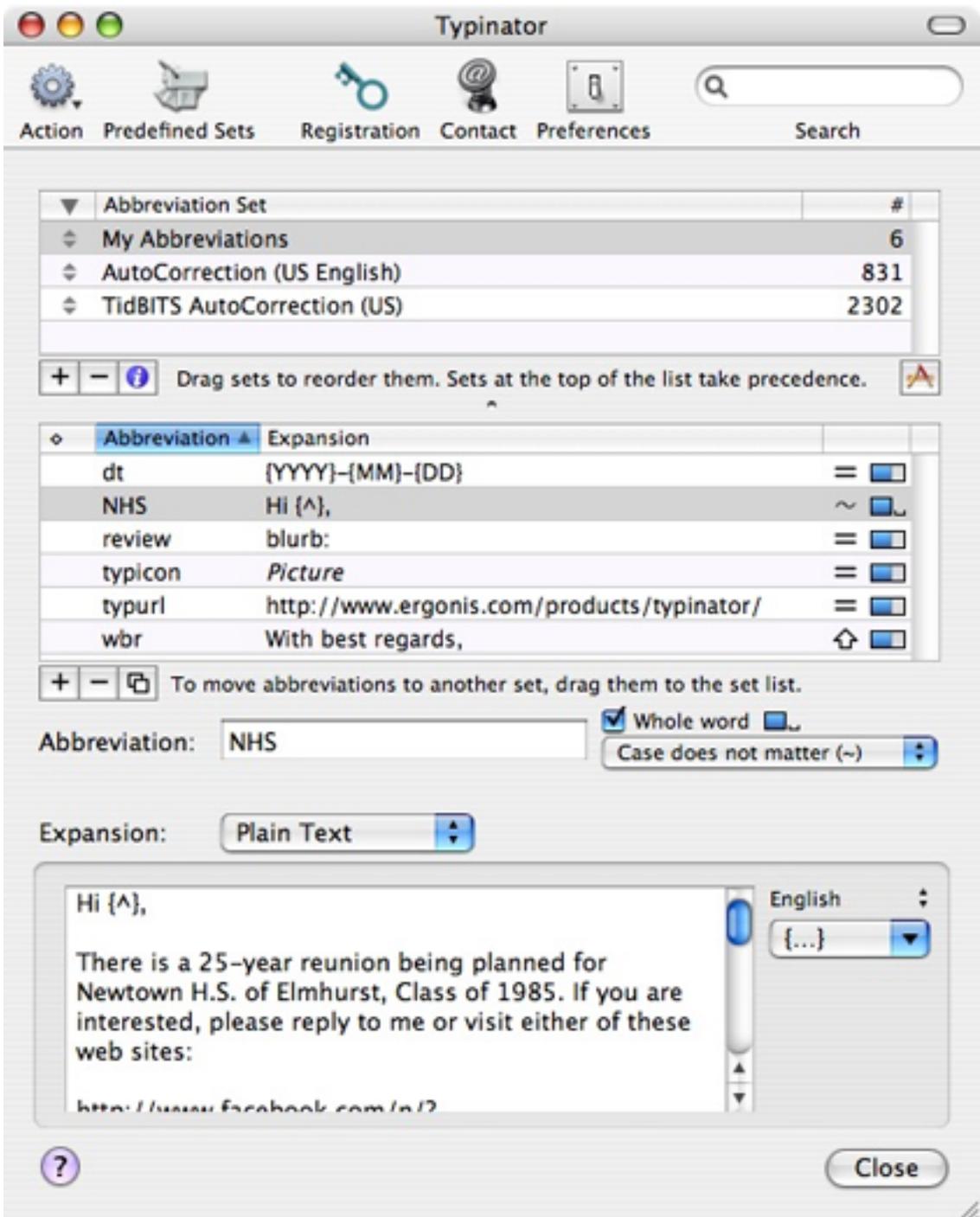
Computers are supposed to make us work faster and more accurately. However, there are times when we find ourselves typing the same text over and over, slowly and tediously. In some cases, it is possible to avoid the redundant work via templates. In other cases, mail-merging skills or fancy programming know-how are needed. Luckily for the casual user, in some situations specialized software like Typinator is all that you need.

### Installation

Installing Typinator means mounting the disk image and dragging the application icon into the Applications folder, or wherever you want to keep it. Typinator's documentation consists of a PDF file that also shows up on the disk image. (Too bad it's not built into the application.) My personal preference is to create a Typinator folder and keep the PDF and the application itself in that folder. Once you enter the license number, you are no longer restricted to having only five abbreviations. Lastly, you'll probably want to select "Automatically start Typinator at login" from the Preferences window.

### Usage

I use my Mac mostly for e-mail and Web surfing, with some dabbling with Photoshop and other specialized software that makes photos artsy. Until recently, I was lucky not to have to deal with repetitively typing the same blocks of text. Late last year, I became involved with my high school's reunion committee and all of a sudden found myself sending the same e-mail messages to many people. It has been over 24 years since I graduated, and even though the many social networks out there are useful, not everyone keeps the same name since high school. Many of the women took on the husbands' last names while others, perhaps for fear of identify theft or running away from the law, have names that don't match the yearbook. I would tell these people about the reunion, then ask them what their names were in high school. Reaching out via the social networks means filling out some Web forms, so using mail stationery is out of the question. Typinator comes to the rescue!



Define an abbreviation then Typinator will save you keystrokes.

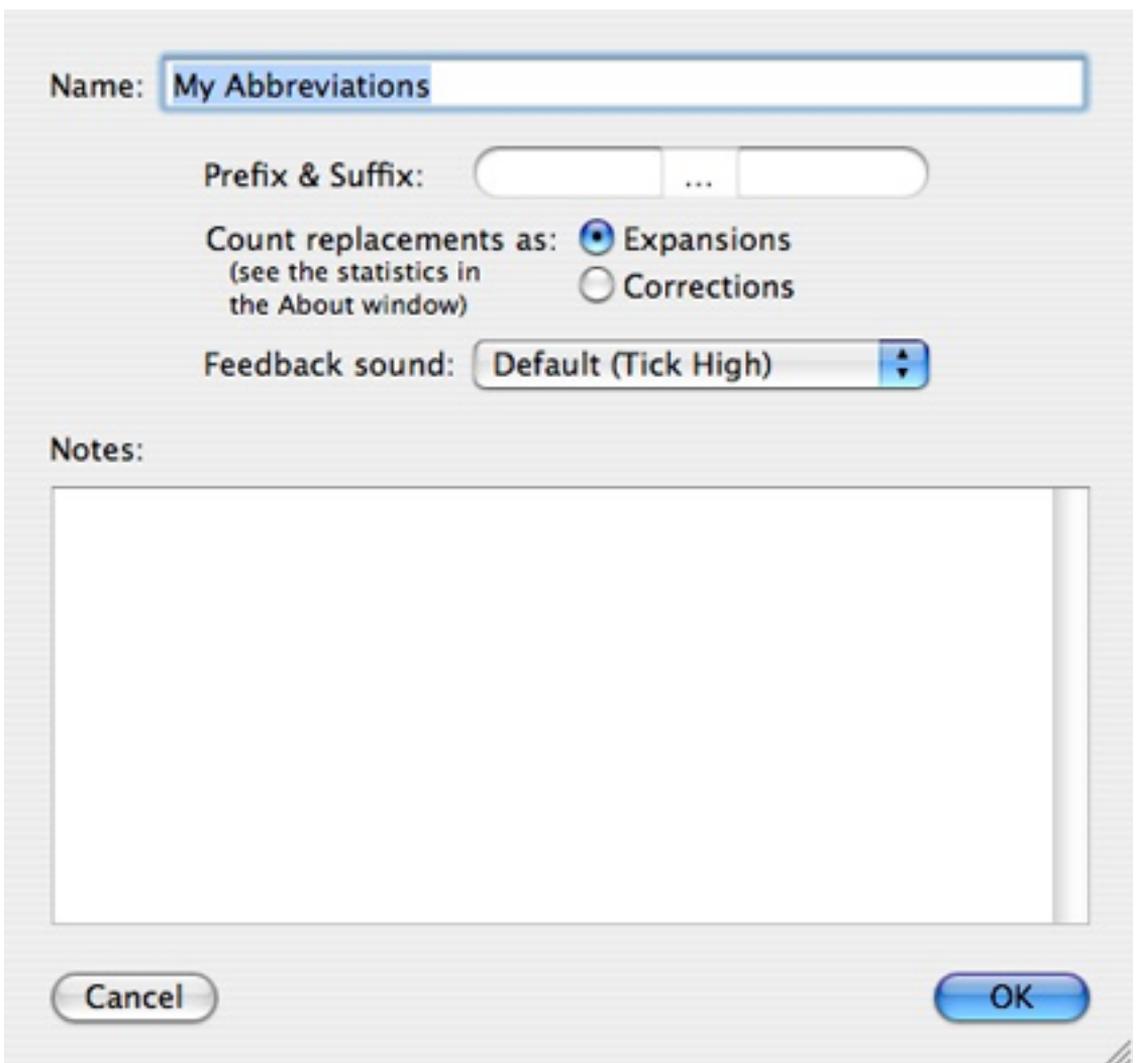
To use Typinator, you first setup an abbreviation, say NHS, short for “Newtown High School.” As shown in the screenshot, I enter the text equivalent of the abbreviation in the Expansion box and the type of expansion to plain text. The next time I need to reach out to someone who might be interested in the reunion, I would go through the usual mouse-

clicking to get to the e-mail Web form, just typing “NHS” and the whole form would be filled with the expanded text. Typinator has been lurking in the background watching every keystroke and pounces when a recognized abbreviation is seen.

To be exact, I could have entered “nhs” and the expansion would still happen because I selected “Case does not matter (~)” in the Typinator window. Note also that I checked off “Whole word,” so that should I try to type the abbreviation for Nathaniel Hawthorne State University (a name I just made up), the “word” is “NHSU” and not “NHS,” so the expansion won’t happen.

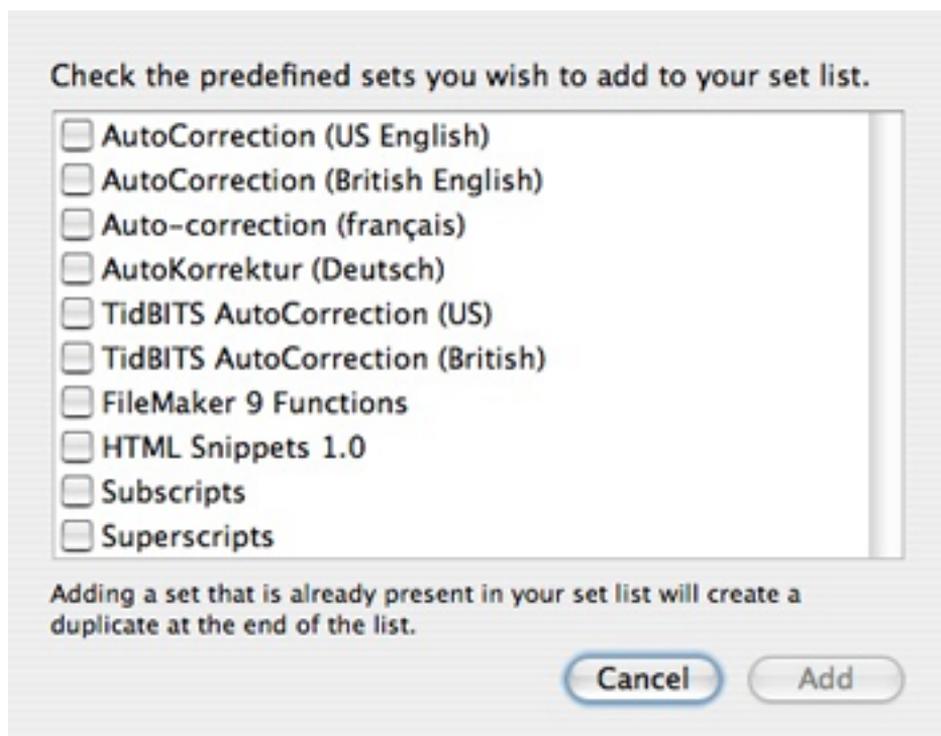
Another nifty feature of Typinator that I made use in our example is the placement of the cursor. After the introductory greeting, I had the special code {^}. I didn’t type that but rather chose Cursor from the pop-up menu to the right of the expansion text. Not only is the text inserted, but the cursor is also placed after “Hi ” so I can type in the person’s name. Other options are pictures, formatted text, and clipboard, although for my simple need of filling out Web forms they were not used. Typinator wisely supports the use of prefix and suffix to indicate when to expand text.

Back to my example, to avoid expanding text whenever I type “NHS,” I enabled the use of the forward slash (/) as a suffix, so that “NHS” no longer inserts any text, but “NHS/” does. Prefixes and suffixes can be applied to any one entire set so you don’t need to update each entry manually. If I want to have a one-time suspension of Typinator, I can choose Pause from its icon in the menu bar.



Use Prefix or Suffix to avoid having text mistakenly expanded.

You can have multiple Abbreviation Sets, and Typinator comes with a few predefined sets, too. With these extra sets, Typinator not only functions as a text expander but also as a system-wide spellchecker. There are AutoCorrection sets for American English, British English, French, and German. For those who type in English, there is also the [TidBITS AutoCorrection](#) set in American and British English. The standard AutoCorrection sets contain only 831 entries. With 2,302 entries, the *TidBITS* set greatly reduces the chance of making common typing mistakes, like entering “10-BaseT” instead of “10Base-T” or “anser” instead of “answer.” If you already use a text expander like TypeIt4Me or TextExpander, you can import sets from those applications



With Predefined Sets, Typinator can serve as a system-wide spellchecker.

## Crowded House

The market that Typinator is in is a crowded one. Features and price play an important role in influencing the buyers. Price-wise, Typinator holds its own well against TextExpander and TypeIt4Me. Typinator can be bought alone for €20 or about [\\$28](#), at the time of this writing. Both TextExpander and TypeIt4Me cost in the neighborhood of \$30 as well. Typinator can also be bought as part of the Mactility Bundle, which runs at €44 or about \$60. The bundle includes KeyCue, PopChar X, and Typinator. Depending on how you value PopChar X and KeyCue, Typinator may cost less than the competition. I just reviewed PopChar X in the [July 2009 issue of ATPM](#).

While Typinator runs bug-free, has a decent set of features, and is well-documented, what it really needs is a way to expand text by selecting from a list. I only use a few abbreviations so I have no problems memorizing them. If I use multiple sets with each set having many entries, I am sure I will easily lose track of what the abbreviations expand to. I would need to bring the Typinator window forward to read the abbreviations and their definitions, but then would go back to my document and type the proper keystrokes. Why not just allow me to click on the entry and carry out the expansion right from the Typinator window? TypeIt4Me already has the feature. While it may be true that Typinator has other advantages over TypeIt4Me, for Typinator not to have clickable expanding is a serious omission.

## Conclusion

Typinator works well as a text expansion utility. Creating abbreviations is easy, and Typinator is flexible in executing the expansions. It can be case-sensitive and can detect whole words. The use of prefixes and suffixes means you can change all the abbreviations in a set together and not have to edit one by one. The inclusion of predefined sets like *TidBITS* AutoCorrection is a plus. Unfortunately, Typinator is in a crowded market and lacks a crucial feature that a competitor already offers, namely the ability to expand text by clicking on items in a list. The best rating I can give Typinator is Good.

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# Accessory Review

by Chris Lawson, <http://chrislawson.net>

## LapDawg X4

**Developer:** [LapDawg](#)

**Price:** \$89

**Requirements:** Laptop, books, papers, and/or food.

**Trial:** None



Long-time readers may remember my effusive [review](#) of the Rain Design iLap. In almost eight years of product reviews, it's still the only one I've ever written that essentially said, "Go buy this."

Until now.

The LapDawg, which is capable of serving much the same purpose as the iLap, might be even better.

Its appearance is similar to the iLap, with an aluminum-and-black theme that looks good with any of Apple's recent products. Heck, it would look good even with a ten-year-old Dell sitting on it (although the published weight capacity is 26.5 pounds, so old Dells—or [Mac Portables](#)—aren't necessarily, uh, "supported").

Let's get something out of the way first: the LapDawg is not as convenient or comfortable for lap use as the iLap; it's bulkier and heavier, and it's wide enough for the arms of some recliners to be in the way. But the LapDawg is capable of far more tricks than the iLap, and it has some important advantages.



When using the LapDawg strictly as a lap desk, the shape of the wrist rest alleviates the most common complaint about the iLap: laptops sliding off the front. The LapDawg wrist rest is permanently integrated into the design (unlike the removable pad on the iLap), but it's also thinner and therefore less likely to bother people (which is why I assume they would want to remove it in the first place). It's also wide enough that folks with 13" laptops can get away with using a small external mouse off to the side, a feature wished for by a commenter on the iLap review here. Forget about that idea with 15" or larger laptops, though.



The main feature of the LapDawg, of course, is its extreme versatility. You can use it as a portable desk with a sufficiently short chair, you can prop up your laptop in bed, or you can even use it as a desk stand with an external keyboard and mouse. Each of the three joints on each leg of the LapDawg is adjustable through 360 degrees, with locking detents at 7.5-degree increments for a total of 48 different positions in each joint. If you can't find something comfortable in the 110,592 different positions this offers, you should probably stick to quill pens and parchment.



There's a little bit of slop in the locking mechanism—maybe two degrees either direction at each detent—but because you're almost always loading the joints somehow, it doesn't really matter. About the only time it might make a difference is if you're using the LapDawg in its highest position with maximum weight on it, which makes it a little shaky. The average modern laptop isn't even close to heavy enough, though.



And the LapDawg can do more than just hold a computer. You can use it to hold books or papers at your desk, on your bed, in the kitchen—heck, it can even double as a music stand in a pinch. It works as a regular TV tray (though it's a bit on the small side compared to most TV trays) or as a breakfast tray if you want breakfast in bed.



Typing on the LapDawg is generally comfortable, but it's not padded on the bottom and can get tiresome sitting on your lap after awhile. However, it's easy to get off your lap—just adjust the legs to a position where they lift the back of the LapDawg off your thighs. It would also be fairly easy to use “upside down” so that the wrist rest acts as a thigh pad if you don't mind not having a wrist rest.



Finally, the same drawback that applies to most stands like this applies to the LapDawg: if your laptop has a front-loading optical drive, you'll have to get creative to use it while your portable is on the stand. Apple isn't making any portables meeting that description anymore, but it did for a long time, so if you're still plugging away with a TiBook, consider yourself forewarned.

Don't think of the \$89 as a high price for a desk stand (which it would be) or as a somewhat high price for a lap stand (which it would be). Think of it as a really good price for both stands plus a TV and breakfast tray. You're not going to find anything else as functional for *double* the price, and you'll have at least three devices instead of one. That makes the LapDawg a winner in my book.

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# FAQ: Frequently Asked Questions

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*About This Particular Macintosh* (ATPM) is, among other things, a monthly Internet magazine or “e-zine.” ATPM was created to celebrate the personal computing experience. For us this means the most personal of all personal computers—the Apple Macintosh. *About This Particular Macintosh* is intended to be about your Macintosh, our Macintoshes, and the creative, personal ideas and experiences of everyone who uses a Mac. We hope that we will continue to be faithful to our mission.

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## What If My Question Isn't Answered Above?

We hope by now that you've found what you're looking for (We can't imagine there's something else about *ATPM* that you'd like to know.). But just in case you've read this far (We appreciate your tenacity.) and still haven't found that little piece of information about *ATPM* that you came here to find, please feel free to e-mail us at (You guessed it.) [editor@atpm.com](mailto:editor@atpm.com).

