Macaholics UNANIMOUS

Care and Feeding of Your Mac

by Sue Beal

We had an amazing turnout in February, despite the cold temperatures, for Joe Kukella's presentation on the Care and Feeding of Your Mac. What follows is a synopsis of what Joe said.

Backing Up

Backing up is the single most important thing you can do to protect yourself from a disappointing experience with your Mac! A backup is a *second copy* of everything that's important to you. That means you make a copy and put it aside, and then don't delete the original! (The idea is always to have at least 2 copies, the original and the backup. You can make more if you like. Send them to family or friends for safe keeping!)

People tend not to think about how important the information on their computer is, until it's too late. Think about it. All those email addresses you depend upon, the contact information, those precious photos, your music, your letters and notes... there's more there than you think! And if you use a laptop, if it is lost, stolen or damaged, you could lose it all in an instant. So how can you make backing up easy and routine? Joe had several ways...

Time Machine

Time Machine is a program built into Leopard and Snow Leopard. It uses a designated hard drive to store automatic backups of your main (boot) drive. This is a great way to stay backed up!

Here's how it works: You set it up and point it at the hard drive you want it to use. (This should be a dedicated drive used only for Time Machine.) Initially, it makes a copy of everything on your boot drive. Then it goes out every hour and copies anything that has changed since the last backup.

In the menu bar of the Finder you see an icon that looks like a clock running backwards. That's how you get into Time Machine.

Let's say that two days ago you deleted an attachment to an email that you now need. You go into Time Machine and use the bar at the right to go back in time to when the file was there. Select it, hit Restore, and you've got it back on your Desktop! Time Machine is a great backup program because it protects you from catastrophic failure, and protects you from yourself.

Time Machine is application-aware. You can open iPhoto, or Mail, then open Time Machine and step back in time in just that application. Very cool!

But you should be aware of this important point: If your backup drive is inside your computer, or stored in the same bag as your laptop, then

Joe Kukella is the Apple Store Manager and Education Director for Macintosh™ Systems Solutions in Key West. He is generous with his time and knowledge, and we welcome him as one of our favorite presenters!

While some might think the topic of Preventative Maintenance would be dry, Joe kept everyone's attention, and the room was full!

We LOVE our subscribers!

DUES TIME

It's dues time again! $25 per year is our requested and *voluntary* donation... to keep UKMUG running smoothly.

Please send a check to UKMUG at 219 2nd St., Key Largo, FL 33037 or hand it to Sue or John Thomas at the next meeting. Your assistance is appreciated, and will help the club with its expenses.

Thank you to the ones who already paid, as especially those who live far away and still support the club. You're especially appreciated! MU

Care & Feeding

if your computer is lost or stolen or gets dropped in water... your backup is gone too! So you might want to make that backup drive an external one that you leave on your desk or somewhere separate from your computer. Just plug

Time machine stepping back through my emails. How cool is this!

it into your laptop when you return home at night and let Time Machine do its thing.

Apple makes a wireless hard drive called a Time Capsule that will automatically connect to your laptop when it comes within range. In case plugging it in is too much work after a long day!

John Hammerstrom asked what happens when the backup drive is full? Joe answered that Time Machine manages the space. As time moves on, it takes the older hourly backups and compresses them into weekly backups. When the drive fills, TM will ask you if you want to fill up a new hard drive or choose to forget the older backups.

Joe cautions: Do not go into the TM backup drive and mess with the files!! Don't touch!

In some cases, Time Machine can get stuck while running, it can seem to take control of you machine(!). If you think this is happening, pull down the menu and check the status. If you see it's stuck in "Preparing Backup,"

go into the TM Backup Drive (Ok, just this one time, you can touch it) and throw away the bottom folder labelled "in progress." If that doesn't fix it, call Joe (293-1888)!!

John Cain asked: How big should your backup drive be? Joe answered that it depends on how much stuff changes on your hard drive on a daily basis. If all you do is email, you don't need a huge backup drive. But if you do, say, photography with your laptop, then you are going to need a big backup drive. For the average user, 500GB is fine.

You can share the same TM drive with several computers in the household. But don't go the other way - don't swap TM drives on any one computer - it will confuse Time Machine!

Here's the Catch!

Ok, now that we all know and love Time Machine, Joe filled us in on the catch: Time Machine, even with all it's wonderfulness, doesn't make a bootable backup!

A bootable backup is one from which you can startup your computer. This is a very good thing to have. If you lost your main drive you could get your files back from Time Machine, but first you have to be able to bring up the computer to access it. And you can't because, well, something happened to your boot drive!

So once in a while, you need to make another kind of backup, a bootable backup.

SuperDuper

SuperDuper makes a bootable backup, also called a clone, of your hard drive. It doesn't do incremental backups like Time Machine, but every day, at a pre-set time, it makes a full copy of the hard drive onto a backup drive. Then if something happens to your main drive, you switch over to the bootable backup, startup Time Machine and get the rest

iPad
Our most advanced technology in a magical and revolutionary device at an unbelievable price.

Joe talked briefly about the iPad in February. He said to imagine that you took the screen from your laptop... and that's the whole computer!

You can use the iPad to read news, magazines, and books, to do email and for web surfing/YouTube. Apple thinks it will change the way people use computers forever! (Have they been wrong about that, ever?)

It's not here just yet. In late March there will be a model available with wireless access built in, starting from $499. For this one you would need to be in a place where WiFi is available to use it.

In late April, we should see a second model with a 3G wireless card from AT&T. This model would allow you to connect anywhere, and you pay for a monthly connection plan, ranging from $30 limited to $75 unlimited. This is separate from the iPhone contract and is a pay-as-you-go plan, rather than a long-term committment.

Books will be available from an Apple iBook Store, and they will work similar to the way the Kindle works. There will be huge access to media, as only Apple can provide! And of course, there will be apps available.

"Go to the Apple website and watch the video, it is a great presentation," added MaryAnne Roper.

Care & Feeding
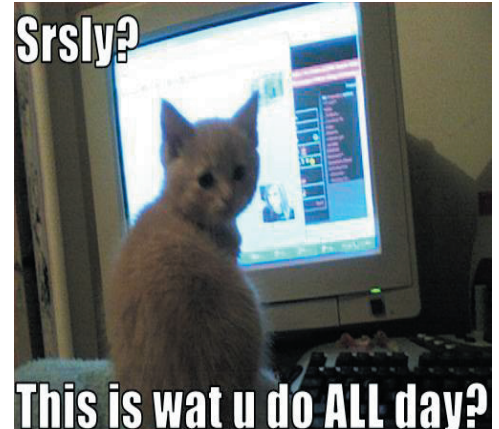
of it up to date.

SuperDuper works in older versions of the operating system as well as with the Leopards. Carbon Copy Cloner is another popular app for this kind of backup. Joe thinks SuperDuper is friendlier to use.

Aperture & Parallels Users Take Note

Time Machine is not Aperture-friendly. The structure of the Aperture's libraries confounds it. It also doesn't work with VM Windows and Parallels. These send TM into a loop, hanging it up. If you use these apps, go into Time Machine and exclude these items from the backup by dragging and dropping them into the exclusion window.

The Great Backup in the Sky

Several companies offer Internet backups. Mozy is one, Carbonite another. Apples ME.com provides this service too. The principle is the same. Your data is copied onto a server in the sky (well, ok, on the Internet!) This is handy if you are traveling.

There's a good article that Joe recommends, comparing these services and talking about the pros and cons of this type of backup, at: **http://www.macworld.com/article/142606/2009/09/online_backup.html**

Joe isn't a huge fan of these types of backups because someone else has your data (yeah, they say it's secure, but sites can be hacked) and to restore it, you have to download it, which can be very slow. Uploading to also very slow. There's also a monthly fee for the storage. But for critical files when you are traveling, it's an alternative to burning DVDs and mailing them to your mom!

CD/DVD Backups

When you need a quick and dirty backup of selected files, the old way still works: burn a CD or DVD of it.

Redundant Point

Remember, always have at least 2 copies. If you copy old photos off your computer and them delete them from iPhoto, you have not made a backup. You only have one copy, and that one copy can fail!!

HOUSEKEEPING AND YOUR MAC

These are some things you should do to keep your Mac running well.

Repair Permissions

The operating system keeps track of hundreds of thousands of files for you, and each file has permission - who can read, write and execute it. These permissions can go corrupt through normal daily use of your machine, so it's a good idea to go in periodically (once a month) and fix them. It's easy!

Go to Applications > Utilities > Disk Utility. It will show you, in the window on the left, all the drives attached. Click on a drive (it doesn't matter whether you
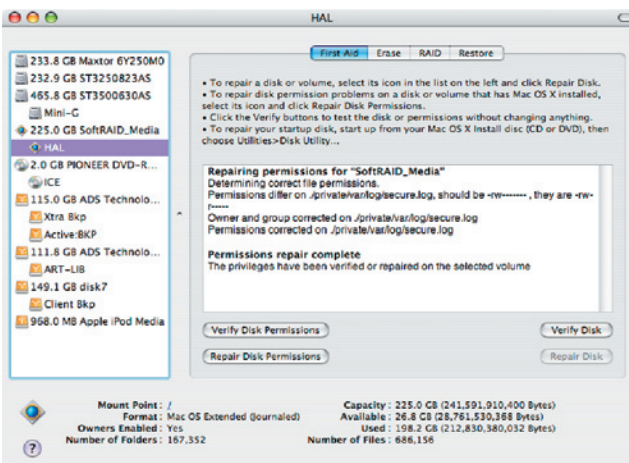
chose the internal or external name) and click "Repair Permissions" (Skip the Verify Permissions button.) It will crawl thought the hard drive and fix what's broken. Don't worry about what it says, even if it says it can't fix something.

Verify Disk

On the right side of the Disk Utility window you see buttons to Verify Disk and Repair Disk. You can verify any disk attached, but you need to boot from another disk (like your installation CD/DVD) if it turns out that you need to repair your boot disk. The button will be greyed out.

Why do this? If your machine is running slowly and you suspect hard drive damage, this is how you diagnose and fix it. If the Verify does turn up damage, then you should first back up your boot drive. Then put in your installation CD/DVD and boot from that. (Hold down the C key during startup, this makes the CD or DVD take over control.) Then go into Disk Utility and Repair Disk. Run it again until it comes up clean.

Stay away from that Erase Disk function in Disk Utility!!!

Send in the Chrons

The Chrons are daily, weekly or monthly tasks that your computer

Find only exact duplicates in iTunes

by Rob Griffiths, Macworld.com
submitted by Bob White

Here's a very simple iTunes hint that may come in very handy for those of you who may have duplicate song issues in iTunes. As you're probably aware, iTunes includes a tool to help find the duplicates; just select File -> Show Duplicates, and iTunes will create a list of all the songs it believes are duplicates.

The only problem with this feature is that it's quite liberal in deciding what is, and is not, a duplicate. As a result, the list of potential duplicates can wind up being very large—especially if you have a number of different versions of the same song by the same artist.

So here's the trick... the Option key. Hold it down, then select File, and notice that Show Duplicates has changed to Show Exact Duplicates. The resulting list will be much shorter, as it will only select exact duplicates. However, based on feedback from those who've heard this hint before, it seems like this feature isn't well known.

If you need more help removing duplicates than this method provides—for instance, clearing out hundreds of duplicates isn't necessarily an easy task, even if you've identified them—then you might want to check out Dupin, which offers a number of features to help solve your duplicate woes, including automating the deletion of duplicates.

The above was borrowed from **http://www.macworld.com/article/145919/2010/01/itunesdupes.html?lsrc=nl_mwhints_h_crawl** MU

Space Crunch Resolved

by John Hammerstrom

With my laptop hard drive nearing its capacity, I faced the usual options - purge unnecessary files, buy an external hard drive to store less-important files, burn those less-important files to DVDs, etc.

I found one unexpected solution that was quite impressive, and it may help others.

My first inclination was to purge the unnecessary files, and I found a free program called "OmniDiskSweeper" available through many links, but I used Version Tracker --

http://www.versiontracker.com/dyn/moreinfo/macosx/8667

The program sorts through your entire hard drive and orders all files according to their size, which allows you to find the biggest culprits and allows you to easily delete them.

WARNING - don't delete a file you can't identify!!! The program claims it won't allow you to delete critical files (that's probably the OS protecting itself, but nevertheless, *do not delete unknown files if you're not sure.*

But here's the epiphany - among all of those files on my laptop was one identified as: private/var/log/asl

The size was . . . 33GB

That's right - Gigabytes!

Tom Mulhall of Macintosh Systems Solutions told me it was a log file that was safe to delete. The Apple discussions said the same thing. I've never found answers to 1) Where did it come from 2) How did it get so big 3) Why did it do so 4) Is there anything wrong with my computer?

Still, I was able to delete a file of 33 Gigabytes, removal of which did not seem to affect my computer the least.

Now I don't have to buy that external hard disk! *MU*

Recommended Listening

by Diane Marshall

Just because you are paranoid doesn't mean you shouldn't be! This is a must hear program on cyberterrorism.

http://m.npr.org/news/front/123531188 *MU*

Care & Feeding

needs to run in order to stay in tiptop shape. They are secret little things that run at 1 or 2 am, automatically, as long as your computer is left on. They are necessary, so if you have been shutting off your computer at night, you might want to start leaving it one once in a while overnight.

ONYX

Only is an app you can download. Joe calls it the Swiss Army Knife of Utilities! For 10.3 and up. Some of its functions:
- *Checks Smart Status (a hard drive hardware test)*
- *Verifies the startup drive*
- *Repairs permissions*

But the most important tool it has is **Hammer**. Hammer goes through a list of housekeeping steps, executing scripts that run the chrons and do other tasks. Go with the pre-checked options unless you really know what you're doing! One benefit of Onyx: if it fails it won't leave your computer in a messed-up state.

It takes a while for Onyx to do this. Before you run it, quit all the apps you have open, and don't use your computer while it runs.

The **Cleaning** Button cleans up your caches (temporary storage for Internet browsers, for example). Read and heed the warnings!

The **Info** Button tells you all about your computer.

Software Updates

Under your Apple Menu, you'll see Software Updates. This pops up and tells you when to update software on your computer. You can set how often you want it to check for new software.

These updates comes from Apple and they're generally a good thing to apply, but pay attention to what it's doing. When you see a major operating system update is lined up (going from 10.6.2 to 10.6.3, for example), don't accept it right away. Wait a week or two. That way, if something is not quite right with the update, you won't be the one tearing your hair out over it. If known problems come up with any updates, Macintosh Systems Solutions makes UKMUG aware and we send out an email. Pay attention!

And when the time comes to accept the system update, remember follow MSS' steps for updating (see page 5).

Liquid Spills and Laptops

One of the most common problems laptop users face is getting something spilled into their computer (onto the keyboard). There are openings all over a laptop, so a spill means the liquid will get into the sensitive parts very easily.

If a spill occurs:

Turn it off immediately. Disconnect the power and remove the battery if you can (not all models have removable batteries).

Flip it upside down and let it drain. (Try to keep the liquid from reaching the logic board.)

Wait 2 or 3 days for it to dry out, and then try to power it up. Chances are good it's fried, but these steps are your best bet! It also depends on what kind of liquid was spilled on it. Fresh water, and you might be okay. Salt water and you're probably not. Beer, wine and soft drinks are not so good either.

Joe shows how to drain liquid from a laptop.

Don't take it in the shower, put it in the oven, dry it with a hair dryer, or microwave it! There are some weird suggestions out there!

Take it to Macintosh Systems Solutions to get it cleaned and see if they can salvage your hard drive.

Hard Drive Failures

Hard drives are made up of little metal platters, coated with magnetic material and stacked up very close to one another. They spin fast and run constantly, and are prone to problems with bearings, motors, and alignment. Your best defense is to back up. But if a drive fails and you didn't back it up, there are data recovery companies who can take it apart, replace parts and try to salvage what's there. This isn't cheap, it runs $500 to $1,000, so just remember to back up, okay?

Free Up Disk Space

Always keep 10 percent of your hard drive free, to give it room to work. If you get a warning message about running out of space, heed it immediately and seriously!!

Always be careful when deleting files from your hard drive to save space. Be sure you know what you are doing!!

Candidates for space saving that are safe: Look in your downloads folders from your web browser and from Mail. Look under Documents > Downloads.

THANK YOU JOE! *MU*

Macintosh Systems Solutions' Patented Upgrade Procedure

by Tom Mulhall

For when the time comes to update your Operating System from, for example, 10.6.2 to 10.6.3.

First, you should always check the "health" of the directory structure on your hard drive by running Disk Utility/Repair Disk from the restore Disk that came with your computer (it is under Utilities in the menu bar when you start on the restore disk {CMD & C}, available after the first page).

After checking the health of your hard drive, it is most important to perform a current backup of your drive (you do backup, don't you?) before continuing.

Once the Repair Disk process and Backup are completed and there are no errors reported (run Repair Disk at least twice, until you get two sequential reports of No Errors), the first thing to do when shut down is to disconnect everything but the keyboard and mouse from your system-- yes-- Everything but the keyboard and mouse!

Now restart your computer normally, assure that all applications are 'quit' (nothing but the Finder and Dashboard should have little triangles under them in the Dock).

Now you can go to the Software Update function under the Apple and start the update procedures. At this point, once you have started the update and agreed to any licensing, it is imperative that you walk away from your computer like it is a hive of angry killer bees. Do not touch your system while the update(s) are downloading and installing. Only respond to prompts from your system. Once it is safe to restart, do so and again step away while updates are completed. Please note that it is normal for several restarts to take place at this point, and it is also normal for these restarts to take longer than normal. After your system reboots back to a normal desktop and all updating processes are completed, it is now safe to once again use your system.

Never, ever use your computer when a Operating System (or other Apple supplied) updates are being run.

—Tom

UKMUG MEETINGS ARE...

An opportunity to learn more about your computer and iPhone. Or to share that little bit of something you just learned!

An opportunity to meet other Macaholics and discuss your current concerns.

An opportunity to see old friends and catch up!

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FREE OS X CLASSES

The Apple Store at the Falls has free OS X classes every Saturday from 9-10 am! Call for more info:

Apple Store at The Falls
305-234-4565
8888 SW 136th Street,
Miami, FL 33176

Mon-Sat:10-9:30pm
Sun: noon-7pm

http://www.apple.com/retail/thefalls

THANK YOU KAREN BEAL

for taking photos at UKMUG meetings!
Please, anyone who has a digital camera or iPhone is encouraged to snap a shot or two and send it in!
It really is nice to have these visual reminders of what we've done.

ONLINE SOURCES FOR MAC HELP:

http://www.macworld.com/mac_help/
http://www.apple.com/pro/tips/
http://www.mactipsandtricks.com/
http://www.apple.com/support/
http://www.mactips.org/
http://www.macosxhints.com/
http://tips4mac.blogspot.com/
http://www.mac-hints-tips.com/
http://www.macfixit.com

http://ukmug.pbworks.com/

UKMUG's Collaborative Website

Post questions and requests for help

Post tips and tricks

Post your favorite links

Comment on all things Mac and UKMUG

Check on upcoming meetings

Download newsletters

Come at 6:30 for the Beginners Circle:

New! Bring your laptop and your questions at 6:30, and for a half-hour prior to the main meeting we'll have experienced folks available to help, one on one, or in small groups.

This is the Beginner's Circle in action in February! Alice (seated) inherited a Mac and didn't know the first thing about it. Several people jumped in and showed her some of the amazing things it can do.

Macaholics UNANIMOUS

is the official newsletter of the

Upper Keys Mac Users Group

A nonprofit organization devoted to the use (and sometimes abuse) of the Macintosh computer. Subscriptions are $25.00 for one year. Contents © 1993 - 2010 by the Upper Keys Macintosh Users Group except where noted. All other rights reserved.

219 Second St. • Key Largo FL 33037
(305) 451-4601 • ukmug@bellsouth.net