# News You Can Use

## NEWS

I will be out of town **July 9-16**. Naturally, you can't *plan* computer failures, but keep these dates in mind for non-emergency work.

## IN THIS ISSUE

- **about OS X**
- **switching: what's involved ?**
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## QUICK TIPS

### WRITE IT DOWN !

Keep your IDs and passwords written down, preferably all in one place. We have IDs and passwords for several uses, and they might not all be the same. Having them written down makes it easier in case they get reset, (e.g. reinstalling MacOS 9).

Remember that all of these are *case sensitive:* upper and lower case matter, so be precise when you write.

Here are some common ones:

- dialup ID/password
- email ID/password
- various web sites
- login name/password (OS X)

### DEFRAG? JUST SAY NO

In the old days when hard drives were slow, we used to *optimize* or *defragment* files. Today's drives are fast and they have a fast memory cache in the drive, so they don't need this. I haven't bothered defragging in over a decade, on OS 9 or OS X.

OS X *automatically* defrags files smaller than 50MB. The OS even *moves* the "hot" files so they're more quickly accessed. This all happens without you having to do anything.

**Everything You Wanted To Know About X_____ all**

# About OS X

Apple began to release early versions of MacOS X ("ten") to software developers in fall of 1997, with the first general customer release (10.0.0) in March of 2001. So OS X has been running on customer computers for over four years. In that time, there have been several major upgrades: we're now on the fifth major release of OS X, so it's become quite mature and stable.

Since January 2004, all new Macs have required OS X.

## It's Reliable and Fast

The guts of the old OS were completely changed, though *not* completely rewritten. There's a subtle difference: by *adopting* the majority of the OS code from UNIX and its variants, Apple has limited the risk of problems with brand-new code. UNIX was developed in 1969 by Bell Labs; most universities have worked with it since the mid-1970s; over the years, it has been extensively tested, improved, and updated.

And if you've heard "UNIX is hard to use," you've only been told part of the story. UNIX was invented so that programmers could be highly productive–thus it was designed for them. Apple has put a great user interface atop it, so it looks and feels like a Mac. But for experts, all that power is still there under the hood.

The result is an operating system that's very solid and quite compatible with other systems, yet it's easy to use.

### Crashes And Corruption

Crashes and disk corruption are extremely rare in OS X. I tend to see an OS crash or hang perhaps *three times a year*, and I'm a heavy user. I only reboot my PowerBook when it's absolutely necessary; otherwise, it just sleeps. Disk corruption, a (sadly) popular occurrence under MacOS 9, is virtually nonexistent. I've seen *only one* case of disk corruption among ninety OS X clients over a three year period!

## What About Software?

All of the good software programs are available for OS X; many companies have discontinued support for their OS 9 versions, requiring an upgrade for OS X.

### iThis and iThat

Apple's **iLife** program suite–the *iPhoto*, *iTunes*, *iMovie*, and *iDVD* programs–makes it easy to work with digital camera pho-

## THE FINE PRINT
### THE PRICE LIST
**Standard Rate** is $45/hr.

**Apple Remote Desktop** help is billed at the reduced rate of $35/hr.

**Phone support** is *free*, except if the call runs to a half hour. Then it's billed at the further-reduced rate of $25/hr.

**Email support** is always free. Ask your questions and you'll get an answer, usually within a few hours.

**Invoices** are mailed on the first of each month, covering charges incurred during the prior month. (So, for example, you'll be billed on May 1st for work done in April.)

**New Clients** receive a one-time half hour discount !

## WHAT'S IMPORTANT
**Solving your problem** the *right* way, as much as humanly possible.

**Not making things worse.** Some support folks try to fix one problem and end up creating new ones. Where does that leave you?

**Keeping your costs down.** It's more important to provide good service than to squeeze out a few more bucks. When you see a "comp" item on an invoice, it's my way of helping to keep your costs low.

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tos, music, even video. Now available only for OS X, iLife continues to improve. It's free with OS X, and you only pay for major upgrades.

### The Old Stuff

MacOS X includes *Classic* support, a subsystem designed to let you run your old Mac programs. Virtually all of the old programs run, with the exception of programs that need direct access to the machine's hardware. (These are usually programs that use special hardware, or CD-burning programs like Toast.)

I routinely run Apple's **Claris Resolve,** a spreadsheet program from 1992. Resolve is so old it predates the Power PC! Yet it runs just fine under OSX–and much faster than it did on 1992-vintage Macs.

A few old programs have problems, but this is often the fault of the original developers: they coded little "hacks" to make things work differently. Though these hacks worked in the old days, they sometimes fail under Classic.

## Trivia

### The Numbers Game

The *version numbering scheme* is somewhat different for OS X than it was for prior systems. In the past, we knew that the first digit meant a major release, e.g. System 7, System 8, or System 9. Minor updates were indicated by the next two digits, e.g. 9.0.4, 9.2, 9.2.1, etc.

With OS X, however, the "10" portion of the number seems to be locked-in. (What will Apple do after 10.9.9?) So the *middle* digit denotes a major release, similar to the *first* digit on the older systems. Thus 10.3 is a major upgrade from 10.2, which is why you have to pay for it.

### "Red Dog, This Is Blue Leader"

All Apple products have code names, used internally during development of the product. When a product is ready, the marketing folks make up the actual product name. (We engineers used to cringe when we heard some names!) Contrary to this practice, though, OS X has been marketed using its internal codename. *Cheetah* was 10.0; *Puma* was 10.1; *Jaguar* was 10.2; *Panther* was 10.3. *Tiger* is now the name of 10.4.

**But Mom, All My Friends Are Doing It !**_____ **9**

# What's Involved In The Switch?

You can upgrade to OS X if your system meets some simple requirements:

• The system should have *built-in USB connections*. This is a requirement to run 10.3 Panther. It makes little sense to install anything earlier than Panther.

## WEB SITES
### SUPPORT AND INFO
**Apple Support** is a great place to find information, though it can sometimes be hard to get exactly what you want. www.apple.com/support

**MacFixit** is a popular support site describing new problems and solutions. www.macfixit.com

**VersionTracker** lists the latest versions of programs and drivers. www.versiontracker.com

**MacOSXHints** provides a searchable collection of hundreds of useful MacOS X hints. www.macosxhints.com

## PRODUCTS
### MENTIONED THIS ISSUE
**MacOS X 10.4 Tiger**. Read all about it at www.apple.com

## NEWSLETTER
You have a few options regarding this newsletter:

- receive it via email
- download it from the web site
- say "no thanks"

Send email or call to cancel, or to add another Mac user to the list.

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- You should have a minimum of 256MB of memory, and preferably 512MB.
- Your hard drive needs about 3GB of free space.

It will take about two hours to do the full upgrade.

**They Just Don't Stop, Do They?** _____ **X**

# MacOS 10.4 "Tiger"

On 29 April, Apple released the newest version of MacOS X, 10.4 "Tiger." Tiger is a major upgrade to the OS; it includes over 200 new features and lots of little bug fixes.

## Big Features

I'll just summarize the top two features in Tiger. Check out Apple's web site for further information. I'm going to simply steal quotes from Apple for these feature descriptions.

### Spotlight

"With Spotlight, you can find anything on your computer as quickly as you type. Search your entire system from one place: Files, emails, contacts, images, calendars and applications appear instantly." That pretty much sums it up.

### Dashboard

"The new Dashboard hosts nifty mini-applications called widgets that appear instantly and keep you up to date with timely information from the Internet. View stocks, check weather forecasts, track flights, convert currency and units of measure, even look up businesses in the phone book."

Developers are already shipping lots of widgets, many for free.

## Take The Plunge?

Many software companies have been testing Tiger for almost nine months, but I still remain cautious about it. I can't risk having my computer in trouble because of some obscure problem. The 10.4.1 update was recently released, fixing several unforseen problems. No matter how well Apple tests, some problems can pop up when the system gets out to customers.

Brand-new Macs will come with Tiger, so there's no choice there. But a *new* model will work better with Tiger: it's all the *existing* models that Apple might not fully test. That's why I advise waiting a while.

Tiger requires a computer with *built-in FireWire ports*.

Check out more details at www.apple.com.

**Doing Things To A Bunch Of Things** _____ **all**

# Selecting Multiple Items

You *select* items in a list or collection before you do something

to them, like deleting, copying, etc. Any action you take will apply to all selected items. Sometimes we refer to this as *highlighting* an item.

You can select multiple items in two ways:

*A continuous group* **of items.** Click at one end of the group to select the first. Now press *and hold* the **shift** key. While holding shift, click on the item at the other end. Release the shift key. You have now selected all items from the first to the last.

*A discontinuous (mixed) group***:** When you want to select several items, but they're not all together, follow the procedure above but use the **command (⌘)** key.

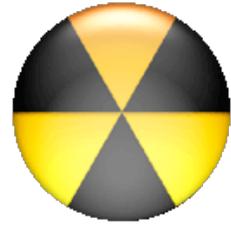Remember that whatever you do will apply to *all* the selected items at once.

**Creativity Department**_____ **all**

# The Name Contest

There's still time to enter your suggestions for the name of this newsletter. Submit your suggestions to `rick@cfcl.com`.

*So far there have only been five suggestions!*

The winner will receive a half-hour labor credit (value $22.50).

# How To

## How Do I Burn CDs With OS X ?

*To burn a* **data CD,** *use the Finder*

A data CD is just a collection of files and folders, similar to what you'd have on a floppy or Zip disk. The Finder does a fine job of burning these. Windows folks can read 'em too.

1.   If you are familiar with the use of floppy disks or Zip disks, CD burning will quickly become easy.

2.   Switch to the Finder. You may either click on the smiley-face at the end of the Dock, or simply click on the desktop background.

3.   Insert a blank CD-R or CD-RW.

4.   If you get a dialog saying "You inserted a blank CD. Choose what to do..."

   4a.  Choose Action: Open Finder

   4b.  Click OK

5.   A CD icon will appear on the desktop.

6.   To name the new CD, click once on the words "untitled CD". Wait till the words get highlighted. Type the new name.

7.   At this point, the CD can be treated like a Zip or floppy.

   7a.  You may double-click the CD icon to open it and view files on it

   7b.  You may drag any files or folders to the CD

   7c.  You may remove (trash) any files you've dragged if you change your mind

   7d.  You may move icons around in the CD for appearance

8.   When you're finished moving files to the CD, it's time to burn it.

   8a.  Drag the CD icon to the trash. As you drag, the trash turns to a "burn disc" icon. It looks like a radiation symbol.

   8b.  You will get a dialog that asks whether you wish to eject, cancel, or burn the CD. If you cancel, you can continue dragging files. If you eject, the CD will remain blank. If you click Burn, the CD will be burned.

9.   It will take several minutes for the CD to burn. During the burn, the CD icon will disappear from the desktop. After the burn, it will show up on the desktop again. At this point, the CD is treated like any pre-recorded CD.

10.  You may eject the finished CD at this point by dragging it to the trash.

11.  NOTE that in step 4 you can check the "Make this action the default" to avoid having to answer that question in the future; step 4 will thereafter be skipped.

### To burn a music CD, use iTunes

1. Create a *playlist* of the songs you want on the CD. Drag songs from the Library to this playlist.

2. Highlight that playlist; you'll see its list of songs in the main panel of the iTunes window.

3. Click the "Burn CD" icon at the top right. iTunes will ask you to insert a blank CD.

4. Insert a blank CD.

5. iTunes will check the blank media, then turn the "burn" icon from yellow to orange.

6. Click on "Burn CD" again to begin the burn.

7. When the burn is done, the CD will appear in iTunes. Eject and mark it.

8. You may keep or delete the playlist used for burning.

### To burn a CD of photos, use iPhoto

Because iPhoto stores photos in its own "vault," you generally don't have easy access to all the .jpg files you might want to burn.

Burning from iPhoto is similar to that for iTunes.

1. Create an *album* of the photos you want on the CD. Drag photos from the Library to this album.

2. Highlight that album; you'll see its photos in the main panel of the iPhoto window.

3. Click the "Burn" icon in the iPhoto toolbar. iPhoto will ask you to insert a blank CD.

4. Insert a blank CD.

5. iPhoto will check the blank media.

6. Click on "Burn" again to begin the burn.

7. When the burn is done, the CD will appear in the list of iPhoto albums. Eject and mark it.

8. You may keep or delete the album used for burning.

### What type of CD blanks should I use?

I use the cheapest blanks I can find; usually they're under 20c in bulk at Staples, OfficeMax, and other large stores. You can buy paper sleeves at these stores too.

Don't bother using "Music CD" blanks for your music discs. A Music CD is designed for a home-stereo burner; part of its price goes to the record companies as royalties (Don't get me started...). The home stereo burners require Music CD blanks, but your computer doesn't. Otherwise, the blanks are identical. (You *can* use Music CD blanks with no problem in your computer, but you're just paying more for them.)