News You Can Use

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QUICK TIPS

DUMP THAT EMAIL !

We all get way more email than we really need to keep. So, periodically go through your Inbox and delete the messages you've read.

But that's not all: make sure you empty the Trash (aka Deleted Messages) once in a while.

Why? This keeps your email program from getting slow. Some programs even crash if they're too full.

With some programs, you can save messages to a mailbox, *export* that mailbox for posterity, then delete.

(Those who get their email via the web don't have this problem, because they aren't downloading the messages into an email program.)

COLUMN SORTING ON OS X

Whenever you have a list with column headings (e.g. a file listing or email message list), you can click in the column heading to sort the list based on that column. The column being used for the sort is drawn in blue.

Many OS X programs display a small triangle in the heading. This indicates *ascending* or *descending* order. Each click changes the sort order.

Welcome

Keeping You Informed

I've finally decided it's time to write a newsletter for clients. Though it's generally easy to use and care for a Mac, we all run into the occasional puzzles and problems.

Each issue will have a couple of feature articles. They'll cover important issues without getting too technical. The *News* column at the left will usually contain quick news bits that you may find of interest.

The articles should be educational for all Mac users, though many will be applicable only to OS X. At the right of the red header line, articles are marked to indicate the intended audience.

Those Who Have, and Those Who Will _____ all

Backups: Your Safety Net

Cleaning out the garage. Checking the tire pressure. Getting rid of the junk in that closet. All are tasks that we *should* do, but we avoid them.

And what about making backups of our files? For most, the task of *setting up* and *planning for* backups is more daunting than the actual backing up. Do I need more hardware? More software? Some complicated procedure? It's no wonder we avoid it.

Life Is Beautiful Till Something Goes Wrong

We just don't think about computer disaster. But it *does* happen, and it *will* someday happen to every one of us. Losing files we've worked hard to create is always a disaster.

Causes of File Loss
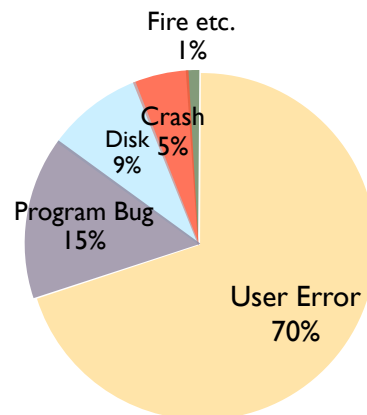
- Fire etc. 1%
- Crash 5%
- Disk 9%
- Program Bug 15%
- User Error 70%

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.

These figures are from personal observation over a two-decade period. As you can see, most file loss or damage is caused by *user error*: a mistake you make by deleting or otherwise changing a single file. A *program bug* can damage a file; there's little you can do here but restore the file and perhaps update the program. A *disk failure* can result in the loss of a bunch of files, or disks can fail in catastrophic way: they just stop working. In the latter case, you may lose *everything* all at once. Occasionally a *system crash* can cause disk corruption that's not repairable. (On OS X, though, disk corruption is much less likely than on earlier versions of MacOS.) *Other disasters* like fire and flood are extremely rare, but they do happen.

Storage For Backups
Backups are most often saved to CD, DVD, or other hard drives. With the advent of CD burners in most modern Macs, backing up to CD is quite easy: you can save about 700MB of data to a CD. With a DVD burner, you can store about 4.7GB. And with an external hard drive, you're limited only by the size of that drive. Zip Drives are also fine, but they hold less.

Backups on CD have the advantage that they can't be changed. This avoids the temptation to simply begin working with your backup file instead of restoring it first.

What Should I Back Up?
On OS X, the most important thing is the contents of your home directory:

Your home directory contains all the files and documents you've created. All of your preferences and email are there too. Reloading the OS and Applications is not a problem, but recovering *your* files might be impossible without restoring them from a backup.

Keep Things Together
If you scatter files and folders all over your hard drive, backing up will be more complicated: you have to back up all that stuff. If it's all in your home directory (or at least in a few folders), backing it up is easier.

MacOS X users should keep all your stuff in your home directory. One of the design points of the OS is that, because it's built for multiple users, the scattering of user files is not the norm.

On OS X, files on your desktop live in your home directory; on MacOS 9, this is not the case: the Desktop *is* a separate place.

Do I Need Software?
If you just want to save your home directory, you can drag the entire folder to a CD, DVD, or to another hard drive. There's no

MACS ONLY
RICK AURICCHIO
805-924-1609
805-927-0445 FAX
rick@cfcl.com
www.cfcl.com/rick

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

PRODUCTS
Retrospect, from Dantz Development, is an excellent backup program. *Retrospect Desktop*, the cheapest version, is more than adequate for those with a single computer. www.retrospect.com

Hard Drives and CD burners are available from Other World Computing. OWC is a favorite supplier for replacement hard drives too. Their *Neptune* line of external hard drives is an excellent value. Most of their storage products come with a copy of Retrospect. www.macsales.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 email delivery, or to add another Mac user to the list.

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additional software needed, just a short list of steps you have to do to make the backup.

If you're backing up a bunch of stuff–too much for one CD–then you may want to use a program like **Retrospect** to do the job. Retrospect knows how to ask for more CDs till the job is done. The program can also back up only the *changed files* since the last backup, which saves time and CDs. And Retrospect keeps a catalog of everything you've backed up.

An Easy Way

Periodically make a duplicate copy of your home directory to a CD or external hard drive. This, of course, only works if your home directory is smaller than where you intend to copy it.

Final Thoughts

Backing up to hard disk or CD is not difficult. It's always good to keep backups so you can recover files in the event of loss. It takes a little time to set up a regular procedure–one that you'll be willing to regularly follow. The payoff is too good to pass up.

Making A Blind Man See _____ **X**

Apple Remote Desktop

Apple's program *Apple Remote Desktop* allows for remote viewing or control of your computer. Using this program, I can view your screen to help you while we're on the phone.

If you call with a complicated problem, it can be difficult for me to talk you through something. Since I can't see what you're seeing, I'm always asking what you see or where you are. Being able to actually *see* where you are makes it easier.

Setting up ARD requires a house call, but it only takes about a half hour. We have to install the latest *ARD Client* program (the part that allows me to access the computer remotely) and enable ARD in your OSX Firewall settings. If you have a router, some settings also have to be made there to allow access.

ARD isn't for everyone, but for some folks outside Cambria–or those who often need complicated telephone support–it can save the cost of a house call.

Billing for ARD support is at a reduced rate of $35 per hour.

Creativity Department _____ **all**

The Name Contest

Everyone else does it, so why not me? Let's have a contest to come up with a catchy, but useful, name for this newsletter. Submit your suggestions to `rick@cfcl.com`.

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

Q&A

The Dock

What is the Dock?

The Dock is the proper name for the "icon bar" that's usually at the bottom of the screen. (Windows has the Task Bar, which is similar.)

The Dock's function is to provide shortcuts to application programs, and to show what's running. (Before MacOS X, a common technique was to place an alias to each common application on the desktop.)

What's with the black triangle?

If an application is running, there's a black triangle under its icon. If it isn't running there won't be a triangle. The triangle lets you distinguish between active applications and the other shortcuts.

How to I add or remove icons from the Dock?

To remove an icon from the Dock, just drag it off the Dock onto the desktop background. It will disappear in an amusing little puff of smoke.

To add an application icon to the Dock, go to the Applications folder (or wherever the app lives). Drag its icon into the Dock.

You can reposition icons within the Dock by sliding them where you want.

Why does an icon appear then disappear?

For every running application, the Dock displays an icon. When the application quits, the icon will disappear *unless* it was there before.

What is the line in the Dock next to the Trash?

The line separates the *application area* from the *document area*. You can only have application icons on the side away from the trash. On the trash side of the line, you can drag icons for files or folders. Clicking on one of these file/folder icons is a shortcut to that file or folder.

Be careful when dragging into the Dock: don't put things into the trash!

Can I move the Dock or get rid of it?

You may position the Dock at the left, the right, or the bottom of the screen but you can't get rid of it permanently.

You can, however, set the Dock to *auto-hide* so that it hides off-screen till your mouse comes near. Setting auto-hide is especially useful if you find you can't get to something behind the Dock (like the corner of a window). The Dock always shows "in front," and auto-hiding is the only way to keep it out of the way.

You'll find the Dock Preferences under the blue Apple menu or in System Preferences.

What about Size and Magnification?

You can set the size of the Dock so it's small but readable, which is good for a smaller screen.

When magnification is turned on, the Dock "balloons" where the mouse is, to make it more readable. Large magnifications can be somewhat dizzying.