News You Can Use

NEWS

MACDEFENDER: NO! NO!

There's a new bit of malware for the Mac calling itself MacDefender, claiming to protect your Mac.

It's a wolf in sheep's clothing, nothing more than malware disguised as something that seems OK.

If you see it, ignore it!

IT'S BEEN A WHILE NOW

Is this really year nine for Macs Only? Seems hard to believe...

IN THIS ISSUE

- **Vacation in Late May**
- **Securing Wi-Fi Networks?**
- **Interesting Statistics**

QUICK TIP

BACKUP !

Backups are important to have, but if backing up takes any effort it won't get done. Two automatic solutions:

Time Machine is included with all 10.5 Leopard and 10.6 Snow Leopard systems. It runs automatically every hour. You can "go back in time" to restore an old file, email, address, or photo. I like it.

When you plug in an external hard drive, Time Machine leads you through the quick setup process.

(I occasionally have a drive or two in stock. Call for info.)

SuperDuper is a $28 program for pre-Leopard users. It backs up automatically, only copying what you've changed. I used it before Leopard.

Vacation Plans

Vacation: Last Half Of May

I'll be on an African safari from **May 16 thru June 3rd**. We'll be out in the Serengeti and won't have phone or email coverage. So please don't try to reach me during the latter half of May.

Here Comes The SWAT Team

Securing Wi-Fi Networks?

On April 25th, the SLO Tribune ran an article about a guy in Buffalo, NY who got an early-morning SWAT-team visit, on the premise that he was downloading child porn.

The cops were wrong, and, after confiscating all his electronics, they determined that it was a neighbor "piggybacking" on his open wi-fi network. But his door was smashed, he was terrorized, thrown to the floor, confronted with automatic weapons, and hauled downtown.

The peril of a SWAT home invasion–not the fear of some stranger committing a crime using my wi-fi–has forced me to set a password on my network.

With a secure network, they can now argue that *only* I had access so I must be guilty. Damned if you do, damned if you don't...

Show Me The Numbers

Interesting Statistics

As most of you know, I keep on file detailed info about client computers. This information is of great help when someone calls asking "Can my system do this?" or "What's my email password?" These are March 2011 figures.

Hard Drive Replacements

In eight years, I've installed 73 replacement hard drives. Desktop systems had 27 drive failures; laptops had 24 failures. Luckily, many of the failures still allowed recovery of most, if not all, of the files. (See "Back It Up" in the sidebar.) The remaining 20 or so were just upgrades to larger drives.

MACS ONLY

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THE FINE PRINT

THE PRICE LIST
Standard Rate is $60/hr.

Phone support is free, except if the call runs to a half hour. Then it's billed at the reduced rate of $30/hr.

House calls are free within a 25-mile radius of Cambria. Each trip beyond 25 miles will incur a $10 distance surcharge.

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.
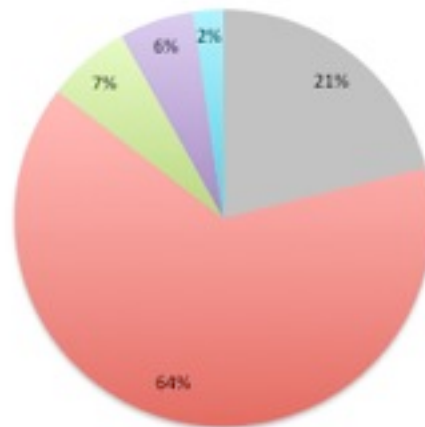
Where People Live

About 85% of my clients are Cambrians, living within five miles of my home. Another 13% are not far away in the county. Only 2% live outside the county.

For the curious: I made 314 house calls (almost 2600 miles) in 2011.

Customer Distance
384 people

■ < 1 mile ■ < 5 miles ■ < 25 miles ■ < 40 miles ■ > 40 miles

Laptops vs. Desktops

They're running fairly close. The graph only shows computers built within the past five years.

Laptop vs. Desktop
Five years old or newer; total 282

laptop, 44%
desktop, 56%

How Old?

As of this writing I have info on 548 customer computers.

Note that I've dated the computers based on when the computer was *first introduced* by Apple, since I don't know when you actually bought it. Using the intro date is close enough: most models are rarely on the market for more than a couple of years.

It's interesting to see that we have a bunch of older computers still operating (most of those are old iMacs). Many Windows computers don't last this long–but that's often because their software gets so screwed up that it costs less to replace the entire system.

Approximate Age of Computers
Based on date introduced; total 548

- 1995-1999, 12%
- 2000-2002, 16%
- 2003-2005, 31%
- 2006-2011, 41%
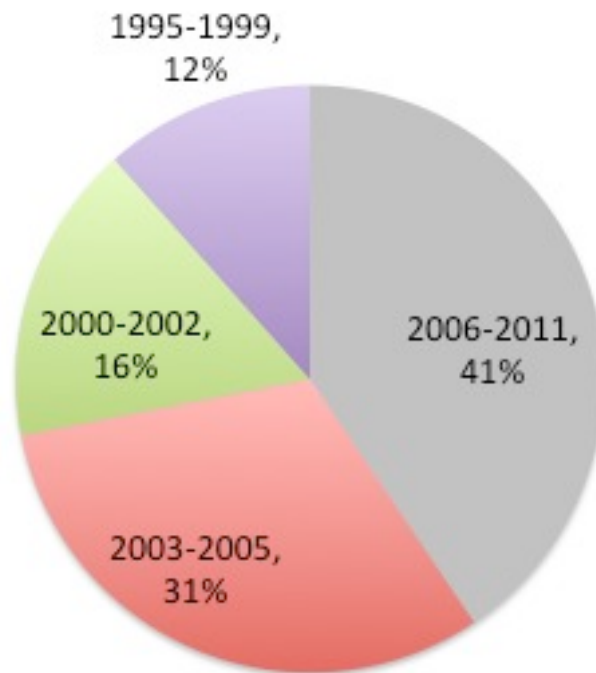
Operating System Versions

We see a good mix of MacOS X versions, and still a couple of really old systems still running MacOS 8 and 9. (Those systems have been unsupported for at least ten years; there are no updates available for any of their software.) It's almost impossible to find a new printer that will work with the old 8/9 systems.

Those old 8/9 systems are kept around for a few reasons:

• They don't use the Internet. Modern web pages just don't work with that old version of Internet Explorer. But they still run some old program well;

• They're gathering dust in garages.

Most of the old iMacs and the "beige" towers will eventually go to the Morro Bay Recycling Center.

A new computer will always come with the latest OS. So it's not surprising that half the systems have 10.4 Tiger, because Apple is still providing updates for Safari on that OS. The high Tiger percentage also includes older computers have been upgraded–many of those will simply live out their lives on Tiger.

The oldest usable system is 10.4 Tiger.

Some OS upgrades are forced by new equipment: an iPod, iPad, iPhone, or even some application programs.

OS Versions
total 513

- MacOS 8/9 (1997/99)
- 10.2 Jaguar (2002)
- 10.3 Panther (2003)
- 10.4 Tiger (2005)
- 10.5 Leopard (2007)
- 10.6 Snow Leopard (2009)