

Magazine of the Apple User Group of Canterbury Inc.

Applebyte



November 2009



Waimairi School

November 25th 6:30 pm

APPLEBYTE is the monthly magazine of:
Apple User Group of Canterbury Inc.

Submissions for publication are due by the 12th of the month of publication. Please submit all articles to:

editor@appleusers.co.nz

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**Christmas Greetings and many New Year
Apple wishes to all our readers.**

Just a reminder - there is no December issue -
we will be back to welcome 2010 in January.

Applebyte is produced on an Apple MacPro using Pages software.
The magazine is printed by PrintStop (<http://www.printstop.co.nz>).

Meeting venue

Meetings are held on the last Wednesday of each month (except December) beginning at 7:30pm, at Waimairi School at the end of Tillman Avenue, off Bligh's Road.

Drinks and snacks are available while we all calm down after the excitement of the meeting.

Some members carpool to get to meetings. If you don't have a car and find it difficult to get to meetings, please contact a committee member to arrange transport. Usually there is someone living near you who can offer a lift.



Meeting programme

Wednesday 25th November 2009

6:30pm

Come along early and share a meal together

We will provide hot savouries, cake for afters, and drinks. Please bring some savoury finger food that doesn't require heating

7:30 Monthly Meeting

Please bring a present (max. \$5) for a lucky dip

- Welcome and News
- Music & music software - Murray Wood
- Quiz - Bart
- Art Competition:
viewing and results
- Supper

Come along and share your passion for Apple products. Learn about the latest technology, and enhance your skills. And meet with old and new friends over supper. Also remember to try your luck with the evening's raffle. Visitors welcome.



Submitting your article

Electronic submissions are preferred (to save wear and tear on my fingers). Just choose whatever format suits and send it to:

editor@appleusers.co.nz

One page is roughly 450 words. Most articles are less than 4 pages, but longer articles may be accepted if of particular interest or relevance. Please ask in advance if you are planning a longer article.

Please write clearly; short sentences are recommended to help you do this. Use a spell-checker. If you are quoting some other article, please include an acknowledgment of your source.

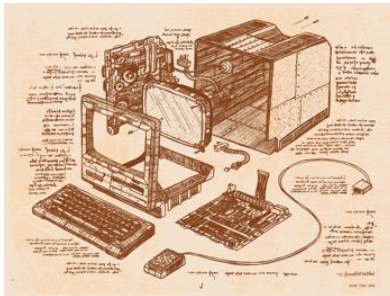
Pictures can help explain your article, so by all means include one (or more) if appropriate. The format is not important - jpeg, tiff and gif are all fine, but try to provide a high quality image (300 dpi) if possible.

For screen shots, you can use the build-in Apple functions Apple-Shift-3 or Apple-Shift-4, or a utility such as Snapz Pro, available from:

<http://www.macdownload.com>.

Next Deadline: 12 January 2010

Prez sez



Bart Hanson



Hi AUGC Members,

Did you manage to find enough time to compete in the digital art competition? The person who created the above picture mimicking the way Michaelangelo illustrated his inventions has done a fine job don't you think?

Our esteemed Secretary Jim Pollard's wife, Jean, will have judged the digital art competition by now and the winners will be announced and their printed work displayed at the Christmas break-up meeting on 25th November.

We plan to start the meeting with food and drink at 6.30pm and start the meeting proper at 7.30pm. Bring along a \$5.00 gift to add to the fun.

The monthly committee meetings have been held at Jim's home this year and it has been a privilege to meet in such civilised surroundings and company.

Currently 50 hard copies of AUGC's magazine are posted out to the membership and downloads have reached 75, exceeding hard copies.

The club has kept its core membership gained a few new members and lost a few. The meetings have been enjoyable and I hope we can have some fresh volunteers put their hand up for the committee in the new year.

2010 promises to be an exciting year with Apple still very much in the ascendent. Personally, I don't really want Apple to grow any bigger but I also know that a company either grows or shrinks and on reflection, growing is not such a bad thing now, is it?

See you at the meeting and I hope you win a prize!

Apple released two major new items last month, a 27 inch iMac and a new mouse. If, like me, you drooled over the 24 inch iMac then you're gonna love the 27 inch one! It is big enough to use as your TV. Some have already dubbed it the "iMac Pro", a misnomer of course, but it has enough grunt for even quite demanding users.



The second new piece of hardware is the Magic Mouse. In spite of some early user's complaints, the consensus is that Apple have themselves another winner.

Apple like to take users into unfamiliar territory, then one day you suddenly realise that you've settled down and made the unfamiliar territory your home. So it is with the Mighty Mouse. I believe Apple are getting as many people as ready as possible for new ways of doing things, the big one being comfortable using a "touch" interface. In this way the Magic Mouse is an enigma.

Although it is a unique product (touch pad and mouse combined) it may well be plotting its own demise as Apple may be using it to actually hasten the day when we no longer need or want to use a mouse, being happy instead to slide our way around a surface letting our fingers do the talking.

The release of the Magic Mouse allows Apple to conveniently forget the



Mighty Mouse as the courts found in favour of Man & Machine who sell a special mouse of the same name which is waterproof and chemical resistant for the medical and scientific fraternity.

Still no right-hand button though, what are we gonna do? Maybe we should spend the next few years learning how to drive the

Open Office Mouse. The programable mouse with a button for everything, 18 programable buttons, an analogue joystick and a "cheat-sheet" to bring you the mouse nirvana you desire. [[Ed: and don't forget the basic 64-button touch-pad available for most computers.]

In a new patent application revealed this week, Apple disclosed further plans for a multi-touch surface that could accommodate two full hands and distinguish between palms and individual fingers for typing and other input gestures.

Although Apple has not yet released any details about its anticipated tablet, Apple seems to be very very busy talking to publishers and is able to show how iTunes has rescued the recording industry from itself. A recent paper proposed that unless publishers woke up and stopped trying to control the distribution of information on dead trees, they too would be dead soon.

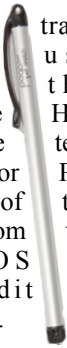


To this end it is believed Apple is negotiating with newspapers, magazines and even comic book publishers to bring compelling content to its highly anticipated new tablet device. McGraw Hill and Oberlin Press are also working with Apple to bring textbooks to iTunes.

Bringing printed content to the Tablet is merely what the Kindle eReader or the latest Kindle killer, Barnes & Noble's "Nook" can do. The real goal for Apple is to have publishers creating rich interactive content using audio, video and graphics in digitally published books, magazines and newspapers. Once all the dust has settled, Apple will have saved the print, music, television and movie industries.

Apple stores are finally doing away with Windows CE-based portable "Point of Sale" devices and replacing them with customised iPods for new checkout operations. The "EasyPay touch" configuration consists of an iPod Touch case with an integrated barcode scanner and a magnetic stripe reader. The hardware talks wirelessly to custom point-of-sale (POS) software. Credit signatures can entered by customers using a stylus.

Debit transactions will be completed using a combination of the Touch system and the Hypercom POS terminal. The terminal serves as an entry pad for PIN numbers, while the rest of the process can be completed from the iPod. The standard POS system will still be used for payments made with multiple credit cards, credit checks, and when returning products for cash.



The EasyPay scanner should reduce the time taken to conduct an iPhone purchase, as each of the four codes displayed on the packaging can be scanned and automatically added to the data fields on the order. Apple staff can then configure all details of the cellular plan without leaving the iPod interface.



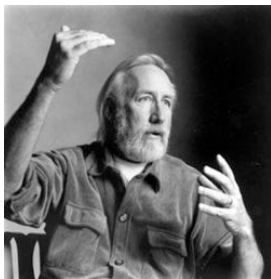
iPhone has been announced for general release in China without Wi-Fi. The reason is that the Chinese government has been promoting a proprietary security standard for 802.11 devices called WAPI, which stands for WLAN (Wireless Local Area Network) Authentication and Privacy Infrastructure.

The WAPI requirement may violate World Trade Organization rules and the issue was significant enough for US Secretary of State Colin Powell to raise WAPI in trade talks in 2004 because if required it would be a bar for U.S. firms to sell Wi-Fi products in the country.

Because Apple already has its phones manufactured in China, there appears to be a wide agreement that future versions of the iPhone will have Wi-Fi with WAPI as an option.

Associated Press estimates as many as two million unlocked iPhones brought in from other countries are already in use in China, and none of those use WAPI.

TBWA/Media Arts Lab, Apple's Advertising company is losing its chief creative officer, Lee Clow, the man behind the "1984," "Think Different," "iPod silhouettes" and "I'm a Mac" adverts. Famous not only for these fantastic ad campaigns, but also for once having gone out Drew Barrymore, he sounds like my kind of guy.



Special offers

Peter Fitchett

Note: These specials are available to all user group members.
Contact Peter (web@appleusers.co.nz) for access or coupon codes.

PocketMac RingtoneStudio 2

PocketMac (<http://www.createiphoneringtones.com>) makes a variety of productivity tools for PDA and Mac connectivity, including using your Mac to support your iPhone. With RingtoneStudio2 for iPhone, you can easily create iPhone ringtones. By creating and setting ringtones for each of your friends and family, you can get an early heads-up before you look to see who's calling.

Apple user group members receive a 30% discount, which reduces your cost to \$20.96 (US).

This offer is valid through **November 30, 2009**.

Mac OS X Snow Leopard books

O'Reilly and No Starch have three upcoming Mac OS X Snow Leopard books (<http://search.oreilly.com/?q=snow+leopard>). Titles include "Mac OS X Snow Leopard: The Missing Manual" by David Pogue, "My New Mac, Snow Leopard Edition" by Wallace Wang, and "Mac OS X Snow Leopard Pocket Guide" by Chris Seibold. Get up to speed quickly with this new operating system.

The user group discount code offer will get you 35% off.

This offer is valid through **November 30, 2009**.

Voila Software

Voila is a professional creativity tool for Mac OS X Leopard that lets you capture your screen, annotate, organize and share. Voila lets you capture any shape, multiple regions at the same time, menu, webpage or DOM elements, and even from iSight. Pick and add annotations, add effects and share instantly via Mail, Flickr, FTP or iPhoto

Voila is offered to Apple user group members for only \$24.95 (US), which is 38% off! A full-featured trial version can be downloaded for a 30-day evaluation.

This offer is valid through **December 31, 2009**.

Note: These specials are available to all user group members.
Contact Peter (web@appleusers.co.nz) for access or coupon codes.
For further specials, see our website.

Worldwide Internet

Of course, the Internet is world-wide ... isn't it? Well, if you speak English, perhaps ... but for everyone else, there are a few obstacles - 26 of them - the letters of the English alphabet, and the Internet. But not for much longer!

Until now, anyone wanting to set up a website has been forced to include a few characters of Latin script in the address, or domain name, that they choose. The address must end with a small but very important collection of Latin alphabet characters, .com, .gov, .co.uk, .cn and so on. The letters are essential for the first step in delivering a message to its destination.

For the first time in its history, users will be allowed to create full web and e-mail-addresses using non-Latin characters.

The change has been announced by the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (Icann) at its board meeting taking place in Seoul, South Korea.

According to supporters of the change, it marks a huge technological shift in the way the web works with the potential to open up access to millions of new users.

Opponents, of course, question the need for a change - but then, they probably have all the latin characters on their keyboards. How would they feel if they were forced to include a few Chinese symbols in each domain name?

We are all going to face new challenges with this change - we may be faced with wanting to use some domain names that we cannot enter on our keyboards. Using search engines to find sites that we want, and clicking of the resulting links may become our new normal way of doing things.

There are those who worry that it might lead to a kind of ghettoisation of the internet, with language communities operating entirely within their own languages cut off from the rest of the web.

There are worries too that it will make the protection of intellectual property rights that much harder. (Are you going to protect your business name in all the possible scripts?)

And how are you going to recognise spam when you have no idea what even the site name is?

The change is being introduced slowly, with small steps. The first step will be to permit different scripts to be applied to the country code in the domain name - the endings like .uk, .cn, .kr and .nz. Later steps will extend this until all domain names will be available in multiple language scripts. A world wide web.

Roving Reporter

Nigel Cooper

Greetings from Italy! Here I am playing in the 19th World Senior Chess Championships being held in the small town of Condino in northern Italy. Out of 172 male players, I am ranked number 157. In the first round, I made a mistake early but fought back and had a win in my grasp against a player rated 400 points above me, only to lose it by a mistake in the end-game. He was sweating though! Round 2 was a good opening for me, but a mistake in the middle game left me with no chance. And so on. After six games, I had one win—against a player who failed to turn up! Yet by the last round, I had 4.5 wins out of 11. This put me 137th, 20 places above my ranking. So I am happy.

It was quite an adventure getting here. A free bus was put on from Milan Linate airport, for the 3 hours drive to Condino, but it left half an hour before my plane arrived. I missed the public bus as I thought, wrongly, that it came to the airport. I was forced to take a taxi (a Mercedes!) 110 kms to Brescia but, although we arrived in Brescia in time, we missed the bus because the driver did not know where the bus station was. I paid the fare of \$340, and said goodbye, in sight. I asked many people, but no one spoke English or knew where Condino was. So, I began to look for a hotel for the night, knowing registrations closed at 1000 next day and the first bus did not leave from Brescia until 1015. Then a bus arrived going somewhere else. A blind lady passenger spoke a little English and translated for us. The driver took pity on me and said to climb on board. I got on in faith, having no clue where we were going. At least it was better than standing on the roadside.



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As we went along, the driver telephoned a taxi driver friend of his and arranged for him to come to somewhere along his route, and to take me some 50 kms to Condino. The fare was 85 euros, but the bus driver negotiated a 50 euro deal. I thanked him and asked him what to pay for the bus, and he replied “Nothing, you are a guest of SIA, the bus company.” I gave him my card and a pen, and said goodbye, thanking God for His mercy and for sending me a guardian angel.

The taxi driver rang ahead for the address of my hotel and used his GPS to guide us through a maze of narrow, steep, one-way streets right to the front door of a monastery! If I had come on the public bus, I would have been dropped off in the town and had no idea how to get here. 54 players who caught the free bus were dropped off at the playing venue, and after registering one by one had to lug their cases to their hotels. There are no taxis here. Several failed to arrive—I am not surprised, just glad I got here!

In UK, I discovered that using my cell phone would cost a large amount, multiple dollars per minute, so I canned that idea and decided to communicate solely by internet. This worked OK until I left my power adaptor on the train and so had to wait until Italy to connect again. I had fun finding a connection to the internet in Condino. I was told there are no connections in their village. However, after some days searching, I found one in a library. I got a few emails off, then Paradise went down. Next day I got a multiple send-out done using BCC (blind carbon copies), attaching my news, but I got a reply from two friends saying the attachment was empty! So, with five minutes to go, I re-sent all the emails again, this time with the text in the email. They got off, but Paradise immediately closed my account! I discovered after returning that their spam filter automatically blacks any account which it thinks someone has hacked into and is sending spam. So, although I had to trust that all would be well with my business and friends everywhere, I had the blessing of no phone calls or emails for almost two weeks! Now that is what I call a holiday!

Even getting home after the championships was fraught with traveller's difficulties. I turned up at the airport in Milan I had arrived at, only to discover after the bus had left that my plane left from another airport. Milan has three of them. I decided that, rather than getting another taxi or bus across town (an hour's drive), I would pay for an upgrade and get a plane from the airport I was at.

Then, in Heathrow, I visited a friend and later arrived back at terminal 4, as instructed on my travel document, only to find Qantas had moved their base of operations to terminal 3 a week earlier. It took an extra hour getting to that terminal and going through security a second time. I was surprised and relieved I actually caught the plane. So, 49 hours after leaving the monastery I arrived home. Holidays can be fun, but I can do without the hassles, thanks. Great to be home though. See you on 25 November!

Take Control eBooks

for the Mac

Take Control is pleased to announce the release of three new ebooks: two providing new info about Snow Leopard and one filling in important details for Leopard on the way to a Snow Leopard edition.

* **"Take Control of Users & Accounts in Snow Leopard"** -- In this revised edition, Kirk McElhearn helps you understand and manage all the accounts on your Mac, which is important for troubleshooting, even if you are the only user. It explains everything you need to know about accounts, including the Guest account; setting up Fast User Switching; using accounts for troubleshooting; and setting up parental controls to limit or what software can be run, what content can be accessed, when, and by whom. You'll especially like this ebook if accounts have boggled you in the past, and the ebook's parental controls advice will help you set up a Mac for a child (or anyone for whom you provide technical assistance, such as an older relative or technologically challenged spouse). The 102-page ebook is available for \$7 (thanks to the 30% MUG discount).

<http://www.takecontrolbooks.com/snow-leopard-users>

* **"Take Control of Sharing Files in Snow Leopard"** -- Next in line is Glenn Fleishman, whose updated ebook helps you share files among users on multiple computers. This ebook explains the nitty-gritty details you need to know to configure file sharing to be fast, effective, and secure. You'll learn how to select and configure the right hardware and software for your needs and budget, consider the pros and cons of different file-sharing options, find setup steps for each of the core Mac OS X file-sharing services - AFP, SMB, and FTP (with tips to help you avoid problems and security risks), get the details on setting up login accounts, and learn how to log in to Mac file servers from a variety of major operating systems. The ebook discusses the new Snow Leopard Wake on Demand feature and the quirky Snow Leopard firewall, as well as how to share media from iPhoto '09 and iTunes 9. The 109-page ebook is available for \$7 (thanks to the 30% MUG discount).

<http://www.takecontrolbooks.com/snow-leopard-sharing>

* **"Take Control of Syncing Data in Leopard"** -- Though it may seem odd to update a Leopard book now, we were amazed at how much work was necessary to bring Michael Cohen's "Take Control of Syncing Data in Leopard" up to date. The ebook now covers iPhone OS 3, Google's ongoing calendar and contact improvements, and iTunes 9. So, if you own Leopard and can't make heads or tails of syncing your data to whatever device you want it synced to (another Mac, an iPhone, a Palm, an Apple TV, a general mobile phone, etc.), this ebook should have you

covered. Note that by "data," we mean calendar events and contacts, as well as media synced in iTunes such as podcasts and videos, but not something more general like all the files in your Documents folder. The ebook has some notes about Snow Leopard changes, and Michael is working on the Snow Leopard manuscript even as you read this. If you'd like this new 167-page Leopard edition, you can purchase it for \$7 (thanks to the 30% MUG discount) - we'll be giving a free update to the Snow Leopard edition to anyone who who has bought the Leopard edition since Apple released Snow Leopard in late August.

<http://www.takecontrolbooks.com/leopard-syncing>

for the iPhone

Two new ebooks in the Take Control series, "Take Control of Your iPhone Apps" and "Take Control of iPhone OS 3," provide an in-depth look at the iPhone and its core apps. These practical, hands-on guides walk readers through the most effective ways to use numerous features and help readers avoid problems. Most of the information is also applicable to the iPod touch, and the differences are called out. "Take Control of Your iPhone Apps" lists for \$10; "Take Control of iPhone OS 3" lists for \$15; both are eligible for the 30% MUG discount, bringing the prices down to \$7 and \$10.50, respectively.

In "**Take Control of Your iPhone Apps**," Mac expert and highly regarded technical writer Jeff Carlson shows readers how to make the most of Apple's core iPhone apps. He provides clear, concise explanations on how to use the iPhone for both work and play - from sending email and Web surfing to playing games and managing photos. Apps covered include Calendar, Camera, Compass, iPod, Mail, Maps, Messages, Phone, Photos, Remote and Safari, as well as the Music and Video apps for iPod touch users. The book also provides pointers to independent apps that expand on the features in Apple's apps.

<http://www.takecontrolbooks.com/iphone-apps>

In "**Take Control of iPhone OS 3**," troubleshooting guru Ted Landau explores iPhone OS 3 and the iPhone hardware. He explains the new features of the latest iPhone models, walks readers through the various options and settings, and provides detailed problem-solving techniques. Landau addresses both general and advanced users and clears up mysteries about such topics as syncing, networking, security, and more.

<http://www.takecontrolbooks.com/iphone>

To take advantage of the MUG discount, contact the Editor for the required coupon code.

Thanks to all at Take Control for their continued support.

Tales from Russia

David Chilvers

Alison and David Chilvers have recently returned from a three week tour of Russia and the Baltic states. The tour of 20 New Zealanders, run under the banner of the Waikato University "Travel and learn" series, involved busing through Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, across the border into Russia and on to St Petersburg. Here we joined our 200 passenger "lake liner" for the two week trip through the Lakes, rivers locks and canals which join St Petersburg, the home of the Russian Tsars for several hundred years with Moscow, their earlier capital city.



I debated long and hard with myself about taking my MacBook with me because of the extra weight. I am pleased I did because it meant I could pre-prepare all my emails, diary notes etc. for the few and far between times I could get on line in Russia.

I would like to start with a few remarks about Russia itself. Like China it is vast country which crosses 4 time zones and 12 hours time difference.

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Most of the population live west of the Ural mountains which leaves about two thirds of the country with only a few million people. Much of this land borders Mongolia and Northern China which house over 200 million people for which this largely uninhabited land must be very attractive. One of Russia's future problems I suggest.

We travelled across a very small proportion of the western third of Russia so this article is only intended to bring you a few stories from the Russia we saw.

Get married and throw away the key!

The first Baltic state we visit is Lithuania, At the city viewing site of Vilnius the Capital, we become acquainted with a social phenomena we will meet in all the Baltic States and also Russia.

The viewing site contains a railing which is covered in padlocks inscribed with the names of the couple that placed them there on their wedding day, and then threw away the key!



In Russia, they are even keener on the idea. This is my wife, Alison, looking a little doubtful about a TREE of locks, there for the same reason.

As one in three marriages end within a few years, this must be an embarrassment for many!"

The institution of marriage in Russia is a little different. Churches make substantial charges for weddings, so most couples these days settle for a registry office ceremony followed by a drive around town with the wedding party in a very stretched limo for photos.



By tradition, no parents are invited to this part of the ceremony. (Apparently they only cry and spoil the fun!)



But they are allowed to go to the wedding breakfast that follows. And here is another difference, guests are not expected to bring a present, only flowers!

The "No Nails" Cathedral

We wake up one morning on a side trip. Cruising up the long length of Lake Onega to the little Island of KIZHI. In the distance shinning in the sun we see the vision of multiple cupolas atop a church.

This Island portrays a typical 1900 century “ wooden building” farming community from which we learnt of the spartan life style of Northern Russia at that time. They coped with 7 months of ice and winter



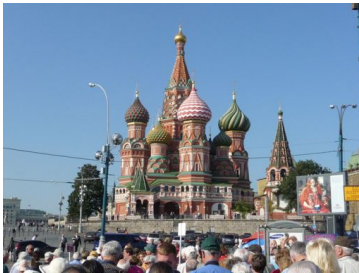
temperatures of minus 30c yet still managed viable farming by keeping their cattle inside their spacious 3 storey multi generational homes. Even the hens lived happily, producing eggs all winter, under the large closed heating stove which, together with the family religious Icon, were the centrepieces of the house. (They even slept on it in the winter)

The community social life centred around their wooden “Transfiguration Cathedral” which we glimpsed in the sun as we came up the lake.

The cathedral, built in 1714 without nails we were told, but using 30,000 wooden shingles, comprises 22 onion shaped cupolas built as 5 series of ascending nest.

St Basil’s Cathedral and Ivan the Terrible

It was still a calm sunny day in Red square beside the Moscow Kremlin (the word kremlin just means A Fort in Russian and most Russian cities have one).



On one side of Red Square we see the fabulous and colourful St Basil’s Cathedral in all its glory. The glory of it was somewhat tarnished by the story that went with its building. The cathedral was commissioned by Tsar Ivan the terrible and built in the 15th century. Ivan was very pleased with his unique cathedral and was concerned that the

architect could maybe build another. So he asked him if he could. He said, “Yes”. So to ensure he did not, Ivan had the architect’s eyes removed!



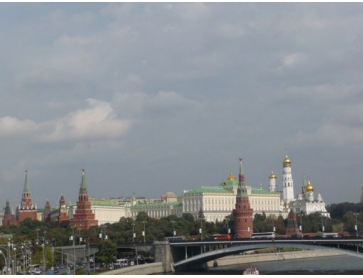
The Kremlin and Red Square

The beauty of, and history of, the Moscow Kremlin(which is right beside Red Square) was a pleasant surprise to us.

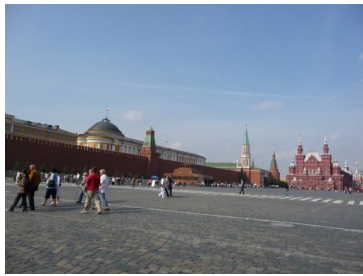
It contains 5 Cathedrals, one of which houses the tombs on many of the Romanoff’s. It was the citadel of the Tsar’s for centuries, and its 30 or so hectares are still surrounded by high walls and makes a sort of peaceful “green zone” with very restricted access, except for the top administration people of Russia. The area of the Kremlin called the Armoury is the storehouse for the treasures accumulated by the Russian

Tsars over many centuries and is a wonder in itself to visit.

The first of these two images is of the Kremlin and was taken from a River bridge some 3 kilometres away to give an overall perspective of the cathedrals, museums and office buildings it contains. You can see the red walls in the foreground. The other



is of Red Square itself (now a pleasant pedestrian haven in central Moscow) with one wall of The Kremlin beside it.



As I indicated at the start, we only caught a glimpse of this great country with a tortured history of ruthless rulers and an oppressed citizenry. We came away heartened by the fact that the proportion of the population living in absolute poverty has dropped from 30% to 7% in the last 15 years, and

there are signs of a greater engagement with the rest of the world than there ever has been before.

And this article would not have been possible without the aid of my trusty MacBook on which I kept a daily diary and a "Russia" iPhoto library!

Our Intrepid Reporter is temporarily back at home while deciding where to head next - Thanks for this, David.

iMumble 20.0

Barry Clark

iTase

iTaser or iGlock? iS there a choice?



iTaser might kill you if you're unlucky, but a 9mm Glock certainly will.

Thanksgiving!



Thanksgiving Shopping Period is the worst time for leaving your mobile devices in the back of Cabs, warn NY Cab Drivers. About 30,000 mobile phones are left in New York taxis every six months.



While the Cab Drivers thank you for your donations, I wonder ... with all that grid-locked traffic, are the phones still mobile?

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AKVIS Sketch Review

Peter Fitchett

For centuries, anyone wanting to record a landscape, a building, a portrait or even just the family pet, it was a case of calling for some paper and charcoal, a pencil or perhaps a pastel. Paint and brush even got the call, and a little talent was useful if others were to recognise your work. Just visit some of the art museums around the world to see some examples. It is perhaps surprising that even the simplest point-and-shoot camera will record the subject more ‘accurately’ - but such images will generally not be found in the museums. There must be some missing element that the photo is lacking!

If you have some favourite photos that you would like to display - with a bit more impact, you may like to consider the technology of the old masters - and convert your starkly accurate photographic image into a sketch. Don’t tell everyone, but your computer can help you accomplish this with the minimum of skills, and without getting your fingers dirty.

Earlier this year I came across a utility, Sketch, from AKVIS Software Inc. (They have a Head Office in Vancouver, Canada, and a software development division in Perm, Russia.) Since April, version 8.6 has been upgraded to version 9, providing some more features, and a speed improvement. So what is Sketch? Put briefly, Sketch is a utility program that can generate a pencil/charcoal sketch or watercolour painting from a photograph. The utility comes in 2 forms - a standalone program and a plugin so you can use it as a filter within Photoshop (CS3 or CS4) or Photoshop Elements 6.



Simply prepare your photograph, and invoke Sketch. You are presented with a control panel including a zoomable image preview area and parameters

to specify how you want your result produced. Control the drawing process, the pencil angle, size and stroke length, the midtone intensity and hatching, the pencil type and colour, the edge width and sensitivity. Even apply a canvas texture to the paper.

A simple click of the Run button will start a rather smart algorithm that somehow produces a sketch that, to my eye, resembles what a human artist may produce. Rather clever, really, with the advantage that you can see the result, and if it is not quite what you want, you can nudge the parameters, and try again.

There is plenty to experiment with here, and a



very large number of possible sketches possible - surely something that will assist you with an interesting take on your favourite photo.



The user interface is well thought out, and shows a level of maturity that reflects the several years and 9 versions of software development that have lead to the current software.

I have tried both the stand-alone program and the Photoshop plugin. Both use the same interface and produce the same results. My preference is the Plugin version as the resulting sketch replaces the source image layer, and I then have the option to apply some of Photoshops tools and filters to further modify the result. Masking the background, or applying a little transparency to

the sketch to reveal the hint of some underlying layer can yield some very interesting results.

The user interface is well thought out, and shows a level of maturity that reflects the several years and 9 versions of software development that have lead to the current software. And some remarkable results are possible, having friends asking who the artist is - around here, they know that it isn't me!

This program is not something that you try and forget - it is a keeper with the potential to pop into use for a number of different projects. I will also take a look at other utilities from AKVIS - there are some interesting examples on their website, often with instructions of how they results were produced.



AKVIS Sketch version 9.0

Photo image to sketch/watercolour conversion utility

Stand-alone program or Photoshop plugin

Hardware: Intel Mac, 1GB RAM, 100MB disk and 1024x768 screen (2GB RAM recommended)

PC version is also available

Software: MacOS X, including Snow Leopard.

Plugin version requires Photoshop CS3-CS4.

Plugin legacy is available for Photoshop 6-CS2, and Photoshop Elements 1-4.

Price: 'Home' (plugin or stand-alone: US\$72);

'Home Deluxe' (both versions: US\$89);

'Business' (both versions: US\$139).

Trial: 10-day free trial of full product.

Website: <http://www.akvis.com/en/sketch>

Around, About

Peter Fitchett

On the subject of photo enhancement utilities, let me mention Ohanaware - a family team with a history and passion in software development. They enjoy taking photos, and have written some software because they think that photo editing should be quick, easy and fun. (Strange people, eh?) They have 2 programs that look like they may be worth a gander: Funtastic Photos, and HDRtist.

Funtastic Photos, is exactly what the name implies: It makes working with your photos fun, and does it in a dead-simple way. No image editor I've seen in the Mac market offers so much, with such ease of use, for such a small price.

If the idea of photo editing sends shivers down your spine then this is a good step up from iPhoto. It doesn't require you to move away from iPhoto for organising your images either. The export and print options also add to the package.

Think of Funtastic Photos as LightZone with a sense of humor, a sense of style, and a personalized sense of creativity. LightZone is serious about enhancing photos. Funtastic Photos is serious about style, creativity, panache. And, fun.

Funtastic Photos is currently US\$34.99 or download the free trial (MacOS X 10.4 or higher) at

<http://www.ohanaware.com/funtasticphotos/>

You will also find examples, tutorials, movies and reviews.

HDRtist is the easiest Mac HDR Photography software, thanks to its intuitive design and streamlined interface. HDR for the rest of us.. HDR - High Dynamic Range - is a technique for extending the parts of your photo that are correctly exposed - there is a good explanation on the website. Basically, you take a number of incorrectly exposed photos, and the program works out what the good photo should have been. Pretty impressive results, and an even better price - Free!

Download the free software (MacOS X 10.4 or higher) at

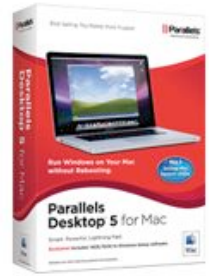
<http://www.ohanaware.com/hdrtist/>

You will also find examples, tutorials, movies and reviews.



We have heard of the new iMac, MacMini and MacBook lineup. The optional Core i7 and Core i5 options have started shipping - and guess what - initial test results suggest that they are 'faster'. (Further testing is required to confirm this, apparently.) Surprise, surprise.

Also newly available is Parallels Desktop 5 for Mac. This is one of the emulation products that enable you to run Windows at the same time as MacOS X on your Mac. In fact, they let you run pretty well any operating system on your Mac while also running MacOS X. So you could be running Leopard, and within Parallels you could start Windows XP in one 'virtual computer', Windows 7 in another 'virtual' computer, Linux in yet another, and in yet another virtual computer you could be testing Snow Leopard. And the desktop of each of these virtual computers is just another program window in Leopard. (No, I haven't managed all of these at once, but I have been pretty close.)



Anyway, version 5 was released recently, and I upgraded with only one minor hiccup - I had to reconfigure my virtual computer to a single CPU while doing the actual upgrade. The new release supports more CPUs in a virtual computer, has various minor tweaks (70 new features according to the developers), and does run noticeably faster. Great.

Speaking of hearing things - there still seems to be mutterings about an Apple Tablet - this has been going on so long that some sources are starting to compare it with the mythical Philosopher's Stone. This magical device was capable of transmuting lead into gold, and of granting everlasting life. Of course, no-one ever actually built a real working Philosopher's Stone. They just talked about it for decades and decades. Recognise the similarity, anyone?

SeniorNet Mac

Computer Training Lessons: Two-hour sessions, once a week for four weeks. Course notes are provided. Classes are small with a maximum of six students and two tutors per lesson.

Social Events: Held on the fourth Tuesday of the month.

Newsletter: Supplied every two months.

The **Learning Centre** is situated in the Cranmer Centre Poolhouse, which is accessed from Montreal Street at the Armagh Street corner.

Contact: If you would like to join SeniorNet Mac and are in the 55-plus age group, please contact Allan Rutherford at (03) 352-4950, or email:

ajmr@xtra.co.nz,

or else leave a message on the club's answerphone at (03) 365 2003.

Do you know anyone using a Mac in a business environment - say a company with their own support techies? Apress Publishing is releasing a book that covers the Administration of a Mac in an Enterprise environment - lots of very useful information here if you want to learn more about the computer and all the software.

Enterprise Mac Administrator's Guide, by Charles Edge, Zack Smith, and Beau Hunter provides detailed explanations of the technology required for large-scale Mac OS X deployments and shows how to integrate it with other operating systems and applications.

Apple provides a number of tools to help automate and guide IT toward managing a large number of Mac OS X computers. However, if you want to put together all of the pieces to tell a compelling story about how to run an IT department or a deployment of Macs, you need to compile information from a number of different sources. This book will provide explanations of the technology required.

Learn How To:

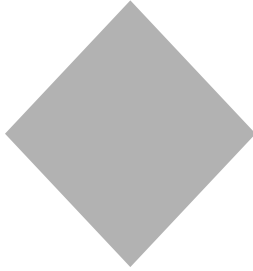
- Provide complete solutions for the large- and medium-scale integration of directory services, imaging, and security
- Integrate Macs and Mac OS X into mixed environments with confidence and no down time
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AUGC contacts

Website	http://www.appleusers.co.nz	
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	The AUGC Discussion List is for members who wish to discuss club matters.	
	The HELP list is open to all Mac users who wish to give or receive assistance.	
Membership	treasurer@appleusers.co.nz with printed Applebyte: \$45 per annum without printed Applebyte \$25 per annum (\$5 discount for early renewal)	

About the user group



Aims

The Apple User Group of Canterbury Incorporated (AUGC) is a non-profit organisation which exists for the purpose of exchanging ideas and expertise about the use of Apple computers, the Macintosh operating systems, and related hardware and software.

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Help: A full list of helpers and volunteers can be viewed in the Contacts section of our website.

Snail Mail: PO Box 31-053, Christchurch, New Zealand.

Website: <http://www.appleusers.co.nz>



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