

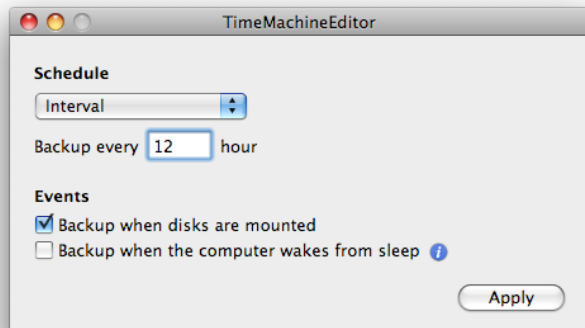
# TimeMachineEditor

*Peter Fitchett*

TimeMachine is the new backup software that is built into MacOS X 10.5 - Leopard. Very briefly, when you allocate disk space to it for backup, it will automatically keep track of any files that you change, and each hour it will make a backup of these changed files. And better yet, it makes this backup in such a way that you appear to have a full backup of your disk each hour. After these hour images are more than a day old, TimeMachine will consolidate them into a day-backup; and after a month, the day-backups are consolidated into weekly-backups. The result of all this is that TimeMachine will endeavour to maintain hourly backups for 1 day, then daily backups for a month, then weekly backups. The really great thing about TimeMachine is that you have the software and the backups happen automatically. How many of you had any backups, let alone regular backups, before TimeMachine?

Now given the great benefit that TimeMachine is providing, what do you think would appear in some vocal bloggers' musings - TimeMachine is flawed because it uses too much of your computer, and you can't control when the backups will occur. From my point of view, I realise that I can't control when my computer or hard disk will fail, and if it is going to happen, I would like it to be just after a backup has completed! And do you know how little of my computer resources I actually use?

Unfortunately, reason never stands in the way of progress, and there are soon utilities appearing to answer the public needs being promulgated in the press. TimeMachineEditor is one such utility that lets you change the default one-hour backup interval of TimeMachine. You are able to change the interval or decide to make daily, weekly and monthly backups. According to the authors, this is useful if you don't need to backup every hour and don't want the performance penalty. This is also especially useful if you manipulate lots of data within one hour as you would spend the whole day backing up. Unfortunately, the authors are not very forthcoming about when you don't need to make hourly backups (- presumably it is when your machine didn't crash in the following hour, so you would never need to use the backup).



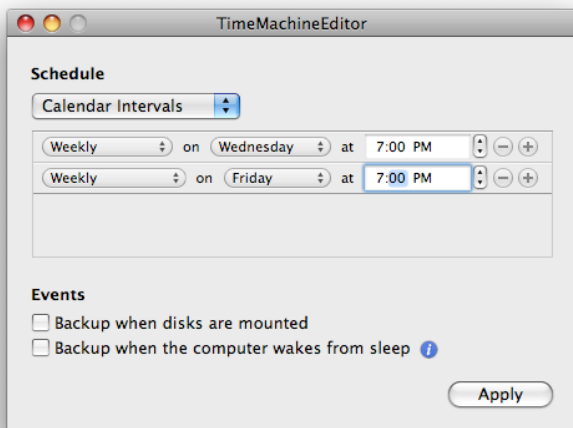
This utility is free software which you can download from:

<http://timesoftware.free.fr/timemachineeditor/>

the authors provide a warning that you use this at your own risk.

For myself, I am quite happy with the default behaviour of TimeMachine - it does a commendable job in making backups of my data when I may otherwise be too busy, or forget. I hope that all the resources TimeMachine uses are totally wasted, but I know that life isn't like that ... one day! And I just can't understand some people's desire to cripple what could be their life-saving machine for the sake of a couple of seconds.

Of course, different people see things from different points of view, so here is a different view of TimeMachine and TimeMachineEditor:



*Tony Mander*

I went to using TimeMachineEditor as an alternative to unmounting my backup disk for much of a day. As most of my work is writing or drawing I don't think a loss of a couple of hours work would be too serious if my HD crashed.

But I did find TimeMachine irritating in that it seemed to kick in just when I was doing something tricky, when it then made my computer stop what it was doing for a second or two (don't know why, but when it starts up it seems to grab all the resources, then once it's backing up I get the computer back again). It also meant I could delete emails that arrived during a day I had no reason to ever want to refer to again, and other temporary work files, knowing that they wouldn't take up backup space.

In the past I used to mirror my HD at the end of each day as my regular backup. Having TimeMachine now set to back up three times a day is sufficient for my needs, without the irritation of it happening when I least want it. The biggest drawback of TimeMachine for me is that I can't have the backup drive as a startup volume so I could still work on my Mac if the internal HD did die (which it did a couple of years ago when the HD circuit board failed).