

The Window MACNJ

MACNJ *Serving the Central New Jersey Macintosh Community since 1986* February 2013

Productivity Apps featured on February 9th

by Bill Barr, Program Chairman

Greetings fellow MACNJ members, friends and the general public. Our next two meetings will have programs sure to interest you ... and your friends! "How we use our Macs" is always interesting in a sort of "looking over the fence" manner, but there is also much you can learn. What is a good idea worth to you? That's what we're about.

The February meeting will feature our member Chod Lang presenting "Productivity Apps" that work for him.

In March, we will host Dave Marra, Sr. Systems Engineer for Apple and a great friend to MACNJ for many years. Come see Dave for the latest Apple news (though he reveals no secrets) plus an in depth review of Mountain Lion, the latest Apple operating system. Dave's dynamic presentations are always engaging.

Chod, as most of us, uses a few apps a lot and many apps a little bit each. Being self-employed, he has to be a bit of a one man band. Productivity is key! What works? What do you need to do? And, by the way, his business is NOT computing. Computing helps him promote his business, manage and build his business. So just how does a very skilled custom furniture designer, manufacturer and repair service

provider make use of his Macs? This sounds pretty interesting!

Now I can't get into all the apps he uses in this short intro. Let's just say his talents are very wide spread encompassing website design, desktop publishing, photography, quick ways to manage notes, banking and collections plus reminders - don't we all need reminders! His use of these apps involves both desktop and mobile devices. Some may be familiar to you - Google Calendar, Taking Care of Business, Square, SoHoNotes and more. Again, too many to list here.

This is a worthwhile investment of your time, I assure you. Our agenda includes time for Q&A - most anything you want to ask. And we have a (members only) 50/50 with always interesting items available - Apple related of course.

So put Saturday morning, 9-noon, the 9th of February on YOUR calendar. We meet at Voorhees High School just north of High Bridge, NJ and provide the finest beverages, donuts and bagels we can find. Friends and the public are welcome. While you're at it, put Dave Marra's presentation on the calendar for March 9th too. See you then.



"It's Time to Pay Your MACNJ Dues"

If you have not paid your **2013** dues, please bring your check for \$24 to Saturday's meeting.

If you'd prefer, you can mail your check to the address on the membership form of this newsletter..

Thank you in advance for your prompt payment!

CLEANUP THE VIEWFINDER

by Walter Chandoha



(A long time MACNJ member and professional photographer, Walter originally wrote this article for a garden-oriented magazine. The ideas expressed below are universal and would certainly apply to anyone interested in making better photos.)

Imagine a perennial border — misty — very early morning — the warm, weak sun providing light to die for — a multitude of flowers in perfect bloom — no wind to blur anything — the camera worked flawlessly. Wow, what a shot! Back in the days of film we couldn't wait for the processed film to come back from the lab so we could again experience the high we had when the exposure was made. . Now with digital and its immediacy a quick look at the screen verified that indeed the picture is sensational and we're anxious to transfer the image from the card into the computer to see it on our huge 27 inch screen. The image comes up and our heart pounds as we are again impressed with the photograph — truly the best garden picture ever made.

Uh-oh — while studying the image on the big screen we notice that on the big clump of flowers dominating the foreground a number of petals are shriveled and very noticeable. The flowers were waning rather than waxing. And a little further down in the middle of the border leaves were drooping on a recently transplanted perennial that needed some water. And way in the background a dead branch on a conspicuous shrub that was not noticeable in the heavy morning mist but was very evident when the fog lifted a bit when the exposure was made.

Does this sound familiar? Obviously in this hypothetical example rarely would all of these disturbing faults occur in one image, but even one of them would be enough to ruin an otherwise perfect picture. By *cleaning up the viewfinder* you can avoid getting these “when the film comes back from the lab” after shocks”, especially if the image was made on assignment abroad with no opportunity to reshoot.

Does *cleaning up the viewfinder* mean taking a piece of lens tissue and wiping the smudges off the viewfinder of your DSLR - or cleaning the screen of point-and-shoot digitals? It does not (Although it's a good idea to do it once in awhile). It means, as you look through the viewfinder, momentarily ignore the subject of the picture you're about to shoot and let your eye roam above and below the subject, in front of and behind it, to the left and the right. Do it once and do it again, and again. What are you looking for? Distractions. Visual noise or a better way to describe it —visual cacophony. Maybe it's a faded or wilted blossom, a bug slowly creeping into the picture area or across a petal or even missing petals, a cigarette butt, a crumpled Styrofoam coffee cup or a gum wrapper, a dead branch; a tree behind a gardener that appears to be growing out of his head; a garden hose snaking across a stone path. people in the background gawking at something. You're looking for anything that can spoil an otherwise perfect picture. if a fault is seen either eliminate it, change your vantage point or wait until the problem corrects itself — like people moving out of the picture area.

This subject “eyeballing” is best done with the camera on a tripod - especially if you're using a point and shoot digital. It's pretty hard to see the image while holding the camera at arms length let alone to look for flaws within the picture. Even with a hand-held DSLR with a conventional viewfinder finding flaws is difficult. With the camera on a tripod you can leisurely look for the picture spoilers A couple of big additional pluses comes with putting your camera on a tripod . The composition of your pix will improve. With the camera stabilized atop the tripod you can fine-tune the compo-

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sition from just good to perfect and you eliminate the possibility of picture blur due to camera movement.

Here's how I make my garden pix. I do a "walk around" my subject to find the best light and vantage point. Then hand-holding the camera and studying the subject through the viewfinder I compose the shot. Finally, the camera is attached to tripod, and if needed, composition is adjusted, **the viewfinder is cleaned up** and the exposure is made.

One final thought, it is far better to **cleanup the viewfinder** before making the exposure than to rely on Photoshop to erase the flaws.

Here are two pix I made in Mexico.

#1 The full Mexican band. Lots of unnecessary feet - a distracting overhead sign - a singer on the right - all add nothing and should go.

#2 By moving in closer and waiting till they are all singing and reducing the size of the sign the pic is better. Both these are full frame and uncropped.

And finally #3 is the cropped version of #2.



Why Do Airlines Require Us to Turn Off Our Gadgets?

by Steve McCabe

You could be forgiven for feeling a little confused if you've been trying to keep up lately with the various regulations and requirements surrounding electronic devices on airplanes, something I try to do even though I spend more time teaching physics than flying these days.

For a number of years, the rule has been quite simple: no personal electronic devices may be used below 10,000 feet, the altitude at which the captain will, typically, turn off the "fasten seat belts" warning, and, generally, a point in the flight by which the aircraft has left the busy airspace around a major airport

But recent news from American Airlines would appear to undermine this regulation. American announced that paper flight manuals and navigation charts were to be phased out on their Boeing 777 flights, with iPads taking their place. In late 2011, American's pilots began using iPads as electronic flight bags during some phases of flight; this new development sees iPads being used in the cockpit during the entire flight, from pushback to parking.

However, American Airlines passengers must still turn their electronic devices off before takeoff, and leave them off until 10,000 feet; the requirement remains for passengers to power down all electronic devices — cellphones and laptops, Kindles and iPods, even the very iPads that the captains of American Airlines' triple-sevens are using while they are telling their passengers not to use theirs — during departure or arrival.

So why does the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) continue to apply this rule? If, as American Airlines has demonstrated, iPads in the cockpit — inches away from the very avionics they could theoretically interfere with, if they were in the hands of passengers — represent no hazard to flight safety, why, then, can they not be used in the cabin? The answer simply seems to be that the FAA's regulations regarding personal electronics are a holdover from the Dark

Ages of Tech — Part 91 of the Federal Aviation Regulations (FARs) bans all personal electronics, with a handful of specific exceptions: portable voice recorders, hearing aids, heart pacemakers (jolly decent of them there) and electric shavers. An eclectic list, to be sure, but one that's entirely antiquated (portable voice recorders? really?) and long overdue for an overhaul. And, once the overhaul is complete, given that the rest of the world tends to follow the FAA's lead in this area, perhaps the de facto international standards will also relax.

The FARs do allow the operator of a flight — in the case of commercial flight, the airline — to allow the use of any devices they have determined to be safe, but the FAA has issued guidelines that ban electronics under 10,000 feet. And so the FAA's request for comments on the matter, issued on 28 August 2012, is long overdue.



Clearly these regulations are in need of review. Modern portable electronics are designed to conform to U.S. Federal Communications Commission (FCC) rules on electromagnetic emissions, and should be able to handle interference from other nearby devices — if my iPhone can handle some stray radio waves, then surely a hundred-million-dollar Boeing jet should be equal to the challenge.

The U.S. Transportation Security Administration (TSA) clearly does not regard portable electronics as a significant threat to flight safety. Even though passengers in U.S. airspace are prohibited from carrying more than a thimbleful of liquid through airport security gates, portable electronic devices — which, the FAA fears, could send a plane plummeting from the skies just because a passenger has started playing Angry Birds — are waved through. If these devices actually represented a safety hazard, would we be allowed to carry them on board?

Similarly, ask yourself this — if your iPhone really had the potential to down your plane, would your flight attendant be happy simply to ask you to turn it off,

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and then trust that you have complied? In reality, many passengers don't — a simple search on YouTube for takeoff and landing videos suggests that plenty of aircraft are landed on a daily basis with all manner of electronic devices running in the back.

We travelers assume that there is no evidence to suggest that portable electronic devices actually can cause accidents. If there were, then we would be prohibited from using our electronics at any phase of the flight, not merely during takeoff and landing. The FAA's own fact sheet [https://www.faa.gov/news/fact_sheets/news_story.cfm?newsId=6275] on the matter suggests that I have to turn my iPad off to avoid distracting the flight crew because they will be concentrating especially hard:

“At a lower altitude, any potential interference could be more of a safety hazard as the cockpit crew focuses on critical arrival and departure duties.”

The same fact sheet also points out that the FCC bans use of 800 MHz cellphones because of potential interference with ground facilities — not confirmed interference, and not with inflight electronics. But most modern electronic devices have some form of “flight mode” or, in the case of the iPhone, “airplane mode,” that disables all wireless transmissions while allowing use of all other functions.

Again, we should remember that this rule is, clearly, being flouted on a daily basis to no ill effect. The argument goes that a cellphone several miles up has direct line-of-sight access to a large number of cellphone towers, many more than it can directly communicate with while on the ground, and it can thus confuse the cell networks. By this logic, we should also, presumably, ban the use of cellphones in tall buildings, atop hills, or anywhere else where such a situation might occur. But we don't, for the same reason that the in-flight rule is so weakly enforced — clearly there is little actual impact, and no evidence of a safety-of-flight hazard. Besides, if this were an issue, wouldn't the FAA point the finger at the cell carriers, rather than claim it's a safety issue?

It's also worth bearing in mind that the requirement that iPods and iPhones and the like are turned



off until 10,000 feet has an interesting unintended consequence. When a plane passes this altitude, as many as a few hundred devices could all be turned on at the same time — hundreds of devices being powered up simultaneously will, presumably, result in a major surge of electromagnetic radiation, but electromagnetic interference has yet to

be implicated in a single crash. Indeed, the FAA itself has, albeit grudgingly, admitted that there is no evidence to suggest that inflight electronics have been responsible for accidents: the New York Times quotes an FAA spokesman as saying “There have never been any reported accidents from these kinds of devices on planes.”

So maybe the issue is not specifically electronic, but more broadly mechanical. When the “fasten seat belts” sign goes on during heavy turbulence, an iPad could, in theory, be thrown from a passenger's hand and become a lethal projectile. The laws of physics don't entirely agree with this argument, though — the kind of turbulence that is invoked in discussions such as this tends to be vertical, rather than horizontal, rendering iPads rather harmless. And if we're banning electronic devices on this basis, what about other heavy objects, such as books? I have little doubt that the banning of books on flights would lead to major passenger resentment — there would be riots in the aisles. And again, it's not like the FAA states this as a problem — the claim is always that the regulations exist to prevent electronic interference with avionics.

When I talked about this on Radio New Zealand's Nine To Noon program in December 2011, the topic generated more email from listeners than any other subject I have discussed on the show, with many comments coming from pilots who are concerned that, if there is currently a ban and there are no crashes, then best to leave well enough alone. But, speaking as a commercial pilot and a physics teacher, as well as an avid user of innumerable electronic devices over the years, I am strongly of the opinion that this is a rule that has outlived its usefulness (if it ever had any).

[Steve McCabe is a British-born Mac consultant, tech writer, and teacher who now, for reasons that have but the most tangential connection to technology, lives in New Zealand.]



Freshly Squeezed Reviews

by Frank Petrie

Product: **Labelist 7.07**

Author Chronos <<http://www.chronosnet.com>>

Price: \$39.99 single user; \$69.99 family license

Requirements: OS X 6, 7, or 8; Intel Core 2 Duo or better

Test Rig: 2009 MacBook Pro, 8B RAM, 240GB SSD

One of the things that I was looking forward to when I started computing was printing envelopes. (I had over 50 Christmas cards to send at the time. Cuts down on the hand cramps, you know.) Most software that I found for my aforementioned task was rudimentary at best. But I plodded along.

I also occasionally needed to print labels for items that I sold on eBay. The software I used was good, but the main thing that I required was to pick a single label on a partially used Avery sheet. I found an app called Labels and Addresses, which best suited my needs.

Recently, I was looking for software to review and I wondered what had happened to my label app. Well, low and behold, programmers had fed it a steady dose of steroids.

"*Labelist* is the fastest way to design and print professional labels, and more on your Mac. Its modern design eliminates the headaches typically associated with printing these items so you can get your work done faster."

The introduction video looks very promising. Let's empty a few ink cartridges.

THE JUICE

Labelist, a 64-bit app, includes everything you need to create labels, envelopes, and letterheads. It can handle one label or produce a mass mailing. *Labelist* also prints disc labels.

There are an infinite selection of ways to layout your text and media, all of which is scalable. So far as addressing goes, everything is tied into your Contacts, so all you need is to pick the fields that you want (such as first and last name, address, phone number, etc.), place them within the chosen field, start typing

the name and *Labelist* will dynamically fill in the rest of the information.

You can also create your own artwork for your labels, or choose from their downloadable package of artwork. Or choose from your photos within iPhoto and Aperture. You can add drop shadows and reflections.

THE PULP

For the past several years, I printed all of my envelopes and letterhead using Pages. Although the choice of designs was somewhat limited, you could still create a professional looking product.

On the other hand, *Labelist* is almost too much. The choices are endless. The first few times that you use it, you'll end up spending way too much time creating your envelope/label just because you want to try all of the various options. But, in this case, too many choices is welcome.

It comes with an enormous selection of label manufacturers and all of their various label sizes. *Labelist* can be set to work with specific printers and label printers. You can either let the software set up your printer automatically or DIY.

The integrated Layers pane makes the different layers that comprise your design always available in one place just as in Photoshop. All text is scalable, as is the artwork and your photographs. They have included every type of postal barcode imaginable. You can even add reflections where desired.

The free digital artwork totals 1.5GB, but it is not included in the software. So long as you have version 6 or greater, you can go to the download page and just select the pieces that you desire.

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It comes with a 97 page .pdf user guide for support. Support is also accessible online at their site.

THE RIND

Nada.

SUMMARY

Labelist is the answer to your mailing and shipping prayers. Selections of artwork of every style. Dynamic address filling. In fact, you can pick one contact

or dozens and *Labelist* will fill out all your labels for you, plus tell you how many sheets it requires. (Kind of overwhelming for me when my main impetus was simply to be able to print out a single Avery label on a half used sheet!)

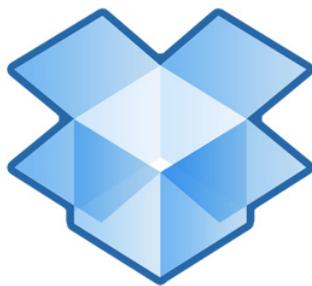
I guess I'll have to mail those holiday cards after all. Bah Humbug!

RATING: 10 out of 10

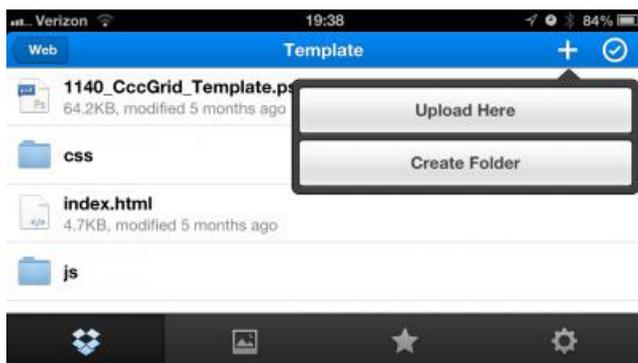
©2012 Frank Petrie; Frank writes for *ScencastsOnlineMonthly Mag* and *The Apple Daily Report*, plus is about to reintroduce his podcast, *YMP Now*, in a totally different format.

Dropbox for iOS Now More Photogenic

by Josh Centers



Dropbox [<https://www.dropbox.com/>], the freemium cloud storage and sync service, has released version 2.0 of its free Dropbox iOS app, featuring a fresh new design, easier photo browsing, and the capability to upload files to a specific folder. The redesigned app offers a new, minimalist icon and a streamlined interface.



The stand-out new feature is the Photos tab. In it, you can see all your photos stored in Dropbox and flick through them in full-screen mode, without having to dig through folders. If storage space on your iOS device is cramped, this feature could be a godsend, since it makes it easier than ever to keep at least a subset of your photo library in the cloud.



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Do You Need Mac Antivirus Software in 2013?

by Rich Mogull

It has been over four years since I wrote “Should Mac Users Run Antivirus Software?.” Although much has changed since then, my recommendations mostly haven’t. While Macs aren’t immune to malicious software (malware), and we even experienced one reasonably widespread incident in 2012, malware on Macs is still not nearly common enough to recommend antivirus software for everyone. And while antivirus tools are effective against certain known attacks, they often don’t provide the level of protection people expect.

More Malware, but Still Rare -- In April 2012, we experienced Flashback, the first real, widespread malware attack against Macs. By some accounts over 500,000 Macs were infected at one point, but there is no evidence that any infected Macs or Mac users were actually harmed in the attack. This quickly led to predictions in certain corners that the Apple “age of innocence” had come to an end, and Mac users would now face as many and as severe malware attacks as Windows users.



Since that fateful week we have seen not a single additional widespread attack, and only a handful of smaller pockets of infection similar to the pre-Flashback days. (Note that there were some attacks against specific targets, but antivirus is relatively ineffective at stopping these). Despite those predictions, Mac users haven’t seen any significant increases in malware, and it is still quite rare

Some of this is due to steps Apple took both before and in response to Flashback. Gatekeeper was designed to reduce the likelihood of a user being tricked into installing malware on their own computer — still the most common attack against Macs. Apple continues to harden the operating system itself, making it more difficult (but far from impossible) to exploit remotely. All apps in the Mac App Store must now implement sandboxing, which reduces the harm they can cause if they are compromised — although, embarrassingly, Apple has yet to sandbox its own apps.

And Apple significantly changed how Java and Adobe Flash, the software exploited by Flashback, are supported and enabled to further restrict their use as a vector for infection via a Web browser.

Plus, if reports are accurate, Flashback failed to net any significant profits for the attackers. For the most part, bad guys are in it for the money, and they drop unprofitable product lines like any other business. In fact, Apple’s security changes have, by their own admission, focused more on disrupting the economics of malware than trying to stop any single vector of attack.

This doesn’t mean there won’t be successful attacks against Macs, but all signs point to those attacks being limited — occasional one-off incidents rather than the constant maelstrom of endless attacks we have seen against Windows. The ecosystem — thanks to its size and Apple’s protections — simply can’t support ongoing waves of Mac malware. Even the latest versions of Windows don’t face the same malware issues as earlier efforts.

Some of these future incidents will be widespread, but they will also very likely be quickly discovered and contained. As for antivirus, the odds are against the tools playing a significant role in preventing these attacks due to their inherent limitations.

The Limits of Antivirus -- There are two main ways to detect malicious software: detect unusual activity, or recognize something in the software that marks it as malicious. Nearly all antivirus tools on the market rely mostly or exclusively on “signatures” for malware detection.

A signature is typically a string of text, often a hash value of a portion of a known piece of malware. Antivirus companies scour the Internet looking for malware samples. Once they find a malicious program, they create a signature based on the application’s code, then push this signature into the antivirus software on your computer when you update your virus definitions.

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Your antivirus software scans new files as they come into your computer, plus all files on your system periodically, looking for these signatures.

Security tools tend to avoid relying on behavioral analysis because it is very hard to know whether any particular action on a general purpose computer is 'bad.' For any malicious action you can think of, odds are there is a legitimate reason for that activity in a different context. It is also difficult to hook into an operating system at the right level to capture this activity. And unless you detect and manage to prevent the act of infection (which may look exactly like normal software installation), the malware gets to run on your system before the tool gets an opportunity to detect bad activity. Behavioral analysis is thus fairly limited, and more effective in controlled environments such as enterprise servers, than on personal computers.

The advantage of signature scanning is that if there is a match, and the signature is well-crafted, you have positively identified a known piece of malicious software. You can also scan software before it ends up on your system or runs in the first place. But there are two very large downsides.

The most obvious limitation is that to create a signature, the antivirus vendor needs a sample of the malware. They can build signatures only for what they find, meaning new malware always has some running time before the first sample is collected, turned into a signature, and pushed down to client computers. Not every malicious program is created from scratch, so theoretically an antivirus tool should have a reasonable chance of picking up new variants. But the bad guys know this and buy the major antivirus programs to test their variants before release. Or, if they are on a budget, they run the samples through sites like VirusTotal [<https://www.virustotal.com/>] which run samples through dozens of antivirus tools.

The second major issue is that malware is a popular market, with massive numbers of new variants appearing daily. Some antivirus vendors report on the order of 65,000 new malware variations every day! That is 65,000 signatures they need to create, test, and release to their customers on a daily basis (now you know why it's important to update virus definitions). To-



gether these two factors make it is nearly impossible for antivirus vendors to keep up. Their tools do filter a lot of malware, but never get close catching to everything bad, and there is always a window where new malware spreads before being detected.

There is far less malware for Macs, but even there we see limited effectiveness across tools. For example, in a recent test by Thomas Reed [<http://www.reedcorner.net/mac-av-detection-rates/>], even the best Mac malware tool detected only 90 percent of the known malware samples used. This is a poor showing — we only see dozens of Mac malware variants per year, compared to 65,000 per day for Windows.

Despite Flashback being used as a call to arms to encourage people to adopt antivirus tools, most of those tools failed to detect Flashback for weeks — until it was highly publicized.

There are additional technical issues, as well. The more analysis and detection you want, the deeper antivirus tools need to hook into your system, and the greater their potential for failure. Apple doesn't help much, as they are much more concerned with preventing malware from taking over the operating system than with helping antivirus vendors — who, after all, need to monitor all access to files and exercise control over launching applications and opening files, which are just the kinds of things malware authors want to do, too. There are also major performance impacts, and nearly every antivirus vendor has issued a bad signature at some point, causing serious issues for customers — typically false claims that a critical system or application file is a virus, which of course causes problems when the software attempts to prevent the (critical, legitimate) file from 'compromising' the system.

Considering the current state of Mac security and the malware environment today, I find it hard to recommend Mac antivirus tools for most consumers. OS X's built-in security and basic malware protection currently stops most or even all existing Mac malware, and new malware variants don't appear often enough for antivirus tools to provide a significant benefit by

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protecting personal Macs. Mac infections are so rare, and antivirus tools are so limited, that they simply don't offer enough value for most Mac users — even the free ones.

When to Use Mac Antivirus -- Those limitations aside, there are situations where antivirus software is still useful.

The first, and best, is when you don't use it on the desktop. Signature-based filtering in email stops known viruses before they ever hit your desktop. I highly recommend using an email service such as Gmail, iCloud, Yahoo, or Hotmail that filters all email for viruses before it is downloaded your computer. For businesses I also recommend Web filtering, but that isn't easily available to regular consumers.

The next group who might benefit from antivirus is family members running older versions of OS X. Nearly all the best anti-malware security features of OS X are available with 10.8 Mountain Lion, with 10.7 Lion being second-best. We know TidBITS readers largely stay up to date with Mac and iOS operating system updates, but if family members don't, then antivirus may be warranted.

Corporate users may also need antivirus software to comply with corporate policies or other requirements.

If you consistently engage in high-risk behavior, then antivirus software may be useful. For example, if you turn off Gatekeeper and routinely download ille-

gal or inappropriate software, antivirus software might prevent infection. Maybe. Of course malware appears on mainstream sites as well, but if you stick with Gatekeeper and known developers your chance of infection is almost nil.

Lastly, you might simply want antivirus for peace of mind — understanding that antivirus tools are far from infallible, and their users do still get infected, especially if you ignore the necessary patches and definition updates.

If Mac antivirus tools offered 100 percent effectiveness — or even 99 percent — I might take a different position. If we ever see massive volumes of malware, as happens in the Windows world, I might change my recommendations. But at this point, there are so few Mac malware infections, and antivirus tools are so limited, that for most users of current versions of OS X, antivirus doesn't make sense.

During the Flashback infection there were accusations that Mac users were too smug, or too ill-informed, to install antivirus software. But the reality is that antivirus tools offer only limited protection, and relying on antivirus for your security is as naive as believing Macs are invulnerable.

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MACNJ User Group members in good standing are encouraged to take advantage of the following savings and benefits

Peachpit Press

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O'Reilly & Associates

Don't forget, you can receive 35% off any O'Reilly, No Starch, Paraglyph, Pragmatic Bookshelf, SitePoint, or Syngress book you purchase directly from O'Reilly. Just use code DSUG when ordering online or by phone 800-998-9938. ordering at <http://www.oreilly.com>.

Vendor Offers For MUGs

The MUG Center, the Resource Site Macintosh for User Groups, offers a number of software, shareware, and hardware specials for User Group members. Visit <http://www.mugcenter.com/vendornews/vendornews.html>.

Think Like a Publisher

by Adam C. Engst

The personal computer — and the dynamic duo of the Macintosh and LaserWriter in particular — revolutionized print publishing by making it easy to whip up a brochure, flyer, or newsletter. The Internet extended our individual publishing capabilities even further, enabling anyone to send bulk email, start a blog, or set up a Web site. Heck, the combination of the Mac and the Internet is why TidBITS exists. Without them, could a pair of 22-year-olds have started a publication that would reach tens of thousands of readers on a nearly non-existent budget?

Much has been said about how desktop publishing resulted in near-criminal uses of ransom note fonts, and similar criticisms have been heaped on amateurs putting up truly horrific Web sites. But thanks to clever programs and templates, it's now easy for anyone to produce something that's passably attractive. However, that doesn't mean that these publications — for that's what they are — succeed at their primary goal of conveying information.

The elimination of visual design as a significant hurdle has made it clear that most amateurs also lack the overall mindset of a professional publisher, which results in publications that fail to include essential details, are continually out of date, can't easily be found online, and so on. A common refrain at the start of this school year among our middle-school parent friends has been how impossible it is to find essential details about our children's classes, clubs, and sports teams. For instance, at the introductory dinner for cross-country parents, we were warned to ignore the race schedule on the official school Web site on the grounds that it was completely incorrect. Then we were handed a paper version that had discrepancies between the dates and days of the week, which is an easy mistake to make when updating schedules. I'll continue to use Tristan's cross-country team as an example throughout this article, since the many "publications" that are associated with it make for great (and generally successful) real-world examples of the challenges you'll likely face.

Keep in mind that I define "publication" extremely loosely. If you're sending email to your book club about the next meeting, that's a publication, as is your class blog if you're a teacher, or the signup form you were asked to make for the community center's swimming lessons. Any time you create information for consumption by others, particularly people you don't know personally, you're acting like a publisher, and to communicate successfully, you need to think like a professional publisher. Don't worry, it's not hard.

Put Yourself in Your Audience's Shoes -- The most important part of this task is to put yourself in your audience's shoes and make sure your publication meets the needs that you would have if you were the reader. This can make for more work up front, as you imagine the questions that you might receive and attempt to head them off at the pass, but it's far more efficient to provide complete and accurate information to start than to answer individual questions (or be forced to issue corrections or addenda) later. I mention this up front because it's something you should consider at all times, starting with the next step: distribution.

With regard to Tristan's cross-country team, the audience is almost entirely parents of the runners, and they're most concerned about logistics — times and locations of practices and meets — and other parent-related details such as buying team uniforms, taking and viewing photos of the races, volunteering at home meets, providing food for the runners, and so on. Since much of the organization is handled by parents who know what their concerns are, the cross-country team does a fairly good job of this. But Tristan has also been involved in organizations that are managed by an adult who lacks the parental mindset, and those organizations have sometimes proven tremendously frustrating when assumptions are made about what the parents know or are expected to do, even though we've never been told.

Use Multiple Distribution Methods -- Here's where you really need to act like a professional pub-

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lisher. Remember, publishers make money only if people can read, hear, or view their content, so publishers put a great deal of thought into how content will be distributed to the widest possible audience. In many cases, your audience will be bounded — all the parents of cross-country runners, all people in your book club, anyone in the area who might join the community center, etc. — but you still want to reach as many of them as you can

Do not fall into the “Field of Dreams” trap: if you build it (a Web site, a mailing list, a Facebook group, whatever), they won't necessarily come. You need to seek out your audience, and make sure you're providing the information they need in the form they want. That may be a Web site, mailing list, public Google calendar, Twitter feed, Facebook group, text messages, traditional paper handouts or flyers, and even an old-fashioned phone tree or other form of word-of-mouth. It's absolutely essential to use multiple approaches — what works for one person may not work for the next. Obviously, there's a point of diminishing returns here, but it's best to have at least a basic Web site for details that don't change often and a mailing list for communication, since almost everyone has Internet access and an email address at this point. (In our experience, Facebook and Twitter aren't nearly as universal as email outside the tech industry.) But I said almost everyone, and until you're certain that you're reaching everyone you need to, paper and word-of-mouth can play an important role.

If you do choose email as a distribution method, unless you want to send a document that needs to be printed out or one with a strong visual component, just type (or paste) your information directly into the email message. That way, your recipients don't have to download the attached document, which may not always be possible or within their capabilities.

In the case of the cross-country team, almost all information comes via a parent-run mailing list, and everyone is encouraged to join via a handout that goes home with kids the first week of practice. Plus, one of the coaches maintains a blog with a schedule on it; the link to the blog was also on that paper handout, making that handout essential. In an ideal world, it would be possible to subscribe to the blog posts

via email; many blogs offer such functionality, and it enables people to stay up to date without visiting the blog regularly or using an RSS reader. (RSS isn't used much outside the tech industry.)

The problem is that because the main school district Web site has out-of-date information, it's extremely difficult for a parent of a student who wants to run cross-country for the first time to find out what's necessary in terms of medical forms, when and where practice will be held, and so on. Because of that, runners trickle in for the first week or two, and the latecomers sometimes miss getting the paper handout that explains the importance of the parent mailing list (or the kids lose it on the way home). When that happens, their parents are often left with information being conveyed only via a 7th grader's often faulty memory; getting accurate details is entirely hit-and-miss. It's worth putting some effort into making sure people don't fall through such cracks.

The Five Ws -- Once you've gotten into the heads of your audience and set up your distribution methods, it's time to take a leaf from the notebooks of reporters, who are trained to ensure that every story covers the five Ws: who, what, when, where, and why, plus sometimes how. You may need to pivot the five Ws slightly, if you're not reporting on a past event so much as providing details about the future. Also, consider the fact that once you publish any details, changing them later is not helpful, so you want to get it right on the first try. For example, if you send email saying that parents should drop their kids off at 6:00 AM at the airport, changing that at the last minute to 5:40 AM at the school is going to cause consternation. Let's look at each W in turn:

- **Who:** If you have a bounded audience, who anything is aimed at may be quite obvious: the people on your mailing list, for instance. But if not, be very clear. For instance, the cross-country mailing list serves all the teams, but sometimes the varsity goes to a different meet than the JV and modified (7th and 8th grade) teams. You don't want anyone asking, “Why am I receiving this?”

- **What:** For everything there is a purpose, and you must tell your readers what that purpose is. If it's

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an application form, be sure to say for what. If you're sharing details about an upcoming event, be sure that's obvious. Again, you want to head off that "Why am I receiving this?" question.

- **When:** Times are key, particularly with meetings. For local events, it's best to give both an arrival time and a start time — even a 15-minute window will prevent people from walking in on an orchestra recital in progress, for instance. If you're organizing an event online, be sure to state the time zone and link to the Every Time Zone [<http://everytimezone.com/>] Web site, which lets people see how your time converts to theirs. I'm a big fan of shared Google and iCloud calendars (and I just started one for TidBITS, but it's likely that not everyone in your audience will be able to subscribe to such a calendar.

- **Where:** Obviously, this applies more to real-world events than anything else, but if there is a real-world component to your information, provide directions in at least two ways: a link to an online map that people can refer to and print out if need be, and a normal postal address for entering into a GPS. I've even created saved locations in Google Maps [5] for things like where my running club's carpool meets so I can

send someone the link rather than assume they can locate the southwest corner of the Vet School parking lot.

- **Why:** As with audience, the reason why you're communicating some fact may be obvious, but if not, be painfully clear. For instance, on that paper handout for the cross-country parents, it was essential to convey the importance of joining the mailing list, plus provide the meet schedule. Again, try to answer that "Why am I receiving this?" question up front.

- **How:** This last item is always a bit of an outlier, not the least because it doesn't start with W, but it's often tremendously important for people trying to think like publishers. That's because it's common to want people to take some sort of an action, but you cannot assume they know how to do this, and it's imperative that you provide instructions. For instance, for the cross-country team, I set up a photo-sharing site called Yogile [<http://www.yogile.com/>] for the parents to upload photos they take at the meets for all to see. It's not hard to use, especially for simple uploading, but the first time I wrote about it on the mailing list, I explained carefully how to use it. The second and

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USE THE MACNJ FORUM!

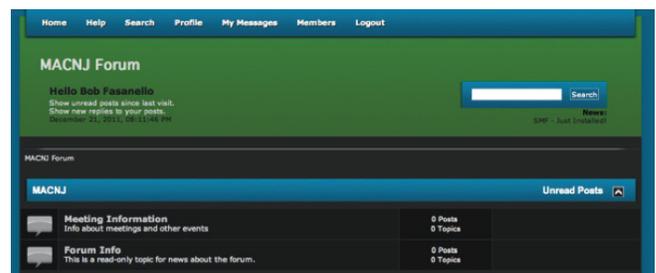
Our forum, using new software to keep out spambots, is only as good as we make it. All members are encouraged to use the forum. It can be of great help in answering questions, providing news, etc., between meetings.

To Register:

There are two links to the forum on the MACNJ home page; or go to macnj.org/forum/ and you are there.

Click on "register" (top right). You'll have to agree to conditions.

Enter a user name which can be used to identify you as member of MACNJ—not strange encrypted names such as xyz123— or you won't be approved. Check the member list to see what names have been accepted.



Enter a valid email address.

Enter and confirm your password. Then remember it! **You can also stay logged-in**, if desired. Look under Profile Information and **enter your location** (City, State). This is mandatory. Enter any other profile information which you choose to use. Click "submit" button, bottom of page. You will be notified by email that you are registered as a MACNJ Forum member. Most questions about the forum are answered in the FAQ Section.

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third times I posted to the list with blank albums into which people could upload, I included abbreviated instructions. And while I don't do even that any more, I copy and paste my message each time, providing updated URLs and email addresses, so the other parents don't have to parse the message each time to figure out what to do. A perhaps more typical example is a form that must be returned. Make sure it's obvious where the form should be returned to, and when it's due. If possible, offer more than one return method — scanned in email, fax, regular mail, and so on.

Fact Check Everything -- You're going to hate this because it's work, but you need to fact check everything. I spend most of my day on Mondays going over the articles in the TidBITS issue with a fine-toothed comb, and while I may not be perfect, I catch a lot of tiny mistakes in those edit passes. Most are so small that few readers would even notice, but every now and then I catch a whopper that slipped past previous edit passes.

You must do the same thing. If there's a date in whatever you're sending out, make sure it's right, and make sure the day matches the date. If there's a location, make sure you've got the right one and that your information is up to date. (Last year, we were told to pick the kids up at practice at "the big rocks" by the track; no one had checked, so no one realized the rocks had been removed over the summer. A Google Maps pin would have been helpful.)

The most important things to fact check are any instructions you provide, because if you get the instructions wrong, or if they are confusing, you'll be helping everyone work through problems individually.

Be Consistent -- Ever notice how the morning paper comes out every morning? Or how TidBITS looks the same each week? That's because professional publishers know that people are creatures of habit, and consistency helps people pay attention. There are two main ways you can be consistent:

Publish on a regular schedule. I try to send the email with new blank photo albums to the cross-country mailing list a few days before each meet, and I never send email about multiple meets at once, since that could cause confusion. Similarly, the coach's blog is updated every week, so you know if you check it on a Monday, that week's schedule will be there.

Stick to the same format each time. Figure out what information you need to convey, and make sure you're doing it in the same way each time. That way your audience won't have to think as hard about the structure of what you're conveying and can focus on the relevant facts.

Making sure you're reaching everyone often requires communicating in a different way — send email to make sure everyone knows about the Web site, calling people to make sure they know about the mailing list, and so on.

Get Help and Plan for Succession. Lastly, it's always best to create systems rather than do everything as a one-off. This is another secret of professional publishers: their goal is to build publishing machines that can spit out content from any number of sources. The more you build a machine, even if it's just a set of instructions for someone else to follow, the more you can ensure that your publication will continue beyond that point when you can handle it all yourself. That point might come because it's too much work for one person or because you don't want to coordinate your group forever or your kid graduates from a school or leaves a team.

It's important to keep the technical capabilities of those who might contribute content or take over from you in mind. One problem the school district Web site has is that it relies on Joomla [<http://www.joomla.org/>], a common content-management system. Unfortunately, whether it's due to problems with the old version of Joomla that's in use, or setup mistakes that were made years ago and never addressed due to updates not being installed, the site is so hard to use that many teachers and coaches and administrators either can't or won't use it, thus ensuring that the information it contains is incomplete and out-of-date.

In the end, publishing isn't rocket science, it's just a matter of thinking like your audience, paying attention to details, and being consistent. Do that, and whatever you publish will convey its information successfully.

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MACNJ Meeting Notes

January 12, 2013

by Hugh Murphy, Jr.

Lee Roth described his use of his iPad and laptop. President Davis stated that Graham Curtis has retired as Treasurer and Dave is now serving as interim Treasurer. John Almeida is moving to Maine and can no longer work on the newsletter. Dave is looking for volunteers for Treasurer and newsletter layout. He discussed the bank account and its activity. There is about \$4500 in the bank account which charges service fees. Lee Roth will look for another bank that doesn't charge fees.

Chod Lang suggested that the Club should buy an iPad because of the emphasis Apple is placing on iOS. Because of the sparse attendance at the meeting, it was suggested that the purchase be tabled until the general membership is informed and concurs with the idea.

The Club's current laptop cannot be upgraded to Mountain Lion, but the computers of members who do have this OS installed may be used for presentations when necessary.

There was some discussion of the costs of coffee provided by Voorhees High School. Most concurred they would like to have coffee provided. Bill Barr brought up the subject of changing our meeting place. Doris Kiziah suggested the Hunterdon Library, but it cannot be counted on to be available every month. Chod Lang suggested the Rail Restaurant in Whitehouse Station, which would have members buy their own coffee and be available for lunch after the meeting.

Dave Marra, Apple Senior Systems Engineer, will make his annual presentation at the meeting on March 9, 2013. He provided a list of 8 topics for his presentation - 1. New iPad. 2. iBooks Textbooks for iPad. 3. Apple and Accessibility (hearing and sight impaired). 4. Reinventing Photography & Music with iPad. 5. Classrooms Rock - Garage Band on iPad. 6. Introducing Mountain Lion, iOS 6 & iCloud. 7. iLife for Mac & iPad. 8. iWork for Mac & iPad. The preference

of the group was for topics 1, 6, 7, and 8 with emphasis on 6.

The meeting was opened to discussion of various topics. Chod Lang stated that when he turns on iTunes he gets an Allow message; Jim Trier suggested replying No unless it is for sharing. Chod mentioned his extending the range of his wi-fi. Walter Chandoha was not viewing his images as icons; Dave suggested going to View options to change the way images were presented. Lee Roth presented questions about publishing on the Web. Jim Trier suggested Hype in the App Store. Chod Lang suggested Freeway Express & Pro; Mac Highway offers free web hosting for 6 months.

Lee Roth thinks MACNJ should be offering instruction in Mac usage and use the Chamber of Commerce to reach out to new members and inform the public about Dave Marra and his iPad presentation.

Jim Trier, our resident iPad expert, used his iPad to present Evernote & Cloud Services for Productivity. The "Cloud" is a distributive networking & storage center in North Carolina. Evernote (Version 5) is Cloud based, simple, and works on all platforms. From 2008-2012 it has acquired 45 million users.

Visit www.evernote.com to see tutorials about the application and download it. Jim showed some of its uses such as recipes, scrapbooks, collaborative databases, Web Clips (screen shots of web pages), voice memos, etc. Each note may be up to 50 megabytes with 2 gigabytes free capacity. Search options include text, TAGS (keywords), notebook, and web access with password. It is also possible to send notes by email.

Here is a link to a survey of Evernote users and why they use it.

<http://lifelifehacker.com/5964285/whats-all-the-fuss-about-evernote-why-do-people-use-it>

MACNJ Member Directory

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 David L. Davis, Acting Treasurer
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About the Member List

Every effort is made to keep the member directory current. If your name has disappeared from the list, you may be delinquent in your dues. Send all address updates, changes and corrections to President David Davis.

Thank you.




Apple User Groups

MACNJ Meeting Information

Check the latest meeting information on the MACNJ website at www.macnj.org



MACNJ's general monthly meetings are usually held on the second Saturday of each month at Voorhees High School, in High Bridge, New Jersey, from 9 AM to noon. Visitors are welcome.

From the Morristown area

Go west on State Route 24 to County Route 513. Go southwest on 513 for 4.9 miles through Califon. Continue on 513.

Voorhees High School will be on the left at 256 Route 513, across from Voorhees State Park.

From the Somerville area

Go north on US Route 202 until it intersects with interstate 287. Take I-287 northwest for 4.2 miles to I-78 west. Follow I-78 west for 13 miles to Route 31 north (this is the Clinton/Washington exit.) Follow Route 31 north 2.1 miles to a traffic light where there will be a sign for High Bridge. Turn right onto County Route 513. Follow 513 north for two miles into the town of High Bridge. Voorhees High School is two miles further north at 256 Route 513, on the right, across from Voorhees State Park.

From points west

Go east on I-78 to exit 15 (Clinton/Washington exit for Route 31 north) Follow 31 north 2.1 miles to a traffic light with a sign for High Bridge. Turn right onto County Route 513 North. Follow 513 for two miles into the town of High Bridge. Voorhees High School is two miles further at 256 Route 513, on the right, across from Voorhees State Park.

From the Flemington area

Take Route 31 north past Clinton to a traffic light with a sign for High Bridge. Turn right onto County Route 513 north. Follow 513 for two miles into the town of High Bridge. Voorhees High School is two miles further at 256 Route 513, on the right, across from Voorhees State Park.

Parking and Entrances

Parking is plentiful and free. Park in the main parking lot of the school, enter the main entrance by the flag pole, and follow the signs for the MACNJ meeting room in the choir room on the first floor.



Photo by Bill Barr



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MACNJ Membership

Annual dues are \$24, due each January. Members joining during the year pay \$2 per month for the months remaining in the current year. Families may join for \$35. Please make all checks payable to "MACNJ". Checks can be given to President David L. Davis at the monthly meetings, or mailed to:

MACNJ Membership
David L. Davis
242 Cherryville Road
Flemington, NJ 08822

Fill out this form and return it with your payment.

MACNJ Membership Form

Check one: Membership Renewal New Member

Month membership begins

amount enclosed (\$2 per month, \$24 for the entire year/\$35 per family)

Name (if a family membership, please list all member names)

Street address (if this is a renewal, please indicate if any of your address information has changed.

city

state

zip code

Home telephone number

mobile phone number

e-mail address

What I do with my Macintosh (favorite Apps, creative work, etc) Be as descriptive as possible!
