

SSMUG NEWSLETTER

August 2008

Meeting Notice

All meetings, June through November, will be at the Grande Prairie Library at 3479 W 183rd St., Hazel Crest. The December meeting will be held at the Homewood Public Library.

REQUEST

What do you want to see in the newsletter? I'm trying to gather information and clippings for you and I need to know what you want to know about. My email is editor@ssmug.org.

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APPLE SECOND QUARTER SALES

U.S. PC shipments in Q2 2008:

- No. 1: Dell
- No. 2: HP
- No. 3: Apple**
- No. 4: Acer
- No. 5: Toshiba

Apple 2007-2008 Growth: **38.1%**
Next highest: Dell, 11.9%
HP: 5.6%
Toshiba: 2.8%
Acer: -20.8%

<http://ct.zdnet.com/>

More second quarter results

In financial results for its fiscal 2008 third quarter, Apple reported its best June quarter for both revenue and earnings in Apple's history, posting revenue of \$7.46 billion and net quarterly profit of \$1.07 billion, or \$1.19 per diluted share. It also set a new record for Mac sales, shipping 2,496,000 Macs during the quarter,

representing 41 percent unit growth and 43 percent revenue growth over the year-ago quarter.

Apple

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INTERESTING LINKS

The Live Journal item, is a list of directions on how to send a text message from your computer to a cell phone. Osxlist is a Mac discussion site.

www.ifixit.com/.webloc

<http://osxlist.com/.webloc>

<http://www.livejournal.c#6CD82B>

<http://osxhelp.com/.webloc>

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MAC BOOKS (The paper kind) (Taken from an Advertisement)

Third edition of "Take Control of Mac OS X Backups" helps you go beyond turning on Time Machine or copying a few files to CD. You'll find an at-a-glance comparison of different backup strategies (low-cost, easy, safest), along with extra advice for backing up digital photos and massive video projects.

<http://www.takecontrolbooks.com/backup-macosx.html?14@@!pt=TRK-0014-TCMUG&cp=CPN31208MUG>

Version 1.1 of "Take Control of Easy Backups in Leopard" teaches you the fastest and easiest way to create a complete Leopard backup system - including archives, an all-important bootable duplicate, and an offsite backup - from which you can restore your data after an accident or disaster. Helps you identify

the backup hardware that best matches your needs and budget (including a look at Time Capsule - Apple's new backup appliance), and provides instructions for using Time Machine as well as alternatives for eight cases where Time Machine won't provide the backups you need.

<http://www.takecontrolbooks.com/leopard-easy-backup.html?14@@!pt=TRK-0057-TCMUG&cp=CPN31208MUG>

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SOFTWARE REVIEW

Viewing and managing video these days is no easy chore. it seems as though every device that plays video wants its own unique video format. If you want to watch a video on a TV, an iPod, iPhone, post it to a website or send it via email, you have to convert it to the correct format, a process known as transcoding.

Popcorn from Roxio is a one stop shop for transcoding video files and creating DVDs. It can read from a variety of video sources ranging from .mp4 and .mov files on your hard disk to movies on a DVD.

Unfortunately unfortunately due to copyright restrictions, the one source it cannot directly read from is copy protected commercial DVDs. Non copy protected DVD's such as those made with iDVD will work just fine however. Popcorn also provides optional software that allows transfer from TivoToGo enabled digital video recorders to your Macintosh.

Installation of the software doesn't get easier. It's a simple matter of dragging the application from the CD-ROM to the Applications folder. The setup assistant which runs on first launch handles the job of registration and installing the optional TivoToGo software.

After completing the setup, Popcorn displays it's main (and only) window. The window is divided into two parts. The left side is for choosing the project type you want and the right side displays the video content for that project. Unfortunately, it required a trip to the user manual to

figure this out as the user interface is very confusing. Even with the user manual, it still took a bit of head scratching (and some trips to Google) to figure out what to do as the manual is out of date with respect to the software. It seems as though Roxio's software is being updated but its documentation is not. In addition, it would have been nice if in addition to the pdf formatted user manual, Roxio had provided a help file to integrate with Apple's help system. As it was, there was much trial and error to figure out how to get things done.

Once I did figure out what needed to be done, Popcorn worked as expected. For my test project, I made a DVD out of 4 video files I had previously converted for viewing on an iPod. The videos were of various length but altogether it came to nearly 4 hours in length. Setting up the DVD configuration again took some time due to the poor user interface and missing manual information. In particular, a feature for setting up the image for a DVD menu button is hidden behind a double click action. I stumbled across it by accident when double clicking a selected video. I wasn't able to find any menu option or button on the main window for this feature and there's no mention of it in the manual. Once it was all set up however, the transcoding and burning of the DVD went without a hitch. Be aware that video transcoding is a slow, very CPU intensive process. In my case, it took over 12 hours to transcode and burn the nearly 4 hours of video on a 1.67GHz PowerPC. Modern hardware will be much faster but don't expect it to be instantaneous. To Roxio's credit, they allow pausing of the process to free up the CPU for other things and then allow you to resume later.

All in all, Popcorn does what it is intended to do. Unfortunately, due to the confusing user interface and poor documentation, I can't say it does it well. Popcorn is available for a suggested retail price of \$49.99. You can purchase it directly from Roxio's website at <http://www.roxio.com>.

Ken Konecki

NEW SOFTWARE

www.apple.com
www.versiontracker.com
www.macdownload.com

SOFTWARE SUGGESTIONS FROM APPLE

Silver Efix

7/10/2008

(Demo)

Create professional quality black and white images from your color digital photographs,

Download 10MB

Hazel 2.2

7/09/2008

(Demo)

Your personal housekeeper, organizing and cleaning folders based on rules you define.

Download 1.5MB

SugarSync

7/08/2008

(Demo)

The world's simplest online backup with remote access, multi computer synchronization

Download 19MB

REALbasic

7/08/2008

(Demo)

Object-oriented BASIC programming language.

Download 109MB

Séquence

7/03/2008

(Demo)

Simple way to capture and save an image or a movie of your screen.

MacGourmet

7/03/2008

(Demo)

Create and share recipes. Make notes about wines; plan meals around nutritional values.

Language Translator

Translates any text between different 22 different languages using Google's language translation service. It can even detect the source language.

Screensaver X-Galaxy 1.1

A perfect companion for the Leopard stylish nebula, this screen saver is the animated, full 3D version of the same concept, the effect achieved is truly fantastic and hypnotic.

Stitches 1.0

07/02/2008 | Demo

A professional level cross-stitching and charting application. It allows anyone to create and design their own cross-stitch charts, either from scratch or by importing photos, drawings and clipart. With a focus on ease-of-use, Stitches offers powerful selection and paint... Read more.

Download 3.5MB

Slideshow Magic 5.0.3

Whether you are a home user looking to make a photo album to share with family and friends, or a business professional looking to make a multimedia production, Slideshow Magic is right for you. Our presentation software allows users to save their slideshow as a video in any QuickTime compatible format. Easily add an audio track to the entire slideshow, or add smaller audio clips for each segment. Include transitions with varying durations between slides, and even insert customizable titles! Toss out your old slide projector and give your old home photos that modern appeal! One of the most powerful features of Slideshow magic is its universality.

HoudahGeo 1.4.11

A one-stop geocoding application for the Mac. With HoudahGeo you may "pin" photos to the locations where they were taken. The thus created information may be exported to EXIF tags as well as to Google Earth KML files. Such a file allows for browsing your photos within Google Earth. - You don't need a digital camera

with a built-in GPS - You don't need a GPS device Don't miss out on these cool features: - Automatic geocoding from a GPX or NMEA (Sony) track logs - GPX download from Garmin, Wintec and Magellan GPS devices - Manual geocoding from GPX way points - Manual geocoding using Google Earth or Google Maps - Reverse geocoding - EXIF/XMP image file tagging - Google Earth export - Flickr upload.

Adobe Reader 9.0

Enables business professionals and home users to reliably share information using intelligent PDF files. With Adobe Reader, you can easily view, print, and search PDF files using a variety of platforms and devices.

Blue Crab 4.9.7

A very versatile program that you can use to copy the contents of a website to your computer, in whole or part. Applications of this functionality include: - Conduct fast offline browsing without an Internet connection. - Create snapshots of websites for historical archiving. - Collect specific types of resources such as images, MP3s or PDFs. - Search current content more thoroughly than a search engine right on your own computer. - Check a site for broken links, or generate HTML site maps. Blue Crab provides the option to receive email notifications of a download in progress, and can display each page encountered during a download in its own web window or your default web browser. - Blue Crab can also be used to batch download URLs and create full page images of URLs in various formats (JPEG, TIFF, PNG, etc.). Blue Crab is gentle on the server it processes because it grabs only one resource at a time. Moreover Blue Crab can be configured to moderate the rate of grabbing even further.

Web Site Maestro 6.5.2

Speeds up your site by optimizing both HTML and script code of your web pages and optimizing your JPEG and PNG images. It helps you keep organized by creating a duplicate site folder for the optimized files. An added benefit is that it leaves your original files untouched. You should use your original web folder for

editing and use the duplicate web folder for uploading. If you work directly on the server you can optimize your original pages. Web Site Maestro features Smart Handling, supports XML and can handle web pages with any text encoding. Moreover, it can check your web pages for dangling tags, missing attributes, and broken links. An integrated FTP/WebDAV Client, supporting iDisk, enables one-click optimizing and uploading, even to a parent site and mirror sites in one pass, also in secure mode. You can synchronize your entire website with your local web folder or synchronize a single remote folder. Web Site Maestro offers many options to customize its operation to your special needs. Drag and drop is supported.

Precipitate 1.0.2

Lets you search for and launch your cloud data from within Spotlight or Google Desktop for Mac. It currently supports the following services: - Google Bookmarks - Google Docs

Tidy Up! 1.4.3

You can search for duplicate files and packages; by the owner application, content, type, creator, extension, time modified, time created, name, label, visibility and delays. You can also search by the tag, duration and bit installments of MP3 and AAC sound files, search the contents of the iPhoto, Aperture, iTunes, iPod databases and Mail mailboxes, and synchronize deletions with iPhoto, Mail and iTunes. - Tidy Up! allows you to search for duplicate folders; by name, date modified, date created, label visibility, empty folders, their contents and more. - Tidy Up! is fast.

Leopard Cache Cleaner 4.0.12

Makes system maintenance simple with an easy point and click interface to many OS X functions. Leopard Cache Cleaner can improve system performance by tuning internet and file cache settings, implementing ram disks, and cleaning out various cached and stale data. LCC includes tools to help optimize files and memory. LCC can recover wasted disk space by eliminating language localization files and slimming Universal Binaries. Leopard Cache Cleaner lets you create

bootable Emergency Disks that include system repair utilities and LCC's powerful cache cleaning functions. If disaster strikes, the power of Leopard Cache Cleaner is available at the command prompt in Single User Mode. Many more features.

Remote Desktop Connection Client

Allows you to connect to a Windows-based computer and work with programs and files on that computer from your Macintosh computer. To connect to a Windows-based computer, you need network access and permissions to connect to the computer, and the computer must be running Terminal Services or Remote Desktop Services.

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NEWS

CNN/Fortune JUNE 9, 2008:

Apple unveils new iPhone services

CEO Steve Jobs announces location-based services and other new software for the popular handset; faster iPhone expected soon.

By Scott Moritz, writer
Fortune -- Apple announced on Monday a slew of new applications for the iPhone, including a wireless system that automatically forwards e-mail to other devices, a friend-finding service called Loopt and mobile blogging software from TypePad.
CEO Steve Jobs opened the show Monday at the company's annual World Wide Developers conference at the Moscone West Center in San Francisco.
Company executives spent more than hour detailing a series of new iPhone applications aimed at boosting revenue from data services. Wireless companies increasingly are looking to these services to offset slowing growth in mobile phone sales. MobileMe, the new wireless e-mail service, costs \$99 a year.
Other new applications for the iPhone include a service from MLB.com that provides a live scoreboard of major league games and a music-making software, called Cow Terry, for creating songs on the phone.

The news comes as Apple watchers await the much-anticipated unveiling of a new, speedier iPhone. Since the original was introduced nearly a year ago, Apple (AAPL, Fortune 500) has sold 6 million iPhones, according to Jobs on Monday. The company has set a goal of selling 10 million handsets worldwide this year. The biggest complaint about the iPhone has been its slow network, called EDGE and operated by AT&T. AT&T (T, Fortune 500) is the exclusive seller of the iPhone in the United States.

Attendance at the Apple developers conference, which is aimed at software engineers, is a record 5,200, according to Fortune.com's Phil Elmer-DeWitt, who is blogging live from the show. Jobs kicked off the conference by talking about the iPhone for business users, a lucrative market dominated by rival Research in Motion (RIMM). He said that the iPhone now works with Microsoft's Exchange office server systems - a key feature if the iPhone hopes to crack the BlackBerry's lock on working professionals. Jobs also said that 35% of the Fortune 500 has participated in a beta program for business applications for the iPhone. Also, Jobs announced that the new version of the Mac operating system OS X is called "Snow Leopard."

(More on MobileMe below)

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Music fans have now purchased and downloaded more than five billion songs from the iTunes Store. The number one music retailer in the U.S., iTunes features the largest music catalog with over eight million songs. And iTunes customers are now renting and purchasing more than 50,000 movies every day, making it the world's most popular online movie store, as well.

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The following appeared just too late to make it into the last newsletter Ed.

Chicago gets first crack at speedy WiMax

By Wailin Wong | Tribune reporter
11:50 PM CDT, May 7, 2008

By year-end, Chicago is expected to be a launchpad for the next generation of wireless networks, blanketed with a fast Internet signal—accessible to subscribers from homes, streets and traveling vehicles—and capable of giving mundane home appliances a voice.

In this Jetsonian vision of life, which could take several years to arrive fully, a washing machine embedded with a wireless chip would detect a problem and contact its manufacturer even before the homeowner knew something was wrong with the spin cycle.

The wireless breakthrough, known as WiMax, was dreamed up over the past few years and then beset by financial worries. It was revived Wednesday in a sweeping deal between [Sprint Nextel Corp.](#) and Clearwire Corp. that also includes some of the biggest names in technology, such as [Google Inc.](#), [Comcast Corp.](#), [Intel Corp.](#) and [Time Warner Cable Inc.](#)

The presence of marquee supporters signifies the industry view that the new technology eventually will bring together phone calls, Web access, radio and television, pushing all this content through one high-speed pipe and making it fully portable.

As analysts see it, a fast signal available everywhere would break down the traditional barriers between devices and content providers and, for example, allow a consumer to watch a TV program on a conventional set, a phone or a laptop computer, either at home or on the go.

The presence of Google is one clue to the deal's scope. The Internet giant, one of the most aggressive players in the Internet age, already is entering the mobile phone arena, developing its own software in partnership with other companies.

The new WiMax venture combines Sprint's wireless broadband business with Clearwire in a new company valued at around \$14.5 billion, with \$3.2 billion invested by Google and the others.

Announcing the WiMax deal, Clearwire Chairman Craig McCaw said, "The power of the mobile Internet, which offers speed and mobility, home and away, on any device or screen, will fundamentally transform the communications landscape in our country."

Chicago is at the center of the action partly because a major WiMax equipment supplier is Schaumburg-based [Motorola Inc.](#) When Sprint and Clearwire started working together, they made plans to roll out the service first in Chicago, as well as Baltimore and Washington. Sprint continued to conduct a limited trial in Chicago even when funding problems derailed the previous agreement in November.

Sprint executives say the Chicago network will come online by year-end. According to Motorola, the coverage area spans from Gary to Rockford. A national rollout is in the picture, with the new Clearwire aiming to reach 140 million subscribers by 2010, as long as funding materializes.

The new Sprint-Clearwire deal means "that the service will be available on a wider basis sooner around the rest of the country," said Barry West, Sprint's chief technology officer. "And obviously, having Comcast and the other partners in there means they can start offering services, like home entertainment services, much sooner than if they were building their own network."

Sprint's WiMax network is designed to transmit data at speeds comparable to mid- and high-tier cable broadband—far faster than what's currently available for wireless Web surfing. This means that using the Internet on a WiMax-enabled mobile phone, for example, will be just as speedy as home Internet connections. It's also a big leap over today's Wi-Fi hot spots, which typically provide laptop users with Internet access in a cafe or airport. Since the coverage will stretch across metropolitan areas, a user would be able to listen to Internet radio in a WiMax-equipped car while speeding down the highway.

"It's all been debugged," Fred Wright, a senior vice president at Motorola who oversees wireless broadband, said of the Chicago network. "Everything all works, so whenever they're ready, we're ready." The first products likely to use WiMax will be cards that plug into laptops and desktop computers and allow them to access the network. Soon after, mobile phones, digital cameras and other portable electronic devices will get embedded WiMax chips. In April, Finnish handset

manufacturer [Nokia](#) unveiled a WiMax-enabled Internet tablet—a hand-held surfing device that has a large touch screen with a slide-out keyboard. This gadget will be available to Chicago consumers for around \$479.

Hamilton Sekino, a partner at Diamond Management & Technology Consultants, expects Sprint to initially offer WiMax laptop cards for a monthly access rate between \$50 and \$60. But the available packages and future pricing will take complex negotiation between the Clearwire investors. And there are skeptics who doubt the WiMax experience will be as fluid, affordable and easy to adopt as promised.

The industry expects the consumer migration to WiMax to be gradual, with Sprint continuing to operate its existing cellular networks so customers won't be forced to upgrade their service and phones.

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HARDWARE

iPhone G3



Introducing iPhone 3G. With fast 3G wireless technology, GPS mapping, support for enterprise features like Microsoft Exchange, and the new App Store, iPhone 3G puts even more features at your fingertips. And like the original iPhone, it combines three products in one — a revolutionary phone, a widescreen iPod, and a breakthrough Internet device with rich HTML email and a desktop-class web browser. iPhone 3G. It redefines what a mobile phone can do — again.
(from Apple)

Comments from Apple about the introduction of the iPhone:

On Sunday, Apple sold its one millionth iPhone 3G, the company announced today.

“iPhone 3G had a stunning opening weekend,” said Steve Jobs, Apple’s CEO. “It took 74 days to sell the first one million original iPhones, so the new iPhone 3G is clearly off to a great start around the world.”

Comments from Apple about downloads from downloads from Apple’s new App Store now available for the iPhone 3G and iPod Touch:

During its first weekend, iPhone and iPod touch customers downloaded more than 10 million applications from the new App Store. The groundbreaking App Store now has more than 800 native applications, including over 200 offered for free and more than 90 percent available for less than \$10.

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NETWARE
MobileMe



What follows was copied from Apple’s Website. MobileMe is the new .mac.

“MobileMe keeps all of your information in an online server, or “cloud.” So no matter where you go or what device you use, everything is always in sync.

Push email. Push contacts. Push calendar.

MobileMe stores all your email, contacts, and calendars in the cloud and pushes them down to your iPhone, iPod touch, Mac, and PC. When you make a change on one device, the cloud updates the others. Push happens automatically, instantly, and continuously. You don’t have to wait for it or remember to do anything — such as docking your iPhone and syncing manually — to stay up to date.

Works with the applications you know well.

Do everything you need to do on every device you own. MobileMe works with Mail, Address Book, and iCal on a Mac; Microsoft Outlook on a PC with Windows XP or Vista; and the built-in applications on your iPhone or iPod touch.

MobileMe on Mac

Everything just clicks.*

MobileMe works with the applications you use on your Mac every day. Just about anything you do in Mail, Address Book, and iCal on your Mac is updated on your iPhone, iPod touch, and on the web at me.com.

Sync all your Mac computers.

If you have more than one Mac, you can use MobileMe to push email, contacts, calendars, and bookmarks to all of your Mac computers and even a PC.

Share from iPhoto, iMovie, and Aperture.

With a couple of clicks, you can upload entire photo albums from iPhoto '08 or Aperture 2 to your MobileMe Gallery. With iMovie '08, you can upload high-quality movies to your Gallery in a variety of sizes perfect for viewing on the web, iPod, iPhone, or Apple TV.

Behind the scenes with iWeb.

MobileMe is built to work seamlessly with iWeb. You simply create your site, click Publish, and it's online. There are no settings or configurations to remember — MobileMe does it all behind the scenes and all you see are the beautiful results. MobileMe will also host your personal domain name so you can publish your site directly to www.youraddress.com.

iDisk on your desktop.

Because MobileMe iDisk is built into the core of Mac OS X, accessing it on your Mac is as easy as opening a Finder window. From there, just drag and drop to upload files or manage your folders. Share with anyone by dropping files into your iDisk Public folder. And when you're away from your computer, you can always access your iDisk from a web browser at me.com.

Wherever you go, there's your Mac.

Back to My Mac puts any remote Leopard-based Mac you use within easy reach. MobileMe finds your Mac computers over the Internet and displays them in the Leopard Finder on the Mac you're using. With Back to My Mac Screen Sharing, you can control your remote Mac as though you're sitting in front of it.

Chat safely with MobileMe.

With MobileMe, you can protect your chats with robust, 128-bit encryption. Just use your MobileMe member name when you chat, and iChat will automatically encrypt your text, audio, and video chats, as well as file transfers, with other MobileMe members.

MobilMe on PC

The best of both worlds.

Imagine running beautifully designed, easy-to-use Apple applications on your PC. At me.com, you can check your email, manage your contacts and calendar, share photos, and store documents. The applications are so intuitive and clutter free that me.com could become your new desktop.

Easy setup with the Windows Control Panel.

Setting up MobileMe to sync with your PC is simple. Just install the latest version of iTunes, and a MobileMe Preferences application is added to your Windows Control Panel. Sign in with your MobileMe member name and password and all of your settings are right there.

MobilMe on iPhone

Everything keeps up with you.

Wherever you go, your email, contacts, calendar, and Safari bookmarks are always up to date. Add a contact or change your calendar on your iPhone or iPod touch, and it's instantly updated on your Mac and PC and on the web at me.com. Whether you're on the road, at work, at home, or at an Internet cafe, the same information follows you.

OOPS (7 16 2008)

*We have recently completed the transition from .Mac to MobileMe.

Unfortunately, it was a lot rockier than we had hoped.

Although core services such as Mail, iDisk, Sync, Back to My Mac, and Gallery went relatively smoothly, the new MobileMe web applications had lots of problems initially. Fortunately we have worked through those problems and the web apps are now up and running.

Another snag we have run into is our use of the word "push" in describing everything under the MobileMe umbrella. While all email, contact or calendar changes on the iPhone and the web apps are immediately synced to and from the MobileMe "cloud," changes made on a PC or Mac take up to 15 minutes to sync with the cloud and your other devices. So even though things are indeed instantly pushed to and from your iPhone and the web apps today, we are going to stop using the word "push" until it is near-instant on PCs and Macs, too.

We want to apologize to our loyal customers and express our appreciation for their patience by giving all current subscribers an automatic 30-day extension to their MobileMe subscription free of charge. Your extension will be reflected in your account settings within the next few weeks.

We hope you enjoy your new suite of web applications at me.com, in addition to keeping your iPhone and iPod touch wirelessly in sync with these new web applications and your Mac or PC.

Thank you,
The MobileMe Team

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TIPS

Don't leave a lot of files on your desktop – the OS generates many log files for them and this eats up space on your boot disk. (WP)

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Browse in Privacy with Safari

Under normal circumstances, Safari retains records of your web browsing activity. It remembers the pages you visit, the data you download, and your web searches. It may also store your personal

data in order to automatically complete online forms.

While these features can save time and help you retrace your online steps, there are occasions when you might prefer to leave no footprints — for example, when browsing on a public computer.

The solution is simple: Before you begin browsing, go to the Safari menu and select Private Browsing. When the warning box appears, click OK. Now Safari stores none of the aforementioned info.

What if you decide you need privacy after you've been browsing? You have several options: You can remove individual pages from Safari's page-view history, erase the entire history, or clear all traces of your activity, including any cookies and cache files you may have accumulated.

To review the pages you've visited and delete them as desired, go to the History menu and select Show All History. Here you can select pages and clear them with the Delete key. To wipe the entire Safari history, select Clear History from the History menu. For a completely clean slate, go to the Safari menu and select Reset Safari.

Note that the Private Browsing option does not prevent Safari from collecting cookies (the preference files automatically generated by many websites). The Reset Safari option clears all cookies. If you want to delete only certain ones, choose Preferences from the Safari menu, click the Security tab, and then click Show Cookies. You can select and delete individual cookies from the list that appears. Careful, though — if you're a frequent web user, this list can be very, very long.

You try the following first. If it works for you I might try it. I got this from another email group. I doubt if using more memory than Apple says would hurt, except for the cost. Of course, with more memory to support, the battery will run down faster.

Rule of thumb =
Intel Core Duo = 2GB limit
Intel Core 2 Duo = 3 GB
Intel Core 2 Duo shipped in 2008 = 4GB limit

There are two USB ports on a MacBook and they are different (from the same source as above):

One thing to note when charging your iPhone by connecting it to a USB port on your computer is that not all USB ports are equal. On a MBP, the left USB port is not powered but the right one is so plug into the right USB port. On a MacBook, the USB port closest to the screen is not powered but the one closest to the front of the computer is powered.

Similar advice applies to plugging in devices that need power, such as external portable drives.

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Note: This is almost the full article, I think that the topic is important. I'll run the risk of copyright infringement. The source is noted. Drop by the web site (www.seattletimes.com/columnists) of the Seattle Times and make their advertisers happy.

To catch a computer thief — or deter one

Glenn Fleishman

Special to The Seattle Times

Never underestimate the tenacity of a 19-year-old. When Kait Duplaga of White Plains, N.Y., had her laptop stolen — along with electronics she and her roommates owned — she didn't despair. She cleverly used a built-in piece of Mac OS X 10.5 (Leopard) technology to catch the alleged thieves.

Duplaga, an Apple Store employee, had turned on Back to My Mac on her computer. This Leopard feature allows remote access to a computer when the right network conditions are met. A few days after her computer was stolen, a friend of Duplaga's spotted her in iChat, and sent her a text message by cellphone congratulating her on the computer's return.

Possessor unaware

The machine's current possessor wasn't aware that Duplaga stayed logged in to iChat, and so she showed up there. She logged in to .Mac on another computer (via the .Mac system preference pane), and used the built-in screen sharing to access her purloined laptop. Screen sharing provides both a view of the remote screen as well as control of the keyboard and mouse.

Duplaga reportedly fired up Photo Booth, Apple software that lets you snap a series of photos through the iSight camera built into all current Mac notebooks, and grabbed shots of one of two gentlemen later arrested for the apartment theft. She copied files using file sharing that included pictures of the other charged individual.

We can't all be as quick-witted as Duplaga, nor could we rely on Back to My Mac to work reliably in situations such as these. Back to My Mac requires, among other things, specific router settings on the network with the computer you want to access remotely.

It also has the disadvantage that a thief with some Mac knowledge could simply log out of .Mac by clicking a single button, and disable the service.

But you can take steps for theft deterrence and recovery that might let you avoid a sad call to your insurance company — or parent.

You can't theft-proof anything, but you can deter it.

First, permanently engrave your driver's license number on the computer (DO NOT USE YOUR SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER. Or, rather please do. I need to build my practice. Ed. WP, Esq). This is something recommended by the police as part of the national but informal Operation ID program. (In some jurisdictions, you can get a unique ID that you register with the police.) Second, install computer locks on all your equipment, anchored to something secure. All Macs and most major brand computers

from other makers have a standard, so-called Kensington security slot, after the company that developed it. You can buy a key or combination lock from many firms, however.

Third, consider installing a motion sensor. In researching software, I was surprised to find just one current project, still in testing: TheftSensor from Orbicule (currently free, www.orbicule.com/theftsensor). Available just for the MacBook right now, TheftSensor uses the Apple Remote as a way to arm an alarm. (The Apple Remote is used to put a Mac into a kind of full-screen media player mode; you may never have unpacked it.)

All Mac laptops feature a sudden motion sensor (SMS), which detects whether a computer is falling, so that a hard drive can be protected.

This SMS can be used to check for any motion. The MacBook has to be active (not in sleep mode), and when enabled TheftSensor sounds an unmutable alarm when the laptop is moved or the lid closed. For theft recovery, you can install software that silently checks in with servers to see if it's been reported stolen and engages a recovery mode if and when you report its loss. This software can't be removed or disabled without an administrative password.

Although there are four packages compatible with Leopard (most also with Mac OS X 10.4 Tiger), I recommend Undercover from Orbicule. For \$49, Undercover uses very little horsepower and network bandwidth to stay in touch with Orbicule's servers.

When it's reported missing, the computer starts snapping desktop and iSight pictures, and sending network information to Orbicule, which will work (at no cost) with whatever local law enforcement is involved.

If the computer isn't recovered, Undercover activates Plan B, which involves dimming the screen, as if the computer is broken.

If the stolen computer is brought into an Apple Store or a known Apple repair shop and put on the network, Undercover starts yelling (using Apple's text-to-speech software) that the computer is stolen while displaying contact information on its screen, including the promise of a reward (paid by Orbicule at no cost to you). LoJack for Laptops from Computrace offers a similar service that requires a subscription of \$50 per year or \$100 for three years (www.lojackforlaptops.com/). Orbicule recommends enabling the special Guest account in Leopard that allows a low-privilege and password-free login on a computer so that a thief is more likely to hook into a network.

After reading about Duplaga's miraculous Back to My Mac aided recovery, I purchased and installed Undercover. While Back to My Mac works in the right circumstances, I'd hate to stake my laptop's life on it.

Glenn Fleishman writes the Practical Mac column for Personal Technology and about technology in general for The Seattle Times and other publications. Send questions to gfleishman@seattletimes.com. More columns at www.seattletimes.com/columnists

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