

MAC OS X HINTS

- Background
- 5 OS X Hits
- 5 OS X Misses
- 5 Favorite Apps
- 5 Tiger Hits
- 5 Tiger Misses
- 20 Favorite Hints
- 10 Troubleshooting Tips

BACKGROUND

- Long-time Mac user...
 - Unix in upcoming OS X scared me!
- Started compiling tips in Filemaker Pro
- Launched site in November 2000
 - Learning experience more than anything
- Not a programmer by training
 - Ironically, Unix made macosxhints possible
- June 2005: Joined Macworld as a Senior Editor

BACKGROUND

- The Tech of macosxhints.com
 - Geeklog [www.geeklog.net] powers the main site - free and open source
 - vBulletin [www.vbulletin.com] runs the forums - paid-for software
 - A copy of the site runs locally on my Mac
 - Hints are posted locally then uploaded
 - Backups are automated via cron and ssh

7,450
hints and
counting!

Over
55,000
users

500,000+
daily page
views

5 OS X HITS

- Multitasking

- OS X shares resources nicely

- Can do more at once than could OS 9

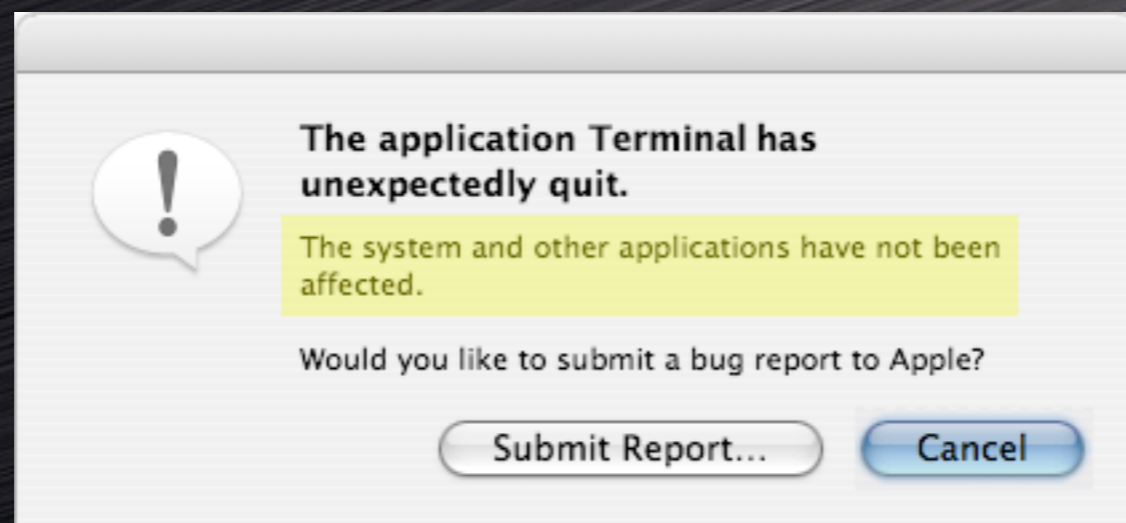
- Very effective memory management

- You'll still want more RAM, though!

5 OS X HITS

● Protected Memory

- One app crash doesn't mean a system crash
- No need to restart after app crashes
- Increased comfort level with many projects open at once



5 OS X HITS

- Exposé

- Window management made easier
- Use desktop mode to quickly hide windows
- As screen size increases, Exposé's value increases

5 OS X HITS

- PDF anything

- No third-party tools required
- PDF-X in Tiger even better (shadow support)
- Use to save online receipts, key emails, etc.
- No excuses when it's a click away

5 OS X HITS

- Unix at the core
 - Was a negative at first
 - Not required for 'typical' OS X usage
 - A whole new world of software out there
 - Much of it free and very well done
 - Install and test stuff easily on your own Mac
 - OS X is the most user-friendly Unix learning environment available
 - Use it only when you want it; not needed every day

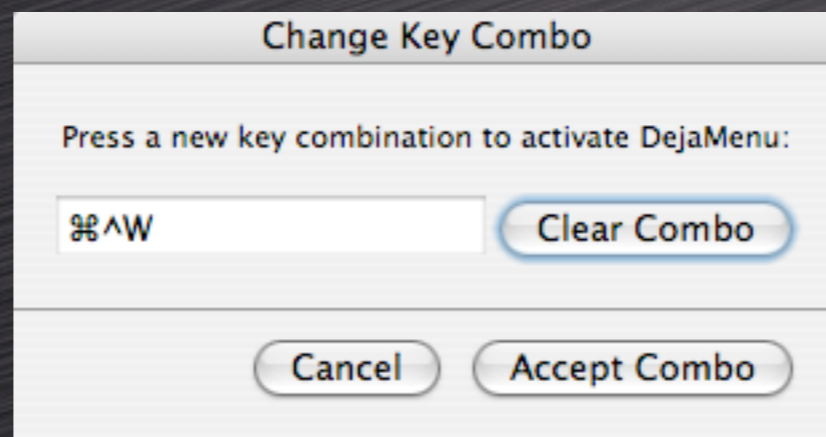
5 OS X MISSES

- Out of control permissions
- Apps that break outside of / Applications
- Non-reversible system updates
- Application interface inconsistency
- Spinning Rainbows

5 FAVE APPS

● DejaMenu

- A must-have for PowerBook power users
- Adds four buttons and scrolling
- Works great with DejaView
- <http://homepage.mac.com/khsu/DejaMenu/DejaMenu.html>
- Free!



5 FAVE APPS

- **SideTrack**

- A must-have for PowerBook power users
- Adds four buttons and scrolling
- Works great with DejaView

- www.ragingmenace.com/sidetrack

- \$15.00 shareware

5 FAVE APPS

- **MenuMeters**

- System info at a glance
- CPU, disk, network, memory
- Takes some menubar space!

- www.ragingmenace.com/menumeters

- Free!



5 FAVE APPS

- **SnapzPro X**

- Screenshot options galore
- Movie capture, too!

- www.ambrosiasw.com/utilities/snapzprox

- \$29 [pictures] / \$69 [pictures and video]

5 FAVE APPS

● Butler

- My single must-have utility
- Launcher, iTunes controller, Fast User Switching tool, web searching, pop-up menus, macros...
- The Swiss Army Knife of productivity tools
- Not for everyone -- high learning curve
- www.petermaurer.de/butler
- \$18.00 donationware

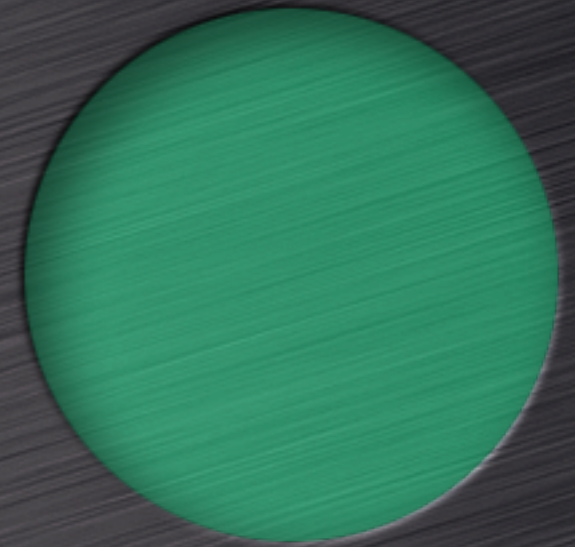
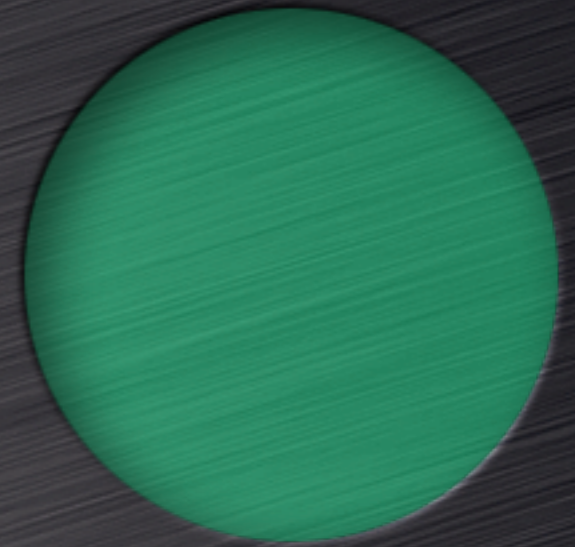
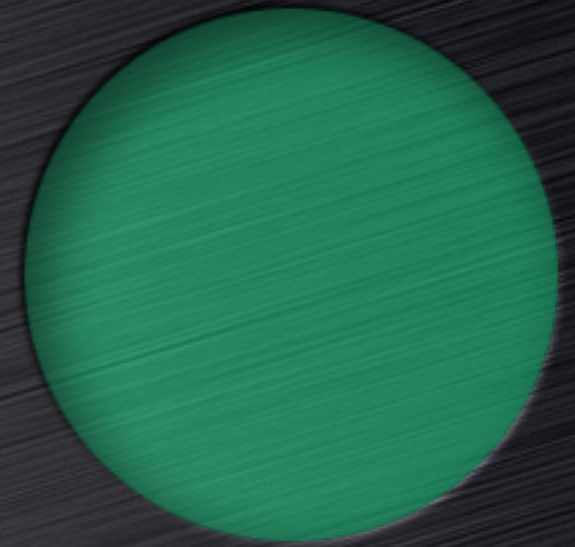
TIGER TALK



OS X 10.4

5 TIGER HITS

- Automator
 - Easy programming for everyone
- Dashboard
 - Some good stuff amongst the fluff
- A better Finder
 - Fewer spinning rainbows, smart folders
- Mail
 - Smart folders, no more drawer
- Preview
 - Commented PDFs, embed comments



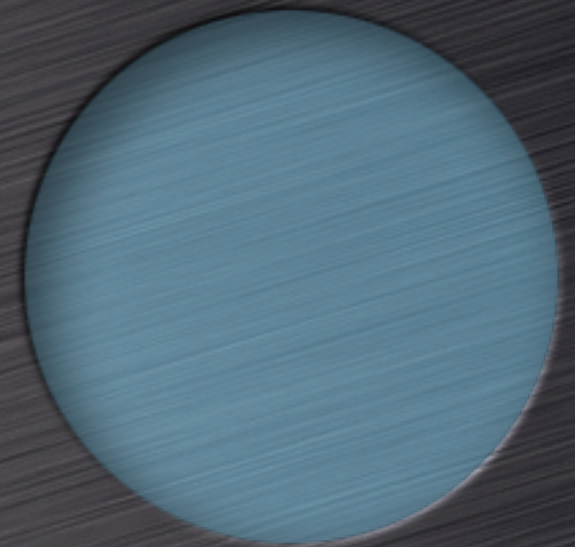
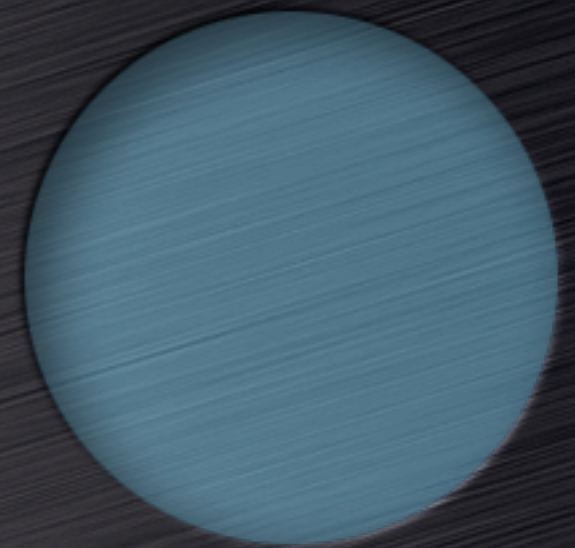
5 TIGER MISSES

- Spotlight
 - Good start, but clearly version 1.0
 - Spotlight windows aren't selectable
 - No boolean (AND, OR, etc) logic?
- Dashboard
 - Heavy RAM usage, rough UI
- System Prefs keyboard navigation
- Finder annoyances remain
 - Resizable grid, view options, defaults, etc.
- Burn Folder in the Finder is confusing

**FAVORITE
HINTS...**

FLOATING WIDGETS

- Move widgets out of the Dashboard area
 - Moved widgets float above all other windows
- Use for often-viewed widgets
 - Stocks, weather, world clock, etc.
- Use for widgets that need context
 - Unit converter to see source figure



```
$ defaults write com.apple.dashboard devmode YES
```

```
$ ## reverse it by changing YES to NO
```

SCREENSHOT FORMAT

- 10.4's default screenshot format is PNG
- Change formats to...
 - Reduce file size
 - Change image quality
- Kill the System UI Server to apply changes

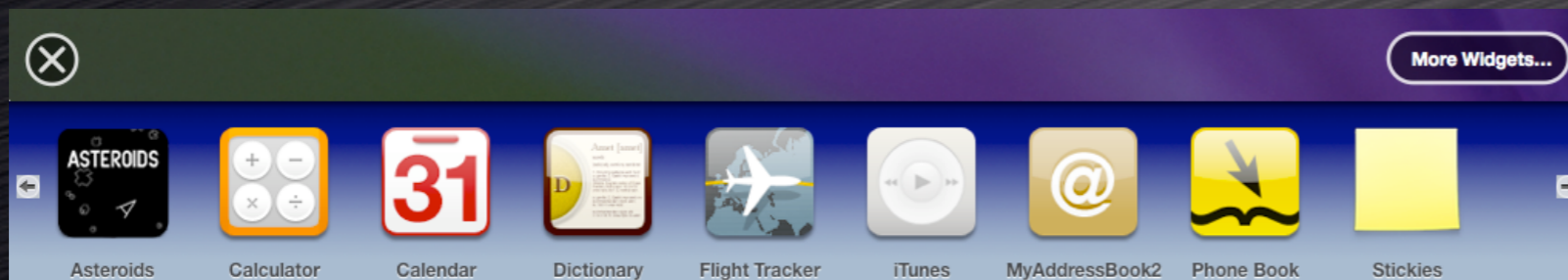
```
$ defaults write com.apple.screencapture type tiff  
$ # type can be tiff, jpg, pict, pdf, gif, or png  
  
$ killall SystemUIServer  
$ # to have the changes take effect
```



Tiger Only

DASHBOARD SHELF

- Change Dashboard's G5 'mesh' to whatever you like



```
$ cd /System/Library/CoreServices/Dock.app/Contents/Resources
$ # create a copy to edit
$ cp perf.png ~/Desktop/perf.png

$ # create a backup copy
$ sudo cp perf.png perf_ORIG.png

$ # replace original after editing
$ sudo cp ~/Desktop/perf.png

$ # restart the Dock to see new image
$ killall Dock
```



Tiger Only

PREVIEW'S NEW POWER

- Open a whole folder of images
 - Command-Option drag folder onto Preview
- Change the image sort order
 - Control-click on a blank section of the drawer
 - Sort by name, path, date, size, kind, keyword
- Add annotations to PDFs
 - Either text or red call-out circles
- Add Spotlight-searchable keywords
 - Add to PDFs, JPEGs, etc.



Tiger Only

DICTIONARY TIPS

- See word completions in Cocoa apps
 - Press Escape after typing a few letters
 - Option-Escape works in 10.3, too!
- Check word definitions
 - Select word and use contextual menu
 - Press Control-Command-D over a word
 - Add this definition as a SideTrack hot corner
- Change the Dictionary style
 - Choose between application and panel
- Look up other words via double-click
 - Within the Dictionary app itself



Tiger Only

DOUBLE SCROLLING

- Two standard scroll arrow options
 - Together at bottom only
 - Up arrow at top; down arrow at bottom
- Best choice: Together at both ends
- Changes take effect on next program launch
- To switch back, use the Appearance System Prefs panel



```
$ defaults write "Apple Global Domain" AppleScrollBarVariant DoubleBoth
```


FOLDER JUMPING

- Use Go -> Go to Folder to save time
 - Shift-Command-G for super-fast access
 - Use from Open and Save dialogs, too
 - Press / to access
 - Auto-completes path when you hit Tab
 - Case insensitive in the Finder
 - Case sensitive in Open/Save dialogs
 - Reach hidden folders with ease
 - /Library/WebServer, /usr/bin, etc.

THE EXPOSÉ BLOB

- A visual means of activating Exposé
- Click = App Windows mode
- Option click = All Windows mode
- Drag and drop The Blob anywhere onscreen

```
$ defaults write com.apple.dock wvous-floater -bool true
```

```
$ # restart the dock to see the blob
```

```
$ killall Dock
```

```
$ # to disable, repeat with false, kill the dock again
```



iTUNES ARROWS

- Change the behavior of iTunes' 'music store linking' arrows
- iTunes prefs allow disabling arrows
 - But not modifying their behavior
- Link to your library, not the store
- Quit iTunes prior to executing command

```
$ defaults write com.apple.iTunes invertStoreLinks -bool YES
```

```
$ # to reverse, repeat the above with NO at the end
```

APP SWITCHING TIPS

- When using Command-Tab...
 - Command-` will cycle backward
 - Other ways to choose an app:
 - Scroll wheel
 - Arrow keys
 - Mouse
 - H will hide the highlighted app
 - Q will hit the highlighted app
 - Home / End will jump to start / end of list
- Command-Tab works in Exposé modes

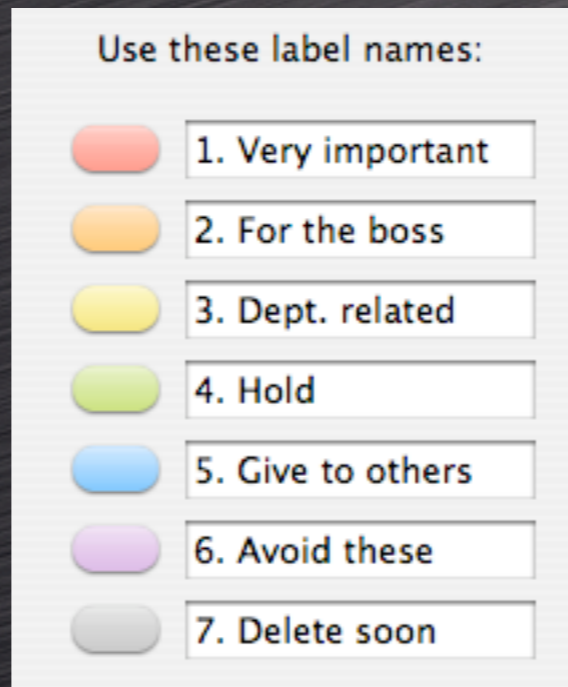
TERMINAL WELCOME

- "Welcome to Darwin!" says the Terminal
 - What's Darwin and why did I go there?
- Use your own message instead

```
$ cd /etc  
  
$ # make a backup first  
$ sudo cp motd motd_ORIG  
  
$ # edit the file  
$ sudo pico motd
```

BETTER FINDER LABELS

- Color labels are a great way to sort
- Finder defaults to sorting by color name!
 - Red is first in color list, but last by alpha
- Use Finder > Preferences > Labels
 - Rename with numeric
- Sorted list views will
 - Or whatever color has



at top

er

TABBING IN FIREFOX

- Using Tab in Firefox forms is frustrating
 - Not all fields are selectable
 - This is easily fixed
- Enter *about:config* in the URL bar
- Double-click on *accessibility.tabfocus*
 - Enter either 7 or 3 in the dialog box
 - 7 enables tabbing to all page elements, links included
 - 3 enables tabbing to only form elements and text boxes
- Browser does not need to be restarted

LOGIN BACKGROUND

- Replace the image that shows behind the login window
 - Use any image you like
 - Add customization info (name, return info, reward, etc.) as minor theft deterrent
 - Give yourself a nicer picture to look at
- Copy /Library/Desktop Pictures/Aqua Blue.jpg to another location for backup
- Place an image named Aqua Blue.jpg in this same location

PLAIN TEXT MAIL

- Some people (me!) dislike HTML email
- Mail has no obvious way to display all messages in plain text mode
 - Message-by-message basis only via the menus
- A hidden preference solves the problem

```
$ defaults write com.apple.mail PreferPlainText -bool TRUE  
  
$ # to switch it back to 'normal' handling:  
$ defaults write com.apple.mail PreferPlainText -bool FALSE
```

SHEET SPEED

- Sheets are 'attached' dialog boxes
- Reduce the time needed to draw them
 - Great timesaver in dialog-heavy apps
- For fun, go the other way
 - A mostly harmless prank...

```
$ # to speed it up:  
$ defaults write NSGlobalDomain NSWindowResizeTime .001  
  
$ # to reset to default:  
$ defaults delete NSGlobalDomain NSWindowResizeTime  
  
$ # as a prank  
$ defaults write NSGlobalDomain NSWindowResizeTime 10
```

Hall
of
Fame

DOCK POSITION

- Disabling the dock has side effects
- So don't disable it, move it
- To the top of the screen!
- Leave it auto-hidden
 - It's virtually impossible to activate accidentally

```
$ defaults write com.apple.dock orientation -string top  
$ # restart the dock to see changes  
$ killall Dock  
  
$ # reverse it by using the Dock's menu to pick a  
$ # different position.
```

Hall
of
Fame

KEY REMAPPING

- Prevent user stupidity
- Some obvious candidates
 - Command-L
 - Log out of iChat or Open Location in Safari
 - Command-W
 - Remap to prevent accidental window closure
 - Command-Q
 - Remap to prevent quitting
 - Add commands Apple 'left out'
 - Secure empty trash in Finder, etc.



Hall
of
Fame

HIDDEN APPS IN DOCK

- Visibly distinguish hidden apps
- Prevents accidentally activating a hidden app with many open windows
- Makes it easier to see 'active' apps



```
$ defaults write com.apple.dock showhidden -bool true
```

```
$ # restart the dock to see changes  
$ killall Dock
```

```
$ # reverse it by changing true to false  
$ # and restarting the Dock
```

Hall
of
Fame

OPEN IN TRASH

- Normally items in the trash cannot be viewed
 - The Dock provides a solution
 - Drag and drop an item from the trash to a docked application
- Will not work with applications in the Finder, Toolbar, or Sidebar
- A quick way of viewing a file before permanently deleting it

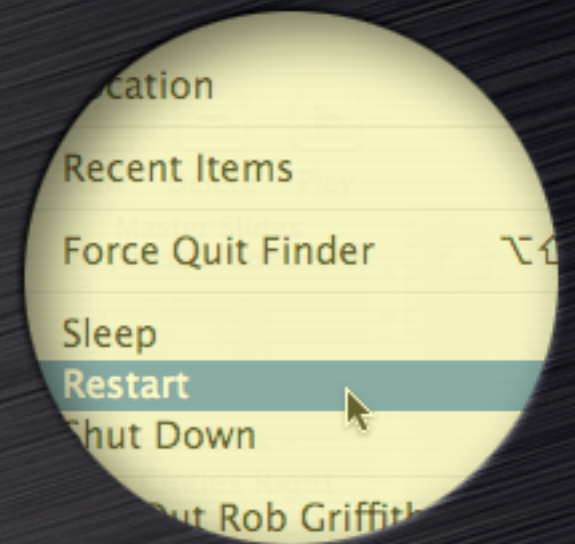
Hall
of
Fame

TROUBLE- SHOOTING TIPS

TROUBLESHOOTING

#1: Restart!

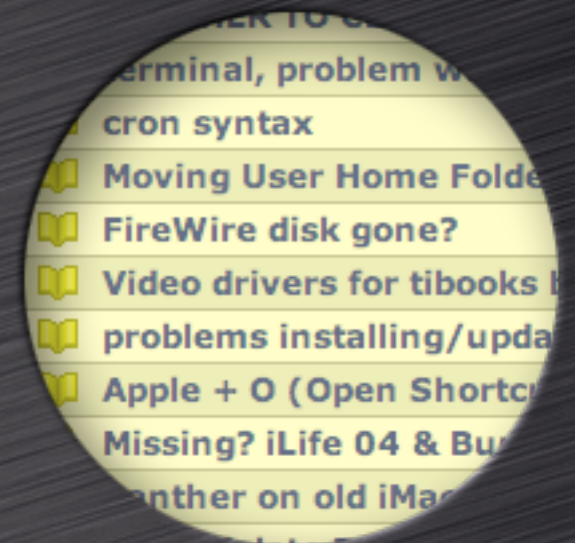
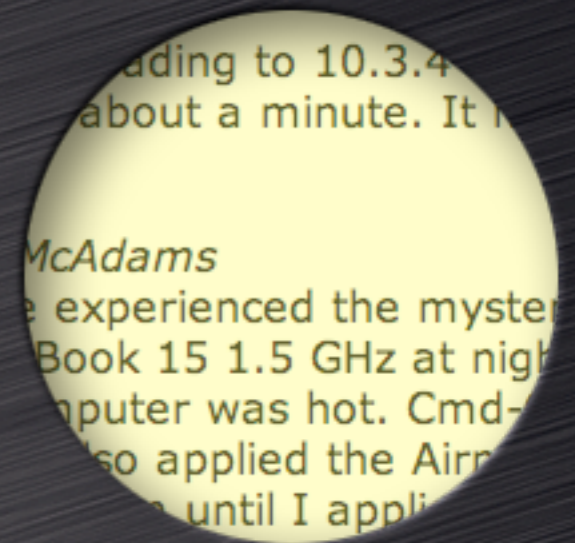
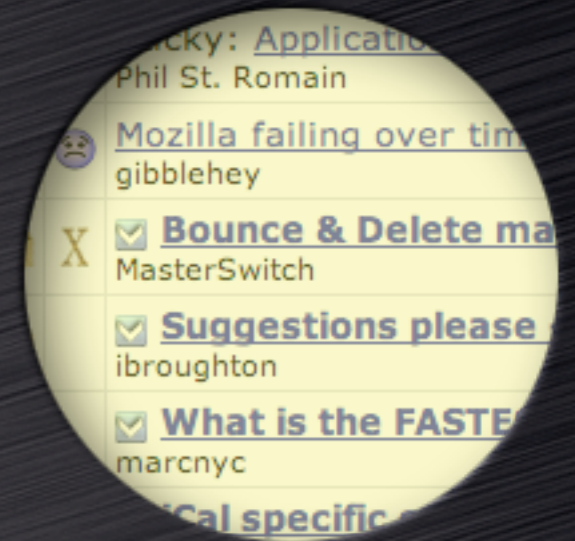
- Don't just logout and login
- Clears many caches
- Restarts all system services
- Hold Shift to disable login items
- The easiest thing to try...



TROUBLESHOOTING

#2: Research

- forums.macosxhints.com
 - forums.macosxhints.com/showthread.php?t=13846
- www.macosxhints.com
 - www.macosxhints.com/article.php?story=2004011205473937
- www.macintouch.com
 - Reader Reports
- www.macworld.com/forums
- kbase.info.apple.com



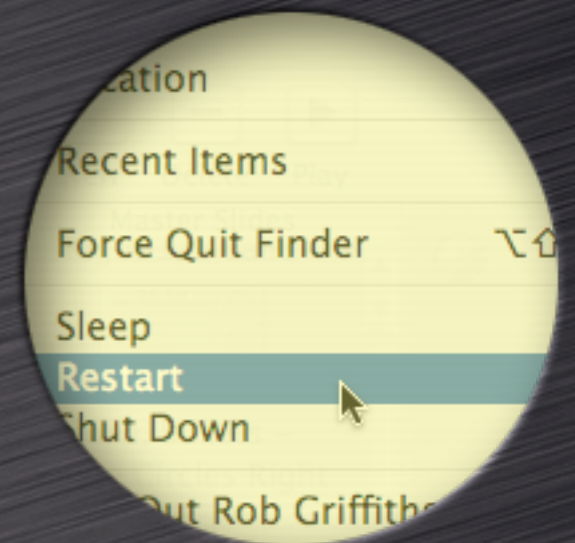
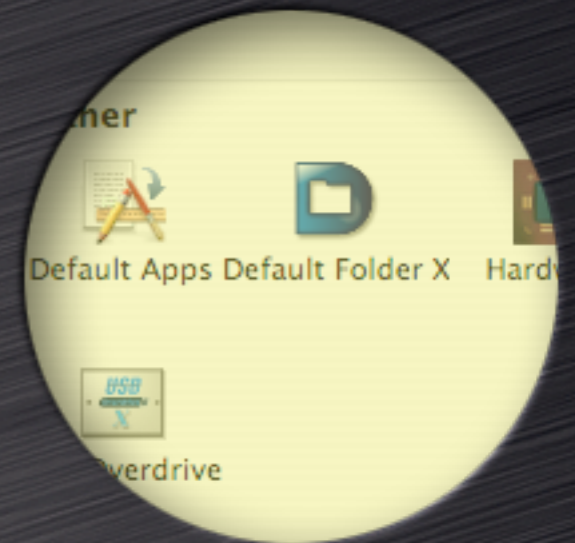
TROUBLESHOOTING

#3: Check boot disk drive space

- Low space can cause problems
- Free up drive space on boot volume

#4: Disable added pref panes

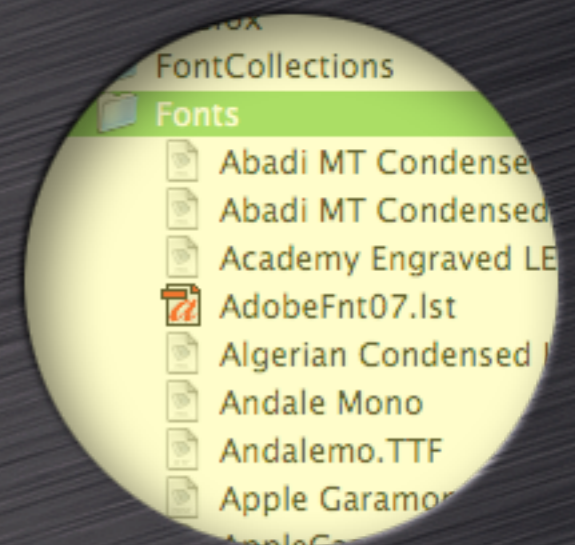
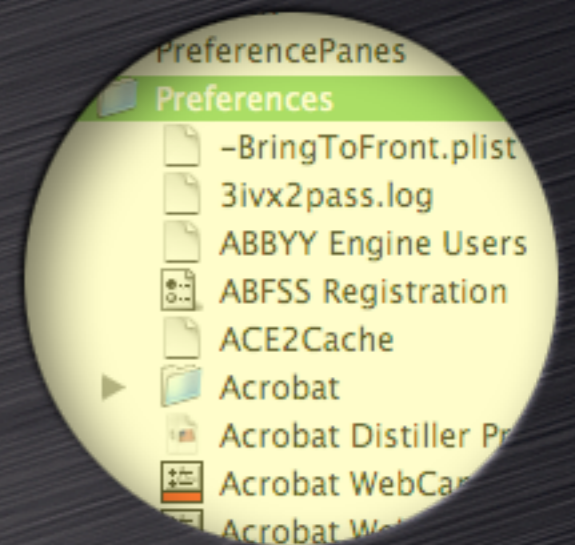
- Unsanity's APE, tablet drivers, etc.
- Restart after removing panes
- Removing added pieces is a good diagnostic tool



TROUBLESHOOTING

#5: Create a New User

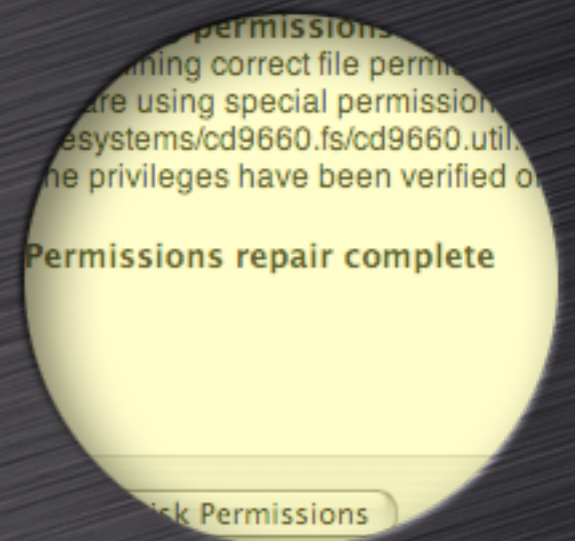
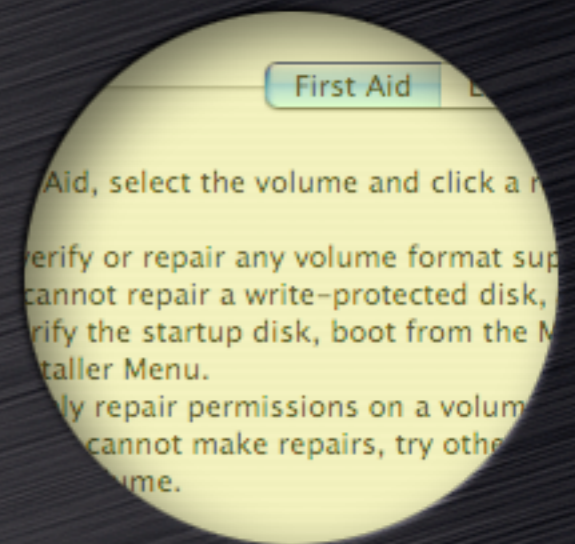
- Login as new user
- Leave new user setup 'fresh'
- Isolates problem as system-level or user-level
- User-level issues are nearly always preference- or font-related
 - Fonts: /Library and ~/Library
- Create new user before troubles start!



TROUBLESHOOTING

#6: Repair Permissions

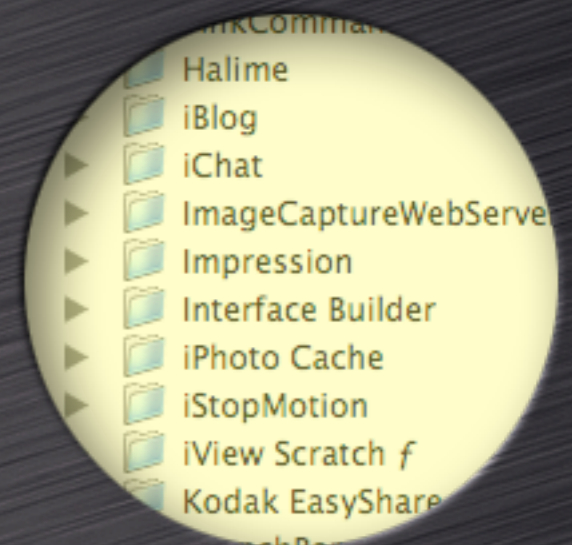
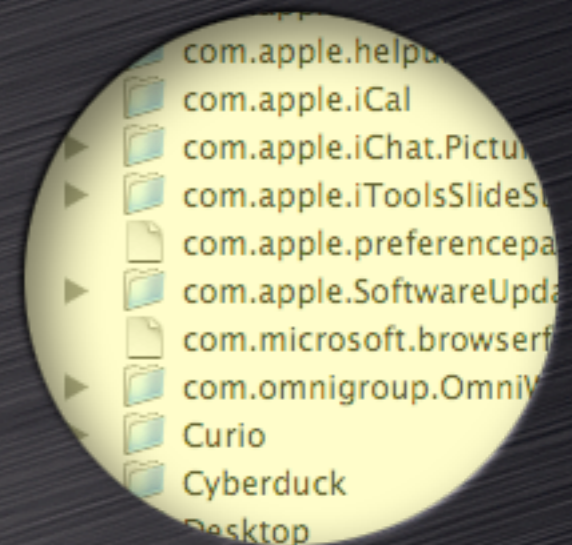
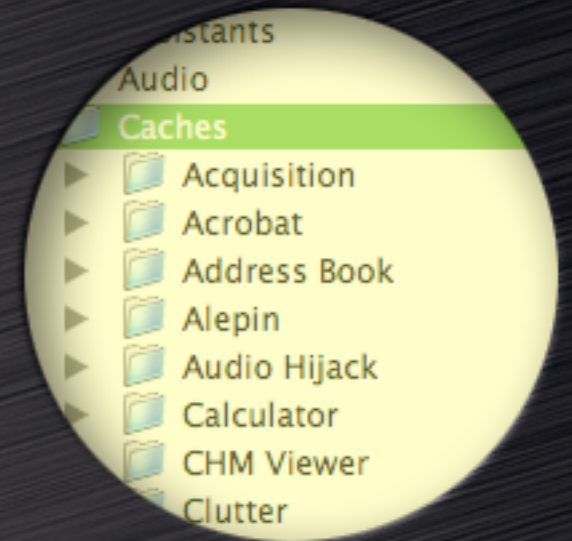
- Incorrect permissions can cause subtle problems
- Certain installers can break permissions
- Good idea to run after any major software installation
- Effects can be subtle or quite obvious



TROUBLESHOOTING

#7: Clear Caches and Restart

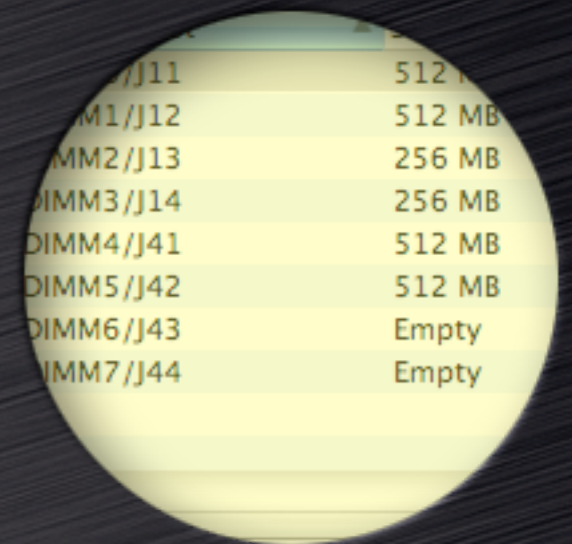
- OS X caches data in multiple places
 - User cache folders
 - System cache folders
 - Various application caches
- Corrupted cache files may not empty at restart
- Easiest to erase via third-party cleaner:
 - Cocktail - www.macosxcocktail.com
 - Tiger Cache Cleaner - www.northernsoftworks.com/tigercachecleaner.html [works on 10.1 - 10.4]



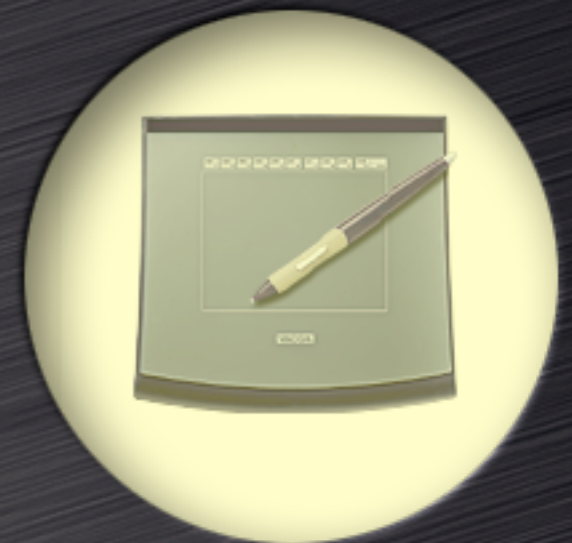
TROUBLESHOOTING

#8: Remove and Test Hardware

- RAM that works in OS 9 may cause trouble in OS X
- USB hubs, tablets, third-party mice
 - Drivers may have to be manually uninstalled
- Reboot with machine, keyboard, mouse only
- Use Apple Hardware Test program
 - On Install/Restore CD/DVD
- Add back one device at a time



/J11	512 MB
M1/J12	512 MB
MM2/J13	256 MB
DIMM3/J14	256 MB
DIMM4/J41	512 MB
DIMM5/J42	512 MB
DIMM6/J43	Empty
DIMM7/J44	Empty



display
AGP
Display Type: LCD
Slot: SLOT-1
VRAM (Total): 128 MB
Vendor: ATI (0x1002)
Device ID: 0x4e48
Revision ID: 0x0000
ROM Revision: 113-A14401-117
Display:
displa

TROUBLESHOOTING

#9: Reinstall latest OS X update

- Use 'Combined Updater' from Apple
 - www.apple.com/support/downloads, search on 'combined'
- Combined updater seems to repair issues that incremental upgrades miss
- Not a fix-all, but also can't hurt to try



TROUBLESHOOTING

#10: Reinstall OS X

- Select Archive and Install
- Select 'Retain User Info'
 - Do not copy over old preferences!
- Migrate old to new very carefully
 - One app at a time...
 - Move only what you must
- **BACK UP FIRST IF YOU HAVEN'T YET DONE SO!**



QUESTIONS

&

ANSWERS

[MAYBE]