

Your questions answered

Charge through Macintosh glitches and curb the worst excesses of rogue software with Rob Buckley's soothing advice



Contact

If you have a question, don't hesitate to get in touch at:

email:
icreate@icreatemagazine.com

post: iCreate
Highbury Entertainment Limited
Paragon House
St Peters Road
Bournemouth
BH1 2JS

Sony woes

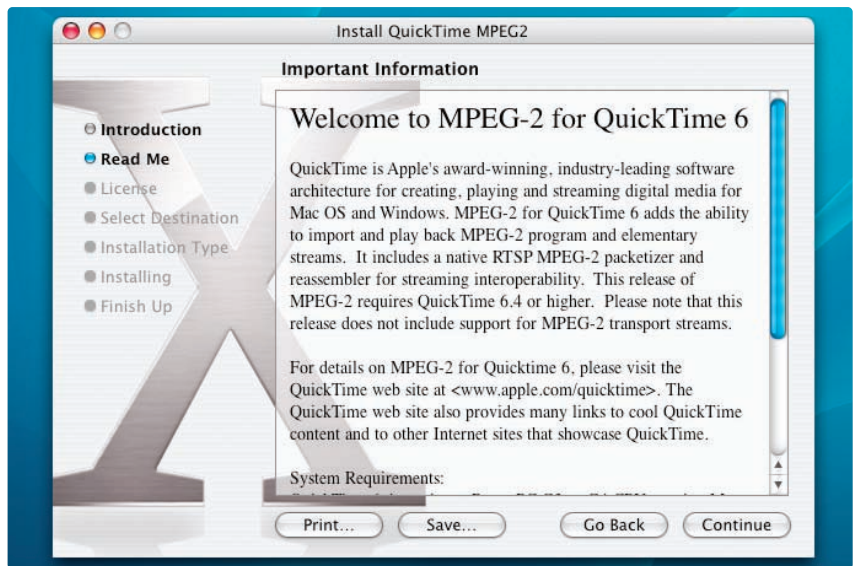


I have a PowerBook G4 running OS X 10.2.6. I also have a Sony DV camera DCR-DVD201E. In order to use the software and to be able to download from the camera, I had to install it on my work PC (running Windows 2000). My problem is that the MPEG files that the software program - ImageMixer - creates for my movies is not readable on my Mac (QuickTime does not recognise the file, although it will recognise other MPEG files that I have). On the PC, Windows Media Player will play my movies (created by ImageMixer) but Windows Media Player for my Mac will not.

John Brown
Email

A In typical Sony fashion, just about everything that could possibly be anti-Mac is going on here. A USB 2.0 connection rather than FireWire (or iLink as Sony, one of the joint patent holders with Apple on the FireWire technology, prefers to call it!) makes it impossible to connect your camcorder sensibly to a PowerBook and to iMovie. ImageMixer does run on a Mac, but only on OS 9, so that's out, meaning you've had to resort to Windows. But what's causing the problem is the 'codec' used by DVDs for storing video. QuickTime Player is perfectly capable of using MPEG-1 and MPEG-4 videos, but DVDs are recorded in MPEG-2 format. Since your camcorder records directly to DVD, that's the format your video is in. On a PC, Windows Media Player can play back unencrypted MPEG-2 files perfectly happily, but since the Mac version can play next to nothing - Windows Media files, basically - you can't use it to play back MPEG-2 files.

You've a few options, fortunately. One is to go to the Apple Web site and buy the QuickTime MPEG-2 Playback Component (www.apple.com/quicktime/products/mpeg2playback/). It'll cost you £19, but you'll be able to play your files in any QuickTime-compatible application including iMovie and export them into other formats if you have QuickTime Player Pro. Your other



The best way to get footage from a Sony DVD camcorder into a Mac is to purchase Apple's QuickTime MPEG-2 Playback Component

option is to look at some of the open source media players available for free, such as MPlayer for OS X (<http://mplayersx.sourceforge.net>) and VLC (www.videolan.org/vlc/), both of which play MPEG-2 files.

If you'd prefer to play your movies in QuickTime and don't want to buy the MPEG-2 component, you might want to convert them

to other file formats, such as MPEG-1. If that's the case, take a look at ffmpegX (<http://homepage.mac.com/major4/>), an OS X version of the open source ffmpeg video encoder. It's shareware and a bit complicated, but if you work through the instructions you should be able to get your movies into a format you like.

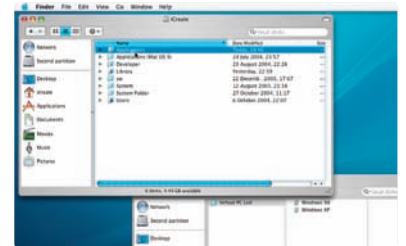
How many PCs can a Mac take?



All my Virtual PC disk images are large now - over 1Gb - and I'd like to share them with the other users on my G5 so they don't have to have their own. How can I do this?

Nick Lord
Email

A It's quite simple to do this, but it relies on you putting your images in a place everyone can access. After everyone's run Virtual PC once to get their preferences set up, do the following:



Location, location

1 Move your Virtual PC List folder from your Documents folder to somewhere that's accessible to everyone - for example, the Shared folder or the Applications folder.

Lost in the mail

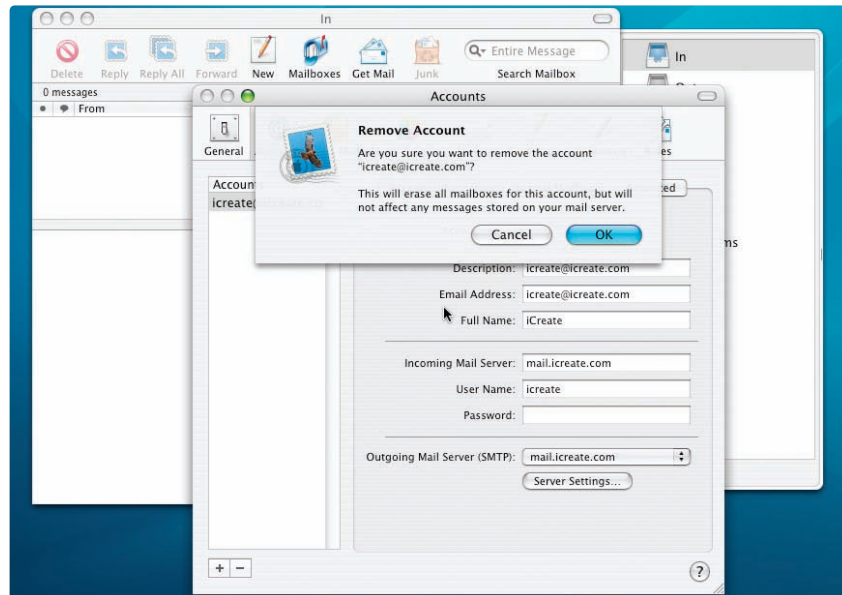


Thanks very much for a great magazine. I recently deleted an account in Mail as detailed in your first issue. Unfortunately, thousands of emails sent to that account then disappeared, along with the email addresses of their senders! This is a catastrophe for me. Is it possible to retrieve them? I've looked in the Library and they're not there...

David Thorpe
Email

A We're not sure how to break this to you, but they're gone. When you delete an account and click on the 'OK' button to confirm that you'd like to delete the account and any mail you may have downloaded, that's it. It's gone. Not trashed, not stuck in a secret folder somewhere, as OS X sometimes does, but wiped from your hard drive. We don't think this a particularly nice feature of Mail: it would be better if everything got shunted off to the Trash in case you had second thoughts or the full impact of the warning message didn't register with you.

It might be possible to recover the files using something like Norton Utilities or Data Rescue, but given the length of time, and so on, it seems likely your Mac will have wiped them off your drive. We can only recommend investing in some backup software. Apple's Backup software is free to members of .Mac and will back up to iDisk, CD or DVD so is worth looking at, as is Dantz's Retrospect. Email accounts from .Mac are also IMAP compatible, so if you have enough storage space, you could leave all your emails online instead of at the mercy of your hard drive and Mail's whimsies. Finally,



You have been warned: once you delete an account from Mail that's it: the settings, folders and email messages will be gone. Delete wisely!

Norton Utilities has a feature for tracking files so that if they're deleted, they're easier to recover. But we're afraid your Mail files are long gone.

The format wars again



I have just purchased a 20-inch iMac G5 for graphic design and DVD creation. I have about 50 DVD+RWs with camcorder, TV stuff, etc on them, which I want to edit down to a finished product for archiving. My problem is when I try to import the contents of the DVD in to iMovie it comes up with the error 'Philips_dvd_vr can't be imported: QuickTime couldn't parse it -43'. I have tried using Toast just to do an exact

copy and it thinks the DVD+RW is copy-protected, but it is not as it was recorded on my own Philips standalone recorder of which the video content is personal stuff. Can you guide me, as one month after buying this expensive product I have not had any success with iMovie?

Conor J Gibney
Email

A I'm afraid, Conor, you've been lulled into a false sense security by CD-R and CD-RW into thinking that the computing industry can agree on standards. For the most part it can't and the current state of the DVD recordable market just goes to show it. There are in

Apple updates

To make sure you have the latest software versions purring away on your Mac, click on the little Apple icon at the top-left of the screen. Choose 'Software Update' from the pull-down menu. If you're connected to the Web, this utility will check out the status of your Mac and give you a list of the latest updates available. You can then tell your Mac to download and install them. Updates are constantly being released so take a look at www.apple.com for the latest list. If you're a .Mac member, login to www.mac.com and check out the latest goodies that you may not have spotted. For example, there are currently three sets of free Apple Loops waiting to put some oomph into your GarageBand compositions.

iCal 1.5.4

A security fix for imported events with alarms. If you don't import events into iCal, don't bother. Otherwise, grab it while it's hot.

iPod Updater 2004-11-15

Updates the iPod mini's and the 4Gb iPod's software to work with iTunes 4.7. The iPod's USB 2.0 connection will be improved as well and the mini will get a whole load of extras, such as the facility to create multiple on-the-go playlists, select reading playback speed with audio books and shuffle and play the song library with one click.

Power Mac G5 (June 2004) Firmware Update 5.1.8f7

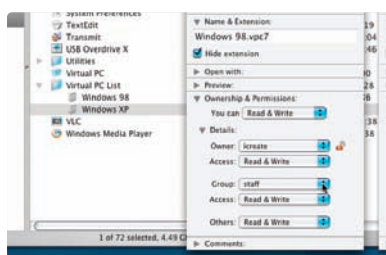
Another firmware update to improve system stability for the Power Mac G5. How often do these things crash?

AirPort 4.1

Anyone using AirPort: get this. Not only does it enable you to extend your network securely (unlike before), it also enables you to give your USB printer a friendly name when attached to an AirPort base station and lets you use a Keyspan Express Remote to control AirTunes. Those are the headline items, but the fact our AirPort Base Station has actually now become reliable makes us suspect there's more going on, too. Go get it.

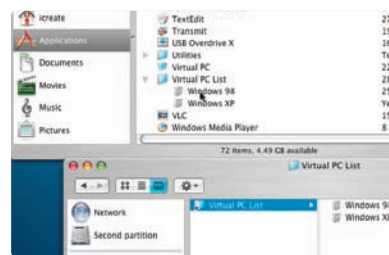
DVD Studio Pro 3.0.2

Another generic 'improves stability' update. It will also improve compilation times, so that's a bonus. For some reason, Apple "strongly recommends" this one. It's just been kidding about the others, then?



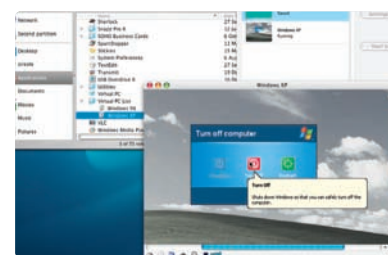
Getting permission

2 With the folder moved to a new location, the next step is to set the permissions on your Virtual PC images so that they're writable by anyone in the 'staff' group.



Not quite Sidney Bristow

3 Now, make an alias of the Virtual PC List folder in your Documents folder. When done, get everyone else to repeat this process with their own Documents folders.



Crank it up

4 Now everyone should be able to run Virtual PC without problem. Remember, though: saved states will be shared between users, so shut down Windows after each use.

File name gibberish

X I've set up file sharing on a Mac in our office and use it to share files with our other Macs. However, recently we've noticed that when we copy some files to and from the Mac, their names end up being changed so they have "#", and some rubbish afterwards. What's going on?

Phil Newson
Email

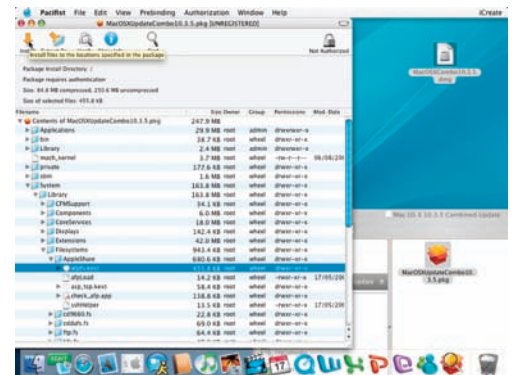
A You've probably recently updated your Macs to OS X 10.3.6, haven't you? Either that or you're all running OS 9, you laggards. What you're seeing is 'long filename truncation'. Once upon a time, all filenames were 31 characters or fewer on a Mac. Then OS X came along and allowed Macs to store filenames up to 255 characters long. The trouble is, OS X 10.3.6 has introduced a bug whereby some files, particularly those on file

servers, have their names chopped off to meet the 31-character limit again.

You can get round most of the problems 10.3.6 has introduced by either using filenames with only 31 characters or fewer or downloading a copy of the OS X 10.3.5 combo updater from the Apple Web site (www.apple.com/support/downloads) and using Pacifist from

www.charlessoft.com to replace the guilty party: it's in System/Library/Filesystems/AppleShare and it's called 'afps.kext'.

The updater comes as a disk image, .dmg. Double-click on it to mount it then drag the updater package, .pkg, onto Pacifist to open it. Navigate down to 'afps.kext' and click on the 'Install'



A handy utility called Pacifist will enable you to weed out the long file name bug in OS X 10.3.6

button in the toolbar to replace your existing one. You'll need to restart your Mac to get the benefits, but you might still notice problems with certain synchronisation programs such as You Synchronize. It'll take 10.3.7 to fix that at least.

fact five different types of recordable DVD (DVD-RAM, DVD-R, DVD+R, DVD-RW and DVD+RW) out there at the moment and they're not really that compatible. The thing to look out for is the plus or minus sign. DVD-R and DVD-RW are basically the same thing, are supported by most of the industry, and will play on your Mac. DVD+R and DVD+RW are a 'rebel' standard from primarily (yes, you guessed it) Philips, and will not play on your Mac. DVD-RAM comes in a cartridge and requires a completely different player from all of them.

Now you can put DVD+Rs and DVD+RWs into your iMac's DVD drive, it can even potentially mount them, but reading the data off them is right out - 'error -43' means 'file not found'.

Panther does have built in support for reading +R and +RW discs, so if you invest in an external +R/+RW reader, you'll be able to plug it into your iMac and read the discs, no problem. Your next option is to find a computer with a multi-reader (compatible with -R/+R/-RW/+RW) and then copy the files onto DVD-Rs or over a network to your iMac.

Webmail in Mail

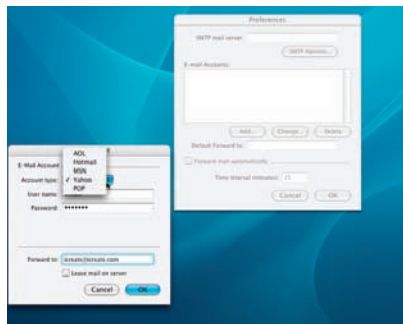


I read your magazine often. Right now I have a problem that I'm hoping you can help me with. I'm using Mac OS 10.3.5 and I would like to make my Yahoo! Mail work with either

Apple's Mail or Entourage. Is there a way to do that?

Marios Softwares
Email

A There's a couple of ways. One is to pay Yahoo! Mail to give you POP access to your mail as part of its Yahoo! Mail Plus service. It'll cost you £11.99 per year and you'll get a load of extra service. Since both Mail and Entourage can access POP mail accounts, that'll give you access in either of those two programs. Alternatively, if you have a POP email account, then a piece of shareware called Mail Forward, available for \$15 from www.sspi-software.com/mailfwd_macx.html, might be more interesting. It can forward Hotmail, MSN,



A nifty utility called Mail Forward makes it possible to download Yahoo! Webmail into Apple's Mail program

Yahoo!, AOL, or POP mail to any email address you like. So if your ISP provided you with a POP email account, you could use that in conjunction with Mail Forward to get at your email.

Bluetooth blues

X I would be grateful if you could offer any advice on the following, please. I've just bought a Belkin Bluetooth dongle for my iBook and a Motorola V3 Razr mobile phone. Bluetooth Setup Assistant cannot pair with my mobile as a mobile phone: it will only see and successfully pair with my phone under the 'Other device' setting and not as a proper mobile phone in the Setup Assistant. Under this 'Other device' setting, my computer and phone can communicate fine, meaning I can send and receive files from both my computer and mobile.

Unfortunately, my problem is that when I try and send SMS messages from Address Book, I right-click on a name, as your tutorial in issue seven shows, but the SMS message function is greyed out, even though the phone is paired with Address Book successfully. Also, the 'dial through the phone' option is also greyed out, as is the 'allow Bluetooth devices to wake this computer' in Bluetooth settings... You can only imagine the frustration! Can you help?

Chris Smith
Email

Pause for thought



I use my PowerBook to view photos in my studio while doing portrait sculpture. But the maximum delay between slides in iPhoto's slideshow is 60 seconds. I need to examine each photo for longer. My query is: can I have the slideshow but

change between shots as I want by pressing the 'end' arrow in the slideshow?
Howard Baker
 Email

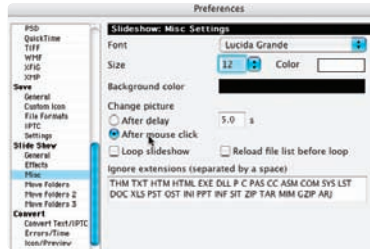
A Unfortunately not, Howard. However, there are programs that offer facilities to enable you to do just that, such as

the outstanding *Graphic Converter* from www.lemkesoft.com. It's shareware but well worth the price and only a few features are disabled until you've turned over the cash. Thankfully, though, slideshows aren't one of them, so we'd definitely recommend that you head to the site and check it out.



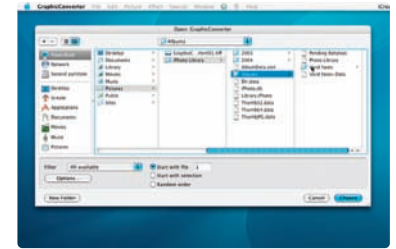
Get the projector out

1 Once you've downloaded Graphic Converter, run it and then pick 'Show a slideshow...'. In the next screen, click 'Options' at the bottom left.



Set the changes

2 When the Preferences screen appears, click 'Slideshow: Misc' and switch the 'change picture' setting from 'After delay' to 'After mouse click'.



Stick it in your family album

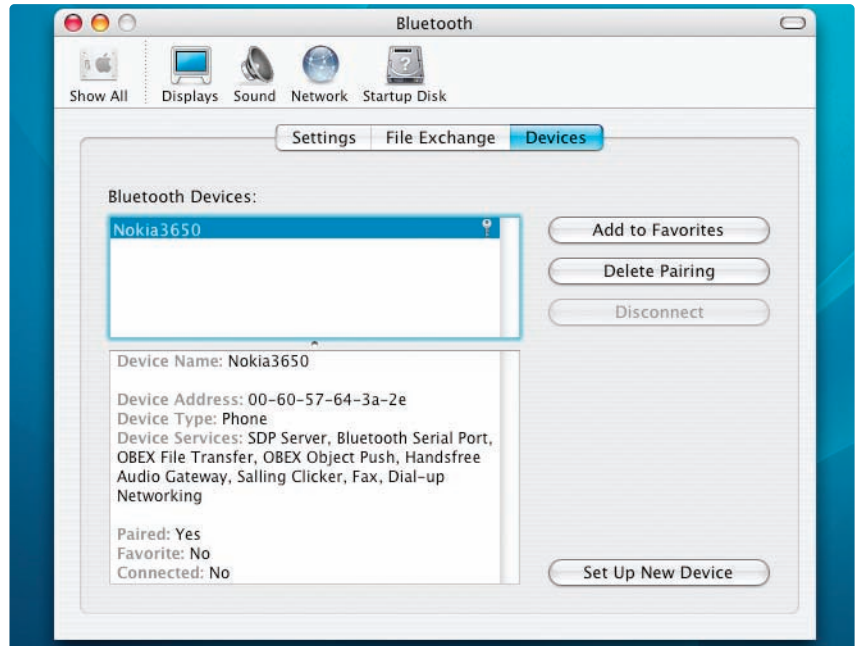
3 Click 'OK' and then navigate to the album you want: it will be in the Albums folder in your iPhoto Library. Click 'Choose' to start the show.

A Bluetooth is more of an aspiration to a standard rather than an actual standard. When it was drawn up, there were all sorts of holes in it that various manufacturers tried to patch with their own ideas. The result is that there are plenty of devices on the market that don't quite work as advertised with all the other devices on the market.

Case in point: the Motorola V3. Bluetooth pairing relies on devices advertising their services – what they're capable of doing – to each other. Here's what a Sony Ericsson T610 advertises: "Dial-up Networking, Voice gateway, Serial Port 1, Serial Port 2, OBEX Object Push, IrMC Synchronization, HF Voice gateway, OBEX Basic Imaging, OBEX File Transfer". Most of these are pretty standard and even self-explanatory. Now here's what a Motorola phone typically advertises: "Gerbang Suara, Gateway Hands-Free Suara, OBEX Object Push, Transfer OBEX File, Samb.GerbangJar." Which, erm, aren't really self-explanatory or standard.

Motorola has effectively made up its own versions of everything Bluetooth, which it can do because it writes the Windows software that communicates with its phones – you can talk in code if you want, provided everyone involved knows the code.

When your iBook tries to communicate with your V3, it looks for those services that identify it as a phone – and finds cobblers instead. Naturally, it regards it as 'Other device' since it doesn't have a clue what it actually is. And if it can't pair properly with the V3 as a mobile phone, it won't be able to



Bluetooth is not quite a standard technology and some manufacturers, like Motorola, have their own, not particularly Mac-friendly, implementations

use the dialling or SMS capabilities (particularly if it doesn't know what they're called. Samb.GerbangJar anyone?)

So what's the solution? Short of Apple rewriting its Bluetooth implementation to cope with Motorola's eccentricities or Motorola rewriting its Windows software to run on OS X, V3 owners are going to have to rely on USB cables. We've had reports of

iSync being able to work with V3s over USB, even though it's not officially supported (www.apple.com/isync/devices.html is always a good place to start when considering which mobile phones to buy, since it lets you know which phones are definitely compatible with a Mac), but as of yet, no one appears to have managed to get an Internet connection using one.