

Mac Matters – The Newsletter of New To Mac



Tiger R.I.P.

You may or my not know that Apple only support the current version of the operating system and the previous one which means that they are currently supporting both Snow Leopard and Leopard. This doesn't mean that if you have a problem with a machine running Tiger that you can't take it to an Apple Store and ask the genius for help. What it does mean is that Apple have stopped developing it any further and will no longer be issuing security updates. Things do move on on the Internet and new security issues do arise from time to time. An article in one of the current Mac magazines goes so far as to suggest that if you are running a Tiger machine you would be unwise to connect it to the Internet. I'm not sure if that could be considered over the top but it's something worth considering .

To further complicate this, some of you may know that I keep an old machine with two internal disc drives (one running Tiger, the other running Panther) which I use when giving telephone support to someone using these operating systems. I'm able to boot into the same system and see exactly what you're seeing so that I can talk you through which menu options to choose etc. I'm afraid that the power supply in this machine has failed and a new one is extremely difficult to find. The only place I can find one is asking £199 plus VAT! Sadly, this makes it and an uneconomic repair. Now could be a good time for you to upgrade!

Mick

Lion

Apple are predicting the release of the next version of the operating system, 10.7, codenamed Lion, in July. The upgrade price has been set at £20.99 but only via the App Store so only for Snow Leopard users. I'm not sure what the situation will be for those using Leopard or earlier. There's a preview available at <http://www.apple.com/uk/macosx/lion/> but briefly they will be pushing on with the Mac App Store which was launched in 10.6.6, and debuting Launchpad. The cynic in me sees this as being very similar to having your Applications folder on your dock. The difference is that instead of a Finder window opening, Launchpad will spread your application icons across the desktop like the iPad. Applications will now be able to run full-screen i.e. without either the dock or the menu bar showing. Whilst I'm pretty sure they won't abandon support for the mouse, laptop sales far exceed those of desktop machines and so Lion will include more support for multi-fingered swipes and gestures. Perhaps that's why they launched the trackpad for desk machines recently!

The feature called Versions will track how you alter a document so that you can revert to a previous version in much the same way that Time Machine currently handles your backups. Lion will include version 5 of Mail which will look far more like the version on the iPad.

It's always worth checking

Apple equipment does have a reputation for being reliable but it does sometimes go wrong. I've had a problem with my laptop recently. At switch on, I often only had the top third of the screen working and the rest of it was black. I discovered that I could get it working properly by either forcing it to shut down and then starting it again or by closing the lid and opening

it. However, it gradually got worse and worse, needing more lid closing or restarting to get it going. I ran Apple's hardware test (did you know you have that on your grey discs that came with your machine?) but that failed to show a fault as I had the screen working at the time.

I decided to bite the bullet and take it to an Apple Store for diagnosis. I had already taken the decision that a repair of up to £200 would be fine but if it was going to be £500 or more then I wouldn't want to spend that amount of money on a four-year-old machine but would rather put it towards a new one. I'm not sure what I would have done if the repair cost had been somewhere in the middle.

In the event, the Genius connected a hard drive and ran a special programme which instantly said my graphics card was failing. But, and here's the point of me telling you this, it was a known fault and even though the machine is well out of warranty, Nvidia (the graphics card manufacturer) are replacing the cards at no cost. I wonder how many laptops of that age have ended up on Ebay for spares when they could have had a free repair! Oh, and out of interest, I asked what the cost would have been had it been chargeable - £600!

Help via phone or iChat

I'm very happy to give support using the phone or more often iChat and as many will know I don't charge for this. This is because most people I help this way do call me out from time to time on a chargeable basis. I still intend this 'virtual' help to be free for my regular and occasional clients, but for those who require only 'online' help there will now be a charge for providing this service if the help is over 15 minutes duration which I hope will be acceptable.