



MacMedics

MacMedics' InfoSource - May 2004

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Security Alert

The first major security risk for Mac OS X has been discovered this past week. The vulnerability could allow someone to potentially hijack your computer by visiting a website with your browser (the hole affects Safari, Internet Explorer and Mozilla based browsers). This is not a virus, so anti-virus programs will not detect if your machine is being attacked. The way it works is through exploiting the Help and Disk protocols. These were designed with certain automated tasks built in, and these are what are being targeted.

Apple is aware of the problem, and has released a Security Update. We recommend that you install this patch as soon as possible through Software Update. It does not require you to restart your computer, so it should not interrupt your workflow. However, this patch only addresses the Help vulnerability. OS X is still susceptible to the Disk vulnerability. Until Apple releases an update for this there are several things you can do to secure your computer. First, and most importantly, when you are using Safari go to Preferences: General and make sure 'Open "safe" files after downloading' is unchecked. The second thing you can do is to download a free copy of 'More Internet Preferences' from <http://www.monkeyfood.com/software>. It installs as a pane in your System Preferences. From here you can assign helper applications for 'disk' and 'disks.'

For more information on this vulnerability and what to do about it, please visit Secunia.com.



Microsoft Office 2004

Microsoft is now Shipping Office 2004 for Mac, and the universal sentiment is that this is a 'Good Thing.' Overall improvements include the use of Apple's Quartz technology for smooth drop shadows and transparencies throughout the suite. To go with these new features, some not even found in the Window's counterpart, a Compatibility Report will highlight parts of your document and allow you to turn off the features or leave them 'as is' so you can rest assured of how your document will appear when opened on a Windows machine or in an older version of Office.



Word has a new enhanced Notebook Layout view, great for taking notes in a meeting, and even has the ability to record audio, time stamp it, and specify who was talking. Excel adds Function ScreenTips to instantly display correct function syntax. PowerPoint gains an on-screen clock, visible only to you, to help you keep your

presentations timed perfectly. Entourage features enhanced junk mail protection, and now acts as the starting point for the new Project Center, the place to go for every part of your ongoing project. Virtual PC now supports G5 processors.

You can get Office 2004 in three packages: Students and Teachers Bundle, Standard Bundle and Professional Bundle. Each bundle is available as an upgrade to owners of previous versions of Office (back to Office 98). Individual programs and upgrades are also available. We've just learned that Virtual PC will be delayed until toward the end of the year, so currently only the Educational and Standard bundles are available.

[For more information, along with screen shots, please visit our website.](#)

Quark Patch

In the February issue of InfoSource we wrote about Quark's XPress 6.1 Update. For those of you who have updated but are still having problems with XPress unexpectedly quitting, Quark has a patch out. The problems can occur when you have nested folders inside your Fonts folder or if you are using font management software and working with PDF's.

[More information, along with instructions and the file to download, are available at Quark's website.](#)



New iTunes Features

Apple recently released an update to iTunes, bringing it up to version 4.5. Four new features stand out in particular. 'Party Shuffle' is a new type of playlist that will randomly pick songs from your library or another playlist and display a list of upcoming and past songs. You can easily add songs to the list, move them up in the play order or remove songs from the list. Also, it's now possible to convert unprotected Windows Media files (.wma) to AAC or mp3 formats for playback in iTunes, which is great news for Windows users (or former users) who imported all their CDs through the Windows Media Player. A third new feature, which ties in with Apple's Music Store, is something called iMix. You can publish your playlists to the Music Store for others to browse and rate. You can listen to 30 seconds of each song from the available iMix's and purchase individual tracks or the entire mix. It's a great way to explore new music. The final new feature is a small tweak to iTunes' interface. An arrow is displayed next to each track name, artist name, and album name, and when the arrow is clicked, iTunes takes you to the Music Store entry for that item. Is this a blatant push to get you to buy more music? Probably, but it's also a great way to learn more about the music you already have.



[iTunes website.](#)

When Lightning Strikes

Summertime is here, and along with it, thunderstorms. Why are we writing about the weather? Every year around this time we see an increase in the number of customers who bring in "lightning-fried" computers. Fortunately, there are steps you can take to prevent



tragedy striking. It's simple enough to make sure all your electrical devices are plugged into a surge protector, and make sure your surge protector has a port for your phone line or Ethernet cable. Lightning strikes can do damage to your equipment through your network connection as well. To make sure you don't lose any work when the power goes out, we recommend that you have an Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS) hooked up to your computer. A UPS unit has a rechargeable battery - you plug one end into the wall to charge it and the other end into your computer. When the power goes out the UPS automatically starts up, providing your computer with continuous power for between 20 minutes and a couple hours – more than enough time to save all our files and safely shut down the computer.



For more information on making sure your computer and data networks make it through the stormy season, please give us a call.

Special InfoSource Offer - Free Backup Plan Consultation

In keeping with this issue's theme of caution, our special offer to our readers this month is a free assessment/consultation of your back up plans. Are you prepared for when lightning strikes – or even worse, when a hard drive fails? Give us a call and we'll help you determine if you're on the right path to safeguarding your computers and data. And if not, we can make some simple recommendations to let you rest easier.



Contact us to set up your consultation.

WAYS TO REACH US

Contact us at any time to discuss your needs. Suggestions are always welcome. If you wish to be removed from our mailing list, simply click on the 'unsubscribe' link below and your subscription will be removed.

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