

California Computer Care

News,
Views,
Tips and
Cool Techniques
for CCC Members

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We
speak
Geek,
so you
don't
have to.

MacWorld Expo 2009

Time again for the MacWorld report. This year the annual Macintosh and Apple technology was overshadowed by Apple CEO Steve Jobs' decision to skip his traditional personal appearance, delegating the keynote speech to Apple's Senior Marketing VP Phil Shiller. Shiller often appears during Jobs' speeches as comic relief; this year he was *The Man*. And, he did a fine job. You can see Shiller's presentation: <http://www.apple.com/quicktime/qtv/macworld-san-francisco-2009>



Why did Jobs skip out on the keynote speech? The news media and Wall Street became obsessed with this question, ignoring Shiller and virtually all other news from the show. Jobs, as usual, said nothing, only admitting after the close of the show that his health problems were driving him to a medical leave for the next six months. See more here: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/technology/7829879.stm>

Apple also announced that 2009 was the last. Not the last MacWorld, Apple has never owned MacWorld Expo, a conference and convention organizing company named IDG does. But, Apple can decline to attend the show, so next year they will go missing. Sadly, it makes sense. Trade shows, conferences and conventions are fading. In the past, MacWorld provided, once a year, a place to learn about new technologies. Today, this information is available to everyone, at any time, on the internet; for free.

From Apple's perspective, MacWorld provided a yearly venue to reach 50,000 rabid fans with its latest wonders. But, now Apple has a world-spanning chain of retail stores that see over 3 million visitors every week! It no longer makes sense to spend millions of dollars to reach 50,000 people when the same amount of money would get their message to millions of potential buyers. Too bad.

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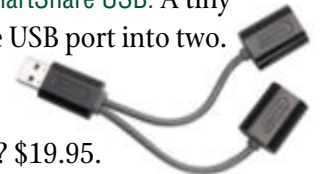
MacWorld is about more than Apple. The real value of MacWorld is not in the big media events, but rather, in the classes that teach us how to use and create software and hardware, troubleshoot problems and more. You get to meet the creative people that produce wonderful technologies and chat with your peers. If MacWorld survives without Apple, it will be on the strength of these attributes.

As for me, I go to learn and to see. Primarily, I go to see and try out the little products from little companies that create great things. They don't have the money for big ad campaigns and are overlooked by the scandal and celebrity-driven news media. Apple, Microsoft, Adobe easily get their messages out to everyone. But, what about these guys:

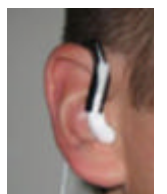
Avery Design Pro for Mac: The label kings are back with free Mac design software. Slick and easy to use in my tests. Create mailing labels, business cards, t-shirt transfers and more. Free. <http://www.avery.com>



Griffin Technology SmartShare USB. A tiny cable that splits one USB port into two. So simple and so useful. Where have you been all my life? \$19.95. <http://www.griffintechology.com>



Innovelis BudFits. Soft, comfortable, over ear hooks that hold your iPod ear buds in place without jamming them into your aching ears. \$8.99. Also, CordFits, a quick way to adjust the length of your iPod ear bud cord. CordFits coming soon. <http://www.budfits.com>



Orbucule Undercover. Clever software for your Mac that takes a picture of the thief and phones home with its location when your stolen Mac inevitably gets connected to the internet. They claim a 96% recovery rate. \$49.00. <http://www.orbucule.com>

Linotype FontExplorer X Pro. A free, light version has been out for several years. The new Pro version enhances this best of all font managers with new features and improved capabilities. \$79.00. Show special \$40.00 off until Feb. 28, 2009. <http://www.fontexplorerx.com>

Eye-Fi wireless memory card. What if your digital camera could automatically and wirelessly connect to your Mac and the internet, upload your pictures to iPhoto, MobileMe, Facebook, Flickr and Picasa as you like? This 2GB SD memory card does that and more. New, iPhone support is free! Starts at \$79.99. <http://www.eye.fi>



Data Robotics Drobo. Take the Drobo box, fill it with bare hard drives (any size) and *Voilà!* mass storage for the masses. Redundant data protection and self-repairing if a drive breaks. Up to 16TB! If you need lots and lots of hard drive space, Drobo is your best choice. From \$499.00. <http://www.drobo.com>



Polar Bear Farm. I couldn't find their booth, but I can't resist the name. <http://www.polarbearfarm.com>

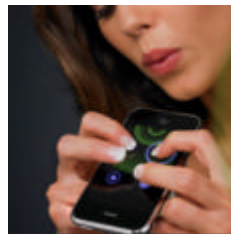
Miccus BluBridge. Snap this onto almost any iPod or iPhone to connect via Bluetooth wireless technology to wireless speakers, headphones and more. Powered by the iPod/iPhone, no batteries to fiddle with. \$59.99. <http://www.miccus.com/products/blubridge-for-ipod>



Kensington SlimBlade Trackball. I'm not a fan of trackballs, but this one is so low profile, sexy and smooth in action that I'm tempted anyway! \$129.99 available soon. <http://us.kensington.com/html/16632.html>



Smule Ocarina. Yes, it doesn't get nuttier than this! Turn your iPhone into a musical instrument. Blow into the microphone and finger the on screen keys to play your favorite songs. Upload your masterpieces for free to Smule's web servers and share with the world. Click on the world globe to hear other Ocarina players' greatest hits. It's amazing, sounds pretty and really works. Check *YouTube* for videos (search on ocarina). 99¢ at the iTunes App Store. <http://ocarina.smule.com>



January Tip—

A new threat...

The bad guys are sooooo clever.

Built into Mac OS X 10.4 and 10.5 (Tiger and Leopard) is an RSS reader. RSS (Really Simple Syndication) is a technology that allows us to subscribe to news services like the New York Times and CNN. With RSS you automatically receive lists of news stories instead of having to manually go to web pages and find them. To subscribe, look for the RSS icon on the web page of your favorite news service.

OK. RSS is a nice and useful technology, but there's always a spoilsport out there to steal the fun away. The bad guys have discovered a flaw in the Safari web browser's use of RSS that they can tweak to take control of your Mac and steal your passwords, user names and vital files. Not a good thing!

Luckily, the fix is easy and free. Open Safari, choose Preferences... from the Safari menu, click the RSS tab and set the Default RSS reader to anything *BUT* Safari. Close Preferences and you are safe.

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Like an
auto club
for your
computer.