

Devote some time to computer maintenance

A publisher recently asked me to write a simple overview of what you can do for your computer when things start going wrong.

The best way to keep things from going south on your computer is regular maintenance.

Let's start with Mac OS9 or less, since many of you are still running these machines or still have one in your shop.

By today's standards, System 9 is old. Apple released Mac OS X six years ago, in March 2001, the same year most software companies stopped writing software for OS9 machines. To find the real tools to work over older machines, you're probably going to have to go Web sites that sell used software.

Most of you are familiar with Norton Utilities, which was the standard program for many years. Norton stopped producing the software for Apple when OS X started doing its own system maintenance. Now the Mac operating system optimizes the drive in the background as you work.

If you're looking for an old version of Norton for a Mac OS9 machine, you need version 6 through 8. Version 8 also works on older OS 10.1 and 10.2 machines.

If you have OS10.3, do not run speed disk. Trying to defrag a drive that Apple's operating system has optimized doesn't work well and can damage your files.

Another piece of software that worked well on the older OS9 machines was Disk Warrior. For the past 20 years, Disk Warrior has been the best software for recovering crashed hard drives. If you want to keep your older machines running well, put this software on your list. Older versions – 3 and back – work



computer notes
from the road

by WILMA MELOT

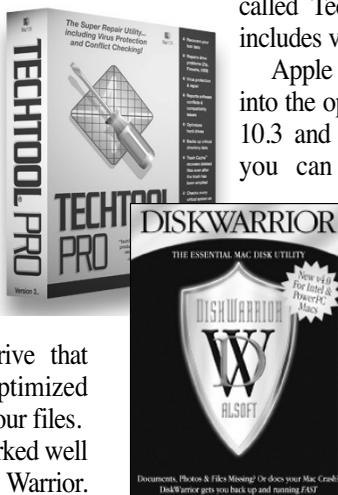
well on OS9 machines. The current version of this software, Disk Warrior 4, runs on Power PC or Intel OS X machines.

TechTool Pro offers a new version of software that works on OS9 machines. It's called TechTool Pro Classic and includes virus protection.

Apple has its own tools built into the operating system for OS X 10.3 and newer machines. While you can use it to keep your machine running smoothly, I still rely on some third party software to keep things in top-notch condition.

TechTool Pro is the best software to use to boot your computer and run diagnostics. No other program comes close to this

product for computer maintenance. This company is working closely with Apple to provide diagnostics for our current Macintosh computers.



Let's take a look at what Apple added to their operating system.

Many of you probably remember holding down Apple Option while restarting to rebuild the desktop. If you're running OS9 or less you should still be doing this. For newer machines, Apple has a disk utility that provides first aid, but works much better. It allows you to repair file permissions on your drive, which are how your computer keeps track of what files go where and who can access them. It also verifies and repairs the hard disk if you boot from the system CD, which is good to do occasionally.

Another highly recommended software is OnyX. This software puts an easy-to-use interface on Unix lingo commands generally accessed through the terminal. While it's free to download and operate, I would read up on it before trying it.

For Windows machines, many tools are built into the operating system to help with system maintenance. Look under "all programs," "accessories," "system tools" for disk clean up, disk defragmenter and, best of all, system restore.

System restore allows you to "roll back" to a previous, more stable state of the operating system. Just select a date when your computer is running well and if your machine crashes, revert back to that date. Just knowing this feature is available may save you many sleepless nights. Mac OS X 10.5 also will have this feature.

The best thing you can do for a Windows machine is keep your virus protection up to date!

Take some time this summer and run a little maintenance on your computers. Devoting a few hours to maintenance now can prevent many computer problems down the road.



FreeAgent Go drives

A smarter backup storage drive is now available. The FreeAgent Go drive is not only able to back up your files but also run programs without ever using your computer's hard drive.

This portable USB external drive plugs into your Windows computer and lets you work with programs on the external drive. Jerry Denson from Arnett was looking for something like this a couple of years ago and now there's finally a good solution. The 160GB drive retails for \$118 and is small enough to put in your pocket.

This drive has its own Windows-like software integrated onto the drive. It lets you take all of your important applications and data on the road with you and backup files from one machine to another.

You're going to have to install your own applications on the drive, which requires some extra software called Argo (\$40 from Seagate).

FreeAgent Go works best with Window XP or Vista. On a Mac it works like any external hard drive. A firewire version that uses External Serial ATA is also available. This larger 750GB drive retails for \$275.

This looks like a great gadget for you guys on the go.

Viers CS3 training videos

Many of you may remember Russell Viers from previous training workshops.

Now you can get Viers' training without leaving the office. Take a look at his YabbAdobeDoo Training Videos Web site. The online training videos are informative and well done. Check it out on the Web at: www.yabb-adobe-doo.com/yabtrain.html.

Training books for CS3

The Adobe Creative Suite 3 Bible is available in paperback for \$30 on some of the bigger Web sites. This is a great reference manual.

Adobe InDesign CS3 Classroom in a Book (paperback) retails for around \$35. It's a great training, not reference, manual. Also look for the Photoshop version of this book.

The Adobe Creative Suite 3 Design Premium All-in-One Desk Reference For Dummies is well written and a good reference for \$25.

Positive reviews for open source software

When I first heard of Open Source software I thought it was probably too good to be true.

So I put it on the back burner to examine later. With the price of software skyrocketing, it's time to dust it off and re-examine some of this free software.

For instance, NeoOffice is the open source software that tries to emulate Microsoft Office.

NeoOffice provides a set of office applications for Mac OS X including word processing, spreadsheet, database, presentation and a drawing program.

Based on the OpenOffice.org office suite, NeoOffice has integrated dozens of native Mac features and can import, edit and exchange files with other popular office programs such as Microsoft Office.

Released as free, open source software under the GNU General Public License (GPL), NeoOffice is fully functional and stable

enough for every day use. The software is actively developed, so improvements and small updates are made available on a regular basis. This is software being created as we use it. We get to tell the programmers what we don't like and they can try to improve it.

After taking a deep breath, I downloaded NeoOffice to my external hard drive. (I didn't want my computer messed up if there were problems.)

It was a standard install but I did carefully read all the "read me" files that came with the program.

To my delight, the program runs fine and works well. I've been using it off and on for about a week now and have found it provides a lot of the basic functions we need in a newsroom.

It opens Word documents, merges to labels and has cool features for doing presentations. What more could you ask for?

It also saves in formats we can use with our

layout programs. And while it's not going to replace Photoshop and I wouldn't recommend using it as a photo editor, it does have a CMYK color model.

You can find this software at www.neooffice.org.

The Windows version of this software is called OpenOffice 2 and is available for download at <http://why.openoffice.org/>.

Reviews of these software programs have been positive. OpenOffice has been around for some time in a fairly stable format. Take a look and see what you think.

Open Source software probably isn't going to replace the big software giants like InDesign, Quark and Photoshop.

However, for some of the small office tasks or just for typing stations you will find this software is good enough.

Plus, you can't beat the price – it's free, except for the time you put into it.

