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The Time Machine

The Digital
Plumber
By Paul Ellis

Leopard's Killer App is, of course, Time Machine. Immediately after installing Leopard or setting up a new Leopard Mac, when you plug in an external disk, Time Machine will pop up and ask you if you wish to use it as a backup destination. Just say yes, and Bob's your uncle. It really is that simple, really does work (I've tried it), and this single feature alone justifies Leopard's price of admission. It's not the be-all and end-all of backup though, and requires a bit of thought to get the best out of it.

FISH OR FOWL?

Time Machine is a weird sort of thing. MacInTouch says "Time Machine is separate from the Finder, and it's located in the Applications folder, although it is not an application, per se. There are several separate components: an invisible background program that performs periodic backups; a System Preference pane that configures Time Machine; the Time Machine icon in the Dock, which performs certain operations (such as Backup Now); a program in the Applications folder which searches and restores from Time Machine's backups in conjunction with the Finder; and Help, which is only available by searching for "Time Machine" from Mac Help in the Finder". As SuperDuper! programmer Dave Nanian puts it "its tendrils are in everything, from the default desktop to Quick Look". By default, Time Machine will back up all volumes connected to your Mac to the Time Machine volume. Also by default, Spotlight will attempt to index the Time Machine volume.

So your first task is to open Spotlight's Preferences and add your Time Machine volume to Spotlight's Privacy list. Your second task is to open Time Machine's System Preference Pane, click the Options button and exclude your connected image archive volumes. Chronosync (<http://tinyurl.com/36yy9>) best deals with these.



Time Machine has been very thoughtfully constructed. It's possible to back up multiple Macs, and multiple users on a Mac, to a single Time Machine volume: this is what Time Capsule does (see below). A network volume shared by a Leopard Mac can also be bullied into being a Time Machine backup destination. A Mac can only have one Time Machine backup destination, which is one reason why you must exclude your image archive volumes, otherwise your Time Machine backup won't have enough space available to do its job.

Time Machine at first creates a full backup of your Mac. It then creates hourly incremental backups, copying all files that have been created or changed since the last backup. It retains hourly backups for two days, daily backups for

a month, and weekly backups thereafter. It intelligently manages hard disk space, too. Apple say "One day, no matter how large your backup drive is, it will run out of space. And Time Machine has an action plan alerts you that it will start deleting previous backups, oldest first. [This is another reason why you don't want to use Time Machine to back up your image archive.] Before it deletes any backup, Time Machine copies files that might be needed to fully restore your disk for every remaining backup. (Moral of the story: The larger the drive, the further back in time you can back up.)" If you don't like Apple's default schedule you can tweak it with Time Machine Editor (<http://tinyurl.com/yomuqc>), although I personally see no real reason to do this.

How about backing up laptops?

Apple say "When your mobile Mac is connected to your backup drive, Time Machine works as you'd expect. When it isn't connected, Time Machine also works as you'd expect. It keeps track of which files have changed since the last backup and backs them up to your backup drive the next time you connect. On any Mac, if Time Machine is unable to perform a backup, that's duly noted in its preferences pane" and d'you know what? They're right.

Time Machine is very space-efficient. It uses a special file link called a Hard Link to make links to files already backed up that haven't changed, and thereby avoids needless data duplication. This is why every timed backup folder on the Time Machine volume appears to contain a complete backup of your Mac. The only

soon be appearing on a MacBook Pro near you. It's very nice and would make a very tasty laptop for an agent, producer or PA, but I don't think it's the main laptop for a working photographer.

TIME CAPSULE

At the MacWorld Expo Apple also introduced the Time Capsule, an

Airport Extreme with a built-in hard disk for network data backup. It's intended to be a destination for wireless Time Machine backups of MacBook Air data, and I daresay it works a treat. It's available with a 500Gb or 1Tb internal disk, has Gigabit Ethernet networking and, like the Airport Extreme, a USB port for connecting a printer

and/or an additional disk. This represents a very simple way to organise Time Machine backups for a small network of Macs. Make sure, however, that any image archive volumes are excluded from Time Machine, or your Time Capsule will bust a gut in short order.

MORE IPHONE

Whatever you do, get a protective case for it, not only to prevent damage but also as a disguise. The Apple Store keeps a nice InTouch rubber sleeve for 20 quid which works a treat (<http://tinyurl.com/2zwo58>).

Next month it'll be instructions for setting up Back To My Mac, iGet Mobile, and other goodies. See you then.

Those of you still hungry for information can keep up by periodically checking my blog at www.thedigitalplumber.co.uk, where you'll also find my contact details.

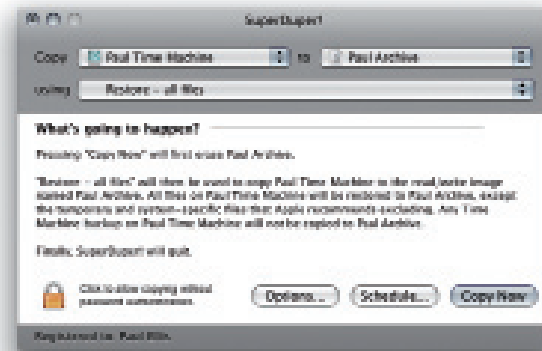
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problem with this approach is that very little other software understands what Hard Links are, and therefore until now it's been very difficult to maintain a backup of a Time Machine backup volume. SuperDuper! 2.5 to the rescue.

SUPERDUPER! IT IS, TOO

A Time Machine backup by itself isn't bootable. In combination with a Leopard Install DVD it can be used to restore a bootable volume. This is all well and good but you know what a fan I am of instantly-useable bootable backups. So is Dave Nanian, who being a thoughtful chap has put a lot of effort into making SuperDuper 2.5 the bootable backup utility of choice for Leopard. SuperDuper 2.5 understands all about Hard Links and other changes introduced by Leopard, and preserves them all. Consequently, SuperDuper! 2.5 can be used to clone a Time Machine volume to another disk, meaning you can keep that copy offsite. Excellent. But Even Better Than That, SuperDuper 2.5 can make a fully-bootable backup of your Mac's boot volume directly onto your Time Machine volume without getting in anything's way. This is extremely clever and useful, because it means that you don't have to have multiple backup disks plugged in, or have your backup disk partitioned. Simple, and just the way we like it. The icing on the cake is SuperDuper! 2.5's new Restore script, which you use to clone your bootable backup from the Time Machine volume to another disk. Only the SuperDuper! backup data is restored; Time Machine data on that disk is ignored.

So, use Time Machine. It works. In



combination with SuperDuper 2.5 it works brilliantly. Never be caught again without a useful backup of your work, and keep a copy somewhere off-site. This is the cheapest business insurance you'll ever get.

NEW APPLE GOODIES - MACBOOK AIR

Ooh, looks nice, doesn't it? And light, too. Just the job for swanky client presentations and the camera bag. Well, perhaps; but bear in mind that in its cheapest form it costs nearly as much as a MacBook Pro and does far less. In particular it has no FireWire ports (so no FireWire-tethered shooting and no FireWire Target Disk Mode), no built-in Ethernet (available only with a USB Ethernet adapter), no expansion card slot and no built-in optical drive (a £65 add-on). It depends entirely on wireless networking to function, and one of its most clever tricks is to be able to wirelessly use the optical drive in another Mac. That implies, however, that there's another Mac around with an optical drive to use. It has a very tactile, large, multi-touch trackpad which we can assume will