

# The Academy of Plumbing 30

## The List 2008

### Part I




# The Digital Plumber


## By Paul Ellis


Looking at my weblogs, my online version of *The List* from July 2007 has become a popular resource. A year later Leopard is firmly established, bringing with it new possibilities; new applications have made an appearance and become favourites, overshadowing older ones, so I reckoned it was time to spruce it up. The List consists of software I find useful and recommend you have copies of. It's categorised by function and accompanied by a sentence of explanation, approximate price and, where feasible, a free alternative. The asterisks show my "first choice" recommendations. The version at <http://www.thedigitalplumber.co.uk/thelist.html> is fully linked: click on an application's name to go straight to the appropriate supplier or download page. All prices are sterling, and approximate.


#### APPLE

First of all, don't overlook the applications Apple has provided with OS X.


 Time Machine: obviously... ignore it at your peril


 Back To My Mac: available with a MobileMe account. It absolutely simplifies remote access to your other Macs


 Dictionary: look up any word or its synonyms in almost any document by Control-clicking on it


 iChat: the best Mac-to-Mac video chat, plus text chat and file


transfer, able to do conference-calling and file transfer in Leopard


 iCal: get your team's lives organised by sharing calendars

 Mail: good, reliable, backup-friendly and free. Say goodbye to Entourage

 Address Book: used by Mail and many other 3rd party applications for contact data

 Disk Utility: format disks in one of several styles; do software RAID 0, 1, and concatenation (check it in Dictionary), repair disk directories and permissions, and sector-copy one disk to another for identical backups

 iPhoto: decent consumer or pro-am level image management with lots of useful convenience features, now also supporting most RAW formats

 MobileMe: £59 p.a. Email, file sharing, backup; calendar, bookmarks keychain and Address Book sync, Web Applications, iPhone push sync, etc. Not cheap, but good and in my view essential if you have an iPhone

#### MAINTENANCE & DISK UTILITIES

Never be without Applejack and SMARTReporter. They're free, and potential lifesavers.



\*Applejack: free. The nearest thing to a diagnostic and maintenance magic bullet. Now works with Leopard, no thanks to Apple



\*Disk Warrior: £50. Nothing repairs disk directory damage better



Drive Genius: £50. Similar to Disk Warrior but does more. Have it as a second string to the bow.



\*Data Rescue II: £50. The first choice to recover data from damaged disks that won't mount



FileSalvage: £60. Can "learn" file signatures to search for and sometimes recovers data such as Hasselblad .fff file packages that Data Rescue II cannot



\*SMARTReporter: free. Periodically checks your hard drives for their state of health and warns you if a hardware failure is imminent. Usually. Unfortunately, and through no fault of its own, it can't check drives connected by FireWire or USB. For that, I recommend...



\*SoftRAID: £60. Software RAID tool to create RAID 0 and RAID 1 arrays. Live monitoring of disk I/O gives early warning of any drive malfunction



\*Onyx: free. More than a hundred system tweaks, optimisations and maintenance routines



Xupport: £10. Similar to Onyx, but with a slightly different feature set. Well worth a look



\*TinkerTool: free. Change the look of the Finder, optimise broadband connections and much more



\*Macaroni: £5. Runs the built-in OSX maintenance routines to your schedule



MacDrive: enables Windows PCs to read and write to Mac-formatted disks. And rightly so



GrandPerspective: free. Gives you a picture of your file system, allowing you to find those monster space-hogging files and folders eating your hard disk



\*SuperDuper!: £15. Incremental bootable backups. Erase-and-backup for free. Technically the most complete backups, including all permissions, Access Control Lists etc etc



\*Carbon Copy Cloner: free. A good alternative to SuperDuper! for bootable backups and the fastest way to make identical clones



Synk Backup: £15. Scheduled bootable backups plus incremental data archiving



Backup Simplicity: £25. As above, but can automatically start backups when target disks are connected



\*ChronoSync: £15. One of the very best for everything except bootable backups



\*Microsoft Expression Media: £150. Son of iView MediaPro, the all-round best image and digital asset manager.



\*LensFix: £15. Advanced lens distortion and aberration correction



\*Noiseware Professional: £35. Excellent, fast digital noise reduction



\*PhotoRescue: £30. For when your CF cards crash...

## COMMUNICATIONS



iChat: Free. Haven't we mentioned this already?



\*Skype: free. Cross-platform video conferencing, SMS and VoIP telephony



iGlasses: £5. Improve your webcam picture when displayed in iChat, Skype and others



\*X-Lite: free. VoIP softphone for making free phone calls over the Internet



iSoftPhone: £20. Better-looking, nicer softphone than X-Lite

## BACKUP

If you have no data backups you will one day live to regret it. Use SuperDuper! to maintain a bootable backup of your Mac's boot volume on a FireWire drive to reboot from should your main drive fail. Update it daily. Use Time Machine, on the same drive if necessary, to recover deleted or damaged data. Keep backups of all of your data drives with ChronoSync. There are lots of backup applications; none are perfect, most are useful.

## PHOTOGRAPHIC

...and there's more to this than just Photoshop and the big RAW developers.



\*Photo Mechanic: £75. By far the fastest application for ingesting from card (with backup), applying IPTC to and selecting your images



\*ImageIngester: free. Does almost everything Photo Mechanic does except the selecting

See November Issue for *The List 2008 Part II: Office & Productivity, Networking & File Transfer and Miscellaneous*.

*PDFs of this and all my other Image articles are available to download at [www.thedigitalplumber.co.uk](http://www.thedigitalplumber.co.uk), each with live weblinks for your browsing pleasure. Go and get 'em.*

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