



# The PULP

## HUGE this month:

**General Meeting: Oct. 21 7 PM**  
**Nominations**  
Virftualization software for  
the Mac or Backup Software

See you there!

East Hartford Public Library  
Main St. & Central Ave., East Hartford, CT.

Q&A Session: 7:00PM–7:30PM  
Meeting starts at: 7:30PM

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#### MEETING LOCATIONS

East Hartford Public  
Library  
Main & Central Avenue  
in the Lion's  
Room(downstairs)

Wethersfield Public  
Library 500 Silas Deane  
Hwy., Wethersfield, CT

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# Editors Corner

We're still working on details for the October meeting. The topic will either be a demo by Pat of some new virtualization software or a demo by me of some Mac backup software mentioned elsewhere within the PULP.

This is also the meeting before the business meeting. This is your annual opportunity to run for office, and you don't need to debate. You don't need to be there to run. Nominations will be accepted from the floor, email, or by phone.

BTW--The timing of PULP delivery may change over the next several months. The season starts the friday before the meeting.

Stuart Rabinowitz  
Editor-in-Chief

Here is the appropriate copyright citation and a link to the full text. articles from "Tidbits"

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Please note that the clubs PO Box has been closed. When membership renewals go out in the fall the return address will be that of our Membership person Richard Sztaba.



# A Little Computer Quiz

*by Stuart Rabinowitz*

The trivia and minutiae of the computer related world. The answers will appear next month or you can submit an answer sheet at the General Meeting. Good Luck.

- 1 I'm sure you've heard of self-replicating invasive software, but who gets credit for calling them a 'computer virus'?
- 2 Who is credited with making the first true cell phone call?
- 3 In 1983, Ovation Technologies announced an integrated office package that promised to include word processing, spreadsheet, database management, and communications software. What was it called?
- 4 Before the iPhone, Apple had experimented with other portable communications devices. Can you name them?
- 5 This past June 8th marked the 30th anniversary of the introduction of a technology that started a new direction for the PC. What was that technology?
- 6 15 years ago (April, 1993) Mosaic became the first widely distributed web browser. What was the first browser written for Windows?

## Answers to September, 2008 Quiz

- 1 Which Mac first introduced us to the trackpad?  
A The PowerBook 520 and 540
- 2 What year was that?  
A The trackpads were introduced in 1994
- 3 One of the key pieces of internet architecture is the Domain Name System. Who invented it?  
A Paul Mockapetris
- 4 Of a similar nature (actually the reverse) & use is the 5 digit Zone Improvement Plan (ZIP) codes used by the United States Postal Service. When was it first proposed?  
A ZIP codes were first proposed in 1944.
- 5 When were ZIP codes first implemented?  
A The non-mandatory use began in 1963
- 6 Believe it or not, a fictional character has their own ZIP code. Who is it (and for extra credit what is the ZIP code)? (No it's not Harry Potter or Bill Gates)  
A Smokey Bear has ZIP code 20252

## Quiz Part 2

On Sept. 15, 1997 a rather significant computer event occurred. Any guesses?

Google got its own URL on Sept. 15, 1997



## The Evolving World of Mac Backup Software

by Joe Kissell <joe@tidbits.com>  
article link: <<http://db.tidbits.com/article/9639>>

Because I write so much about backups, I try to keep on top of all the programs one can use to back up a Mac, and their ever-changing feature sets. While working on the recently released version 3.0 of "Take Control of Mac OS X Backups," I realized that the appendix in which I provided feature-comparison checklists was badly out of date, and that trying to update it as I'd done in the past was a lost cause - it would just be obsolete again a day later. So instead, I've put that information on a Web page, where I can update it much more quickly and easily than revising an ebook.

<<http://www.takecontrolbooks.com/backup-macosx.html?14@@!pt=TB935>>  
<<http://www.takecontrolbooks.com/resources/0014/index.html?14@@!pt=TB935>>

At the moment, this online appendix provides feature comparisons of 90 Mac OS X backup programs (not counting seven enterprise-oriented programs that I mention but don't describe in detail) - and I wouldn't be at all surprised if my list is still incomplete. Think about that for a moment. Nearly 100 different Mac programs that claim to have some type of backup capability. Incredible. To be sure, not all of them meet my criteria for a backup program, which is to say that some of them are incapable of producing either an additive incremental archive or a bootable duplicate - that makes them, essentially, "merely" synchronization programs (useful, just not the same thing as a backup). But still, when I saw that number I was truly astounded.

I'm all in favor of choice, but seriously... Mac users do not need this many backup options! Who has time to sort through them all, test them, figure out which program uses which terminology to mean what, and come up with a meaningful evaluation of what's actually useful? (Yes, I know, that's what I get paid to do, but I was speaking rhetorically.) What we need is a small number of excellent options. And yet, although my list of 90-plus programs includes some that are very good, there isn't a single one to which I'd give a

perfect 10-out-of-10 rating, or even 9 out of 10. In my professional judgment, every backup program I've tried has room to improve - in some cases, significant room.

It is by no means my intention to diss all the world's Mac backup software. In fact, I can confidently say that, all things considered, the range of options available today is vastly better than what was available a year or two ago. All I'm saying is, despite the quantitative and qualitative increases we've seen recently, we haven't reached Backup Nirvana yet, and I'd rather see more work on the quality side than a greater number of so-so choices.

**\*\*Backups Redux\*\*** -- Still, what strikes me more than anything else about my revised list of Mac backup programs is how much activity (new programs and updates released) has occurred since the release of Mac OS X 10.5 Leopard. When Apple announced Time Machine, a lot of people worried that it would spell the end of third-party backup software for the Mac. On the contrary, just the opposite seems to have happened. The buzz surrounding Time Machine has helped to educate Mac users about the importance of good backups, and that has increased the interest in backup software generally. Inevitably, some people discover that Time Machine isn't what they need (or isn't all they need) and search for alternatives or supplements, and developers seem happy to jump on that bandwagon.

The people who create backup software are being more creative, too. Previously, I had divided my feature-comparison list into three main sections: programs that create archives, programs that create duplicates, and programs that do both; later on I listed things like synchronization utilities, version control software, and Internet backup services, which were outside the scope of what I considered core backup options. But developers, it seems, have not made it their top priority to preserve the tidiness of my lists. With wanton disregard for my carefully considered classification system and the number of table cells that can reasonably fit



on a page, they've added novel features left and right, created programs that intertwingle categories in ways I'd never imagined, and otherwise altered the rules for creating backups. As a result, I've had to do a considerable amount of extra typing, copying, and pasting, with more undoubtedly to come. \_Thanks a lot, guys!\_

**\*\*Current Trends\*\*** -- It's still useful to think about archives and duplicates as separate, and essential, backup tasks. But beyond that, the range of ways in which backups can function is becoming much more interesting. I'd like to highlight a few of the recent trends I've noticed:

\* **Block-level incremental updates.** Most backup software copies an entire set of files on its first run, and then on subsequent runs, incrementally updates your backup with just those files that have been added or changed since the last time. However, this can be a problem when the files are quite large (think of the disk images used by virtualization programs like Parallels Desktop and VMware Fusion, or Entourage's database file); because the `_whole_` file must be copied every time even a tiny bit changes, backups can take a long time and chew up tons of disk space. The effect is more serious if you're backing up over a slow network, or paying by the gigabyte for online storage. But now, a number of programs (including CrashPlan, MozyHome, and QRecall) can copy just the `_portions_` of files that have changed on subsequent runs - what's known as `_block-level_` updates. These can run much faster than file-level updates, and occupy far less storage space. The downside is that you absolutely, positively must be able to retrieve every single piece of a file, in perfect condition, when the time comes to restore it. If any corruption occurred during transfer or storage, or if the backup engine is unable to correctly reassemble the pieces for any reason, you could be completely out of luck.

<<http://www.crashplan.com/>>  
<<http://mozy.com/mac>>  
<<http://www.qrecall.com/>>

\* **Duplicate filtering.** Retrospect has offered

this for years, but now more developers are catching on. To save even more time and storage space when creating archives, some backup programs (in general, the same ones that offer block-level incremental updates) check to make sure no data is duplicated at the destination. So, if you have two copies of a file on your computer, it stores just one (but remembers where both copies were). If you back up two or more computers to the same archive, and the same file appears on more than one, again, only one is stored. Some programs take this concept even further, eliminating duplicate data not just at the file level but within files - for example, if you have two files that have a 90 percent overlap in their data, only the different 10 percent of the second one will be stored.

<<http://emcinsignia.com/products/smb/retroformac/>>

\* **Schedule-free backups.** What I'm now beginning to think of as old-fashioned backup software runs only on a fixed schedule (every morning at 3:00 AM, for example). Increasingly, backup programs do their thing continuously (or at least frequently) in the background, without requiring you to set up anything, and with very little system overhead. Time Machine, of course, runs every hour. CrashPlan Pro can detect when files change and back them up immediately (or after a delay you specify, such as 15 minutes). MozyHome lets you choose automatic backups, scheduled backups, or both. NTI Shadow lets you archive files every time they change, at a fixed interval (such as every 10 minutes), or as infrequently as once a week. Retrospect has a mode (called Backup Server) in which it runs as often as needed. Numerous other programs offer variations on this theme.

<<http://www.ntius.com/shadow.asp>>

\* **Smarter scanning.** When a backup runs, actually copying the files is only part of the process. Before the copying starts, most backup programs scan all the files you want to back up, comparing them with what's already in your archive to see what's changed, how much space will be needed, and so on. That scanning can take a long time, which in turn means the backup itself takes longer. One way to avoid scanning (or at least to speed it



up considerably) is to use Leopard's FSEvents (file system events) notification system to determine which files have changed recently without a full, brute-force scan. Time Machine, Synchronize Pro X, and Synk (Backup, Standard, and Pro editions), for instance, all do this. Other programs, including SuperDuper, scan and copy in a single pass for greater efficiency.

<<http://arstechnica.com/reviews/os/mac-os-x-10-5.ars/7>>

<<http://www.qdea.com/pages/pages-sprox/sprox1.html>>

<<http://www.decimus.net/>>

<<http://www.shirt-pocket.com/SuperDuper/SuperDuperDescription.html>>

\* Hard links. Time Machine makes use of a clever Unix construct called a hard link to make a file (or folder) appear to be in many places at once without each copy taking up lots of space. With hard links, each incremental update can look and act exactly like a full copy of your files, even if only a few changed. Long before Time Machine existed, the command-line tool rsync (and its graphical variant for Mac OS X, RsyncX) could do the same thing. Now other backup programs, such as Intego's Personal Backup X5, are joining the party too.

<<http://archive.macosxlabs.org/rsyncx/rsyncx.html>>

<<http://www.intego.com/personalbackup/>>

\* Online sync. Lots of backup programs (including CrashPlan, MozyHome, and steekUP) can send your data over the Internet to secure servers. But a new breed of programs is starting to combine online backups with multi-computer file synchronization and even online file sharing. Of course, .Mac members have always been able to use an iDisk for online storage and file sharing (albeit without the benefit of an encrypted connection), optionally adding backups using Apple's Backup or another program. Now, though, the landscape is changing even more. DropBox, still in beta testing, syncs local folders to online storage space. You can access your files - including old

and deleted versions! - from any other computer, using the DropBox software or a Web browser. SugarSync also offers online syncing (prices start at \$4.99 per month for 30 GB), but without storing old and deleted files. However, you could get the same end result by sharing the external disk on which your conventional archives are stored.

<<http://www.steekup.com/>>

<<http://www.getdropbox.com/>>

<<http://www.sugarsync.com/>>

\*\*Trends I'd Like to See\*\* -- As delighted as I am to see progress and innovation in the world of Mac backup software, I'd like to see still more. In particular, there are a few areas that have received too little attention, and developers of backup software would do well to give them serious consideration.

\* Amazon S3 support. Amazon.com's S3 (Simple Storage Service) offers capacious, secure, and reasonably priced online storage - ideal for backups. But Amazon doesn't supply any software. Although a few Mac FTP programs (such as Cyberduck, Interarchy, and Transmit) can access S3 storage space, the only serious option at the moment for backups to S3 is JungleDisk. Not only can JungleDisk mount your S3 storage space as a volume (which, in turn, another backup program could access), it's a full-featured archiving program in its own right. And, with the optional \$1-per-month JungleDisk Plus service, it can even do block-level updates and resume interrupted transfers. (A program called Super Flexible File Synchronizer (SFFS), still at beta 1, also supports S3, though I can't yet tell how good it will be as a backup tool.) But whereas JungleDisk supports online backups \_only\_, I'd like to have a choice. I'd like to see existing conventional backup software upgraded to let users choose S3 as their destination as easily as they can now choose a hard disk or mounted network server.

<<http://www.amazon.com/s3/>>

<<http://cyberduck.ch/>>

<<http://nolobe.com/interarchy/>>

<<http://www.panic.com/transmit/>>

<<http://www.jungledisk.com/>>

<<http://www.superflexible.com/mac.htm>>

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Going Green

by Jerry Grommes, Past President, Sandwich  
Computer Users Group, Illinois  
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Obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups.

During our June program, there was quite a discussion about whether to leave your computer on verses shutting it off when not in use.

I, personally, like to leave my computers run so they are kept up-to-date with auto updates and backed up with scheduled backups. These tasks are done in the early AM so my computers are fully functional when I sit down to use them.

However, others asked why not just leave them on the nights that the backup runs instead of 24/7. I didn't think it was using much energy by running 24/7 but decided to check it out and run some tests using my "Kill-AWatt" meter. (Measures watts, amps, hours, kill a watt hours, ect.) I started with my newest computer (which is approx 2 years old and probably the most efficient). This machine is running Vista and I had the Power Options set to turn off the monitor after "20 minutes" and put computer to sleep to "never". With these settings the computer was drawing between 110 and 140 Watts of power with a total average of 2.63 KWH (kill-a-watt hours) per day. Cost per day was \$.026 (\$7.87 a month) based on my most recent bill.

I then changed the Power Options to turn off the monitor after "20 minutes" and put computer to sleep "after 2 hours".

The watts dropped from between 110 and 140

while I was using the computer to 6 while in the sleep mode and the total average of KWH dropped to 0.65 per day. Cost is now down to 6 cents a day (\$1.94 a month).

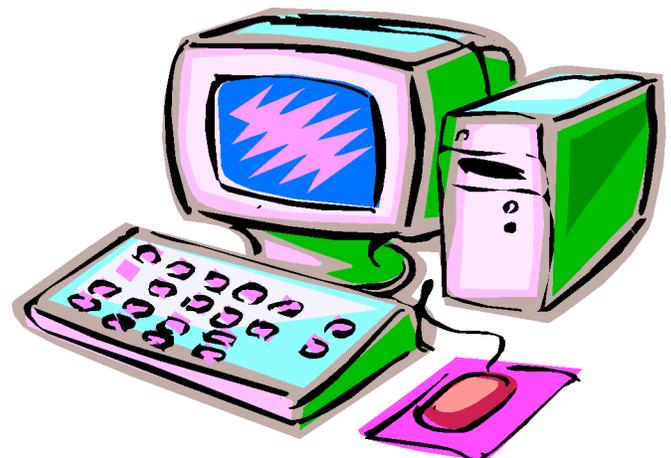
With the current power options (turn off the monitor after "20 minutes" and sleep "after 2 hours") the computer will wake up and get updates as well as run the scheduled backups. So with a simple change to a power option, I was able to reduce power consumption by approx 76% and save \$5.93 per month with out affecting my user experience.

I plan on testing my XP machine next to see what it is costing and to see if it can be reduced. Thanks go to Louise and the rest of the group for a great discussion on energy use.

To get more info and tips on energy savings try one of Louise Dieden's favorite links:

<http://www.energy.gov/forconsumers.htm>

Louise is a SCUG Board Member at Large. This article has been provided to APCUG by the author solely for publication by APCUG member groups. All other uses require the permission of the author (see e-mail address above).





Stop the iPod touch's Constant Beeping

by Adam C. Engst <ace@tidbits.com>  
article link:  
<<http://db.tidbits.com/article/9703>>

I wasted no time after arriving home from vacation on Monday: I promptly purchased, downloaded, and installed the 2.0 software upgrade for my iPod touch. I wanted to catch up on what I'd missed while out of the country and start playing with new applications and test Apple's improvements. Almost immediately, the iPod started beeping at irregular intervals. I had downloaded a few applications, such as NetNewsWire, NYTimes, AIM, and WeatherBug, but there was no indication as to which application was responsible for the beeps.

A quick call for help on Twitter revealed the culprit: Mail. Apparently, the new version of Mail feels the need to beep every time a new message comes in, and that's a problem given that MobileMe's "push" option for email means that new messages are being received constantly. Maddening! (A number of people on Twitter confirmed that they were experiencing the same problem.)

Although I'm sure some people like email notification beeps, my MobileMe account receives a bunch of spam - approximately 30 messages per day - and not much else. I don't use the account for real work, and Apple Mail filters the spam fairly effectively on the Mac, so it's never been a problem before. But since I launch Mail on the Mac only about once a week, there are often hundreds of spam messages that make it through to the iPod touch in the interim. Until now, I've mostly used Mail on the iPod touch to familiarize myself with the technology, so having it beep constantly throughout the day required some action.

Two solutions present themselves, but neither is entirely satisfactory. First, you can turn off sound effects, in Settings > General > Sound Effects. The only problem with this is that

sound effects are also used for calendar alerts. I'm not using those at this point, but I could easily see someone wanting to silence Mail while retaining calendar alerts. Luckily, timed alarms set in the Clock still make noise even if sound effects are off, as does the timer option in Clock. I don't know if any independent applications rely on the sound effects, but if so, I presume they'd be silenced as well, which could be good or bad.

(iPhone users don't have this problem with granularity. The iPhone offers Settings > General > Sounds, a settings sheet which has separate On/Off switches for new voicemail, new mail, sent mail, calendar alerts, and more.)

Second, you can switch Mail so it retrieves new messages manually whenever you enter Mail, rather than constantly (the Push setting) or on a schedule (Fetch). Change this in Settings > Fetch New Data > Advanced > yourAccountName. This won't silence Mail, but it will play its sounds only after retrieving messages, so you at least won't be surprised (or woken up) by them.

I understand Apple's desire to keep preferences to a minimum in the iPod touch, but this is an instance where the preference granularity used on the iPhone would be an improvement.





cont. from pg 6

\* Better metadata support. Almost every Mac backup program can handle common pieces of metadata such as resource forks, file permissions, and Finder labels. But metadata comes in many shapes and sizes. What about access control lists (ACLs), or HFS+ extended attributes? And what about hard links, including those for folders (introduced in Leopard)? More than a dozen varieties of metadata can be set for a given file, and lots of current backup software ignores a good bit of it. The result is that what \_appears\_ to be a perfect duplicate of your data might in fact be missing some important attributes.

I've been using a command-line tool written by Nate Gray called Backup Bouncer to automate the testing of how well various programs handle these many sorts of metadata. Backup Bouncer doesn't yet evaluate every possible type of metadata, and arguably some kinds of metadata it does check are completely irrelevant in terms of backups, but it's still been tremendously helpful to have this automated testing tool. Note that, in response to some feedback I've received, I've recently modified the way my tables present the "scores" for metadata support. A much-less-than-perfect score is not necessarily a cause for concern, though programs with an "A" or "A+" (including, as you might expect, Carbon Copy Cloner and SuperDuper) do merit increased confidence for bootable duplicates.

<<http://www.n8gray.org/code/backup-bouncer/>>  
<<http://www.bombich.com/software/cccl.html>>  
<<http://www.shirt-pocket.com/SuperDuper/>>

\* Better optical media support. All things being equal, I think it's usually best to back up to a hard disk rather than to a recordable CD or DVD. But optical media can be useful in some situations, such as when you're traveling, or when your budget doesn't permit the purchase of hard drives. Most Mac backup software has only minimal support for optical media - specifically, it usually can't split a backup across more than one disc (pretty important if you have individual

files that are too big to fit on a single disc) or record multiple sessions on a given disc (even if there's lots of free space). Retrospect can do both of these things; so can Data Backup 3 (though it supports multisession recording only for CDs, not DVDs). A handful of other programs (including BRU LE, Get Backup, and Personal Backup X5), support disc spanning but not multisession recording. (In some situations, you can work around the lack of multisession support using a 15 euro [about \$23] utility called BurnAgain FS that lets you add data to CD-R, CD-RW, DVD-RW, and DVD+RW discs in the Finder.) I'd love to see much more thorough and pervasive support for optical media in Mac backup software, including, naturally, full compatibility with Blu-ray drives available from FastMac and MCE.

<[http://www.prosofteng.com/products/data\\_backup.php](http://www.prosofteng.com/products/data_backup.php)>  
<<http://www.bru.com/products/macosex/le/>>  
<<http://www.belightsoft.com/products/getbackup/>>  
<<http://freeridecoding.com/burnagainfs/>>  
<[http://fastmac.com:16080/slim\\_bluray.php](http://fastmac.com:16080/slim_bluray.php)>  
<<http://www.mctech.com/blu-ray/>>

\* Better user interface. Whatever you may think of Time Machine's limited customizability or its 3-D outer space animation, it's at least clear that Apple put a great deal of thought into making a very complex process extraordinarily simple to set up and operate. At the other extreme, and without naming names, one of the most recent additions to my list has such an astonishingly complicated user interface, it makes Retrospect look like SuperDuper. The program in question is undeniably very powerful, but getting it to do anything interesting requires many highly unintuitive manual steps that almost make me feel as though I'm programming my own backup software from scratch. Far too often, a program's user interface is a mere afterthought, and in many cases, what you end up with is something that makes sense to engineers but not to ordinary folk. (That's true of all software, of course - not just backup software.) A good backup program need not look anything like Time Machine or SuperDuper, but as a user, I deeply appreciate any and all efforts to make software self-

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<b>PULP Staff</b>	
Editor	Stuart Rabinowitz
Distribution	George Carbonell

Membership: Anyone may become a member. Dues are \$12 per year and include a one-year subscription to The Pulp as well as access to the HUGE Public Domain disk libraries and BBS. Meeting topics, times and places can be found on page 1 of this issue.

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# October 2008

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

Midnight Madness (Friday, Oct 24)

General Meeting 7 PM (Tuesday, Oct 21)



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explanatory and obvious, to provide plain-English explanations and error messages, and to limit the amount of clicking I must do to accomplish simple tasks. Developers, if UI design is not your forte, hire a good designer, and have an outside firm conduct usability tests with, say, your parents as test subjects. You'll be amazed at what you learn. (This goes double for companies with cross-platform Java software, which tends to look pretty bad under Mac OS X.)

\* Better logging and feedback. Adam Engst reminded me of another issue that afflicts many otherwise good backup programs. Anyone who's used Time Machine, for example, has probably noticed that sometimes the "Preparing Backup" and "Finishing Backup" stages of each hourly run take an inordinately long time, and that sometimes a lot more data is copied than we have any recollection of changing. Why? What exactly is going on behind the scenes? And when an error occurs, what's the problem, and how can I fix it? Figuring out what your backup software is doing shouldn't require advanced forensic investigation (see Matt Neuburg's "Time Machine Exposed!", 2008-05-08). Backup programs should provide clear, unambiguous feedback as to what they are currently doing (and how long it's expected to take), and log files should be both detailed and easily human-readable.

<http://db.tidbits.com/article/9607>

I have no idea how long my list of Mac backup programs will eventually grow, though I truly hope not to see too many more additions. On the other hand, at the risk of sounding like I'm encouraging feature creep, I also hope very much to see some of the existing programs evolve to be more powerful and flexible under the hood, while at the same time acquiring simpler, more intuitive user interfaces. And developers: bonus points if you can do all this without messing up my tables again!

### Monster List of Mac Backup Software Updated

by Joe Kissell <joe@tidbits.com> article link:  
<<http://db.tidbits.com/article/9769>>

I've just finished a significant update of my online appendix to "Take Control of Mac OS X Backups" that lists just about every graphical Mac backup program in existence. Although I had tweaked the tables here and there over the past few months, I had also been maintaining a separate list of new and updated backup programs that required more testing before I could properly list them. When that list grew to more than 20 items, I realized I'd better take action before it collapsed under its own weight.

<<http://www.takecontrolbooks.com/resources/0014/>>

<<http://www.takecontrolbooks.com/backup-macosx.html?14@@!pt=TB945>>

In addition to updated details on numerous backup programs, the list now includes several entirely new entries, including ElephantDesktop, IBackup for Mac, IDrive Online Backup, and Mathusalem. In addition, I've promoted SugarSync to the "real backup software" portion of the tables now that it includes versioning (as discussed in "SugarSync Sweetens Online Syncing," 2008-08-30).

<<http://www.elephantdrive.com/download/>>

<<http://www.ibackup.com/ibackup-for-mac/>>

<<http://www.idrive.com/idrive-for-mac.htm>>

<<http://code.google.com/p/mathusalem/>>

<<http://www.sugarsync.com/>>

<<http://db.tidbits.com/article/9751>>

I'm also aware of a couple of programs in beta testing, and as soon as I get my hands on shipping versions, I'll include those as well. Meanwhile, as I was typing this post, I saw yet another update appear for one of the backup programs in my table (and yes, I've already updated it). Jeesh!