

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.

Soft where?

Our Mac computer, printer and scanner hardware is great; well-built and reliable, but they can't do a thing without software

Definitions—

Hardware: The physical components of your computer: the case, processor, screen, disk drives, printer and so on.

Software: The magnetic information that is today stored on disks of various types, that instructs your hardware in its duties.

Wetware: You and me. The operators of computers generally seen as the primary problem by makers of hardware and software.

What do you need?

Software is created to do specific jobs: write letters, surf the World Wide Web, balance your checkbook, organize your addresses. There is software out there to do almost any job that a computer could be asked to do (including things that no sane person would ask their computer to do). So, the first step in getting your software needs fulfilled is to know clearly what you want to do.

Is it made?

Is there a piece of software to help you, say, run your veterinary clinic? How do you find out? Go to Apple's web site, of course.

<http://www.macsoftware.apple.com/>

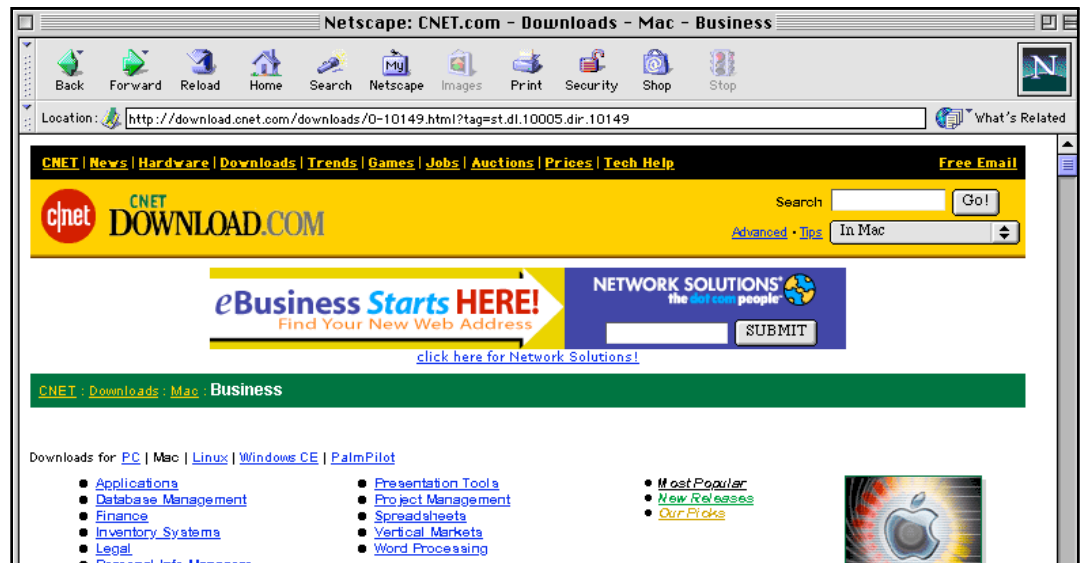
will get you there. Once there you can check a database of over 17,000 products made for Macintosh computers.

After determining that you speak American (not Australian) English, you can then choose to search the software categories. Here you will find a breakdown of all sorts of software types: Business, education, home, games, publishing and so on. Pick a category, and subcategories pop up. Under Business, do you want software for Accounting? Medical? Taxes? Law? or Veterinary (and many others, too)? Under Veterinary, you'll find eleven choices of software made specifically for that industry.

Once you find a likely piece of software, click on its name to see who makes it and where to get it. Here you'll get a brief description of the product, what kind of Mac you need to run it and contact information such as phone number, address, email and web site. Once you have this information, you can contact the company for ordering information.

Shareware, another option

The Apple web site lists over 17,000 products, but these are commercially made products that are sold through normal channels. Oddly, this is only a fraction of ALL of the Mac software that is available. There are literally hundreds of



thousands of great software solutions distributed as Shareware.

More Definitions—

Shareware: Software that is distributed over the internet and hand-to-hand on the basis of Try-It-For-Free. If you like the product, you are on your honor to pay for it (usually less than \$50.00. Sometimes all the creator wants is a postcard from your home town). If you do not like it, you are on your honor to delete it.

Freeware: Is distributed like Shareware, but costs nothing to use. The creator of a piece of Freeware retains the legal rights to the product, so you can't go out and sell it as though you created it.

Public Domain: This is Freeware that the creator has given up all legal rights to, so you can use it as you see fit.

The best place to get Shareware is a terrific web site that specializes in it:

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

Here you will find a searchable database of thousands to shareware titles and updates to commercial software. Download.com is even smart enough to know that you use a Mac so that when you search for software, you won't be distracted by PC software that you can't use.

We'll search for you

If you don't have time to search out software by yourself, let us do it for you. Just email your request and we'll find software that meets your needs and all of the information you need to acquire and install it.

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*Like an
auto club
for your
computer.*

Back me up on this

I haven't nagged you about this in some time, so here it comes again: **BACK UP! BACK UP! BACK UP! Darnit!**

Yeah, it's a hassle, but:

It will happen to you!

It's inevitable. Hard drives break, a file gets thrown away by accident, a file gets renamed and copies itself over another important file, your Mac gets stolen or a power surge fries your machine. Ouch!

Backing up means...

making copies of all of your important files. If you would be unhappy to lose a file; back it up! It's best to back up to a removable disk like a floppy, Zip disk or a cartridge or tape system. With removable disks or cartridges, extra sets can be kept off site to protect against theft and fire. A safe deposit box is ideal.

Be Pro-Active

There are utilities like Norton Unerase and TechTool Pro that can usually recover erased files and modestly damaged hard drives, but why wait until you have a problem; that's too risky. Get ahead of trouble by starting a Back Up Routine.

Back Up Tools

If you have a calendar or appointment program, set it to remind you to back up. Daily back ups may be necessary if you produce lots of work each day, weekly is sufficient for most home users and light users may be safe with monthly back ups. Just be sure to do it regularly.

Back ups can be accomplished by simply copying new or changed files to another disk as you create them. Unfortunately, few of us are disciplined enough to do this without fail (Murphy's Law says that if you forget to back up a file, that will be the file that will be lost).


To help automate the process choose a commercial backup tool like Retrospect Express (\$49.95) or shareware tools like Drag'nBack (\$50.00) or SYNK (\$10.00).

However you do it, there is no more important thing you can do to stay out of computer trouble. So, **BACK UP!**

March Tip—

Here's a cute one.

The next time that you open a folder filled with lots and lots of icons, and you know the name of the one you want, instead of grabbing your mouse and hunting and clicking, just start typing the file's name.

After you type three or four characters, you'll see that the file you want is highlighted and ready to open. Now, all you need to do is hold down the Apple key  and type the letter "o". Like magic, your file opens!

The trick is to type quickly and accurately. If you type too slowly, you'll get a succession of different files and if you mis-type you'll get the wrong one. Try it and see. This is a real time saver.