

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.

Keeping in Focus

One year ago, in the February 2007 CCC News, an article entitled *3 Things You Must Know*, mentioned the Mac User's Mantra:

First you choose it, then you use it.

In computer-talk, this is referred to as *focus*. As in, where your Mac's attention is focused at this moment.

When you use your Mac, you switch from task to task and item to item. It is important to always be aware of where its focus is. Mac OS X gives you subtle clues to guide you. Be aware of where your Mac's attention is focused. If you are, your Mac will always do what you tell it to. If your Mac's attention is in the wrong place, just click on the thing you want it to focus on.

Here are some examples of the clues to look for:

Finder windows—

Brightly colored pips

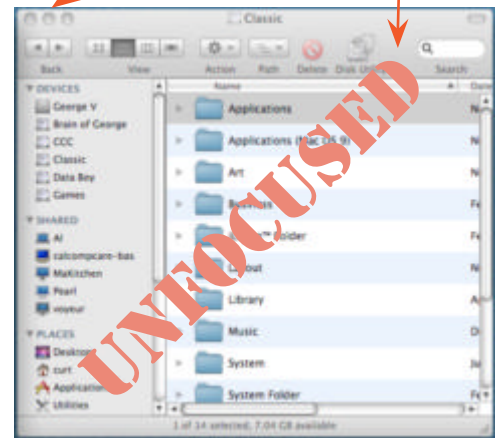
Dark grey, distinct title bar

No color in pips

Light grey, indistinct title bar

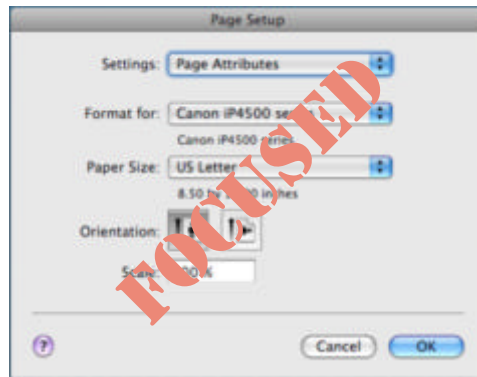


Overall bright appearance

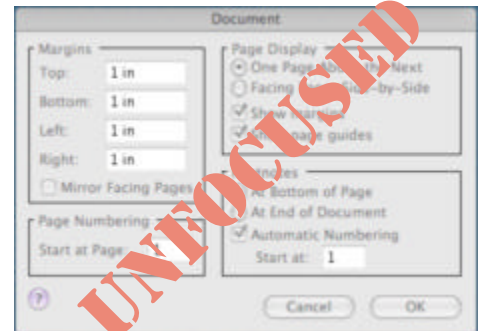


Overall dull appearance

Dialog boxes—

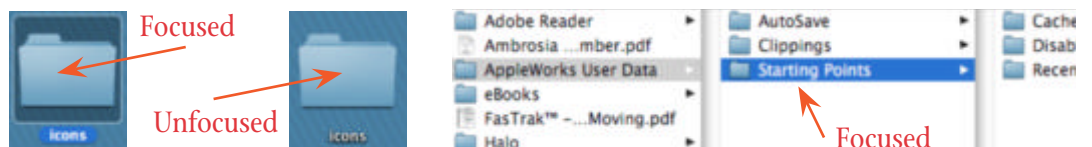


Overall bright appearance with colored parts



Overall dull appearance, no color. If you try to click a button (such as OK) in an unfocused dialog box, your click will change the focus to the dialog box. *Only then can you click the button.*

Icons (with icons, focused and selected are the same state)—





Mac OS X 10.5 (Leopard) Update

Much has happened since last month's CCC News. Apple has released the *Mac OS X 10.5.2 Combo* updater and the *Leopard Graphics Update 1.0*. All five of my 10.5 test Macs received the updates without incident. In some cases a slight speed improvement was noticeable. Everything seems to be stable (so far!). No software was broken by the updates that wasn't broken by the original 10.5 install. These updates are strongly recommended for all Intel and PowerPC Macs that are currently using 10.5 (*Leopard*).

Some happy fixes! Apple does listen when we howl loudly enough. 10.5.2 fixes two very big annoyances, so now you can turn off the translucent menu bar and return folder icons, in the *Dock*, to familiar list view. Fortunately, the *Stacks* option is still available for folders that it works well with such as *Downloads*. There are 74 other fixes included, most of them esoteric (you Latvian keyboard users will be pleased).

Time to move up to 10.5? For people using older Mac OS X versions, not quite yet (unless you have a specific need for one of *Leopard's* many features). Of course, the adventurous among you will do it anyway. So keep these tips in mind:

Before you install a new Mac OS or update Mac OS, always run *Disk Utility* to repair permissions and verify your hard disk. If any problems are found that *Disk Utility* cannot fix, do not proceed. Contact me for a repair.

Disconnect all firewire devices. That includes iPods, hard drives, digital cameras, scanners, anything that connects using a firewire cable. If you want to be extra safe, disconnect everything except keyboard and mouse. Don't forget to turn everything off before you disconnect items.

Connect a wired keyboard and mouse. Often wireless keyboards and mice will stop working during an update.

Start up your Mac in *Safe mode*. To start up in *Safe mode*. Shut down your Mac. Press the power on button and immediately hold down the Shift key on your keyboard. (Your Mac will take a bit longer to start up than usual.) Keep holding down the Shift key until you see the *Safe mode* message on screen.

In *Safe mode*, many functions and abilities that you are used to will not work. That's OK as you only need *Safe mode* when installing operating system updates and fixing some nasty problems.

Don't be creative. Read and follow the installer's instructions carefully. Be sure not to run any other software during any install.

Don't install an operating system update using *Software Update*. Always download the complete installer from Apple's Support web site. You can find the 10.5.2 Combo updater here:

<http://www.apple.com/support/downloads/macosex1052comboupdate.html>

The matching *Leopard Graphics Update 1.0* can be installed from *Software Update* safely.

Once done, restart and enjoy your new operating system. Contact me if you have questions.

February Tip—

Comcast users! You may have received an email from Comcast about a new, free feature.

Comcast has contracted with *Plaxo* for a new address book technology. This makes the Comcast, online, address book compatible with virtually all other address books. Not only can you easily upload your address book entries to Comcast, you can have your local address Book and the Comcast address book automatically stay in synchronization. This will allow you to make changes in either address book that will be automatically transferred to the other.

As a bonus, the *Plaxo* software will also synchronize address books on multiple computers; automatically.

I'm testing the *Plaxo* system right now and it looks like a winner. If you get the offer from Comcast; try it.

California Computer Care

P.O. Box 9445

Santa Rosa, CA 95405

(800) 540-8989

help@calcompcare.com

Like an
auto club
for your
computer.