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BYTER

Apple Blossom Computer Club  
A registered Apple/Macintosh User Group

Nov. '09

still only

\$2.00

Next Meeting

Nov. 19, 7 PM

American Legion Hall  
406 SE Oak Ave

Agenda

1. Meeting starts at 7 P.M.
2. Intro's of members and guests
3. Old business
4. New biz
5. Program: Jack Webster presents **Voilà** followed by a drawing for your very own copy!
6. Questions & (maybe)Answers

Adobe Product

by Jim McClellan  
<mcclellan@charter.net>

In mid October I asked a long time friend for advice on fixing an old b/w photo that I'd scanned. His reply, "What you do to improve these will depend largely what software you have available to work with. I am using both Photoshop CS3 and CS4 which has the ability to open up dark areas and tone down areas that are too bright. If you cannot do this with the version you are using I would suggest that you buy Adobe Photoshop Elements version 8 that has just come out. I believe there is a Mac version: <http://www.adobe.com/products/photoshopelmac/>."

So, I went online and looked at what Adobe said about the requirements for Elements 8 and found this: "System requirements

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12 Expert Google Search Tips

by Dave Archer <dave@davearcher.com>

Like me, you probably use Google many times a day. But, chances are you probably still use Google in its simplest form. If your current use of Google is limited to typing a few words in, and changing your query until you find what you're looking for, there's a better way – and it's not hard to learn. On the other hand, if you are a technology geek, and can use Google like the best of them already, then here are some TIPS. The list is by no means comprehensive. But, I assure you that by learning and using the 12 tips below, you'll rank up there with the best of the Google experts out there, at least that's what "they" tell me.

1. Explicit Phrase:  
Lets say you are looking for content about internet marketing. Instead of just typing **internet marketing** into the Google search box, you will likely be better off searching explicitly for the phrase. To do this, simply enclose the search phrase within double quotes.  
Example: "**internet marketing**"
2. Exclude Words:  
Lets say you want to search for content about internet marketing, but you want to exclude any results that contain the term advertising. To do this, simply use the "-" sign in front of the word you want to exclude.  
Example: "**internet marketing** -advertising"

3. Site Specific Search:  
Often, you want to search a specific website for content that matches a certain phrase. Even if the site doesn't support a built-in search feature, you can use Google to search the site for your term. Simply use the "site: somesite.com" modifier.

Example: "**internet marketing** site:www.smallbusinesshub.com"

4. Similar Words and Synonyms:  
Let's say you are want to include a word in your search, but want to include results that contain similar words or synonyms. To do this, use the "~" in front of the word.

Example: "**internet marketing** ~professional"

5. Specific Document Types:  
If you're looking to find results that are of a specific type, you can use the modifier "filetype:". For example, you might want to find only PowerPoint presentations related to internet marketing.

Example: "**internet marketing** filetype:ppt"

6. This OR That:  
By default, when you do a search, Google will include all the terms specified in the search. If you are looking for any one of one or more terms to match, then you can use the OR operator. (Note: The OR has to be

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The **Apple Blossom Computer Club** (ABCC) is an Apple Computer Inc., registered Macintosh and Apple ][ family user group. The ABCC publishes *The RoseByter* newsletter monthly which is posted to each paid up member and reciprocating user groups. ABCC participates in user group newsletter content exchange. The ABCC also maintains a WWW site at:

<http://www.abccmug.org>

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Jim McClellan

### AppleScript Guru

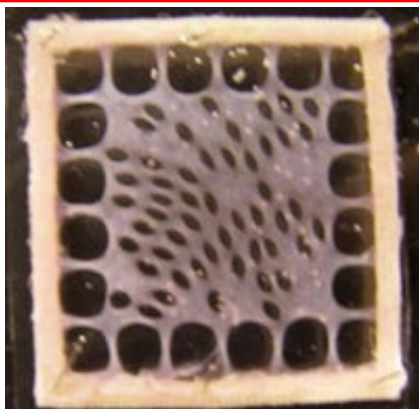
Jack Webster <jackw@rio.com>

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**Making a patch for hearts**

## <-1 12 Expert Google Search Tips

capitalized).

Example: "**internet marketing**"  
**OR advertising**

### 7. Phone Listing:

Let's say someone calls you on your mobile number and you don't know who it is. If all you have is a phone number, you can look it up on Google using the phonebook feature.

Example: **phonebook:617-555-1212** or any other number. This one doesn't work of course. I made it up to show example.

### 8. Area Code Lookup:

If all you need to do is to look-up the area code for a phone number, just enter the 3-digit area code and Google will tell you where it's from.

Example: **617**

### 9. Numeric Ranges:

This is a rarely used, but highly useful tip. Let's say you want to find results that contain any of a range of numbers. You can do this by using the X..Y modifier (in case this is hard to read,

what's between the X and Y are two periods. This type of search is useful for years (as shown below), prices or anywhere where you want to provide a series of numbers.

Example: **president 1940..1950**

### 10. Stock (Ticker Symbol):

Just enter a valid ticker symbol as your search term and Google will give you the current financials and a quick thumbnail chart for the stock.

Example: **GOOG**

### 11. Calculator:

The next time you need to do a quick calculation, instead of bringing up the Calculator applet, you can just type your expression in to Google.

Example: **48512 \* 1.02**

### 12. Word Definitions:

If you need to quickly look up the definition of a word or phrase, simply use the "define:" command.

Example: **define:plethora**

## <-1 Adobe Product

- Multi-core Intel® processor
- Mac OS X v10.4.11 through 10.5.8 or Mac OS X v10.6
- 512MB of RAM (1GB recommended)
- 64MB of video RAM
- 2GB of available hard-disk space (additional free space required during installation)
- 1,024x768 display resolution
- DVD-ROM drive
- QuickTime 7 software required for multimedia features
- Internet connection required for Internet-based services"

The Mac I was going to use is an iBook G4 with OS 10.4.11, so I ordered the software. When I tried to install it I had an error message saying I needed to have a different processor. I use a 1.42 GHz PowerPC Gr processor. I hadn't seen anything in the System requirements above about the

processor requirement.

Obviously I wasn't happy but I went to Adobe's support web site and tried to cancel my order. Here is where I probably made a mistake, which is one reason for writing this item. In my first exchange with Adobe Customer Support, stated, "I use an iBook G4 laptop with PowerPC architecture CPU. I really wish my computer would work with this software. I'd be interested in learning if Adobe has a version of Elements that will work with PowerPC architecture CPU." They replied a day later that version 6 would work on my computer. I checked and while it would work on my computer, the features weren't very close to version 8's features. I then notified Adobe that I didn't want version 6 and wanted them to cancel my order and wanted them to remove my VISA data. Their web site indicated that I should receive a reply within 24 hours. No reply for more

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## Why Answers, and why now?

O'Reilly is at the center of an amazing exchange of knowledge sharing and idea generation. We've created the

## <-2 Adobe Product

than the 24 hours, so I reopened my case and this time didn't even mention version 6. Only that I wanted my order cancelled and my VISA bill cleared.

I received a reply a couple of days later asking for me to again submit my request. I did, and received another request to submit my request to have my case reviewed. That I did and have since received a reply that my case had been approved. It is now a day later and my VISA bill hasn't been cleared. Granted this delay could not be Adobe's fault, but my credit card company's. I'm still not pleased with how this entire issue was handled.

I've gone back over the process and finally found a sheet that mentioned the CPU requirement. If you, like me, are still using PowerPC architecture, I encourage you if you are buying new software, to check ALL requirements and particularly if you can use PowerPC architecture.

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Jim



usual means of facilitating communication between customers, O'Reilly folks, and the outside experts we call "alpha geeks" who contribute to O'Reilly books, conferences, and websites. We can connect through reader reviews, errata submissions, book forums, blog comments, Get Satisfaction, our customer service department, and more. But too much of this conversation is siloed, and not enough is public (e.g., discussions on our internal mailing list for editors, or personal responses to customer questions). O'Reilly Answers will be the place where much of that communication happens from this point forward.

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I'd like to acknowledge the projects that have proceeded Answers and inspired us, such as SitePoint Forums (we distribute their books), Stack-Overflow, Yahoo! Answers, Knol, and many others. They're great resources, and we think the O'Reilly community can create a useful site that's, well, a different kind of animal.

**One last thing:** O'Reilly Answers is in beta and you may encounter bugs. We're still working on many improvements to the site, such as feeds for each tag, but would love to hear your suggestions for features and improvements. Please send any suggestions/questions/bug reports to <mailto:answers@oreilly.com>.

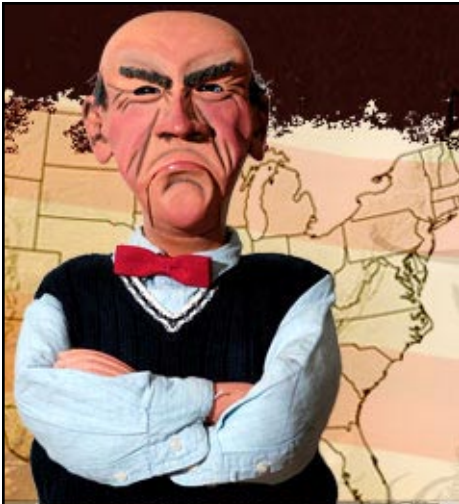
Until next time--

Marsee Henon

# Water Blogged Wump

Any trace of organization in these paragraphs is entirely coincidental

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## My Essence by Dunham

I recently got a new HP printer for a client. It came with a large fold-out sheet of set-up instructions, copiously illustrated and in four languages. Generally, when I'm doing things with other people's computers I tend to be more careful than I am with my own.

### **I try to read, understand and then follow the instructions.**

Sounds good, right? Well these days it's an approach that has serious pitfalls. It seems that installation instructions are almost always not quite correct these days. I suspect it has a good deal to do with most things being manufactured overseas, typically in China. Sadly, even though the companies equipment is made for are usually American corporations, it's apparently too much trouble for the Americans to check whether the instructions are what they should be. No wonder our economy is swirling about the drain.

I'm watching the news. There's an early freeze back east and they're reporting on the accidents and wrecks on some of the roads. There's video of several vehicles shown sliding around; some just a little, others with reckless abandon. There're other images of wrinkled car carcasses, some even with their **tires facing up in a clear effort to beg for mercy after being ruthlessly attacked** by the ice covered pavement. What

really got my attention was the short interview with someone who'd apparently been in one of the vehicles which was unsuccessful at completing its intended trip. He said, "The truck lost control." Really? The truck was doing the controlling and then got in over its head? Now, I know we're getting a whole lot of unnecessary, and even potentially dangerous, automation in new vehicles but I was unaware that we now had vehicles available to the general public that drove themselves. Just in case the idea that this automation can be dangerous seems far fetched, consider the possible ramifications of something I heard in an advertisement for the latest of Mercedes Benz: if the car thinks the driver is not paying attention, it will stop. Sound good? Well, how about the car stopping in the middle of the freeway? Maybe what Mercedes has done is really a great thing, but in the absence of details, it sounds like something that a really bad driver could cause major havoc with.

Many moons ago I wrote about the "hassle of mashed potatoes," expressing the opinion that boxed, dried mashed potatoes might be more of a hassle than making them from scratch. But a few minutes ago, I was accosted by a \$32 potato ricer, for "easy mashed potatoes." Now, if I had to use that thing to make mashed potatoes, I think my impression would be that it's definitely a hassle. But it did make me think of one important point about making mashed potatoes and I can't remember whether I pointed it out the last time or not. **Having a decent mashing tool does make a big difference.** You can use just about anything that you can squash boiled potato with. But, a lot of commercially available tools really don't work very well or take an inordinate amount of time and effort to clean. One simple potato masher that I can recommend avoiding from personal experience is

the handle carrying a serpentine wire. It can be made to work but isn't a convenient shape for a round pan and the wire is easily bent. We long ago gave up on such an implement, replacing it with another simple tool, but one of much better design. It's simply a round plate with holes punched in it, attached to a handle by two lengths of metal – all of which is stainless steel. It's quite strong enough. It fits the shape of most pots. It's easy to clean. And, most importantly, it does a whiz bang job of mashing potatoes.

TWh = Tera-Watt-hours. The U.S. reportedly uses about 3,700 TWh per year. Of that, about 290 TWh are consumed by electronics, with buildings using the bulk: about 2,700 TWh.

### **These statistics should really balloon when we all plugging in our cars for the night ...**

but that's not quite what this paragraph is about. The computing industry has been using CMOS (Complementary Metal-Oxide Semiconductor) technology for quite some time. CMOS is what's made it feasible to stick four mainstream processors on a chip, running at microwave clock rates, though it's a bit tricky to do. **[Side note: I still like to use some of the original CMOS ICs because of their extremely low and unfussy power requirements.]** CMOS is tough to beat for a lot of electronic things. But there are strong efforts afoot to supplant it in various ways. The most important is probably general logic (the stuff of which computers are made). Given the extremely tiny dimensions involved in CMOS these days and the need to take quantum mechanical issues into account, one might think that there'd be little in the way of new things to do. Nanotechnology is opening up a number of opportunities, however. The dimensions of devices made with this sort of technology will be even smaller than those used in CMOS. Moreover, they will rely on quantum

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## <--Water Blogged Wump

mechanical effects for their function. Indeed, inhibiting bulk material effects in the anticipated large collections of such miniscule new elements may be something of a problem. A DARPA funded research project is creating devices that uses 25 to 100 times less power than CMOS. They use “tunneling” – the subject of Schrodinger’s cat in/out-of-the-box argument. Tunneling is one of those spooky, statistical quantum mechanical notions, though it usually doesn’t involve much distance (Einstein abhorred the notion of “spooky action at a distance”). As our understanding of the atomic scale improves, our ability to arrange atoms to produce desired effects will likely improve. We’ve yet to see the coming flood of new stuff from these efforts but the damp is at your feet.

I was just reading an article in the News-Review about the recent discovery of 32 more extra-solar planets. The point was made that numerous Earth-like planets must exist because, “Nature doesn’t like a vacuum.” I find this a curious statement, especially coming from an astronomer. Ignoring the personification of nature one might infer from its liking or disliking things – I know of no one who doesn’t use such idiom – it seems that there’s a great deal more volume of the universe occupied by vacuum than there is occupied by matter. Consider that the distance to the nearest of these things is at least 4+ light-years and the diameter of the red giant star Betelgeuse (1000 times the Sun’s) is a mere 0.000054 light-years. This is, of course, a simplistic view. Today it’s believed that solid matter is largely comprised of empty space, ie. vacuum – atoms seem to be made of much smaller bits of stuff, the force fields of which define the size of the atoms. Worse, the current cosmology contends that the bits we think of as non-vacuum are accelerating away from one another, leaving behind even more vacuum. **If nature doesn’t like**

**a vacuum, it’s certainly managed to make plenty of it.** Over the years I’ve seen numerous estimates of what the likely number of Earth-like planets in the galaxy is. After reviewing them, I believe they likely over estimate the number by very wide margins. I’ve made some estimates that indicate the presence of the Earth is unlikely. But I’m not qualified to judge what set of assumptions is most correct. I’m inclined to believe I’m wrong and that there are numerous habitable, if not quite Earth-like, planets in the galaxy.

Apple decided to release new products the other day. The iMac stable puzzles me just a bit. The mix of screen sizes available strikes me as a bit odd, with just two sizes: 21.5 and 27 inch. Having worked a bit recently with the previous 24” model, I’m of the mind that **a 27 inch screen is pushing the envelope on what will comfortably fit on a desk.** Well, a big executive’s desk will handle it OK, I suppose. There, it could sit on one end of the desk, several feet away. After all, the screen is plenty big enough and would work well for office presentations – no need for a projector and screen. There are some new Mac-minis. I think Apple doesn’t really want to sell them – my impression is that they are over priced. The new 13” MacBook probably makes more sense to most people, especially given it’s ability to run a large monitor as well as its built-in screen. But the MacBook still lacks Firewire and the Mac-mini does not. I doubt very much that the cost of adding Firewire to a MacBook would have been enough to have spoiled Apple’s margins on them. It’s troublesome to keep up with what does what if you have to work with different mixes of capability. This problem is probably going to get worse since the external interface people are busily attempting to outdo one another creating new versions of their favorite protocols.

As Mac users, we don’t – yet – have

a “netbook” to call our own. While a MacBook or even a MacBook Pro can be thought of as small, the smallest of them is large compared to the 10 inch screen of the typical netbook. One might argue that the iPhone is even smaller ... so there. True, but it’s really too small for any serious computing or even Web browsing, especially for those of us who’re presbyopically challenged. But **Apple is curiously absent from what is believed to be the next big thing in computing technology** (read that: digital crap people are willing to buy in large numbers). I have little doubt the marketeers have it correct. The netbook is likely to out-sell probably every other category of consumer computing equipment. They are cheap, ready to hook to all manner of consumer gear like WiFi, etc., have a large enough screen to read from, enough speed and capacity not to annoy a lot of people unduly. Some pundits predict that makers of “classical apps” for “ordinary” computers are likely to be in a vanishing group. I’m not so sure. While the netbook is very nice for the “road warrior”, it can do significant computing tasks in the same way that its bigger siblings do. And those bigger siblings can be faster, with bigger screens, more capacity – all things those who’re attached to desks in cubicles most probably don’t care to give up.

This afternoon I happened on an apparent tie up of Google’s ability to respond. It lasted for quite a while. Eventually, it seemed to clear up. I have no idea what the cause of this outage was but I did use the time to find out some things. First, I used the **host** command to see if **www.google.com** was resolving to an IP address. It turned out that it resolved to several different IP addresses. This is hardly surprising as Google needs gobs of bandwidth to do what they do. Just for kicks, I chose one of the IP addresses and replaced the **www.google.com** with it in the

## <--Water Blogged Wump

URL Firefox was trying to access. Interestingly, up came the page to type a query into and, when it was unleashed, a result page came up reasonably quickly. Clicking on a link from that page, however, did little but spin the whirly-gig at the top of a blank page. However, if I stopped it and again replaced the **www.google.com** with the IP address, up would come the page Google was pointing to. This latter behavior occurs because **Google shows you one URL in the text of the search results but actually uses a link that sends that link to a Google server which keeps tabs on what you're doing before it accesses the page you end up on.** Of course, you could also extract the real URL from the Google URL and paste it into the location field of your browser. But enough of techno-maneuvering. For a very large portion of the population, reliance on Google for accessing things on the Internet has become more than a mere habit. Even major corporations rely on a working Google to provide data from their web sites as I was able to test during the outage. This is a very dangerous state of affairs from several perspectives. I'm not trying to be a fear monger. It's much too late to bother being afraid now.

I recently was asked to download a program that someone had purchased at Adobe's web site. They did this because the instructions for downloading the purchased software were, to put it mildly, a tad confusing. It took me several attempts to figure out what the devil Adobe wanted in the way of credentials to access the download site. After delivering the download to Adobe's customer, I waited a while and then inquired as to how the software was working for him. The answer was that it wasn't working and, indeed, would not work on any of his equipment despite hav-

ing the indicated compatible operating system installed. **Adobe very cleverly disguised the fact that it would work ONLY on Intel processor based Macs.** I use the word "disguised" because they made it clear near the purchase and download links that Mac OS 10.4.11 or later was required ... but apparently nothing else. Way across the page, in a little box with four items in small print was a "System Requirements" link. The purchaser had overlooked the processor requirement and I had not seen this link until doing research into why the program would not work. I might have looked for it if I'd been doing the buying but I just as easily might not have, too. Frankly, I'm amazed that Adobe is so willing to simply abandon their Power PC Mac user base (which can use 10.5.x as well as 10.4.11) in such a manner. I suspect it's because Adobe is really not that interested in software for the Mac, despite the Mac's historic presence in the graphic arts. There's almost no reason not to produce either a dual target binary (one that works with either Intel or PPC) or separate binaries for Intel and PPC, except laziness or stupidity. Now, I am not particularly a fan of Adobe but that is not why I'm writing this paragraph – the specific incident mentioned above is just a catalyst. Many companies today are writing software that is only intended to run on Apple's very latest operating systems and hardware. Whether this is just because they don't want to bother to test their products on other systems or is the result of some sort of real difficulty is unclear. In any case, be careful when buying software. It has become increasingly difficult to know ahead of time whether something is going to work for you or not. I strongly suggest negotiating a "no questions asked, money back guarantee."

I was just offered a cell phone service at "a price I want." **I didn't know anyone was offering to pay me to use a cell phone.** Some-

how, I suspect that if I were to check into it, the price would be somewhat in the other direction. I'd actually be surprised if I'd find the price they charge reasonable, to say nothing of the terms and conditions that seem certain to accompany any such service these days. In any case, I find it amazing that they claim to know the price I want without first having made any attempt to ascertain that data. Perhaps they send recreational vehicles through neighborhoods carrying people who were trained by staring at goats to read the minds of everyone they pass. Or, maybe, my TV is sending them back my comments over Charter's cable. It is bidirectional, after all. Nah, I don't really believe such things. Instead, I believe it's just more propaganda designed to persuade us that Murkin should be our preferred language.

No wonder GM's sales are in the proverbial toilet. I just saw a commercial in which they touted **their new SUV. The selling point: it costs less than 30 grand.** Well, whoopie-doo-dah! What the heck is there in the metal box with wheels and an engine that needs to cost 10 times what it did just a few years ago? Admittedly, I don't relate well to the current prices for things, but I have to confess I'm puzzled by such pricing ... given that price is what they're touting. The whole SUV craze was set off by clueless media geniuses declaring them to be safer than ordinary vehicles. Naturally, Mommy just had to have an SUV to trundle her brood from Sun up to the wee hours of the morning. The bigger, the better, too. Big is obviously safe, right? Having done some road racing in my past and still being a fan of some of it, I have been consistently amazed at the incredibly inane "improvements" in vehicle safety over the last 40 years. To put this into perspective: a Formula 1 car can crash straight into a wall at 120 miles per hour (or even **7 -->** more) and the driver can walk

**<--Water Blogged Wump**  
away. The odds of anyone surviving such a crash in any vehicle generally sold to the public are not particularly those one would care to place a bet on, ie. they'd fold up like an accordion – even if they had a medallion stuck on them that contained the letters S, U & V. But, you have air bags. Hmm... I wonder why race cars don't use air bags. Could it be that they're really a generally bad idea? Well, not if you're a crusading political moron. Admittedly, race drivers get dressed up a bit specially for driving in a race. They wear fire resistant clothes, though fire is much less common today at races than it once was because fuel is not kept in simple tanks ... like it still is in your car. They wear helmets – probably a bit too much to ask of consumers. The biggie is that they strap in and not with some chintzy over-the-shoulder lap strap. Coupled with a padded enclosure that is designed not to crush inward, race cars are far safer than the stuff we drive on the highway. While I don't believe we'll ever saddle the public with cars as safe as race cars, we could easily apply some of the engineering principles that have been repeatedly proven to improve the odds of survival in crashes.

Have you seen the car zapper? It's a device that is supposed to be able to stop a car, generally to arrest whomever is riding in it or simply stop it before it gets where it's being driven.  
**How does it work? It uses “atomic bomb technology” known as “electromagnetic pulse” or EMP.** Sounds good, right? The development of this stuff has been going on for decades now, despite the fact that it really does work ... if the vehicle you're trying to stop has an electronic ignition system. Unfortunately for the powers that be, stopping vehicles with old style ignition systems is not so easy. Why?

**7** Well, the electronic ignition system uses solid state parts that can be ruined rather eas-

ily by an electrical overload ... the primary effect of EMP. But mechanical points, carbon brushes, lead-acid batteries and copper coils – the stuff of old ignition systems – are not so easily damaged. True, with enough energy in the EMP, the points could be fused or disintegrated or the coil could get shorted or even the spark plugs could be have their electrodes vaporized. But an EMP of that sort of magnitude would most likely do things like blow up the gas tank, heat small metal objects to the point of exploding in occupants' faces and melt the plastic off the steering wheel into the driver's lap. I suppose if one could limit these effects to one vehicle, there may be situations in which such behavior would be acceptable (if somewhat difficult to generate). EMP energy don't play dat.

I just read a question that gave me a chill: **“Do we need a U.N. cybersecurity council?”** Were it not for the sad truth of the Peter Principle, such high level activities might well make good sense. They could provide consistent, well thought out means to improve things. But as local events have demonstrated time and again, even the minor hierarchies of small city governments do a smash-bang job of demonstrating the Peter Principle. It's such things that spread the chill when one thinks of machinations in the hierarchy at the level of world “leaders.” Dilbert's pointy haired boss's cluelessness is absolute genius compared to that.

As you'd be hard pressed to know by the results, the U.S. has a plan to bring broadband to the masses. The plan is being managed by the FCC as required by section 706 of the Telecommunications Act of 1996. Hey! Thirteen years to do essentially nothing ain't too bad for the FCC. Every two years they've produced a study on the progress and have concluded it's occurring “in a reasonable and timely fashion.” Scott Bradner, a Harvard professor who studies such things and then writes

about them, says that very few agree with this assessment other than the carriers and the FCC. Billions of dollars in stimulus funds have been made available but large carriers have avoided them like the plague. They seem to be trying to rid themselves of the pesky rules that say they have to be fair to their customers. You could get involved ... if you could get invited to the FCC hearings on the matter – they seem to neglect to invite anyone who cares about Internet users.



### **8 <-- Dreaded Terminal**

right an additional character from cal's normal output and most lines end in a trailing space. There's a little problem in that the script needs to use the day number twice. I chose to do this by acquiring and reacquiring it from the **date** program. But this might fail if you happened to run the first **date** just before midnight and the second one just after midnight. This difficulty can be dealt with like:

```
x=$(date +%e);cal | perl -pe 's/^/ /;s/$/ /;s/ "$x" /\["$x"]/'
```

which uses a variable to capture just one idea of what the current day is before doing the editing. Of course, you still might end up with the wrong day being highlighted if you execute the script just before midnight with it ending just after midnight.

In fact, with either method, you could end up with the previous month's output ... if you start the command before midnight but the clock ticks over before the output is done. The problems listed above are most probably something you'd actually have a hard time inducing, but they could happen. This sort of thing is common with programs where synchronization with independent events is required.

The **cal** program is pretty simple but does have a few parameters that you can taylor things with. One prints out a whole year's calendar.





One thing about mucking about with stuff in Terminal is that there's

always something new to learn.

First is the `-o` option for the `grep` command. Commands used in Terminal often allow a number of options and `grep` is no exception, having far more than I care to commit to memory.

The `-o` option of `grep` is one I'd wished for a long time. The reason is that `-o` tells `grep` to output only the data that matches the search pattern, not the whole line on which the match exists. In other words, it extracts the match from the muck in which it's embedded. When `-o` is combined with `-h`, even the filename in which the match occurred is eliminated. This means that I don't have to add a complex `perl` or `sed` sequence to pick out the stuff I want to work with.

When I read about `-o` in an email, I immediately gave it a try. I was also immediately taken aback by the `grep: invalid option -- o` error message that resulted. The `-o` option is relatively new. The `grep` included in Panther (Mac OS X.3.9) does not include the `-o` option. Being the curmudgeon that I am, I normally do not use later versions of Mac OS on my computers. It turned out to be easy to download and compile a recent GNU version of `grep`. Still, if you're writing a script for general consumption, I would suggest avoiding the `-o` option as it's clearly not going to be available on just any `*nix` system.

The second Terminal goodie that I happened upon is the `softwareupdate` command. One might expect that I'd already be aware of `softwareupdate` as it's been around since at least the long lost days of the Jaguar (Mac OS X.2.1). In my defense, there are literally thousands of Terminal



commands available and I limit

my absorption of them to what I've needed for the most part. The downside of that is that I'm clearly missing out on a lot of neat stuff. Such is life.

Now I've not actually run the `softwareupdate` command to do more than list the available updates. What got me interested in it was again an email that was in answer to a question about how to download the update `dmg`'s because that option was missing in Snow Leopard's `SoftwareUpdate` system preference pane. I can't attest to that, not having a working SL available. I have used the option in earlier versions, however, so having it available via the `softwareupdate` Terminal command could be handy.

There are about 200 commands in the `/usr/sbin` directory, to say nothing of the 700 or so in `/usr/bin` and all the other stuff that comes in from diddling with open source software in various places. Many of those in `/usr/sbin` are peculiar to Mac OS X. You might enjoy exploring them. If you do, how about writing about your experiences?

The other day I bumped into a little CLI (Command Line Interface - ie., Terminal) command that outputs a calendar. Of course it's one of those things Mac users don't need because they have `iCal` sitting in their docks. But I've learned that it's sometimes very handy to have a basic, simple function upon which one can build. As an example, look at this little snippet.

```
wump$ cal<Return>
October 2009
 S M Tu W Th F S
                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
```

Clearly, it's pretty easy to get a basic textual calendar. The fact that it's plain text provides one great advantage that I used to write this article - you can copy and paste it readily. While Terminal doesn't let you go nuts with spacing, fonts, sizes, etc., popping the

text of the calendar into `TextEdit` can provide for that. From there you might want to take fancy results to a drawing program for further embellishment.

I discovered `cal` because I happened on an email discussion of how to format it's output so that the current day was "highlighted," ie., enclosed in square brackets. Some of the techniques used were a bit complex. I got to thinking about it a little and came up with the little ditty:

```
cal | perl -pe 's/^\s+//;s/$/;/s/ "(date "+%e")"'/\["$(date "+%e")"]/'
```

which generated this output

```
October 2009
 S M Tu W Th F S
                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
```

This works by `cal`'s output being piped to `perl` where the code puts a space before and after each line, then, if the line contains today's date, it replaces the space preceding the day number, the day number itself and the space following the day number with a [, the day number and a ] and prints the result. The result is shifted `7 -->`

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