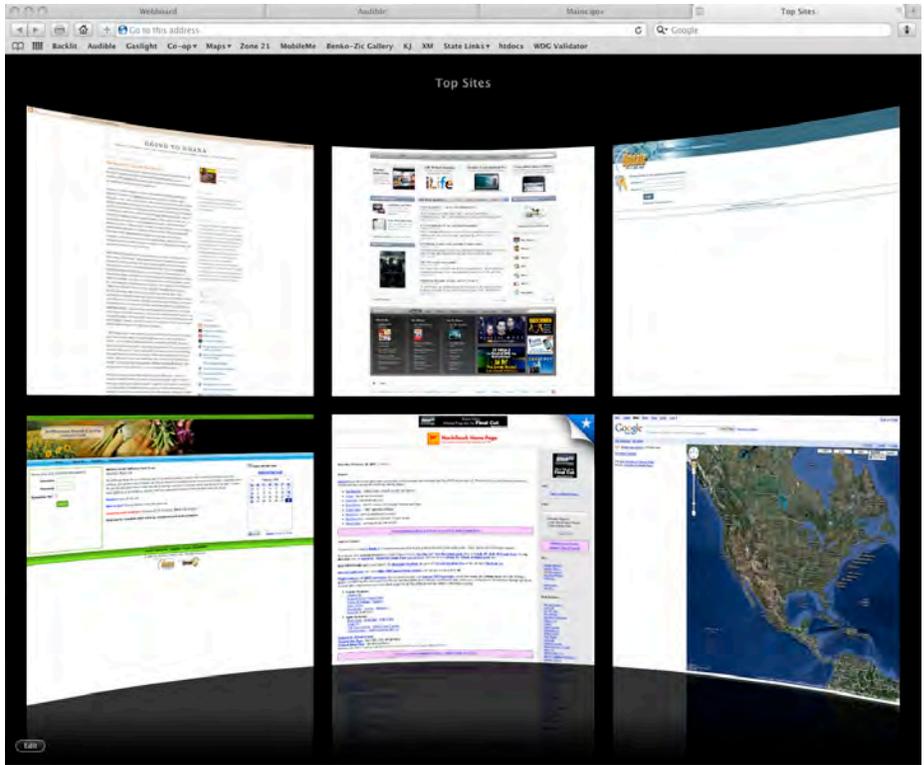# CAMP NEWS

Skype's Just Right

I remember watching Sue Westlake demonstrate Skype several years ago at a CAMP meeting. She was talking into her laptop's microphone to her husband Teddy, who was talking to her via his computer back home. Sue had the volume turned up moderately high on the laptop, and the sound was pretty much in the range of what you'd expect to hear from the speakerphone on a telephone. I was pretty impressed, but didn't foresee doing much telephoning computer-to-computer, even if calls were free.

Last September my son Sam joined the Peace Corps in Ghana. He now lives in a very rural area with no nearby internet access, and postal mail is complicated. But he does live only several miles from a cell phone tower, and bought a cell phone.

I still don't call computer-to-computer. But I do rely heavily on another feature of Skype, called Skype-out. Skype-out allows the user to call a **telephone** from a computer. Skype has now become my primary means of communicating with Sam.

Unlike Skype proper, Skype-out calls are not free. However, the rate for Skype-out calls to Ghanaian cell phones (19¢ per minute) is far less

Safari 4 Beta

You're looking at Top Sites, one of the new features of the Safari 4 beta that Apple released last month. Up to 24 of your most frequently visited web sites appear in a mock 3-D array in your browser window. Click on a miniature to jump to the site depicted.

You call up Top Sites by clicking an icon in the links bar. And if you really like it, you can make it your home page, as I have done. See page 2 for more eye candy examples of the new Safari.

The most controversial feature in the beta is the redesigned tabs. Earlier versions of the program placed the tabs bar below the links bar. The version 4 beta places the tab bar at the very top of the browser window where one ordinarily finds the menu bar. This saves maybe ten pixels of vertical space, but has sent interface purists howling. The new compact look takes a minute or two to
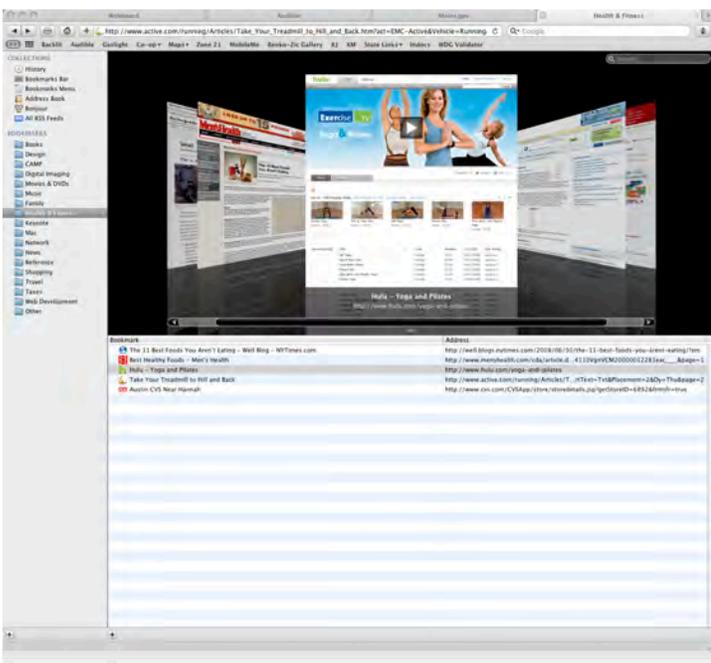
get used to, but in no time flat you'll figure out how to move the browser window, re-arrange tabs, drag a tab out of the bar to create a new browser window, etc.

According to Apple, the version 4 beta loads pages far speedier than competing browsers and earlier versions of Safari. I can't really say that I've noticed a real-world difference from v3. Unfortunately, the version 4 beta continues to frequently "unexpectedly quit" when I quit in the normal fashion, just like v3. Nor does the version 4 beta display PDFs of my credit card statements, another holdover problem from v3.

This is, of course, a beta, and Apple includes a bug icon in the tool bar to report problems. I've submitted both these snafus, so we'll see what the future holds. For now, Top Sites and Cover Flow are brilliant new additions that make Safari a joy to use. ☼

Pages That Flow

Apple first introduced cover flow view as a way of navigating through your iTunes music collection by album cover. Leopard brought cover flow to Finder windows, and the version 4 beta brings cover flow to Safari. Above, a cover flow view of my browsing history. Below, a cover flow view of a bookmarks folder. In either situation, double-clicking the resize widget just below the horizontal scroll bar restores history or bookmarks to traditional list view.

expensive than the rate charged by my long distance provider (32¢ per minute) or cell phone provider ($1.41 per minute). (Calls to a Ghanaian landline cost a few cents less.)

Call quality is surprisingly high, especially if I use the headset that came with my antiquated IBM ViaVoice speech recognition software. It sounds like I'm talking to someone down the road from me! A Skype beta promises "enhanced video and audio quality," but I haven't tried it.

We call Sam weekly. Skype has dramatically lessened the distance between us. What I first thought was a novelty has turned out to be a lifeline.

March 11 CAMP Meeting

Jeff Frankel will lug in his Power Mac G5 to demonstrate Time Machine, the backup utility Apple built in to the Leopard operating system. We start at 7:00 p.m. in Room 117, Gardiner Area H.S.