

# CAMP News

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JEFF FRANKEL, EDITOR

## Capital Apple Mac Performa User Group



Augusta, Maine  
www.campug.org

### Helping Your Mac Take Care of Itself

For our November program, Adam Tomash will demonstrate utilities that allow users to directly run Apple's background system maintenance scripts. Plus, at Steve' Katz' suggestion, we'll all share our favorite web sites. The heart-stopping action begins at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, November 9 at Buker Community Center, 22 Armory Street, Augusta.

### Sakes Alive, It's iOS5!

Jeffrey Frankel

Me and my iPod are down with [iOS5](#), friends. The updated operating system offers a smorgasbord of new features for us to dip our meaty little Mac fingers into. iMessage is cool, Notifications Center ratchets up electronic communication to an even higher level of annoyance, and Reminders may be handy for the peripatetically disorganized. (Why do so many writers use "Pick up dry cleaning after work" to showcase Reminders?)

I'm impressed with the new formatting controls and flagging ability in Mail, although I'm disappointed that you \*still\* can't send a message to a Contacts group in iOS5. The side scrolling display of daily appointments in Calendar is a treat. In fact, I like Calendar on the iPod far more than iCal in Lion. Newsstand looks like a great way to access all the newspapers and magazines that I'm never going to subscribe to (except for the New York Times). But I am looking forward to setting up keyboard shortcuts to cut down on thumbing.

In short, there's plenty to explore and evaluate. But for me, the brightest jewel in the iOS crown is wireless syncing of iTunes content from my iMac to my iPod.

I listen to a lot of audiobooks and podcasts, all of which I manage via iTunes. Back in the dark days (i.e., prior to October 12 of this year), it was necessary to connect my iPod to my iMac with a USB cable in order to shovel all the new content from the iMac to the iPod and clean out the old. No more. Now, so long as the iMac and iPod are on the same wireless network—i.e., at home—I can trigger a sync sans cable from either the iMac *or* the iPod. Plus, if I plug the iPod into AC power anywhere at home—i.e., within range of my router—a wireless sync is triggered automatically. The only major qualifications to all this magic are that for wireless syncing to occur iTunes must be running on the Mac, you

must be logged in to the proper user account, and the Mac cannot be asleep.

Wireless syncing is available on certain models of the iPod Touch and iPhone and on the iPad and iPad2. For a good explanation on how to set it up, see [this Macworld article](#).

Apple has not taken away the option of syncing iTunes via USB cable if you prefer. This might be handy for those who routinely connect their iDevice to a desktop computer to charge the device as well as sync it.

But for me, wireless syncing is the way to go, and I have one less cable littering my desk. Said cable now litters my wife's desk: for syncing her iPod Nano to iTunes on her Mac. ☀

## eBooks on the Air

**Jeffrey Frankel**

Reading about the new line of Amazon Kindles propelled me once again into flip-flop mode about purchasing a reading tablet. I'd managed to survive 60 years just fine flipping physical pages, and I wasn't crazy about welcoming yet another hungry little electronic mouth into my burgeoning fold. Then I realized with a start that I might not have to. Perhaps my 13" Macbook Air could serve as an eBook reader.

Leisure reading has turned out to be a pure delight on the Air. The machine is small enough and light enough to sit comfortably on my thighs, especially if I rest my legs on a hassock. And the backlit screen is far better suited for indoor use with my aging eyes than the much dimmer e-ink screens of the Kindle or Nook.



*Mt. O-J-I and Mt. Katahdin as seen from Sentinel Mountain, Baxter State Park*

So far, I've burned through four books in ePub format from the [Maine Infonet Download Library](#), a service of the Maine State Library, and am in the middle of a fifth. I read the books in the free [Adobe Digital Editions](#), which is similar to Adobe Reader, but with more options for flowing the text on screen.

To my immense surprise I've found, over the course of the past 3½ weeks, that I actually *prefer* reading on the Air to reading bound books. The flatness and angle of the screen, larger type size, and my preferred two-column screen layout make it easier for me to scan and ingest words from the Air than from a printed, handheld book. The activity feels so natural that I was surprised to discover that Apple's iBooks application is available only for iOS devices and not for Macs.

Until settling into this routine I had thought that eBooks were best enjoyed by people who either travel a lot or are short on shelf space. Instead, I found that reading on my laptop is a fine alternative for general use—and I didn't even have to shell out

extra \$\$ for a dedicated tablet or an iPad.

Cultural critics have pondered what this means for intellectual life, community and the transmission of knowledge. After all, you can't exactly go down to the neighborhood eBookstore and examine the titles. And depending on how you acquire an eBook, you may or may not be able to loan it at will, or maybe not at all. Will eBooks push us even further into the dehumanized world of on line consumerism? Will reading to children drift off into another session of *Angry Birds* or waiting just a second while daddy checks his email? On the other hand, Andy Ihnatko wrote a while back that if you love *books*, stick with bound print; but if you love *reading*, eBooks may be the way to go.

Technology is a tool that opens many doors. If it makes your life better, use it. I see a definite place in my life for eBooks, and I thank Apple and the Air for opening this particular door for me. ☀