

Apple Bytes

The Newsletter of the **Lynchburg Apple Core**

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March General Meeting

Thursday March 17 - 7:00 PM - Lynchburg College

The March regular meeting at **Lynchburg College, room 17 Hopwood Hall** will begin with a general discussion and Q&A session at 7:00 p.m. followed by the featured presentation by Tony Young, Tom Johnson, and Gordon Mattox on how to import audio into your computer.

Note that this meeting is in Hopwood Hall where we have held most of our meetings at Lynchburg College.

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Digitizing Audio from your Vinyl Discs and Tapes

The program topic for the March Meeting will be about getting audio into your computer from your vinyl records and audio tapes. We will demonstrate software to capture and edit the audio before it is burned to CD or just stored in your iTunes library. We will also show the Griffin iMic, an audio analog to digital converter which you may use.

Just as analog video has to be digitized before it can be edited in your computer, so does audio. If you have albums on compact discs (CD), the music is already digitized. Your CD ROM drive can read the CD and your computer can play the music. Just put the CD into your drive, open iTunes (if you don't have it, it is a free download from Apple.com), and iTunes will read your disc and display the song tracks. Note that many of the newer Macs have CD-RW drives which can both read and write CDs.

Many of us are already familiar with iTunes so we won't go into much detail here except as it applies to digitizing music from vinyl records and cassette tapes. The real power of iTunes is to capture music and store it on your computer for future play. The music will be stored in the iTunes library where you can listen to it, copy it to a blank CD-R disc (if you have a drive that writes), or copy it to your iPod.

You may have music on vinyl records or cassette tapes or even reel-to-reel tapes that you would like to import. To do this it needs to be digitized. One of the most popular software packages to do this is CD Spin Doctor, an application that is included with the Roxio Toast Titanium package. If your Mac does not have an Audio-In port, such as any of the iBooks, the Cube, or the G4 QuickSilver, you must input you audio signal through the USB port. The most popular device for this is the

Griffin iMic. It plugs into your USB port and you plug audio cables from your cassette player or phonograph into the iMic. This \$35 device transforms the audio signal into a digital signal that the computer then receives through the USB port. The advantage Griffin claims for the iMic is that it is outside the computer motherboard, eliminating electronic noise that can be picked up when digitizing inside the computer. A writer for TidBits (an electronic newsletter for Mac users) claims that his testing has confirmed the accuracy of Griffin's claims.

Note that there are two types of signals from phonographs. The true signal from the tone arm on the turntable is a very low voltage signal, and may require an audio pre-amp to get a strong enough signal for the iMic (which has two settings to select from for high and low audio signals). It won't be strong enough to take it directly to the audio-in port if you're not using an iMic. Some phonographs have a pre-amp built in and output standard audio strength signals that need no pre-amp. Griffin's description of the iMic indicates that it can capture phonograph audio. Our suggestion is to try it without the pre-amp and if it does not work then get the pre-amp at Radio Shack or elsewhere.

Cassette tape decks and players need no pre-amp for outputting to your Mac. Just plug the cables into the audio-in or the iMic, run the tape and capture away! Once you have the music captured (usually it is an MP3 file, but you can select that or WAVE or other formats before you capture the audio). Once you have the songs digitized you can use iTunes or Toast to record the music to CD's to play in your CD players (or computer).

In OS X, you can record into iMovie, though it's not configured well for archiving LPs, tapes, etc. Third party applications are better suited for that. Griffin offers Final Vinyl, free audio recording software exclusively for Griffin PowerWave and iMic owners. Final Vinyl makes recording your old records and tapes super easy. It has several advanced features including waveform based cue editing and built-in 10-band EQ. CD Spin Doctor is a commercial program included with Roxio Toast 6 Titanium disc burning software that does the same thing and is quite good.

You can manage the recording session, and then edit the music with a relatively simple user interface. For instance, the little "bump" noise the phono needle makes as it sets down on the record can be seen, and you can click-drag that "bump" to highlight it and press the "delete" key to remove it. Spin Doctor offers several filters that can reduce pop, hiss and rumble that often occurs in recordings from vinyl discs. It can also enhance bass, etc. Then you can save the song, name it what you want, and import it into iTunes or do whatever you want to with it.

Sound files can exist in a number of different formats. The WAVE or AIFF file formats used on commercial CDs take about 8 or 9 megabytes per minute of sound. The MP3 format is one of the most popular for digital music players. There are several levels of MP3 audio compression. The least compression takes up the most memory. The middle is fine for most listening with headphones, most speaker systems, etc. It takes up 1 megabytes per minute of music. This means that you can get nearly 10 hours of MP3 songs in the space of one AIFF format song. So that's why you can get so many songs on your computer or iPod.

iTunes can also handle AAC and Apple Lossless Encoder formats. The large discussion of the various file formats and encoding bit-rates is beyond the scope of this article, but it can be, as the old TV Laugh-In show's Arte Johnson's German soldier says, "Verrry interesting!"

Once you get your recordings into iTunes, you can then burn them to CDs, either in the standard CD format, AIFF, or into an MP3 CD. However, be sure your CD player can play MP3 formatted discs. The older ones cannot, and you have to record the music as WAVE or AIFF files to play on them, with about 72 to 80 minutes of music per disc.

April Meetings:

Westminster-Canterbury - Tuesday April 19, 7:15 PM
Amherst, 123 N. Main St. - Wednesday, April 20, 7:15 PM
Lynchburg College, Room 17, Hopwood Hall - Thursday April 21, - 7:00 PM

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Managing your Photos with iPhoto

The program topic for the April meetings will be Managing your Digital Photos with iPhoto. Version 5 of iPhoto, which is included in iLife '05, has some very nice features added to those of the earlier versions. Gordon Mattox will demonstrate the latest iPhoto and will show how it can be used to catalog, sort, enhance, organize and display many thousands of photos. It also has other very fine features, including allowing you to order special printed albums automatically from iPhoto.

Future Meeting Dates and Main Topics

Here is a listing of future meeting dates and the major topics planned for each meeting. There are always more discussions about other topics, so don't feel that these will be the only topics at the meeting. The floor is always open for questions. Topics can change. Check your latest AppleBytes.

Note that all the meetings are the Third Thursday of every month.

April 21.....Managing Digital Photos with iPhoto
May 19.....Spreadsheets (Excel, Appleworks)
June 16.....First Hands-on OS X 10.4 "Tiger"
July 21.....iMovie & iDVD
August 18.....Protecting your computer privacy
September 15.....Build a Website
October 20.....Advanced Word Processing
November 17.....3rd Annual Dinner at Oakwood Country Club
December 15.....Managing e-Mail

Mac OS X Class at CVCC March 18, 19, and 25, 26

NOTE: By the time you read this, the class enrollment may be closed!

The next class will be in October and will feature

Mac OS X 10.4 *Tiger!*

The Lynchburg Apple Core is sponsoring a 1-credit college class on Mac OS X, covering both Version 10.2 Jaguar and Version 10.3 Panther. This class is intended both for Mac users who are new to OS X and those who have been using it for some time but who want to gain a better understanding and become more proficient in the use of their Macs. The class will be relatively small and will be geared for a lot of personal attention, questions and answers. It will include coverage of iPhoto, iTunes, iMovie, iDVD, GarageBand, Safari, Mail, and AppleWorks. Gordon Mattox is the instructor.

This is a weekend class, March 18,19, and 25, 26. Two Friday nights from 5:30 PM to 9:00 PM, and the two Saturdays from 8:00 AM to Noon, to minimize disruption of your normal schedules.

It is listed as Business 195-01MD, “Macintosh Operations - Mac OS X“. Sign up through the CVCC Admissions Office on campus, or if you have been registered before, call 832-7633. Or call Gordon at 401-0163 for info.

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