

## Cool Mac OSX Third Party Add-Ons

With Lesa Snider



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Lesla is the owner of Flying Fingers, a Texas-based creative new media firm specializing in web usability and search engine optimization. She is also a consultant for the National Association of Photoshop Professionals, travels with the Adobe Photoshop Seminar Tour, and is a certified PalmOS Trainer. Lesla's publishing credits include technical editor for "Mac OS X Conversion Kit" by Scott Kelby and contributions to MacDesign magazine. She is a member of the Apple User Group Advisory Board, a three-time

User Group University faculty member, and content consultant for everything under the usergroup directory on Apple.com.

### Let the downloading begin!

Gone are the days when the mere thought of installing third party software sent us running to the extension manager. Being in the world of OS X means our OS is ten times more stable than it used to be. Think of it as a license to have ten times more fun, while at the same time becoming ten times more productive. I invite you all to come with me on a journey through the coolest software and hardware add-ons available today. Remember, customization is one of the many reasons we love our Macs. Let us all hold hands now and rejoice as we re-enter the glorious realm of super cool, third party stuff.

### Software

#### Upgrade to Panther ([www.apple.com/macosx/](http://www.apple.com/macosx/))

Get yourself a sleek, black cat! If you haven't done it already, you're wasting valuable time. Panther has some terrific new features, but more importantly, you'll get a speed boost, courtesy of the OS itself, and your Mac will feel noticeably faster. It's like getting a hardware upgrade without the hardware. Once you upgrade you can do cool stuff like never quitting applications (Command + H to Hide them instead), and never letting your Mac sleep (Panther runs diagnostics and defragments your hard drive while idle).

#### Cocktail ([www.macosxcocktail.com](http://www.macosxcocktail.com))

Keep OS X running at peak efficiency by using Cocktail to run daily, weekly and monthly system maintenance tasks on a regular schedule that you set. The major features are arranged in five basic categories: Disks, System, Files, Network, Interface, and Pilot. It's great for those of us who forget to keep our Macs from sleeping, preventing Panther from doing this stuff on its own :)

#### LaunchBar ([www.obdev.at/products/launchbar/](http://www.obdev.at/products/launchbar/))

May your hands never leave the keyboard after downloading LaunchBar from ObjectiveDevelopment. This handy piece of shareware allows users access to literally anything on your computer by pressing Command + Spacebar, and entering short abbreviations of the item's name. It's also trainable, so once activated, you can teach it to open Photoshop by simply pressing the letter P.

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### **Safari ([www.apple.com/software/safari/](http://www.apple.com/software/safari/))**

Apple's web browser, Safari, is slim, trim, and fast. Take advantage of it's unique "tab" feature by first enabling it in Safari's preferences, and then pressing Command + T to pop open another web page within the same document window. Enjoy even faster web browsing by using the Spacebar to page down a document without scrolling. Be kind to your eyes when reading small type by pressing Command and + to zoom in. Likewise, pressing Command and - will also zoom back out.

### **Mozilla Firefox ([www.mozilla.org/products/firefox/](http://www.mozilla.org/products/firefox/))**

This free, Open Source browser is quickly gaining popularity and has some really neat features. Like Safari, it features "tabbed" browsing (the ability to browse more than one site in the same document window). It also supports the blocking of pop-up windows, though it allows you to specify it on a site by site basis in the Preferences. You can even add an extension called Google Bar which has a variety of functions related to the popular search engine. It supports browsing history, along with a handy 'find' function so you can search for sites you've visited using keywords. Sweet.

### **Prefling ([homepage.mac.com/asagoo/prefling/](http://homepage.mac.com/asagoo/prefling/))**

Access System Preferences on the fly by with Prefling by Amar Sagoo. Download this great piece of freeware and then drag it to your dock for one-click access to all Preference Panes.

### **Carbon Copy Cloner ([www.bombich.com/software/cccl.html](http://www.bombich.com/software/cccl.html))**

Sleep better at night with a complete clone of your hard drive. Download Mike Bombich's Carbon Copy Cloner from Version Tracker to painlessly create an exact duplicate of your hard drive on an external hard drive. This will get you back up and running in no time flat if/when that fatal crash ever happens.

### **DeLocalizer ([www.bombich.com/software/local.html](http://www.bombich.com/software/local.html))**

Reclaim hard drive space with DeLocalizer, also from Mike Bombich. This handy piece of freeware rids your hard drive of all non-American localization files (choose a local language from a series of checkboxes). Run it and be amazed at the sheer volume of free space now available for... more music of course! (Hello, Apple Music Store!)

### **NetNewsWire ([www.ranchero.com/netnewswire/](http://www.ranchero.com/netnewswire/))**

Major fun with RSS feeds! Clean out that browser bookmark file and stay up-to-date by assimilating news at warp speed! Read tons-o-headlines without having to visit the actual web site from whence they came. Click the subscription drawer and choose from myriad feeds, or click subscribe and add others. It fetches headlines, a short description, and a link to the full story from your favorite news sources. Set this little gem to refresh every 30 minutes, and amaze your friends and colleagues by staying up-to-date on everything, everyday. Beware the siren call! Engaging in RSS activity is HIGHLY addictive. Even as I type, I can see the icon in my dock... a number in red... 557 unread headlines... it calls me... it calllllllllls me...

### **Notebook ([www.circusponies.com](http://www.circusponies.com))**

Organize your note-taking life with digital notebook paper, complete with pages and tabs. You can arrange notes hierarchically in each page's outline, collapse or expand hier-

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archies to hide or show detail. You can annotate your notes with keywords, stickers and highlighting, add an action item checkbox, and a whole lot more. Copy text and other stuff straight into Notebook without leaving the application you're working in. Import and enhance photos, images, film clips, and sound files directly in Notebook. You can even add in video clips or movies, complete with a standard playback control strip for convenient viewing or replay. Supports HTML publishing and more.

### **You Control ([www.yousoftware.com](http://www.yousoftware.com))**

Welcome to custom menu heaven. This amazing software enables you to create custom menus for faster access to the files and folders you use the most. It's actually a collection of fifteen unique menu utilities. You can control iTunes, iCal, Address Book, and more. Create menus to monitor stock quotes, RSS news feeds and the heavens themselves (e.g. the weather). Once a new menu is created, you can put it in the OS X menu bar, or any corner of your screen. They're also accessible via keyboard shortcuts. Very, very cool.

### **Apple Mail scripts ([homepage.mac.com/aamann/Mail\\_Scripts.html](http://homepage.mac.com/aamann/Mail_Scripts.html))**

Andreas Amann recently updated his Mail Scripts package with several new scripts that are worth checking out if you use Apple's Mail application. Once installed, you'll gain access to a host of functionality in the Applescript menu. Enjoy things like deleting duplicate messages (handy if you experience server weirdness and your email gets downloaded twice), instantly sending all messages in your "Drafts" folder, and more.

### **SpamSieve ([www.c-command.com/spamsieve/](http://www.c-command.com/spamsieve/))**

Take your email inbox back by using SpamSieve spam filtering with popular e-mail clients. It learns what your spam looks like so it can block nearly all of it. And, like a bottle of good wine, SpamSieve gets better with age as you train it with more messages. It's not invasive, and merely marks messages in lieu of deleting them so you won't lose any mail. SpamSieve works with any number of mail accounts, of varying types (POP, IMAP, Hotmail, and AOL).

### **DiskWarrior ([www.alsoft.com/](http://www.alsoft.com/))**

Engage in disk directory battle with DiskWarrior. It's a little different than some of the other disk repair software out there, as it doesn't patch the original directory. Instead, it uses a patent-pending technology to create a new directory using the data recovered from the original. When you are experiencing weirdness, and Disk Utility simply doesn't cut it, reach for a warrior instead.

### **Plasma Tunnel Saver ([www.apple.com/downloads/macosx/icons\\_screensavers/plasmatunnelsaver.html](http://www.apple.com/downloads/macosx/icons_screensavers/plasmatunnelsaver.html))**

One minute you're working... and the next you're fighting for survival in a worm hole! Explore the wonders of space through the gaping maw of a swirling vortex (always wanted to say that!) with the galaxy's coolest screen saver.

### **Macdesktops.com**

Face it, we probably all spend too much time in our "batcaves" than we should. Take a break and treat yourself to a change in desktop scenery by visiting Macdesktops.com. They've got a huge collection of quality desktops, and they're divided up into neat little categories.

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### **Apeiron, Bubble Trouble, Mars Rising ([www.ambrosiasw.com](http://www.ambrosiasw.com))**

What's that? You don't have time to play games on your Mac anymore? Hogwash. It's time to have a little fun on the computer that works so hard for you. There's nothing like blasting a few centipedes and spaceships for quick stress relief. Ambrosia has a truly superior selection of engaging Mac games including strategy, puzzles, arcade, and shoot 'em up.

### **SnapzPro ([www.ambrosiasw.com](http://www.ambrosiasw.com))**

Put some power behind your screen shots! If you put together any type of training materials, this software jewel is invaluable. Once it's installed, just press Shift + Command + 3 and suddenly you can grab and save objects, complete with those gorgeous drop shadows. Make movies out of your mouse movements and poof! You've got an instant software tutorial.

## **Hardware**

### **Radtech ([www.radtech.us](http://www.radtech.us))**

Treat your Mac and iPod to the silky-soft luxury of a Radtech screen protector and sleeve. This amazing material both protects your equipment, and repairs your screen! Just dab a little water to the soft cloth, add some elbow grease, and polish away screen damage caused by the keyboard and trackpad.

### **inMotion Portable Speakers ([www.alteclansing.com/](http://www.alteclansing.com/))**

Traveling with your tunes just became a whole lot better with Altec Lansing's new portable speakers, made especially for the iPod and iPod mini. They fold up surprisingly small, and have the best sound out there for the size.

### **Laptrap ([www.shاونjackson.com](http://www.shاونjackson.com))**

Ever travel with your laptop? Ever have trouble finding the perfect bag? Your search is now over. It's a backpack, it's a shoulder bag, it's a desk. It's small and it's light, (okay, it's light because it IS small and I can't stuff my entire office into it). Cut down on the injury to your back, and to the others you've bumped into, by getting rid of that dead elephant on your back. Snap up one of these cool new bags for around \$50. Both 15 and 17 in. models are available.

### **iCurve, SightLight, iTrip, PowerMate ([www.griffintechology.com/](http://www.griffintechology.com/))**

This company makes some of the coolest, most innovative products around. Take a look at the iCurve, a sleek laptop stand, and the SightLight for Apple's iSight video camera. Want to listen to your iPod through your FM radio in your car? Then the iTrip is for you. Do a lot of video-editing or just want a cool gadget with a throbbing blue light? Grab a PowerMate.

### **Salling Clicker ([homepage.mac.com/jonassalling/Shareware/Clicker/](http://homepage.mac.com/jonassalling/Shareware/Clicker/))**

Have you ever had the desire to control your Mac with your cell phone or PDA? Of course you have! It's easy if you have this award-winning utility. It works via Bluetooth, on any computer platform. You can use it as a remote presentation device with Keynote. You can use it as a remote control for iTunes and iPhoto. The possibilities are endless!

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### Online Resources

#### **[www.apple.com/usergroups/locator/](http://www.apple.com/usergroups/locator/)**

Stay up to date with what's going on in Panther and future upgrades by contacting your local Mac User Group! It's easy to find one in your area by visiting Apple's locator.

#### **[www.mugcenter.com](http://www.mugcenter.com)**

Everything, yes EVERYTHING, that goes on in the Mac User Group community can be found here. Don't miss a single networking opportunity! Check here for all the goings-on at Macworld and other Mac happenings across the globe.

#### **[www.wwbchat.com](http://www.wwbchat.com)**

Chat and interact online with notable Mac celebrities in the World Without Borders chat room. Check the calendar and log-in for some online fun.

#### **[www.versiontracker.com](http://www.versiontracker.com)**

Check out the latest version of all your freeware, shareware, and commercial software here. You can also search for other cool third party stuff by perusing the different categories they've so kindly arranged for our convenience.

#### **[www.macworld.com](http://www.macworld.com)**

The Mac 911 Forum here is invaluable for technical help.

#### **[www.dealmac.com](http://www.dealmac.com)**

The forums on Dealmac are great for any and all advice on buying hardware or software, plus the information on the main site is of great help in getting the best value for your money.

#### **[www.yourmaclife.com](http://www.yourmaclife.com)**

Listen to Your Mac Life, Shawn King's internet-based Mac radio show, to stay informed (and entertained) about the Mac community. Tune in each Wednesday night at 7:30 pm Central time.

#### **[www.macosxhints.com](http://www.macosxhints.com)**

Mac OS X Hints is a great source for cool, super useful tips and tricks.

#### **[www.lowendmac.com](http://www.lowendmac.com)**

This site has all the information you need on older hardware.

### Great Mac news sites to peruse daily

[www.maccentral.com](http://www.maccentral.com)

[www.macsimumperspective.com](http://www.macsimumperspective.com)

[www.macminute.com](http://www.macminute.com)

[www.macsurfer.com](http://www.macsurfer.com)

[www.macfixit.com](http://www.macfixit.com)

[www.macintouch.com](http://www.macintouch.com)

[www.macmerc.com](http://www.macmerc.com)

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