



AppleGram

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**Michigan Apple
User Group
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 **Apple User Group**

Michigan Apple Elections



Annual Board of Directors Elections

The March meeting of the Michigan Apple User Group will include Elections for the 2007 Board of Directors. The Board is primarily responsible for the day to day operations of the User Group and how effective it will be in the upcoming year. Although we couldn't find anyone that wanted to run and to fill an existing Board position, we will take "Write In Votes" if anyone wants to step up and serve "last minute".

Also this year we are hoping to include a Membership Survey with the voting Ballot so we can get feedback on how to better serve the members during the upcoming year.

We will also feature the popular Apple Buffet Question and Answer session as the focus of the rest of the meeting.



Mac Using Too Much Memory?

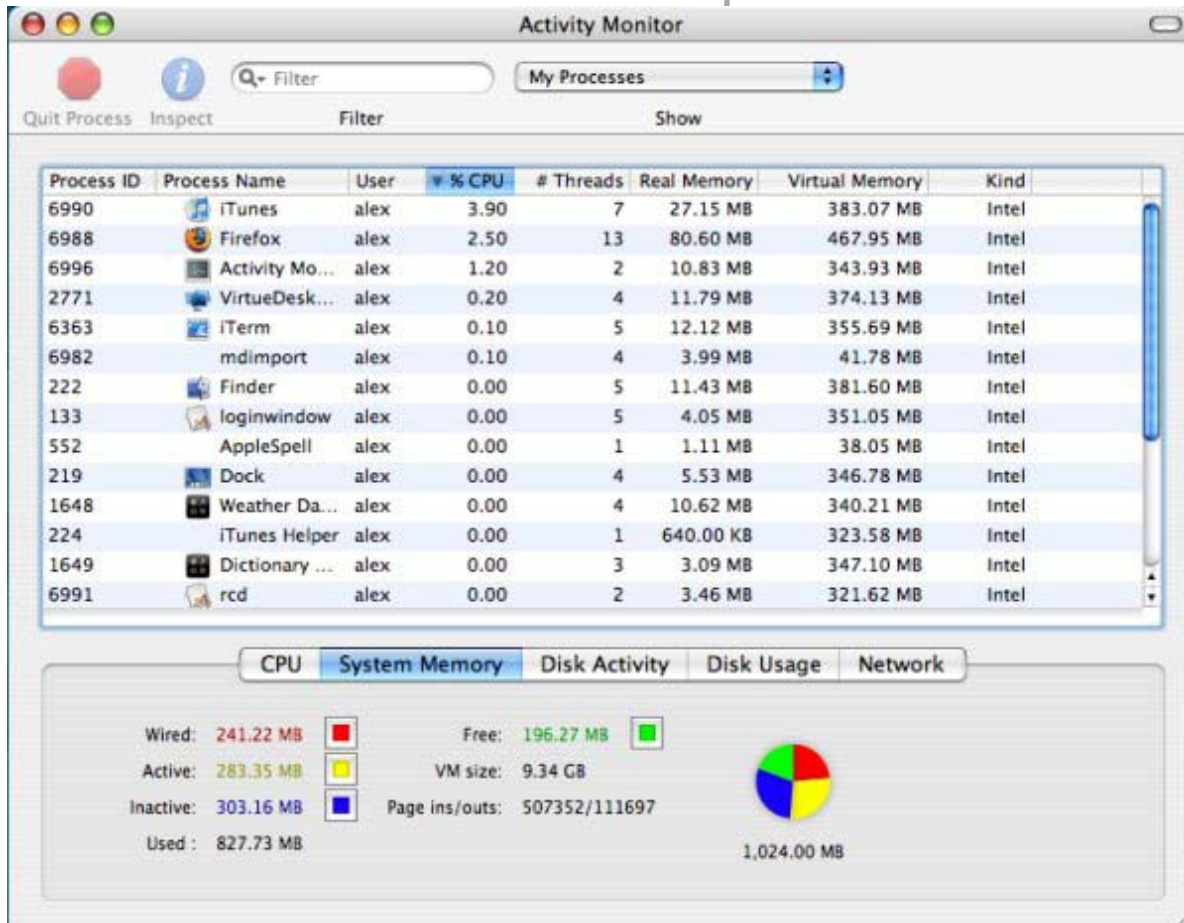
(Submitted by Keith Burby)

Michigan Apple member Keith Burby found an interesting post on a Blog on the Internet about how a new Mac User was concerned that his new Mac wasn't using its memory efficiently or correctly, He suggested that it be reprinted here in the Applegram to share the information with our membership. The Blog is written by a guy named Alex and is called "Bits About Bytes".

I have been a Linux user for a few years, and I recently (6 months ago) switched to a MacBook. One of the reasons I originally switched from Windows to Linux was resource efficiency. There were others, but this is the one that leads to this discussion. A couple of weeks after I got my MacBook, I was working one day on a programming project for school with nothing open but iTerm and a couple of gvim windows. I happened to look at a resource monitor widget I had in my Dashboard, and was immediately concerned that I was only showing around 100 Mb free RAM. Concerned that I had some kind of memory leak going on I started digging around to find out where the "bug" was. It turns out that the bug was in my understanding of how OSX uses--and labels--memory. A friend of mine (Quinn) helped illuminate some of this for me.

So here it is....

If you open the Activity Monitor (found in utilities) and select the "System Memory" tab at the bottom, you'll see something that looks roughly like this:



OSX labels physical memory (RAM) as follows: Wired, Active, Inactive, and Free. Wired memory is used by the OS and is pretty much untouchable. Another application can't "borrow" wired memory. Active memory is what is currently in use by running applications. Note that thanks to the splendors of virtual memory, all of the memory needed by an application isn't necessarily contained here. If you look at a running process in the Activity Monitor list, you'll see a column for Real and a column for Virtual Memory. Since we are talking about the amount of RAM in use, we won't worry about virtual memory for the moment.

If there is no inactive, or free memory, active memory can be used by other applications, but this causes the OS to write the current state of the active memory being traded to its owner's virtual memory pages on disk before granting the memory to another application. Inactive memory is memory that has recently been used by an application that is no longer running. OSX keeps track of what this is and what it belonged to because of the idea of temporal locality, the idea being that if you opened an application you are somewhat likely to do so again and if the memory is still labeled, the application can start very quickly. In the absence of sufficient free memory, inactive memory will be reclaimed by another running application that needs memory.

Free memory is just that, free. Nothing has a claim on it, and it's up for grabs for any application that needs it. As you can see from my screen-shot image above, I tend to run with

around 100-200 Mb free, between 150 and 300 Mb wired, and the rest split between active and inactive.

What does this memory labeling have to do with how fast or slow the machine runs? Simple. When you log in, OSX claims the memory it needs to do all of its chores. This is wired. Other applications claim a smallish chunk of active memory as they are opened. Most applications that need to keep track of any kind of history or user data gradually use up more memory the longer they are open. Every now and then an appli-



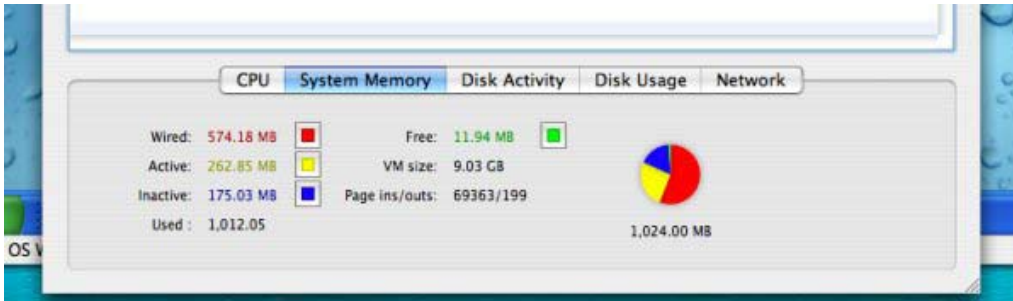
Is My Mac Using Too Much Memory?

(Submitted by Keith Burby)

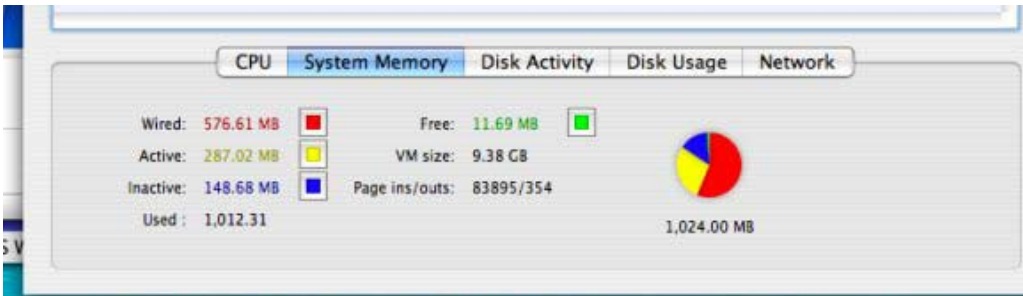
ation will need to use some part of its memory that it doesn't use frequently and OSX has to get this from disk and place it in that application's active memory allocation.

All of these things can slow down a system. Also, virtualization applications such as Parallels or VMWare's Fusion require a large chunk of memory for the virtual machine that gets marked as wired. The main thing you want to be aware of is not necessarily how much memory you have marked as free, but how much wired, active, and inactive memory you have and how often OSX has to swap memory pages in from or out to disk (Page ins/outs in the Activity Monitor).

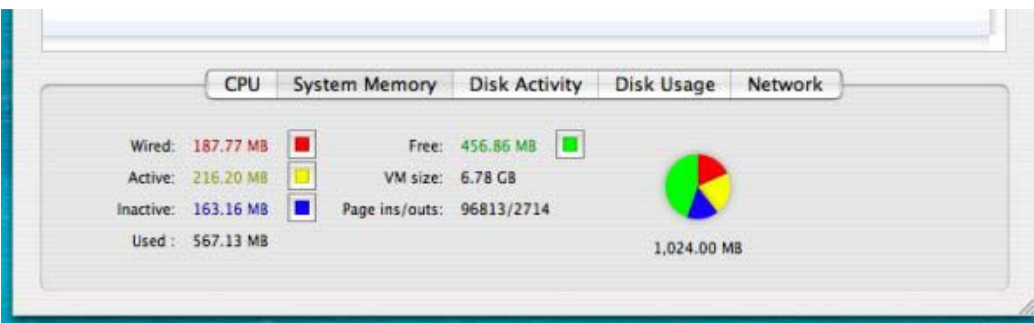
For example, my MacBook (which has 1 Gb of RAM) is almost always very responsive, except when I'm running anything in a virtual machine. When I start up Windows (which happens as rarely as possible), Parallels grabs its virtual machine memory and my usage graph looks like



this:
You'll notice that wired has more than doubled in size, there is significantly less inactive memory, and next to none free. Page ins/outs are ok. "Ins" has a pretty high count from a human standpoint, but it's no big deal. "Outs" is still pretty low and my system is still fairly responsive. However, if I then try to run lots of other applications, I run into problems.



Just opening Firefox caused the "Outs" to nearly double almost instantly. Inactive memory has gone down even more, and my system is noticeably less responsive. Continuing on this trend leads to a condition where "Ins" and "Outs" are nearly equal, and climbing fast. When this happens, OSX is spending all its time shuttling memory in and out of the virtual memory pages on disk, and doesn't have time to do much else. Similarly, your running applications are all waiting on OSX to swap memory to and from disk, and take much longer to do what you want them



(Continues Page 4)

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Advanced SIG Meeting Recap

(Member written by Tony Moore SIG Leader)



At the February Advanced Meeting Chris Thompson was in full geek-speak. Showing us how to make an old computer, such as maybe a laptop with a busted screen, into a media server for the rest of your home network and accessing that server via a combination of VNC (Free Remote Access Software) and Terminal since that server would not be connected to a screen.

And using VLC (Free Open Source Media Player) to stream and/or access that video or audio from other computers on the network. Chris even showed using sudo in the Terminal or command line which gives you full access to do anything to your computer including destroy it with no questions asked.

One thing I need to remember to do at these meetings is to take notes because we learn and experience so many interesting things

March Advanced SIG Topic:

Terminal Tips & Tricks...

Learn the hidden side of your Computer via Terminal with Chris Thompson



Mac Using Too Much Memory?

to do. This is bad. Closing the memory hogs in a condition like this will lead to almost instantaneous relief.

In this case, you'll notice that closing Parallels immediately caused a huge leap in free memory, and a marked decrease in active. This is sort of an isolated case in that the memory that was previously wired for the virtual machine is now free. In a normal case, closing applications like Photoshop, Office programs, etc. will cause a slower increase in free memory and a more immediate increase in inactive memory, with an additional decrease to active. It will take a little while for your system to get "balanced" again, and the more applications you close, the faster this will happen. You'll notice that in the time it took me to shut down my windows system running in Parallels, close Parallels, and take another screen-shot that page "Outs" increased by 9 times, and by proportion were rapidly gaining on page "Ins".

The moral of the story is: If you happen to look at Activity Monitor or some other system resource monitor and notice that you only have about 10-15% of RAM free, don't worry about it unless your system is noticeably unresponsive. This is not to say that some third party applications don't have memory leaks, but that's a topic for another day.



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CompUSA to Close Area Stores

The Internet was buzzing at the end of February when it was announced that CompUSA will



close more than half of its retail computer and electronics stores in the next two to three months. CompUSA had 4 or 5 stores in the Metro Detroit Area and all are set to close with the only remaining store in the State being in Lansing Michigan almost 100 miles away from the Detroit area.

In a recent statement, CompUSA said it would shutter 126 stores — it currently operates 225 in the U.S. and Puerto Rico — within 90 days as part of a massive restructuring. The restructuring will rely on the store closings, as well as a \$400 million cash infusion and other expense reductions. CompUSA did not specify the source of the cash investment.



CompUSA was notable to Mac Users for the concept of its partnership with Apple call a "Store In A Store" long before Apple launched its current Apple

Retail Stores. Apple and Mac products were kept in a separate section, usually in the rear corner of the Store. In the early days, the biggest complaint was the un-kept condition of the section and the lack of help. Years later, Apple employed part time Retail Representatives to help CompUSA and eventually added full time Apple Employees within the Store to help with the proper customer sales and service that has come to be expected with Apple products.

The CompUSA located in Troy, MI was one of the more popular stores in the area mainly due to Apple's ASC employee Eric Blomberg who is a member of a few local Mac User Groups in the area. He was one of the most helpful Apple employees to come through the CompUSA channels in a long time. I spoke with Eric shortly after hearing the news and he said that although he wasn't at liberty to say much, he said that Apple says that he and most of the other CompUSA Apple Reps will still have a job with Apple.

CompUSA is said to be liquidating the inventory over the upcoming weeks offering progressive discounts until the inventory is gone. At the time of this article, much of the inventory is 10% off with Computers at 5% off. Some good deals may be had towards the end provided that all the good stuff doesn't sell early.



Board Election Nominations

The Michigan Apple will hold its elections of the current Board of Directors for the User Group in March. If you would like to step forward and run for a Board Position or know someone who be beneficial to the group as a Board member, please plan to attend the next meeting.

Being on the Board is very important for the survival of our User Group as we handle all of the planning and month to month operations of the Group. The Board usually meets on the 4th Thursday of the Month except during the Thanksgiving and Christmas Holidays.

President:

~~Ron Hartmus - Current Position~~

Chris Thompson: - Nominee

Vice-President:

~~Dave Birdsong - Current Position~~

Ron Hartmus - Nominee

Secretary:

Anthony Moore - Current Position

Nominee - Open

Membership Director:

~~Vacant - Current Position~~

Keith Burby - Nominee

Treasurer:

David Wood - Current Position

Publications Director:

~~Chris Thompson - Current Position~~

Art Payne - Nominee

Vendor Relations:

Art Payne: Current Position

Community Relations:

~~Keith Burby - Current Position~~

Anthony Moore - Nominee

Director At Large

~~Barb Quincey - Current Position~~

Eric Blomberg - Nominee

More info:

<http://www.themichiganapple.com/elections/>



Board Meeting Minutes

February 2007 Minutes

In attendance: Ron Hartmus, President; Anthony Moore, Secretary; Keith Burby, Community Relations; Dave Birdsong, Vice-President; Art Payne, Vendor Relations; Barb Quincey, Membership Director

Absent: David Wood, Treasurer; Chris Thompson, Publications Director;

Called to Order: 7:43

Membership Report: 60 Members; 0 Expiring

Treasurer Report: \$960.94 Total

Vice President Dave Birdsong asked about former President Avi Drissman's name and account info still being charged the MaxMail answering service that the Group uses as a point of contact. Ron responded that he has taken Avi's name off the account and that the account will be charged to our newly activated Debit Card

Still contemplating whether or not to drop our .Mac account. Art will give Ron the .Mac login info so Ron can look into how many "points" are needed to take the quizzes to renew our account.

Elections are next month. The following is the proposed ballot. President – Chris Thompson; Vice-President, Ron Hartmus; Secretary – Open; Community Relations – Anthony Moore; Membership – Keith Burby; Vendor Relations – Art Payne; Treasurer – David Wood We will have a few open positions that may pose a problem so those positions will have to be covered by other Board Members.

Ron will send an e-mail to members inquiring about volunteers for the Board. Currently Secretary is open.

Art Payne was the only Board Member to do his homework and came with survey questions. Ron will add to it and provide the survey at the next meeting. Art will send a copy of the ballot to Ron to mark up.

Keith Burby was looking at a collection of possible meeting topics for the upcoming year such as Interface your cell phone with your Mac; Software for Genealogists; Astronomy on the Mac; Building Secure Disk Images; and Member Showcase.

March

General Meeting: Elections; Apple Buffet
Advanced Meeting: Terminal

April

General Meeting: Taxes & Quicken
Advanced: Apple's Motion

Adjourned: 8:31



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Membership Report

Memberships Expiring

David Birdsong
 Keith Burby
 Albin Burkacki
 Frances Carr
 James Gallagher, Jr.
 Hugh Nelson
 Carl Pendracki
 John Schinkai

Membership Renewals

Eric Blomberg
 Anthony Moore
 Elaine Tokarski
 Robert Rolando

Happy Birthday

Bill Collins-Carey
 Russ Ferbitz
 Ron Hartmus
 Barbara Theriault
 Lloyd Weeks

Submitted by Barb Quincy - Director At Large



Michigan Apple Help Providers

If you need assistance with a Problem please visit our Online Forum or phone the Michigan Apple HelpLine:

Phone: 248-232-7865

<http://www.themichiganapple.com/forum/>



Colophon

Editor: Chris Thompson (applegrameditor@gmail.com)

Assistant Editor: Art Payne (artpayne@mac.com)

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eMail Address _____

Computers Owned _____ Renewing Member's ID # _____

*New Member referred by member _____

The above information is confidential and will not be released publicly.

Membership dues: \$35.00 ____ (12 months includes subscription to The AppleGram)

Corporate Membership: \$60.00 ____ (12 months and 2 AppleGram subscriptions)

CASH ____ CHECK # _____ No. of Years ____ Amt. Enclosed \$ _____ Canadian Membership add \$10.00 ____ (US Funds)



Michigan Apple Calendar of Events

March General Meeting (3/8/07)

Topics include:

***Apple Buffet
Election Nominations***

April General Meeting (3/8/07)

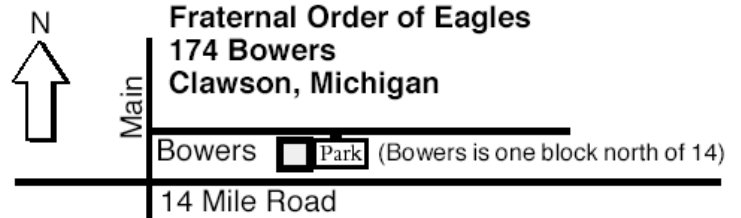
***Topic: Quicken, Checkbook
& Tax Software***

For SIG Meeting Topics
Please visit our website:
www.themichiganapple.com

Please Attend and Bring a Friend.

Times & Location

- **General Meeting: Thursday, March 8th, 2007**
7:30PM, at the Eagles Lodge, Clawson, MI
- **Advanced User SIG: March 15th 2007**
7:30PM, at the Eagles Lodge, Clawson, MI
- **Board Meeting: March 22th 2007**
7:30PM, at the Eagles Lodge, Clawson, MI



For more information on Meeting Location, Times, Directions, and changes, please visit our website:
www.themichiganapple.com



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