

Software Review by John R. Carter, Sr.

for

MacTuneUp

November 2, 2010



For starters, administrator privileges are required to use all features of **MacTuneUp**. If your login doesn't give you administrator privileges, you can change that in **System Preferences** → **Accounts**.

Each time you use MacTuneUp, it will check for updates if and only if you have that option set in **MacTuneUp**.

You would really benefit from all the features of **MacTuneUp** by reading the Help – from top to bottom. Included in this is the section on Major Rules where they give you 8 Do's and Don'ts – and you really need to know about them. As administrator, you can seriously damage your Mac if you aren't fully aware of what you're doing. For one, if **MacTuneUp** appears to be hung, DON'T force quit the application – give it time to

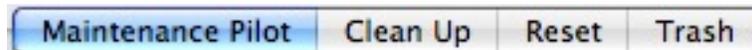
complete.

When **MacTuneUp** launches, you get the following toolbar at the top center of the Mac:



Settings is where all the options are set, not in **MacTuneUp** → **Preferences**. There are eight sections to go get familiar with, but for the first time through, just take all the defaults.

Maintenance has four sections:



It would be useful to check out the options in the **Clean Up** section because that's where you select what to clean. The default is to clean nothing. You can clean individual applications, like Mail. There also is no scheduling, so all maintenance is manual when you feel like you might need it.

Optimization may be too technical if you don't understand anything about networking or virtual memory.

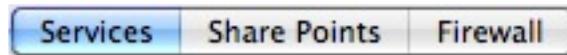


When you enable **Network Optimization**, the application set up buffers for you, but you can adjust the settings if you're daring. Otherwise, the Automatic setting may be more comfortable for you.

In the Virtual Memory Optimizer, you have the option to set the swap space to a partition (hard drive) other than the default system hard drive (the default path is `/private/var/vm/swapfile`) – and that would definitely speed things up, but only if you never allow the selected hard drive to spin down when

not in use (it takes time to spin up, and that would actually slow things down). You can change the setting to put hard disks to sleep in **System Preferences** → **Energy Saver**. If you're running on battery, it would be best to put hard disks to sleep when possible, and you're probably not going to use an external hard drive for swap space anyway. In that case, you really can't benefit from changing anything in this section. If you do change the swap space setting, you have to close all other applications first and restart the computer after.

Sharing is probably something you'll bypass altogether, as this pertains to allowing access to your computer from other computers, including from the Internet.



If you have more than one computer in your home (desktop and laptop or two laptops is not uncommon), then you probably having file sharing turned on in **System Preferences** → **Sharing** and this section will be important to you. In addition, every Mac comes with a feature to support your own personal web site on the Mac (although it would only be available to others when your Mac is turned on).

If you are using a router to connect between your modem and the computer, the router most likely has a firewall and it is most likely enabled by default, which is a good thing. In that event, you should have the firewall in the Mac turned off – having more than one firewall active at a time is not a good thing.

The **Backup** section is really only useful if you are not using some other backup feature, like Time Machine.



And of course, any backup feature works best if you use an external hard drive to backup to. This backup feature is not very sophisticated in that you do a complete clone of whatever items you identify, and you restore an item by selecting it. This really isn't the kind of backup process that works best because it doesn't do incremental backups and it doesn't run per a schedule. Skip it.

The **Browser** is just that, a browser.

The **Unix** section simply gives you access to the unix manuals in the Mac, and you can do that best from Terminal on the Mac. Skip this unless you want to print one of the man pages for a unix command. You would be better off buying a unix manual or going online for help with any unix command.

The **Info** section was a surprise.



However, the only section here that might ever be useful (because the Mac provides all the information give by the other sections) is **Error Codes**. Searching for error codes in Mac Help is a daunting task. It does help to know what may be causing a problem if all you get is an error code and a brief message that your application failed. The error code list is rather short, so don't expect great insights.

MacTuneUp is available online from MacWareInc.com for \$34.95.