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Contents

FEATURES

4 Flying the SR-71 Blackbird

By BRIAN SHUL

10 A Dismal Guide to Concurrency

By CARLOS BUENO



PROGRAMMING

14 2 Steps to Becoming a Great Developer

By ERIC DAVIS

16 iPhone Developer: "This is why I sell beer"

By JAMIE JAWINSKI

18 Top Three Motivators for Developers

By DAVE RODENBAUGH

STARTUP

32 How I Took My Web-App to Market in 3 Days

By TAWHEED KADER

34 Organic Startup Ideas

By PAUL GRAHAM

36 Not Disruptive, and Proud of It

By JASON COHEN

38 Turning on Your Reality Distortion Field

By STEVE BLANK

CAREER

20 What Value do We Create Here?

By CARTER CLEVELAND

22 7 Tips for Successful Self-Learning

By BRAFORD CROSS and HAMILTON ULMER

SPECIAL

25 Adam?...is there a reason your laptop is in the fridge?

By ADAM KEMPA

26 The Scariest Pricing Idea Ever

By WALT KANIA

29 5 Actions that Made Me Happier

By GARY HARAN

30 How Not to Run an A/B Test

By EVAN MILLER

39 Best Writing Advice for Engineers

By WILLIAM A. WOOD

Adam? ...is there a reason your laptop is in the fridge?

By ADAM KEMPA

I'D READ A few times that bringing the temperature of a failing drive down will increase its reliability long enough to salvage important files. When the drive in my trusty Powerbook decided one day last week to stop booting and make horrible clicking sounds, I decided to test the theory.

Not feeling particularly motivated to dissect the Powerbook, since that would void the warranty I planned to invoke to get the drive replaced, I set it on a relatively uncluttered shelf of the fridge when I got home from work. Ten minutes later, I took it out, and the drive booted like new. I copied my iPhoto libraries to an external drive and once that was successful, begun the copying of the only other important file on the drive: a giant iMovie project (~ 30 GB). About halfway through, the drive had warmed up, the copy progress bar had stalled and the clicking was back.

Fair enough. Back in the fridge, for 20 minutes this time. I took it out, booted up (painlessly), hooked it up to the external drive and started the copy again. This time it made it to 75% before the clicking took hold. At this point I considered going after the video clips that made up the iMovie project in small batches, but decided I didn't feel like doing that if it wasn't absolutely necessary. I also didn't want to play guess and check to discover the ideal length of time to chill a powerbook, so I devised a devious plot.

This plot consisted of cooling the Powerbook down again, carting my external drive to the kitchen, booting the laptop in the fridge, beginning the copy, and closing the door. Success! I share this experience with you, the Internet, in the hopes that it is useful. ■

Adam Kempa works as a web developer in Ann Arbor, Michigan (Yes, people still live in Michigan). His nerdy musings intermittently appear at kempa.com.



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