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MacBook Air has issues, says Apple

Support docs detail wireless glitches, Remote Disc work-arounds, headphone trouble

By Gregg Keizer   Comments **18**   Recommended **83**   Share

February 1, 2008 (Computerworld) MacBook Air users might need to move their new ultrathin laptops to keep bits moving to and fro, Apple Inc. said in a note on its support site, just one of several problems posted now that the new portable has started shipping.

Among the documents that populate the support section Apple unveiled this week was one that outlined an issue between MacBook Air and some external monitors. "If your MacBook Air is closed and an external display is your only display, you may notice a reduction of throughput for wireless networks that use the 2.4-GHz band," Apple said in a document published on the newly opened MacBook Air section of the company's online support site.

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To fix the problem and get throughput back on track, Apple recommends that users try another channel on the wireless access point, switch frequency ranges or move MacBook Air closer to the base station.

Other MacBook Air wireless issues, according to Apple, involve slow speeds when connected to multiple Bluetooth devices and balky routers that refuse to work the Remote Disc magic. For the latter, Apple suggested that users update the firmware of their non-Apple 802.11n wireless routers to get disc-sharing operational.

Apple also confirmed that MacBook Air users who want to install Windows XP or Vista in a Boot Camp partition must have an external USB optical drive, like the $99 SuperDrive the company sells. Windows can't be installed using the Remote Disc CD/DVD-sharing software bundled with MacBook Air, said Apple. "Be sure to connect your external USB optical drive to your MacBook Air before starting the Boot Camp Assistant," the company warned.

Other FYIs from the computer and consumer electronics maker included a note that some headphones won't properly jack into MacBook Air because of the notebook's nearly hidden audio-out port. "Some third-party audio products, such as headphones, may not plug into the MacBook Air headphone jack because part of the connector does not fit within the port hatch," Apple admitted. "Use a third-party

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headphone adapter to extend the audio connection outside of the port hatch. Adapters are available at the Apple Store."

Proud MacBook Air owners should reconsider migrating from an older Mac over the default wireless connection that the Air offers, Apple added. A cabled connection is a smarter idea. "Consider using a USB Ethernet adapter on your MacBook Air and a wired Ethernet connection to your migration source for your data migration," said Apple. "This should be much faster that using a wireless connection."

And if users must migrate using wireless -- perhaps because they had not sprung for the $29 adapter that hangs an Ethernet port from the Air's sole USB jack -- they should pay attention to signal strength. "Use the Signal Strength meter in the upper-right corner of your screen to find a location that provides the best signal to your source computer before you start," Apple recommends.

As with other recently revamped Macs, MacBook Air comes with one additional warning: "The Mac OS X 10.5 installation media that shipped with your MacBook Air is designed for use on this computer only and not intended for any other computer. The installer prevents this software from being installed on other Macintosh computers. Furthermore, other Mac OS X 10.5 installation media should not be used when restoring the system software on your MacBook Air."

MacBook Air, which Apple CEO Steve Jobs unveiled Jan. 15 at Macworld, began reaching customers this week. Apple's newest laptop comes in two configurations: a $1,799 base model and a $3,098 system that sports a faster Intel Core 2 Duo processor and a 64GB SSD (solid-state drive) in place of the traditional 80GB hard drive packaged with the lower-priced MacBook Air.

Apple retail stores that had not received stock as of Wednesday reported limited numbers of MacBook Air systems on hand Friday. A sales representative at the store on West 14th St. in New York, for instance, said: "We have just a few of the 80GB [MacBook Airs]," but acknowledged that the store had none of the more expensive SSD-equipped notebooks available for sale.

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Love Apple, Air's OK But Underwhelmed by MacWorld Announcements

Submitted by **Imran Anwar** on February 1, 2008 - 17:12.

I know it is hard for Steve Jobs to top his own performance sometimes, and it would be hard to beat the iPhone launch. Air is nice, but I think he miscalculated how great its reception (in public, not WiFi) would be. Which is why they probably made the dumb decision to announce a very powerful set of desktop computers days before MacWorld, presumably not to steal MacBook Air's thunder... Just made it one lame MacWorld overall.

...Read the entire comment

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Nice unfair anti-Apple spin

Submitted by Anonymous on February 1, 2008 - 17:15.

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I dont think the title is

Submitted by Anonymous on February 1, 2008 - 17:56.

I dont think the title is unfair at all. The Mac guy on tv keeps telling me that Mac's "just work"...

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