

**Tools of the Trade****Paranormal Investigating with a Mac**

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Vanilla vs. Chocolate... Rock vs. Country... Deep dish vs. Thin crust... Each debate has a side that has fanatical supporters and can support their cause using numerous technical, political, and/or emotional facts, but the bottom line is they all boil down to personal preference. Same goes for the Mac vs. PC debate that has been raging for decades. So what happens when you and your best friend 'Mac' join a paranormal group that is dominated by Windows? In reality, aside from some good-hearted ribbing back and forth, it should not be an issue in the slightest. Macs and PCs at their simplest level (**Hardware**) are essentially identical. Both use Intel based processors and almost all hardware is interchangeable. Disks, Keyboards, Mice, Flash drives, etc, all use industry standard interfaces such as SAS, SATA, USB, Ethernet, FireWire (IEEE-1394), although sometimes the names are changed to make 'marketing' easier.

When it comes to **FileSystems** used for file exchange on transportable storage devices such as USB Hard Drives, or flash drives, the Windows world is dominated by NTFS and on older/smaller devices FAT, FAT16, or FAT32. The Mac uses HFS as the native default, but can also mount and read NTFS and FAT volumes (but not write). A good common filesystem that both can read/write is exFAT and perfect for Flash drives.

When it comes to **file** interchange, you should NOT have a problem. Both platforms use all the same industry standard format and many times have same types of issues (e.g. missing codecs, etc.). Some common formats shared between them are:

Video: AVI, MP4, MKV, M4V

Audio: WAV, MP3

Document: TXT, PDF, DOCX

**Applications** tend to be multi-platform these days and generally are also starting to include LINUX as well. Cross-platform applications that you may use are:

MS Office or the freeware equivalent called Open Office, Photoshop, Audacity (Audio), VLC (video), and webBrowsers such as Firefox or Chrome.

Smaller tools and utilities are generally 'not' cross platform, but are plentiful in the options to choose from and do the same thing in the same way (because they many times share the same open-source root). Some of these are utilities like: EXIF Readers, Video or audio editors or convertors, etc.

When it comes to interfacing with equipment (e.g. pulling audio of a recording device), most interface via USB or Ethernet via a dedicated webpage on the device, so should be fine. Serial devices can also be used but will require a USB-to-Serial adapter.

A few good references:

[http://www.diffen.com/difference/Mac\\_vs\\_PC](http://www.diffen.com/difference/Mac_vs_PC)

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ExFAT>

<http://www.macwindows.com>