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Keystone MacCentral Macintosh Users Group ❖ [www.keystonemac.com](http://www.keystonemac.com)

## Keystone MacCentral August Meeting

Please see your membership email for the links to this month's Zoom meeting or email us at [KeystoneMacCentral@mac.com](mailto:KeystoneMacCentral@mac.com).

During our program this month we plan to discuss how to manage your iPhone photos and some tips for dealing with your email



We have virtual meetings via Zoom on the third Tuesday of each month:

Emails will be sent out prior to each meeting. Follow the directions/invitation each month on our email – that is, just click on the link to join our meeting.

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Keystone MacCentral is a not-for-profit group of Macintosh enthusiasts who generally meet the third Tuesday of every month to exchange information, participate in question-and-answer sessions, view product demonstrations, and obtain resource materials that will help them get the most out of their computer systems. Meetings are free and open to the public. **The Keystone MacCentral *printout*** is the official newsletter of Keystone MacCentral and an independent publication not affiliated or otherwise associated with or sponsored or sanctioned by any for-profit organization, including Apple Inc. Copyright © 2023, Keystone MacCentral, 310 Somerset Drive, Shiresmanstown, PA 17011.

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By Adam Engst

# Innovative Web Browser Arc Reaches 1.0 Release

*It is recommended that you check out the article "[Arc Will Change...](#)" if this post catches your interest. The article was intended to go into July's issue. However it had to be cut due to its excessive length.*

I seldom write about beta software, particularly in great depth, but the utility and maturity of Arc, the new Chromium-based Web browser from The Browser Company, caused me to make an exception with "[Arc Will Change the Way You Work on the Web](#)" (1 May 2023). Nevertheless, recommending an app with a waitlist was awkward, even though TidBITS readers generously posted invitation codes in the article comments.

I'm pleased to note that The Browser Company has now released version 1.0 of [Arc](#), making it a free download for everyone. Since I penned my 7000-word opus, I have changed none of my core opinions about Arc—I still feel it is the most impactful app I've used on the Mac in years. I particularly appreciate being able to switch fluidly between the synced copies of Arc on my iMac and my MacBook Air, and I've become increasingly fond of [Arc's iPhone companion app](#) because it contains pinned tabs to all the websites and pages on which I rely. (That said, the iPhone app still doesn't display Favorites, an annoying and seemingly easily rectified lapse.)

My sole disappointment has been with the responsiveness of The Browser Company. None of my bug reports or suggestions were acknowledged (though some have been resolved), nor did my article generate any communication despite being more comprehensive than anything else ever written about Arc. (Yes, that's authorial pique speaking; in contrast, I got a nice note from the developers of the WebKit-based [Orion](#) after just a brief mention in "[A Roundup of Vertical Tab Support in Mac Web Browsers](#)," 5 June 2023.) Other TidBITS readers have noticed a similar lack of response to support questions. This silence feels at odds with how garrulous The Browser Company is on [The Service Previously Known as Twitter](#) (sadly)

and [YouTube](#), and the company's seeming desire to encourage community (such as by creating a [Credits](#) page with over 34,000 names of beta testers. Perhaps the company will devote additional resources to customer support now that the beta period is over.

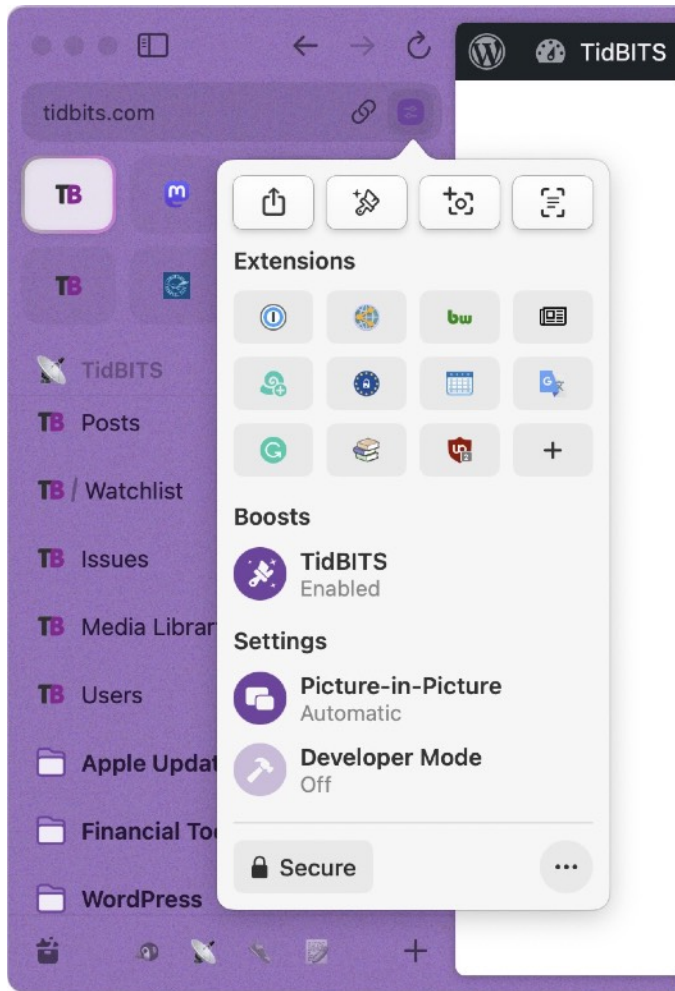
Regardless, Arc's developers have been [far from idle](#) in the months since my review. A significant release with new features and interface polish has arrived every Thursday like clockwork. Some of the more compelling changes include:

- **Boosts:** Although The Browser Company promotes Boosts heavily as a fun way to [personalize any website](#), all that keeps me from muttering "[Waste CPU cycles drawing trendy 3D junk](#)" under my breath is how Boosts are an accessibility win for those who need to make websites easier to read. Don't like something about a site you regularly use? Create a Boost to change it. You can even use the Zap feature to remove entire elements from a page. Boosts get a section in the Library sidebar, and a [Boost Gallery](#) collects submissions from the community if you want to see what others have done. And no, I didn't keep the Boost for the TidBITS site shown below.



- **Optional toolbar and Site Control Center:** If Arc's lack of a traditional wide toolbar at the top of the

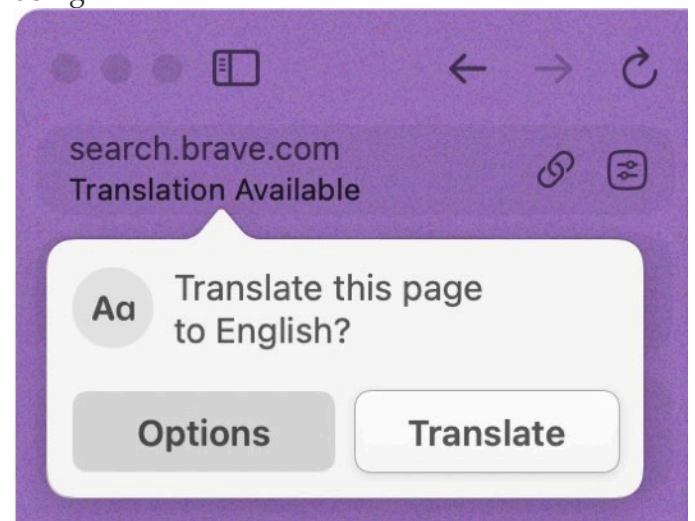
page is too jarring, you can now turn one on by choosing View > Show Toolbar. Or don't—I prefer Arc's small toolbar at the top of the sidebar, where you can access Boosts and other site-specific settings in the new Site Control Center.



- **Option-click for Split View:** Arc's Split View is great when you need to work back and forth between two tabs, such as when I'm copying an article I've written in Google Docs to a new post in WordPress. To make it even easier to create a Split View, you can now Option-click the second tab to create a Split View with it instantly. Now there's

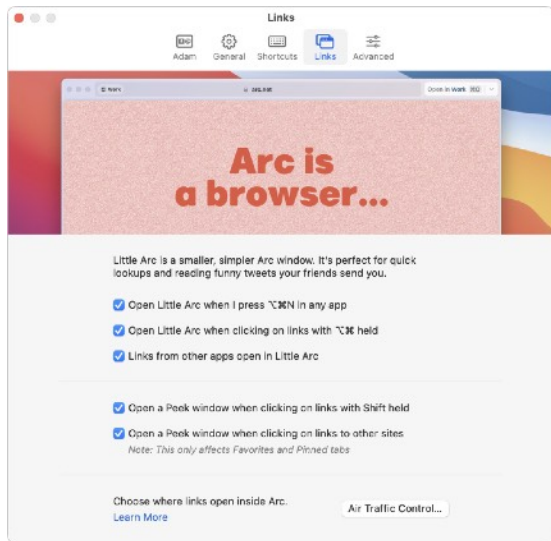
no need to select both tabs, Control-click, and choose Open in Split View.

- **Better multi-window behavior:** Despite Split View, sometimes you need to open something in another window. In Arc, you can now drag any tab or favorite out of the window to create another window with its contents. It's a full-fledged Arc window, although the sidebar is hidden by default. I love this feature, though I'm less happy about how unpinned tabs are now window-specific and don't sync across systems. Sometimes I want those synced and have to remember to pin them temporarily.
- **Page translation:** When you visit a page in another language, Arc automatically offers to translate it. I don't need this often, but it's handier than the Google Translate extension I had been using.



- **Multiple adblocker detection:** Arc's developers found that more than a third of people who import from Google Chrome have multiple adblockers enabled, which can radically hurt performance in any browser. Arc now detects that on import and prompts the user to pick one.

- **Peek at any site:** It's now easier to open any link in a Peek over the current tab so you don't lose your place—Shift-click a link. If you dislike this feature, turn it off in Arc > Settings > Links.



- **Air Traffic Control:** Although I'm a massive fan of Little Arc, the standalone window for links clicked from other apps, there are some links that I'd prefer to open in a Space. The [Air Traffic Control](#) feature accessible in the Links settings lets you specify where links that match or contain specific strings open.



- **Paste New Tabs:** You can now create a new tab with the contents of the clipboard by pressing Command-Option-V. If the clipboard contains a URL, Arc makes a new tab with it; if it contains text, the new tab loads with search results.

I still haven't wrapped my head around [Easels](#) and Notes, so I can't say any more about how they might be helpful. Nor do I ever peruse my archived tabs, media, or downloads—the entire [Library](#) sidebar remains terra incognita.

But I don't care—Arc has become such a part of my work life that I actively dislike using other browsers now, not the least because I'm addicted to being able to press Command-Shift-C to copy the current page's URL, something I do many times per day as I write and edit. I've built up hundreds of pinned tabs across my four Spaces, and I can quickly switch among the many sites I need to use without losing my place in any of them. And as I noted, I can easily do all that on either of my Macs or my iPhone because Arc lets me make a mental map of everything I have stored.

Arc may be overkill for those who use just a handful of tabs at a time, but if you spend much of your day working in websites, I recommend [giving it a try](#). Arc is free to download and requires macOS 12.1 Monterey or later. Remember, though, that it will take a few days to set up your Web *mise en place* before you really start cooking with fire. 🍳

By Adam Engst

# The Unbearable Ambiguity of Emoji

A picture is said to be worth a thousand words, implying you'd need a thousand words to describe a single image. Emoji are much simpler—maybe just ten words would suffice. But there's still plenty of room for interpretation within the picture/text exchange rate, as a recent Canadian court case shows.

A grain buyer in Saskatchewan, Canada, texted farmers asking to buy flax at \$17 per bushel, and one farmer indicated he could deliver on that. The buyer texted a photo of the contract, as it had done numerous times before, and asked, "Please confirm flax contract." The farmer replied with a thumbs-up 👍 emoji. But when prices for flax jumped to \$41 per bushel and the farmer failed to deliver on the less-lucrative contract, the buyer sued for breach.

The facts of the case aren't in question; [the nut of the issue](#) is whether the farmer's 👍 response had the legal meaning of "I accept the contract that you just texted me" or merely implied "I'm acknowledging receipt of the contract." Judge Timothy Keene ruled that the farmer's 👍 counted as a signature and the farmer had thus breached the contract:

This court readily acknowledges that a 👍 emoji is a non-traditional means to "sign" a document but nevertheless under these circumstances this was a valid way to convey the two purposes of a "signature" – to identify the signator (Chris using his unique cell phone number) and as I have found above – to convey Achter's acceptance of the flax contract.

This emoji-driven ruling didn't come out of thin air. The grain buyer's attorney said in documents filed in the case that the farmer had previously agreed to contract at least four other times in text by replying "looks good", "ok", or "yup".

More generally, the farmer's lawyer argued that:

...allowing a simple 👍 emoji to signify identity and acceptance would open up the flood gates to allow all sorts of cases coming forward asking for interpretations as to what various different emojis mean – for example what does a 🍊 emoji mean or a 🤝 emoji mean, etc.

The judge wasn't swayed, responding:

This appears to be a sort of public policy argument. I agree that this case is novel (at least in Saskatchewan) but nevertheless this Court cannot (nor should it) attempt to stem the tide of technology and common usage – this appears to be the new reality in Canadian society and courts will have to be ready to meet the new challenges that may arise from the use of emojis and the like.

This story has been making the rounds based primarily on its humor value, often missing the fact that the farmer had laconically agreed to contracts before. But I've long been perturbed about the use of emoji in text communications when there's room for interpretation. It's one thing to toss in a smiley or frowning face to add emotional color to text, but entirely another to rely on an image to convey something significant. Sometimes a cigar is just a cigar, but an 🍆 isn't always just an eggplant.

It was in this context that I read about the draft [Emoji 15.1](#) list that contains recommendations for new emoji that will likely become final in September 2023, alongside the release of Unicode 15.1. (Apple would likely integrate them into its operating systems in early 2024.) This batch of emoji is very particular—most are new sequences that combine existing characters. Of the 118 candidates, 108 merely change directionality, so a slew of emoji that currently only face left will now be available facing right as well. That seems uncontroversial, but meaning still rears its ugly head with the proposed Head Shaking

Horizontally and Head Shaking Vertically emoji.  
[Emojipedia says:](#)

Designs for the 🤨↔️ Head Shaking Horizontally and 🤨↕️ Head Shaking Vertically may pose some semantic difficulties for emoji designers, given that they can have inverted meanings in different cultures. For example, while a nodding head such as intended to be depicted in the 🤨↕️ Head Shaking Vertically emoji is a positive “yes” in the

United States, in Bulgaria it conveys a negative “no” meaning.

There’s no stuffing emoji back into the bottle, though I suspect relatively few TidBITS readers use emoji heavily to stand in for true textual communications, rather than as simple reactions or emotional color. Even if you know what you intend an emoji to mean, there’s no telling how someone else will interpret it. And the next time you’re selling flax, perhaps stick with saying what you mean in actual words until the powers that be

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By Adam Engst

## Apple Updates All Active Operating Systems to Block Exploited Security Vulnerabilities

Apple has updated all its active operating systems to address (in varying combinations) three security vulnerabilities, all of which are actively being exploited in the wild. The most concerning of the three vulnerabilities affects the kernel and thus cuts across all Apple operating systems, new and old. macOS, iOS, and iPadOS also receive fixes for a WebKit vulnerability, and iOS 15.7.7 and iPadOS 15.7.7 plug yet another WebKit vulnerability that has presumably been addressed in newer versions but afflicts versions prior to 15.7.

The affected operating systems include:

- [iOS 16.5.1 and iPadOS 16.5.1](#)
- [iOS 15.7.7 and iPadOS 15.7.7](#)
- [macOS Ventura 13.4.1](#)
- [macOS Monterey 12.6.7](#)
- [macOS Big Sur 11.7.8](#)

- [watchOS 9.5.2](#)
- [watchOS 8.8.1](#)

Neither tvOS nor HomePod Software are included at the moment. It’s possible the exploits can’t affect them, or perhaps Apple will release updates for them shortly as well.

[iOS 16.5.1](#) and [iPadOS 16.5.1](#) also fix a bug that prevented charging with the Lightning to USB 3 Camera Adapter. It must have been waiting in the wings such that it could hop a ride with this set of security updates.

Although it’s difficult to determine the severity of any given security vulnerability, Apple’s language about active exploits against new and old versions, coupled with the release of so many updates at once—even watchOS 8.8.1 for the Apple Watch Series 3—suggests these vulnerabilities are especially concerning. Update as soon as you reasonably can. 🗑️





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