The Setup

2010

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I'm Kenneth Reitz, one of the two co-founders of Züm Hosting. I'm a passionate Python developer for NetApp. I typically spend my nights developing a number of open source projects, and my weekends architecting the web.

What hardware are you using?

My sole machine is a 2010 MacBook Pro running a Core i7 processor at 2.66 GHz w/ 8GB of DDR3 RAM. Its 15" non-reflective screen runs at a beautiful 1680 x 1050. It features both a 250GB SSD and 500 GB HDD, for a total of 750GB of local storage, thanks to the OptiBay. I often have it hooked up to one of many 23" LCD monitors. For general audio, I sport a pair of Bowers & Wilkins P5 Headphones. If I'm in a high-fidelity mood, I listen through a pair of open-backed SR-60s from Grado Labs.

For telephony, I have an HTC Supersonic (EVO) running the Nightly Android 2.2 (Froyo) CyanogenMod v6. This also functions as a perfectly portable hotspot.

I read documentation and play arcade games on a 64GB Apple iPad (wifi). I play a PSP Go solely for Castlevania: Symphony of the Night.

I have a large number of very powerful Linode servers at my disposal for various projects and builds.

My system is backed up regularly to a cheap 1TB Western Digital drive. My media archives are backed up to a 1.5TB Seagate drive.

My media exists on a NAS attached to my Netgear WNR3500L router. My code is backed up to various Git repositories local and across the net. All web projects and databases of relevance are backed up to Amazon S3 on a nightly basis, along with all my tweets, Flickr photos, and Gmail messages.

And what software?

I develop and live on the latest build of Snow Leopard. My main Python environment is the latest 2.7 release, along with well managed virtualenvs for all other releases via Buildout.

I also employ a very large number of virtual machines, via VMWare Fusion 3. I have a particularly efficient XP VM that is always up, providing me with OneNote 2010. I'd do anything for Mactopia to port OneNote to OS X. Anything.

My development environment consists of TextMate + PeepOpen, [most recently] PyCharm, SequelPro, Titanium Mobile, Transmit, and GitX. I love using HTTPScoop for request sniffing.

My favorite command-line utilities are: Terminal.app w/ Zsh + Git, JoelTheLion's autojump, Defunkt's Hub and Gist, Mxcl's homebrew, nicksieger's jsonpretty, and Rtomayko's bcat.

On servers, I typically run the latest Ubuntu Server release, or CentOS (but only if I have to).

I carry out heavy-duty writing with Ulysses Core. Soulver is the best number-crunching application around. I don't know how I lived without it.

My audio production work is carried out in Adobe Audition CS3 and FL Studio 9. I use Adobe CS5 Master Collection for light design work and photo retouching. Photoshop Lightroom for kosher photography dark room work. I've been meaning to get into Fireworks for wireframing, but haven't had the time as of late.

As for architecture work, I utilize OmniGraffle for diagraming, Mockingbird / Balsamiq for mockups, and MindNode Pro for mind-mapping.

For note taking, as mentioned, I use OneNote 2010. Nothing compares, except my Soft Large Squared Moleskine Notebook. My tasks are managed with Things.app. I can't wait till they roll out proper syncing. If they don't do it fast enough, I'll be switching to Macman's Taskforce.

I use Kindle for purchased books, and iBooks for PDF reading on the iPad. I consume Google Reader via Reeder, the most beautiful application I have ever used.

For Remote Desktop I use CoRD.app. Backups are performed by arRsync.app, a beautiful interface for rsync. My desktop's windows are managed well with Cinch.app.

My music library is provided by Spotify at offline, 320KBPS Ogg Vorbis goodness. In the rare occasion that Spotify is missing an artist, I use 320KBPS MP3s and FLAC recordings for the ultra-special tracks (e.g. Liquid Tension Experiment). I buy my MP3s from the (wonderful) Amazon MP3 Store. I keep my video library nice and organized in iTunes, regardless of format, with iFlicks.

I stream 1080 videos, NetFlix, and BlueRay Disks with a Play Station 3 Slim. I play emulated retro video games on Wii. Best $200 I've ever spent.

For communication, I use iChat + Chax, Linkinus, Echofon, and Skype.

What would be your dream setup?

No power cord.

The Philosophy Behind My Setup

My setup philosophy revolves around three core principles: portability, redundancy, and simplicity. The MacBook Pro serves as the central hub, but everything important lives in the cloud or on remote servers. This means I can work from anywhere – a coffee shop, an airport, or a client's office – without missing a beat.

The SSD/HDD combination in the OptiBay is crucial. The SSD handles the OS and applications for blazing fast boot times and responsiveness, while the HDD stores media and less frequently accessed files. It's the perfect balance between speed and capacity.

On Backup Strategy

I've learned the hard way that data loss is not a matter of if, but when. That's why I have multiple layers of backup: local drives for quick recovery, Git repositories for code versioning, and Amazon S3 for long-term archival. Even my tweets and photos get backed up – you'd be surprised how often you need to reference something you posted months ago.

The key insight is that different types of data need different backup strategies. Code needs version control. Documents need frequent syncing. Media needs reliable long-term storage. Trying to use a one-size-fits-all solution usually means compromising on something important.

Looking Forward

Technology moves fast, especially in 2010. The iPad is just starting to show what tablets can do, Android is gaining momentum, and cloud services are becoming more reliable. I suspect my setup will look very different in a few years.

The trend toward mobile-first computing is unmistakable. More of my work is happening on the iPad, and the lines between "mobile" and "desktop" applications are blurring. The dream setup of "no power cord" isn't just about wireless charging – it's about having all your tools available on any device, anywhere, with seamless synchronization between them.

Until then, this setup serves me well. It's flexible enough to adapt as new tools emerge, robust enough to handle professional workloads, and portable enough to take anywhere inspiration strikes.