

Issue 2 Volume 1 August 2003

# macCompanion Magazine

Your Guide to All Things Macintosh



Commentary  
Book Reviews  
Shareware Reviews  
& Software Reviews

Original painting by Lucien Levy Dhurmer 1896  
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And our special Thanks to those who have allowed us to review their products!

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## ***Letter from the CEO***

by Robert Pritchett

August 2003

Welcome once again to the macCompanion site where we have provided links to various Mac-based sites. We also are providing some of our own experiences in macCompanion with books, shareware and software this month.

### **"PC" Soapbox**

I've had a few discussions with PC-Centric (meaning Poorly Configured, not Politically Correct or Personal Computer) personnel recently who said they would never, ever, no-way, no-how, "I'd die first", consider sitting down in front of a very Personal Mac (a "PM", like Preventative Maintenance, Private Machine, Powerful Money!) in order to experience the difference between it and their current situation.

I guess that really bothers me, especially when they consider themselves "bleeding edge" programmer types. I really feel for them. I feel their pain. And it is so unnecessary. I think it will be just a matter of time for them to step out of "clueless mode"... job-security be danged!

### **Ludditis**

See, they have way too much invested in their current environment. It isn't so much a matter of "learning something new" but the fact is that they have a legacy-mindset with current software and unfortunately, a lot of it isn't "legal" stuff either. They would probably get one of those WalMart Lindows machines for \$300 but not buy the XP Pro upgrade for \$300 more. Heck, by then they are paying for an eMac at \$800, especially if they want to do something else besides just turn on the machine. They keep adding parts and pieces over time and then throw out the old in 2 to 3 years and replace it with new. Do they really know how much time and effort and money they've pumped into the system they are currently limping along on? And can they resell what they've invested so much in? I doubt it. Those systems have become "throw-aways". And in the current economic situation, so have the folks that use them.

If they want to really get excited about new technologies, then they need to take off the blinders and focus on the task at hand and learn to get their work done "on" computers and not just work "at" them. Not doing so labels them as modern-day Luddites.

### **Backlash!**

I'm nearly worn out from saving various companies' "crown jewels" as they suffer from the Internet cyberwar being waged right now against them, whether from Spam, Crackers, Worms, Viruses, Trojans, Operating Systems on alternative platforms or just poor and failing network and computer equipment. I'm "war-weary" after fighting in the

"PC" trenches each day. Then I go home and collapse in front of my Mac. Thankfully, I'm not alone in this battle. There are many other "techie" who also fight the good fight and then come home to a Mac after the day is through.

The president of the company I am working at now asked what it would take to get the software we support ported to the Mac. It is already "there". The problem is, the 3rd-party folks we partnered with are not there, and not all are expected to ever be. I think we will become proactive anyway. Why?

I think it will be because of what is going to happen next year with Microsoft licensing.

See, with Apple products, when you buy it, it's yours. Apple is a hardware company and throws in exciting innovative software. It just so happens that it is really good software! Think of them as being a flying solar-powered vehicle.

Microsoft is a software company. It just happens to throw in ho-hum "so-what" uninspiring hardware to run on that isn't expected to last long. They live for the "churn-rate". Money flows in as folks go through the "replace, upgrade" cycle. And the hardware is provided by lots of other companies. This time, only one of which made any money last year (and their name doesn't rhyme with "heck). Think of Microsoft as the gas that goes into ground-hugging non-environmentally-nice gas-guzzlers.

Next year the "annual licensing fee" is going to kick in for the XP Pro Operating System. As I understand it, the Operating System will shut down if the fee isn't paid. How's that for security, hum? Am I wrong?

When that happens so many folks are going to be so upset that they have to cough up more money that they will find alternatives. Quickly. We are prepositioned here to help. Maybe that scenario in the movie "Independence Day" where the Macintosh Portable is used to save the earth, isn't so far off after all?

Go to the macCompanion link now and see how some products could possibly save your company from destruction. And then go save a friend.

## *Editorial*

by Robert Pritchett

### **The Pareto Principle and Productive Employees**

Well, here we are again. We hope you are tempted by what we've put together this month for you.

Are you familiar with the Pareto Principle? That is where 20% of some factor produces 80% of the results. It is applied in business to mean that 20% of your customers comprise 80% of your business. It also applies to the workforce: 20% of employees do the real work, while the remaining 80% take up space. Really successful businesses learn how to make each employee a "Pareto". (I think I'm coining a new noun here, but MBAs know what this is.)

There tends to be this constant dialog about "market share" and the Mac, and comparisons between the automobile industry and the computer industry. What the mainstream pressies don't seem to understand is that the Apple Corporation (Apple) provides a "full-meal deal" when it comes to computing. The extra motherboard slots aren't really needed by the general population, and more and more of the software comes built-in, so extra outlays for software applications just isn't really an issue like it once was. It's okay to have control of the whole process, if the intent is to make the "Paretos" self-sufficient. In other words, productive employees don't need extra hand-holding or having someone babysitting their computer systems all the time. So far with Apple, that has been the trend.

We learned a while ago that only two computer manufacturers made any money last year. Apple was one of them. After 11 straight quarters of profit (what is left over after all the bills are paid), Apple once again surprised the world by posting a quarterly profit of \$19 million USD on well over \$1 billion in sales. Their profit margin is also increasing, and so is the value of their stock. The future prospects just keep getting better, don't they? And this while we have been suffering from an economic downturn that has lasted for a while.

#### ROI

Then there is the resale value of a Mac. Lots of us just give the older units away to our friends and family, but, if we wanted to, we could sell those units for a tidy sum. Honest! Competing platforms lose their value instantly as soon as they are taken out of the computer store. Macs tend to be of more value, while lasting longer with less hands-on maintenance associated with them. It isn't so much an issue of quality vs. quantity, but one of *real* value, and not just perceived.

And so far, the Mac systems are way down on the radar-scope of crackers and associated

Internet nasties that plague competing platforms. That is an incredibly good thing. Really!

### More Migration

Apple is beginning to focus on business once again. More and more forward-thinking businesses are buying Macs. Business managers like to see an upward trend on the growth charts. There isn't just growth in niche markets anymore, but growth is across the whole computer spectrum. Apple continues to make life easier, whether it has to do with using an iPod for backing up a Macintosh workstation or an xServer, to using AppleScripts to let the machine do all the work.

Maybe Apple will grab the old "Dr. Pepper" jingle and run with the "I want to be a 'Pareto', too!" as a principle of doing business.

Look around your office environment. Who are the "Paretos"? Those who use Macs or those who use competing products?

### The Cover

Now about this month's cover: It is provocative. It is symbolic of how tempting Apple technology is. We show the iPod and the Operating System being picked from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. We'll let you imagine who the serpent is. We don't care and neither should you. What are the consequences of partaking of the forbidden fruit? Well, knowledge of both what is good and what is not so good. We have partaken. We have a pretty good idea of what is good, and we deal with the bad every day using competing platforms. Frankly, we like the good better than the bad. We think you will, too.

Please take a peek at what we have discussed and reviewed this month. We hope you are tempted and find the fruit to both be enjoyable and delicious to the taste.

Then let us know what you think by writing to us at [feedback@maccompanion.com](mailto:feedback@maccompanion.com).



## *Views from the Ivory Tower*

By Ted Bade

Late June into July has been an exciting period for members of the Macintosh platform. There have been a number of rather exciting announcements from Apple, most prominent among them being a machine with (finally) a CPU newer than the G4. I am really hoping that this machine will be all that Apple says it will be and decided to replace my old G4/450 with one.

Of course a lot of controversy surrounds Apple's claims about this new machine (but when was this ever news?). There have been a number of comments around the Internet saying Apple tweaked the number to make the G5 look better or that their numbers aren't correct or whatever. All I can say to these people is, "Get real!" When has PR on any new product ever been 100% factual? (Do you **really** believe that 4 out of 5 dentists recommend...?????).

So lets just consider some real facts, it's a new Mac model with a newer processor that is a 64-bit chip. It uses newer and faster memory chips and a newer type of hard drive interface with a fast data throughput. It comes in a new aluminum case that might help with cooling and it might offer a "high-tech" look to it; at least in some people's eyes. (I also heard a rumor that there is some concern about certain plastics emitting potentially dangerous toxins, especially when heated. Which could be another reason for Apple moving toward metal cases).

Is it faster than a new Windows PC? I don't know, but then I don't really care. It will be faster than my old G4 and it will provide me with a lot of fun exploring all the new features and hardware items included in the package. If you want a new faster Mac, you should buy one.

Another interesting announcement from Apple was the iSight, a firewire based web cam/microphone. It is a pretty nice device, works flawlessly with the beta of iChat (with video and audio), although it is a bit pricy compared to USB cameras. But, it works in OS X, not something many other less expensive cameras do!! iChat with video is pretty cool, now I can actually gesture at my friends rather than using "winkies"! However, they need to be able to receive the video (or audio), not something many of them can do. The audio capabilities are really nice and can save on long distance phone calls

Being a real fan of computer games, I have been really excited about the release of several new games for the Macintosh. Unreal Tournament 2003 (with some serious system requirements), Dungeon Siege (an excellent dungeon game), and America's Army (a US Army recruiting tool or great game, you decide!) are among my favorites. Also I expect NeverWinter Nights to be released by the time this article goes to print and also anticipate (as I have for several years) the release of Bungie's Halo (it seems the people in Redmond sold as many copies as possible to Xbox owners). There were several other good game releases, but I haven't had a chance to try them all for myself.



**Apple, music to my ears** – Apple released a new iPod in late May and it has been quite the hit. As a matter of fact, USA Today Online called it a star! [<http://www.usatoday.com/usatoday/20030528/5193184s.htm>]. The new control layout is attractive to some people who found the rotating disk a problem. I am not sure if I like the "feel" of the touchpad buttons, since they don't give any touch feedback, but the dial that doesn't spin is nice. If you have an older iPod, there is at least one company (Smalldog - <http://www.smalldog.com/wag13041>), that has a trade-in program.

Once again the US government is trying to pass legislation to punish people for sharing music over the Internet. This new legislation is called the Consumer and Computer Owners Protection and Security Act of 2003 (ACCOPS Act). While I agree that it is not right to steal copyrighted materials, I think the government is going overboard here, (probably because the recording industry has the money to make some very nice contributions to certain campaign funds! (My opinion – really ;-)).

In any case, as I have said elsewhere before, why is it that major bills to crack down on music sharing make it to legislation while these same legislators don't do anything about other Internet issues like computer virus's, child pornography, and spam! My humble guess is this: there isn't any money in it for them and ultimately, they don't really care!

What bothers me most about legislation like this is that it can be the first step toward taking away the rights of music consumers. Perhaps someday it will be a crime to play music when your friends are visiting, unless you pay royalties, or perhaps you will have to pay a tax if caught humming a tune on the streets!

Apparently, the famous Michael Jackson spoke out against this legislation. Indicating that a jail sentence seems to be a bit too much of a penalty.

**Coming to a library near you** – NASA had created a very interesting exhibit promoting space exploration using iMacs and a very futuristic design. They are sending this exhibit to public libraries around the country. The exhibit consists of one section using six flat screen iMacs offering interactive information about NASA and space exploration and another providing a large plasma screen that will show movies about NASA research.

I thought this was so cool that I passed the information to the local public library network and was happy to hear one of the library directors actually has the exhibit coming to a library near me! I can't wait to see it.

NASA has an excellent page describing the exhibit along with some great images and links. Visit it at: [[http://science.nasa.gov/headlines/y2003/01jul\\_library.htm?list893686](http://science.nasa.gov/headlines/y2003/01jul_library.htm?list893686)].

## *Features*

### **Security under OS X**

by Robert Pritchett

Here are some Security "Thou Shalts" that I think might help us while we, as users of OS X, try to protect ourselves from online vandals.

I suggest each of you go to [<http://www.securemac.com/>] and do some reading there first, then come back here.

1) If you aren't running Brickhouse and you are behind a hardware firewall, download it anyway and install it. OS X has its own firewall, but you have to go to Share in Preferences to activate it. Brickhouse checks for more vulnerabilities than the built-in firewall in OS X. It's just a bit nicer to know not all the emperor's new clothes are invisible. [<http://www.securemac.com/brickhouse.php>]

2) Download MacScan and check your system for any keyloggers, trojans, etc. that may be lurking on your systems. [<http://macscan.securemac.com/>]

3) Get a copy of Littlesnitch and use it to see what kind of accesses your system is running or connecting FROM your system [<http://www.obdev.at/products/littlesnitch/download.html>]. Yes, your system can be compromised so that others can use it without you noticing – until it is too late. This lets you know if that is the case.

4) Install a copy of [<http://www.visualware.com/visualroute/index.html>] to see a physical route along with the electronic route between you and whomever you are tracking.

5) Just for fun, run MacAnalysis; but be careful, okay? Dr Jan Harrington is reviewing this package. [<http://www.macanalysis.com/>] We discovered you shouldn't run it on your local ISP without asking first. Some have agreements that, if violated can cause you to be dumped permanently off their service. It tends to hose bandwidth.

6) Don't forget that each of you have a built-in copy of Network Utility in your Applications>Utilities>Network Utility folder in OS X and you can run all kinds of network checks there.

7) Also go to [<http://grc.com/intro.htm>] and run the two ShieldsUP!! tests at [<https://grc.com/x/ne.dll?bh0bkyd2>]. My system was stealthy (well, the tests there said so), but I still got "hit" because my email passwords were either discovered or were too easy to figure out.

8) Pretty Good Privacy (PGP) site [<http://www.pgp.com/>]. Use this if you want to do PGP for a fee for OS X. Hey, this has worked for many years. Even the Intelligence services keep a close eye on this one. It's that good.

9) Or use the newly released Mac GNU Privacy Guard that "replaces" PGP, at [<http://macgpg.sourceforge.net/>]. James Meister and I took a day and figured this one out by constantly going back to the FAQs and the Winter Quarterly PDF files to finally get it working correctly for us.

10) Protect your email and other system passwords from prying eyes and change them occasionally. It's a pain, but consider the consequences of NOT doing that on occasion. Derek Caudill also figured out the HEX process to keep spambots from getting to us in our macCompanion email system.

Even though OS X is designed to keep on running like the Energizer bunny, turning off the system is the best way to keep others from accessing your info, unless, of course, you put everything out on .mac or some other web-based location. But that is not always the best course of action, so try these security applications and see if you are practicing safe networking, okay?

## *Real World*



### **Delete It**

Reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad

Drew Findley who resides in Los Angeles, California  
<http://www.drewfindley.com/findleydesigns/index.html>  
\$6 USD  
File Size: 1.1MB



### My Problem

There I was, having downloaded some National Academy of Sciences radiochemistry documents as PDF files and wanting to store them in a designated technical references folder. Well, one-third of the files refused to move, be trashed, duplicated or otherwise be obliterated, even with all the “Get Info -> ownership and permission requirements! Of course, I downloaded loaded them again. They did not belong on the desktop. Under a different name... this time those files were Finder friendly. But 4 files refused my tender ministrations to get the heck off my desktop. I immediately went to the terminal application and attempted to use the following input ‘script’.

Type: `sudo rm`

*Then drag and drop the file to delete into the terminal window.*

Then hit the enter key and went to type in my administrator password.

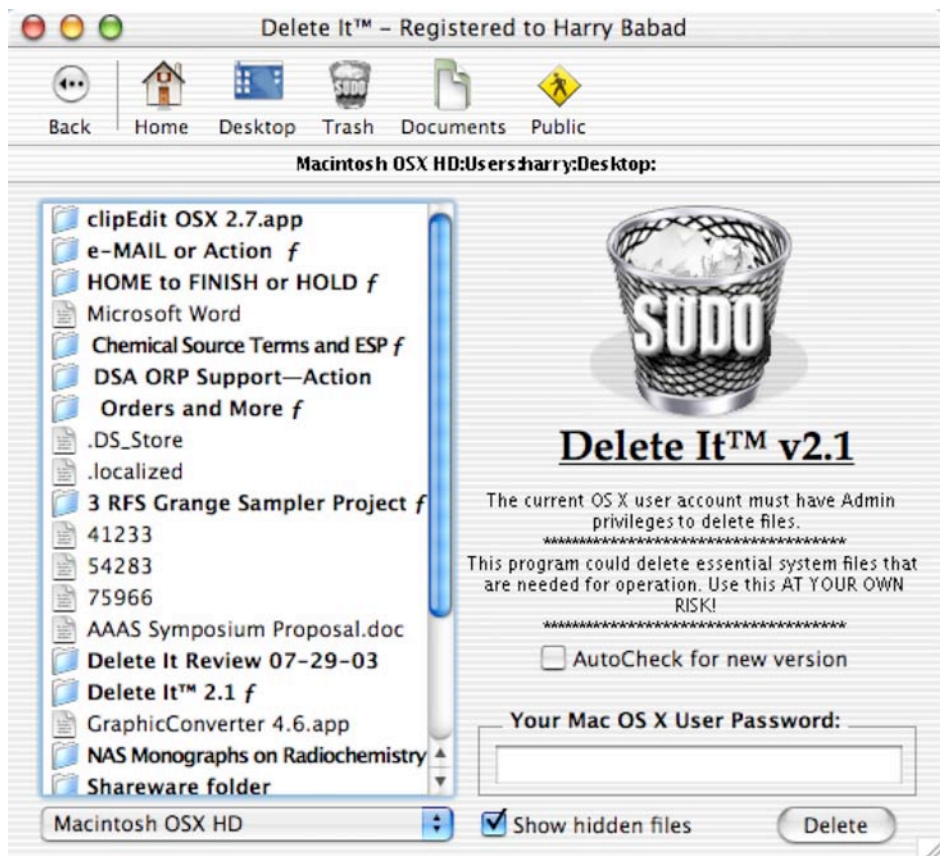
Well, the tooth fairy didn’t love me even though I was soon gnashing my teeth, because the %#\$@£∞#% terminal program would not let me type in my password... The cursor mark just sat there, not even having the courtesy to blink at me.

So, what to do next?

Okay, [1] using Apple's disk utility to repair my privileges. That didn't work, Nor did [2] an application of Disk Warrior's™ magic made any difference. So when all else failed, I searched "Version Tracker™ OSX tab, used the words "delete trash" and there it was: Delete It v.2.1 — the tooth fairy smiled. First a quick download, then I checked out the developers page [not much there beyond the version tracker narrative], read the Readme file and after a fast trip to Pay Pal, it was mine, all mine! So here is the straight skive on this neat **5 macC** utility.

Delete It™ is a Macintosh OSX System Utility that deletes files that can't be trashed initially because the Finder doesn't recognize them. The current version is 2.1 and the product system requirements: Mac OS X 10.0 or higher, it works on Jaguar OS X 10.2.6 on my G-4.

**Product Description** — Delete It can be used to delete files that seem to be "in use", "locked" or "invisible" to the finder. Toolbar buttons for the current user's home, trash, desktop, documents and public folders provide the ability to quickly locate key folders or files. To avoid **your** doing damage to your trusted files, Delete It™ comes with warnings and a bit of protection for the times we all get too hasty.



For you folks who are Terminal Users, which I'm not, — here's how it works: According to the developer, the Delete It™ program is written in REALbasic and uses the "sudo rm -R" terminal command through a shell interface to delete stubborn files. It, as an added safety measure, requires that the current user is an administrator. The program is submitted as shareware (\$6 USD) but has full functionality in Demo Mode, so please pay the shareware fee.

Those pesky files are gone and the time I spent poking around trying to solve my problem, even expensed out at minimum wage, is about three-times the shareware fee.

‘NOUGH SAID: TRY IT, YOU’LL LIKE IT!

## *Audio*



### **iListen 1.6, therefore I am**

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

MacSpeech, Inc.

50A Northwestern Drive

Salem, NH 03079

Phone 1-816-373-4506

[<http://www.macspeech.com>]

\$100 USD without headset, \$150 with.

Requirements: A desire to let the technology speak for you. OS X, 256 MB RAM and some hard drive space. Works best with faster CPUs. Transcription requires a digital voice recorder external to the Mac.



**Strengths:** Come on, you always wanted the power of being a dictator, didn't you? Now you can be one. This product is "good to go" as a Speech app that covers all bases.

**Weaknesses:** Maybe now with the G5, this will get some respect as a viable technology. Older systems just held it back, but it does work on a G3.

So you want to use the Mac to it's fullest capability? Try using iListen from MacSpeech.

Give yourself about 5 minutes of dictating practice with the learning function by reading the canned stories and you can begin immediately to experience the joy of nearly 85% or more accuracy (many do much better than that) by letting your tongue do the keyboarding for a while. The keyboard is still needed to touch up the input, but it sure



beats having to do everything by hand!

Along with the stereo headset and iMic comes this "labor of love" put together by folks who graduated from other speech applications and backgrounds. The Speech Engine comes from the Philips Corporation.

I've had the honor and privilege along with some other more notable Mac aficionados to continue the beta-testing cycles with this product. Version 1.6 is the most recent public release, and I'd love to see it running on a G5!!

Along with the package you can also purchase ScriptPaks that cover various other applications such as Word, some browsers, etc And it isn't just for English either: I had the opportunity to test the Spanish version. It does come with a vocabulary so you don't have to teach it everything from scratch. You can even create your own AppleScripts if you want to, but the price is low enough that you may want to explore what is in store already so you don't reinvent the wheel.

And it has Hands Free Correction capability. It took quite a while to get it as good as it is.

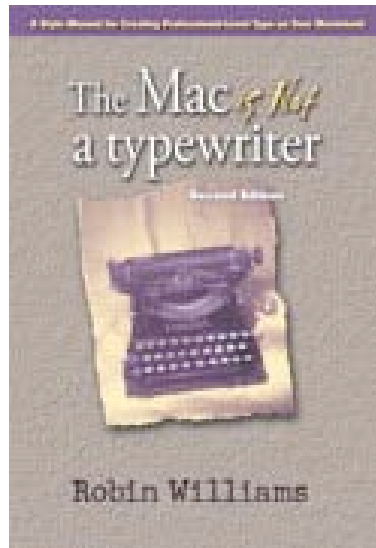
So dictate, transcribe, edit, format, navigate to your heart's content. It really is all here from MacSpeech. Even generating text from AIFF and WAV files now.

And share it with others. It takes multiple profiles. Just have lots of hard drive space. Last I checked it took 250 MB per profile. The more you train it the bigger that profile gets.

And it takes verbal shorthand. Preprogram a phrase or text (I believe it is up to 32,000 characters per instance) so you can just let the technology work for you.

Why do I find this to be such neat technology? If you have dyslexic fingers like I do, this is a godsend.

## Books



### **The Mac is not a Typewriter Second Edition**

Reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad

Author: Robin Williams  
Peachpit Press  
<http://www.peachpit.com>  
Published: April 21, 2003  
88 pages  
\$12.99 USB  
ISBN: 0201782634

It's been many a year since I first read Robin Williams' first edition of *The Mac is not a Typewriter* in 1990. I'm greyer and older, use a fancier and more capable Macintosh, but, over the years, I have become only marginally more aware of the subtle but real feature of typography that Robin Williams discusses in this, the second edition of her fine tutorial. Since most of my writing has been for federal contractors or professional journals, whose style guides lead to boring looking text, *style* was not important. But after reading the many simple suggestions on how to look good in print—as the book illustrates and describes—I'm again motivated to make it all look a bit more enticing to the reader.

This book expands upon and clarifies the materials in the first edition. It once again raises the reader's consciousness to elements of "style" that make our written word more professional looking and readable. This is not a comprehensive book on either typography, or page design, or on the use of fonts to support such design. Robin has written such books for Peachpit press and one of these days I'll get to them. Robin simply

shares the simple, logical principles for using type, on a Macintosh, of course, to produce beautiful, readable, and professional-looking documents.

As stated by the publisher, "This updated edition includes new examples and expanded information dedicated to the practical advice that made the first edition an enduring bestseller. Throughout, Robin shows you the small details that separate the pros from the amateurs: typographer versus typewriter quotation marks, en and em dashes, tabs and indents, kerning, leading, white space, widows and orphans, and hanging punctuation."

Robin's book is a simple, easy to read, desktop mini-reference book that beginners can easily follow and that "Pros" will learn from and use again and again. Now, if only Robin would develop a software package that could be used to check whether typographical features are violated! Until then, Appendix A will have to do.

### **Features I Most Enjoyed**

- A clearly written, easy to read and understand (mostly) text that is deceptively logical and straight forward—well, we've all read those other books! The grace of the logic and presentation did not become obvious until I got the last chapter and wondered where I could find more!
- Crystal clear illustrations that lead the reader to a precise understanding of Robin's focus.
- Robin's readable and quirky style that present her "do's and don'ts" in a friendly, emphatic, but inoffensive manner. These are presented, at times under the guise of *The Chicago Manual of Style*, but are really all 'pure' Robin! Her occasional rants and "thou shalt's" are points that help focus and settle her guidance into the reader's memory. For more about typography "do's and don'ts", read: [\[http://www.press.uchicago.edu/cgi-bin/hfs.cgi/00/12245.ctl\]](http://www.press.uchicago.edu/cgi-bin/hfs.cgi/00/12245.ctl)
- The appendices:
  - "Compendium of Rules: A Checklist" [Appendix A].
  - "List of Most Commonly-Used Special Characters and Accent Marks" [Appendix B].

### **Nits and Nats (Picky-Picky Harry)**

I have only three minor complaints —nits, really—about this otherwise excellent book.

- I would have preferred that the illustrative examples were printed in "show formatting mode", especially the material on Leading, or Line Space (Chapter 14), and Hanging the Punctuation (Chapter 16).
- I would also have welcomed a bit more information on "widows and orphans" (Chapter 12).
- A few more MS Word™ illustrations would have been helpful. Most of them are in Mariner Write™, which Ms. Williams prefers.

### **Recommendations**

A "must buy" for anyone who writes anything other than email.

*Shareware*



**DiskTracker™ 2.3**

Reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad

Portents, LLC  
P.O. Box 329  
Winchester, MA 01890-0429  
USA  
<http://www.disktracker.com/>  
\$30 USD  
OS X Jaguar



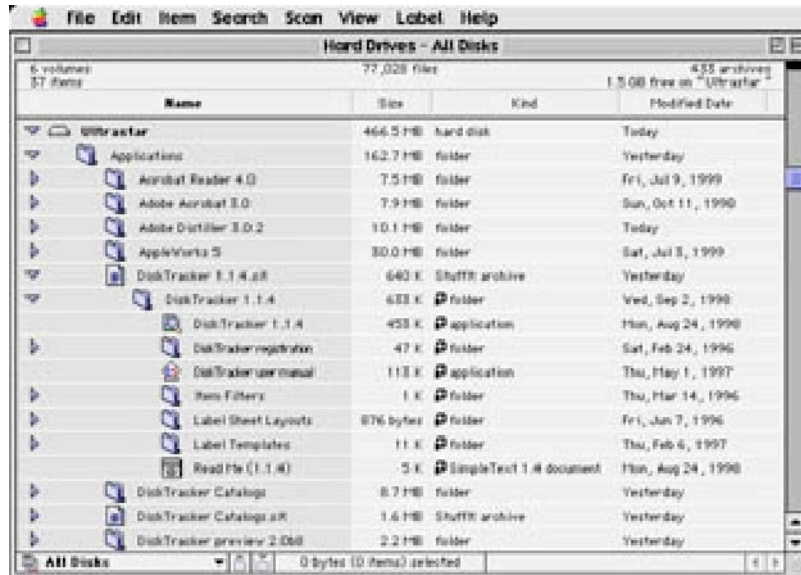
The availability of the OS X version made my move to Jaguar a bit less painful.

**Strengths:** Since I burn to CDs to free up hard disk space, which contain a great many technical references, completed project files, shareware and font ‘n graphics collections — to name a few, I find the software invaluable.

**Weaknesses:** Although DiskTracker™ has an export as text feature, it is nearly useless. To capture the contents of a text index, to create a inputs for database or spreadsheet input, even for a jewel case insert or booklet, you must first open every volume and every folder in that volume contained in that catalog – an exercise in futility.

DiskTracker™ is a relatively complete disk cataloging and labeling system for the classic Mac OS and Mac OS X. This powerful cataloging utility helps you keep track of what’s on your CDs, Jaz disks, Zip disks, external hard drives, iPod, servers, and more. Plus, it features a handy disk labeling system to create and print professional disk labels. A truly excellent program, especially if you have uncountable sets of removable media disks. MacAddict has chosen this software to catalog their monthly CD. It features a relatively intuitive user

interface and contains a number of useful “Data CD collector” features such as adding the catalogs for individual storage “vessels” to master compilations (e.g., Shareware, reference documents, and recipe collections). There are better tools for cataloging your graphics collections that go beyond just the listing of the file name and the file location. Think Image collections.



For those who are not DiskTracker™ or MacAddict subscribers, a disk cataloger is an application that records the directory structure, but not the contents, of a volume. The saved directory structure of a volume is called a disk catalog and is useful for cataloging data CDs. The catalogs range from under 100 KB to over 7 MB in size, depending how many individual disk catalogs I load in to a master (my shareware) catalog. More importantly, a disk cataloger can store the individual disk catalogs for more than one volume. Since searching a disk catalog is much faster than loading the directory structure from each actual disk, searching and browsing a disk catalog is often much faster than playing hide and seek through a stack of disks. And the volume to be searched does not need to be mounted on the desktop while you are browsing its catalog. This allows you to have a single disk catalog containing the library of all of your CD-ROM's, removable media volumes, and floppy disks.

Although, if you've gotten internet information on the track information (Toast's search Internet feature) you can catalog audio CDs tracks, using a music CD database, created in FileMaker Pro, a more versatile approach to keeping a discography of the music holdings.

Thus using a disk cataloger you can, in one motion, search all of your “indexed” volumes, be they mounted on your desktop, in a box next to your machine, or at the office on the other side of town. And, because only the directory information -- not the actual volume data -- is saved, disk catalogs are relatively compact. The Portent web site contains detailed information on DiskTracker™'s abilities both for OS X and the Classic version.

Help Wanted: One missing feature that I would find very useful is a free” DiskTracker™ reader [Portends version of Acrobat reader” that could be used by both Macintosh and Wintel users allowing my contacts to read and search a multiple CD catalog index, when I share these with friends who have not purchased the software or cannot use the software.



## Pixeltoy© 2.6

Reviewed by Dr.Eric Flescher

LairWare Software

[beastie@lairware.com](mailto:beastie@lairware.com)

<http://www.lairware.com/>

\$20 USD

Power Macintosh, Mac OS 8.6 or newer, QuickTime 3.0 or newer, and CarbonLib 1.2 or newer.



**Strengths:** Well worth the price. Fun to use and easy to work with. Customizable and multiple options. Use of the free version allows one to test out most of the options. Displays can be saved in picture, video and can be used with many other multimedia programs.

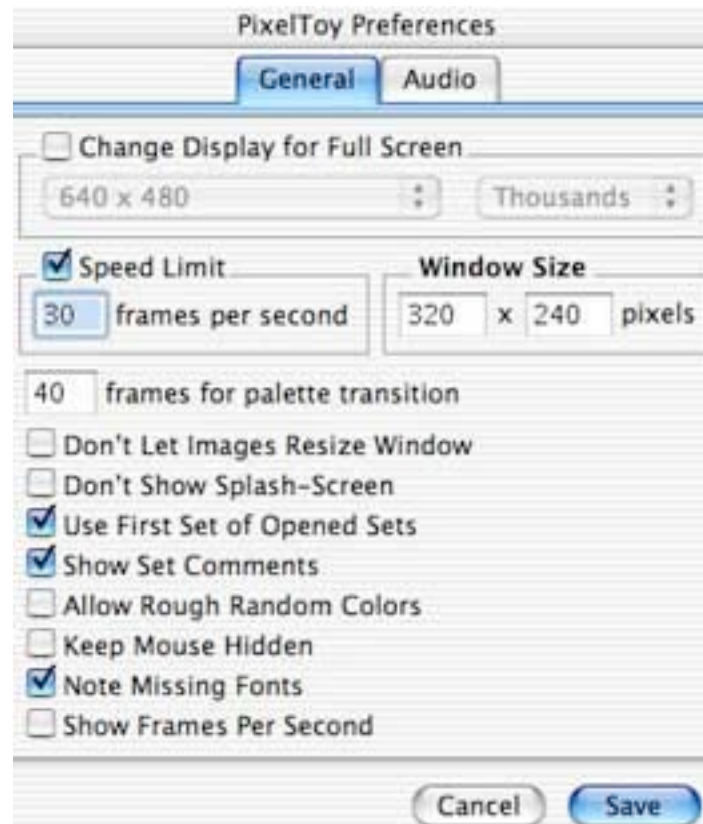
**Weaknesses:** None except it takes awhile to perfect the displays and shows. That is actually a learning process and fun not tedious. You slowly develop your own methods.

PixelToy© is one of those rare software based programs that are not easy to categorize or describe. This software is a tool, a toy and visual screen utility that can do much more.

PixelToy©'s flexibility allows for the creation of unique, beautiful special effects. These can be integrated with animated text, images, sound waves, and more. Users can create still images with the software to use in an image editor. Effects can be generated for QuickTime movies and for use with video editing software and a multitude of projects. Pixeltoy© can also be used as entertainment, relaxing and watching the beautiful, hypnotic patterns. Hooked up to an audio source or music, you can also enjoy how the patterns react to audio. In any case, PixelToy© is a lot of fun and can be used in many ways.

The software is shareware and is easily downloaded from several sites to try for free. This new version, has included optimized filters, particle brightness control, timer-based animation capabilities and enhanced audio source selection and requires a Power Macintosh, Mac OS 8.6 or newer, QuickTime 3.0 or newer, and CarbonLib 1.2 or newer.

Once downloaded and launched, PixelToy© can be used as a stand alone application or can be placed your desktop in a little window on your desktop, as a pleasing visual display show of colors and effects which you watch as you go about your work with other applications.

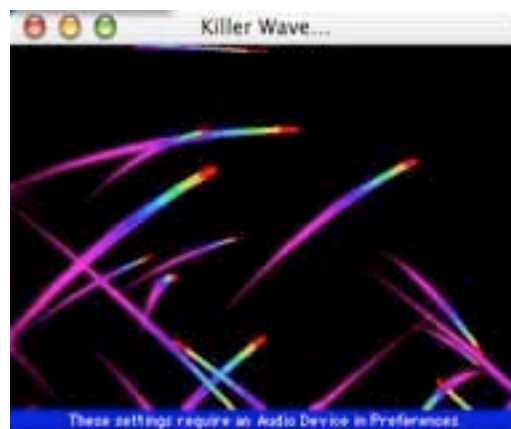


The preferences can be changed to suit your needs. A full screen display is possible or the window display can be customized to meet your needs. The options of the number of colors, speed limit per second and monitor screen resolution can be changed. The mouse can be hidden if desired and you can select to keep the software from resizing the window.





Many options can be accessed from the Toolbar or the six customizable palettes. It is a handy feature that these windows can be moved around to any area of the desktop and accessed to customize the effects for your display shows. When any of the 19 sets (blazing sun, killer wave, lunar landscape etc.) are clicked, visual displays begin to move about your screen window area. Numerous options available can change your screen display at any time just by clicking. The transformation is almost instantaneous. Select any of the 14 different options, 15 colors (colors displayed for each in the color palette editor) or 25 filter effects in any combination. The predefined sets (series of predefined effects for the display) can be used to modify your displays and you can even create and save your own sets. Sets and your displays of any combination can be saved as movies, screen or PICT files. These can then be used with other software.



The unlimited number of combinations can be tried and tested which makes for a lot of multimedia fun. In addition, the software can be synchronized with audio and music to create beautiful, hypnotic patterns that react to audio. Because of Pixeltoy©'s flexibility and visual effects, the software has been used in dance clubs and cafes around the world. Visual artists have utilized PixelToy's wealth of video effects while integrating with QuickTime movies and use with non-linear video editors such as iMovie, Final Cut Pro, Adobe Premiere or After Effects.

You will find that this program is a lot of fun to use. It is easy to use and offers you so many creative outlets for a lot of multimedia fun that once you try PixelToy©, you will want to use it for unlimited sessions. Free and unregistered, you have access to most of PixelToy©'s features for an unlimited number of 15 minute sessions. The shareware fee is well worth the price and allows the author to keep updating this excellent multimedia software. Try Pixeltoy© for your visual and multimedia pleasure and let your creativity soar.



### shadowGoogle v.2.1.1

Reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad

stupidFish Programming  
[info@stupidfish23.com](mailto:info@stupidfish23.com)  
<http://www.stupidfish23.com/>  
\$7.50 USD

Application Installed Size, 1.3 MB  
OS Requirements Mac OS X 10.1 or later

**Strengths:** One-step  
Googleplex.

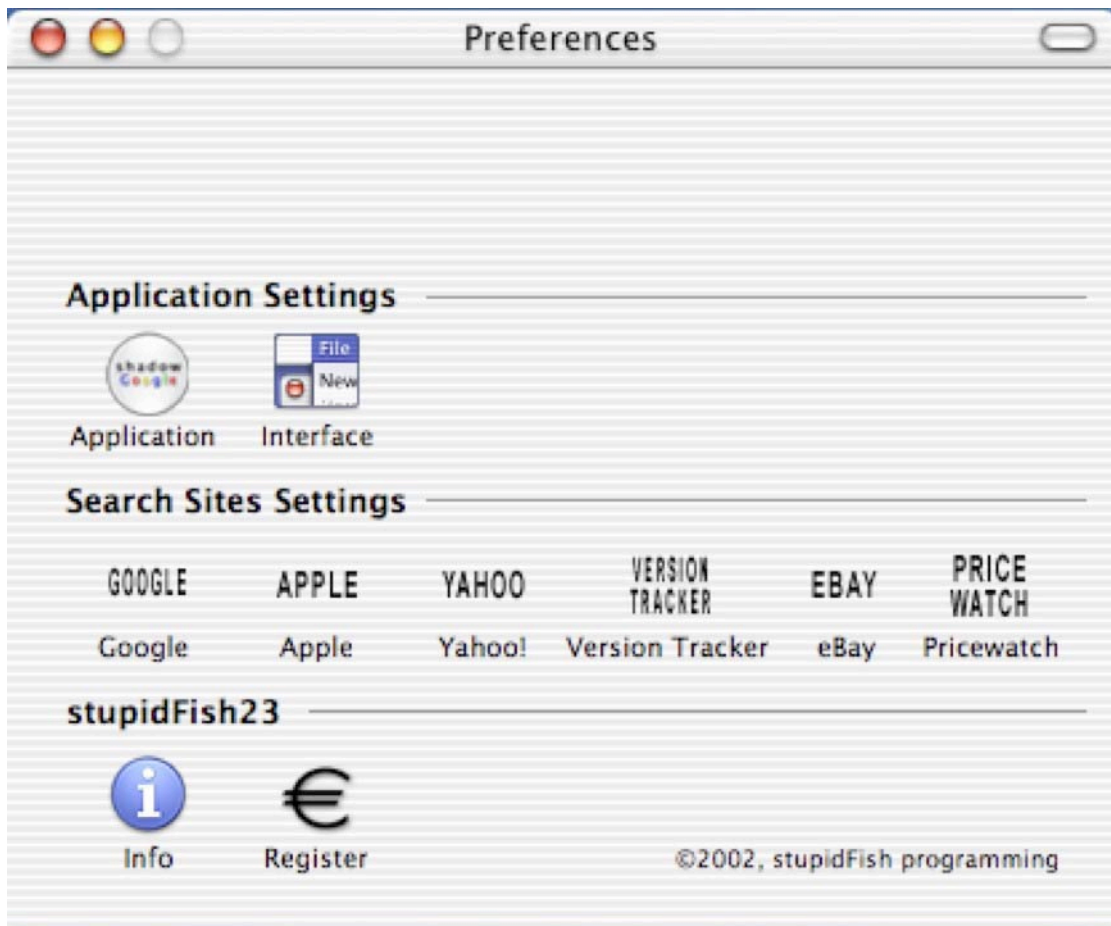
**Weaknesses:** Not Watson...



Have you ever stumbled across a utility on VersionTracker or another shareware site, and, after a quick try, you suddenly wondered how you could have managed for so long without it? shadowGoogle by stupidfish23.com is such a utility.

For years I extensively used the Google search engine for finding information ranging from backgrounds on movies or music, to recipes, as well as for chasing waste chemistry information. My usual Google access was by starting Internet Explorer, where I had posted Google on the favorites bar.

Instead, in one step, shadowGoogle puts a floating search text box see on your desktop.



Click in the box, type a search term, hit enter, and your browser pops up with the Google search results page. Indeed, when I copied a key word or two from any open document, it was already pasted in the “tiny” shadowGoogle search window. Since I have set shadowGoogle to open on startup [System Preferences => login items], all I have had to do is click on the shadowGoogle icon [an off-white circle on the right hand side of the Apple menu bar] to gain instant access to my most-used search engine. The software is a Macintosh OS X Cocoa utility. It is fast, easy to use, stable, and a very convenient way of making a Google, Apple, Yahoo!, Version Tracker, eBay, or Pricewatch search from either a floating text box or from the desktop. It includes features (see the preferences

pane image) such as searching for only keywords, graphics, groups, or Mac sites. It also has translation and filtering features.

Installation is easy — shadowGoogle 2.1 comes as a .dmg disk image file. To install it, simply double-click the .dmg disk image file and copy the folder on the disk to your OS X applications or utilities folder. The required disk space for installation is 1.1 MB. The software can be configured to automatically launch at login or you can place the application in the dock.

You can configure whether to look on the web, in groups, or for images via a hot-key selection, and you can also specify in which languages to restrict your searches. Since I've not needed this feature, I have not yet tried it, but other posted reviews of the software laud this feature.

Unlike other software I've tried and found wanting, removal is easy. shadowGoogle 2.1 can be removed from your system simply by deleting the shadowGoogle folder from your hard drive.

shadowGoogle is such a great shareware product that, even charging myself minimum wage for my time these last few weeks, the shortcut has saved me more than the equivalent of the shareware fee. shadowGoogle has earned a permanent spot on my desktop. It's much easier to find the text box than to always go hunting for a browser window. It is ideal for simple searches, 95+% of my seeking. But for more complex searches I have been using either the advanced search features of Google, or better yet, those incorporated in Watson 1.7.2a, Apple's "Sherlock on Steroids" ... but more about that in a later issue.

## Software



### Boswell 3.1

Reviewed by John McGibney

Copernican Technologies

P.O. Box 8527

Santa Cruz, CA 95061-8527

<http://www.copernican-tech.com>

Requirements: OS 9 or X, 8MB RAM, 5MB HD space,  
CD ROM drive.

\$100 USD



**Strengths:** Works well. Simple to use, once properly set up.

**Weaknesses:** Doesn't support imports from nested folders. Archives can't be trimmed down. There aren't many faults I can find with Boswell. Aside from the unusual interface for a Mac application, it seems so early OS-7. There are only four faults I can find. 1) Boswell doesn't import files from nested folders during batch installs. 2) Boswell only imports plain text files. 3) Text clippings must be dropped into new entry. 4) Entries can't be deleted from the Journal once they're created.

What is it?

Are you the type of person that has "Sticky notes", text clippings, notes all over the place? Want to keep all sorts of info just incase? Then Boswell might be just what you want. Boswell is an application for storing any and all text you would like to keep. Sort of "Sticky Notes" on steroids. All the data you store gets archived into one file which can be sorted and searched at any later date. You can organize your data into notebooks, essentially data that fits into a particular group that you define. You can have multiple notebooks for each archive and any item can be in multiple notebooks.

How do I install it?

Installation is by a simple drag-and-drop to the location of your choice. The installed package consists of the application, a sample archive, and documentation. There is the usual short Read-Me file, an Overview file and an in depth HTML document that explains the process in great depth. Also included on the CD are two utilities for exporting your email from Eudora and Outlook Express. Copernican Technologies has included everything you should need to get you started in one complete package. As usual any updates or additional info can be found at their web site.

How do I use it?

I'll explain how Boswell works by using a public library as an analogy. In order to save your data and be able to work with it you have to create a new archive. This becomes your library for saving your data (books). You enter data into a journal (main desk). Each entry can be considered a book. You then create a new notebook for sorting your data (card index). You then extract select items to be listed in each notebook by selecting key words, phrases, dates, etc. as you see fit. Your notebook only contains links to the relevant data in the archive. This data can be read, copied, or extracted and exported elsewhere. You can have multiple archives and multiple notebooks for each archive. Each notebook can be linked to only one archive.

For example you can create one archive for your email, another for technical data, another for computer related problems and fixes, and so on. The choice is yours. This way you can pinpoint your search to a smaller file of relevant data. You can then delete archives that are no longer relevant without losing all your data, nor do you need a large archive of which you need 10% of the information. You can create an archive for a big project so you can organize your notes. When you're ready, you can organize these notes and export the relevant ones to a text file that you can edit for your presentation. When finished you can delete this archive or save it to CD for later retrieval if needed. Any changes to one archive do not affect the others.

Setting up a new archive involves four steps. Here is the process in a step-by-step list.

1. Create a new Library, or select an existing one to work with.
2. Enter data into the journal: one or more entries, one for each data piece of data.

3. Archive data: saves your entries to the permanent file.
4. Create notebook(s): groups of data along guidelines you create.
5. Pull data from archive into notebook(s): create search criteria to organize file data.

It is actually quite easy once you know the process. Boswell's creators have provided both a quick reference guide and an html document with expanded instructions on using Boswell. They even provide a sample archive to examine and practice with. I would recommend playing with their archive first before you create one with important data, as you can only add to an archive and not delete from it. Once you're done with it toss it to gain hard drive space and rid yourself of all those silly messages you saved just for practice.

Boswell's creators recommend using it to save email messages and include two handy utilities for extracting messages from Eudora and Outlook Express. These are a nice touch, but they export all the email messages present at the time. I would rather use a utility like Outlook Email Archiver to export messages from a specific folder as separate text files and then do a bulk import into Boswell from the Finder. Boswell does allow for batch processing. Each message becomes a separate entry in the journal.

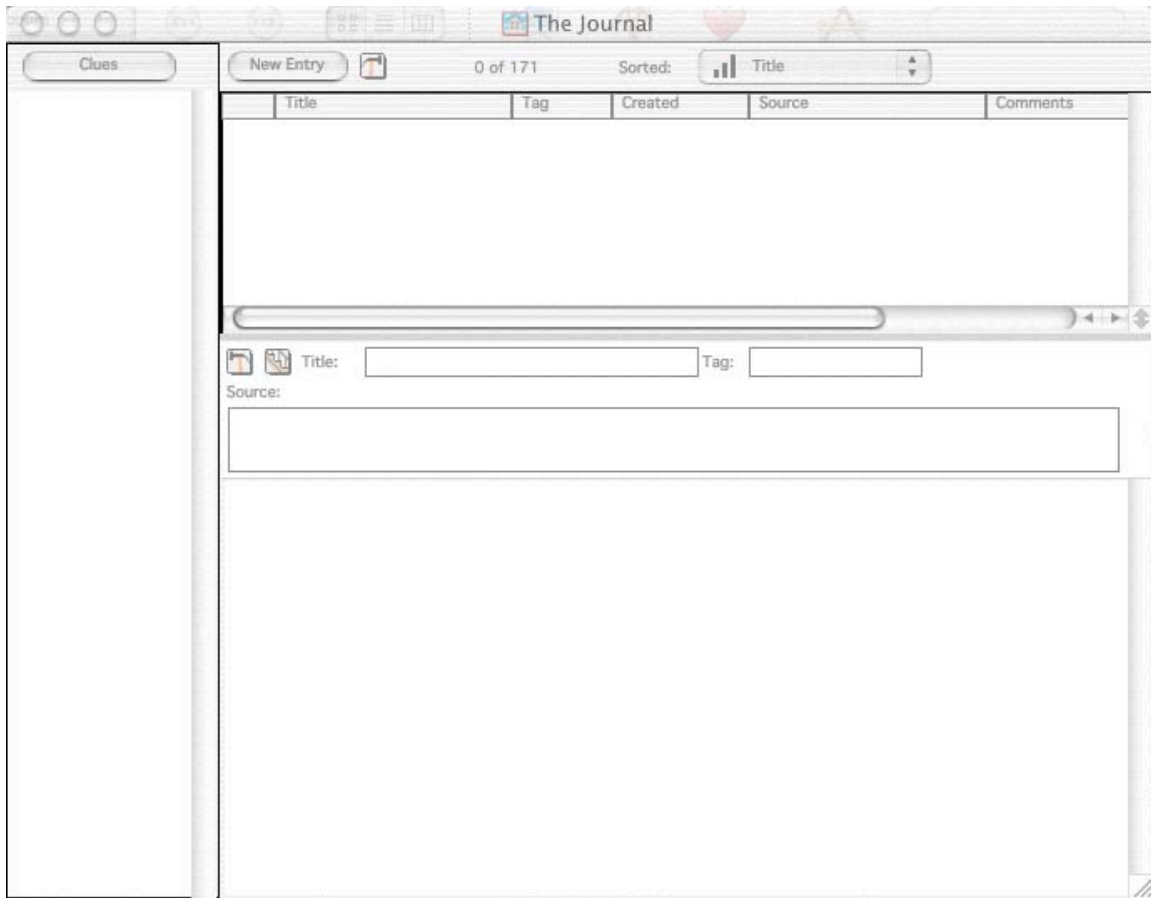
I'll now do a quick walk-thru to show how Boswell works. Step one, create a new library and name it as you wish. Select a folder to place it in. Now you're ready to add entries. You can either add one entry or do a batch install. Once you have a few entries, you can at your option create one or more clues to help you sort your entries into notebooks. Create your notebook or notebooks to sort your entries into collections along guidelines of your choosing.

Step one - Create a new library.

I'll create a library for email storage and pick the documents folder. I'll name it email archive. Click the button and a new folder is created. Inside is an alias for the library and another folder that has the actual library and associated files. Once this is done two windows will open, "The Journal" and "Notebooks". Figure 1 below is the Journal window.



Figure 1



#### Step two - Add data.

You can either add your entries or create your notebook(s) at this time. As your working and you think of a key word or phrase that you might want to sort by you can add it to your "clues" list. This will make sorting easier and somewhat automatic later. Clues aren't necessary but they are useful for repeated searches.

#### Step three - Archive

Once you are done adding and editing your entries you must archive them. Click the Hammer icon and select auto archive. This will transfer all the items to the archive file.

Remember don't archive the entries until you are sure you are done editing them! You can quit Boswell with items in the journal and not archived. They will be there when you reopen the library.

#### Step four - Create notebooks, clues

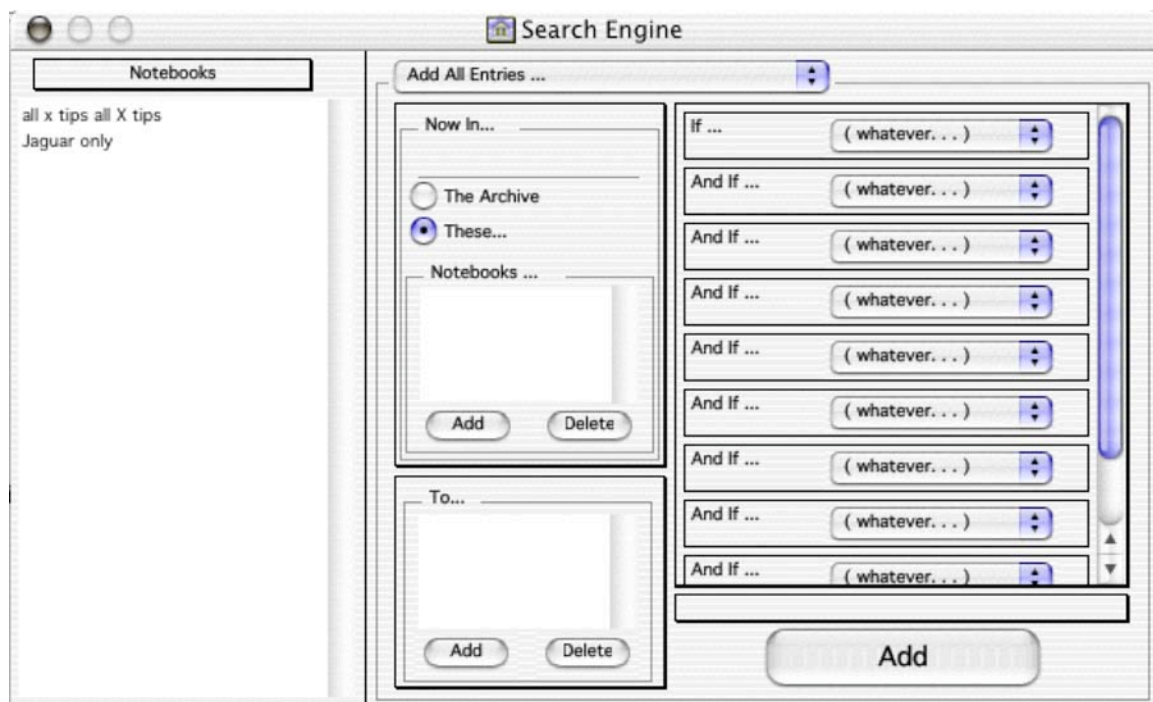
If you have not as yet created a notebook by choosing create from the Notebook Pulldown menu. Name it and link any clues you want to it. Clue creation is optional. Clues are a quick way of doing repeat sorting of you data after you update the archive. It

can be done at anytime, or not at all. Once you have a notebook you are ready to organize your files.

Step five - organize you data.

Now is the time to add some items to your notebook. Open the Search window (figure 2 below). Select where to search, for now its the Archive. You then select the criteria to search for/by. In the right most column select the first item If. Now select Archived from the pop-up menu. Now select before from the next pop-up in the rectangle below it. Make sure the time is close to now. Now go to the center column and chose the to box. Either drag a notebook from the left column into it or click the add button. Select your notebook. Verify your settings and click the large Add button in the lower right. All the entries will now be checked and those fitting your search will be added to the new notebook.

Figure 2



Ta-Da! You have now created a fully functional library that can be searched at will. When you want to add additional items just add them into the journal. Archive them when you're ready and they can be searched for and added to any/all notebooks that you wish.

Things I would like to see added if possible to Boswell's features are a feature to export a batch of entries in an archive directly into a new journal/archive so old outdated entries could be scrapped. The search feature's window seems a little overwhelming to a first time user. Maybe this window could be redesigned so it flows thru the search process. More like those found in Apple's Find command. Batch support for text clippings and other simple text files created by other word processors would also be a plus. Granted my wishes may seem petty, but I think they will help Boswell grow into one of the more elegant and often used databases.



## ConceptDraw™ Professional 1.8.5

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Computer Systems Odessa  
2A Chkalova Street  
Odessa 65012  
Ukraine

380-482-266576

<http://www.cs-odessa.com.ua>

[info@cs-odessa.com.ua](mailto:info@cs-odessa.com.ua)

<http://www.conceptdraw.com/en/>

<http://www.conceptdraw.com/en/products/mindmap/applications.php>

<http://www.conceptdraw.com.ua/en/resources/suppdwnl.shtml>

<http://www.conceptdraw.com/en/resources/supflowres.shtml>

<http://www.conceptdraw.com/en/resources/tutorial/>

<http://www.conceptdraw.com/en/visio/>

<http://www.conceptdraw.com/en/sampletour/load/>

Downloaded, Standard, \$150 USD; Professional, \$250 USD; 5 -User Standard, \$630; Professional, \$1,050. Boxed, +\$50 USD

Requirements: An ability to think, OS X, 32 MB RAM, 40 MB hard drive space, CD-ROM.



**Strengths:** Works cross-platform. Some integration with other applications, mostly importing.

**Weaknesses:** Could improve some on exporting capabilities. Visio Library conversions could be "reverse-engineered" somehow. No DWG conversion capability yet. And it still does a couple of things in the WinTel environment that can't be done yet in the Mac environment.

You still can't get a copy of Visio to run on your Mac, right? So, is that a problem? Try ConceptDraw™ Professional 1.8.5 from Computer Systems Odessa (CSO) and use their on-line converter if you dare. Download a demo.

Once you get comfortable by going through the tutorials and tours listed above, go ahead and play with this fully functional vector drawing program to create database diagrams, floor plans, flowcharts, Gantt charts, network workflow diagrams, organization charts, pie and bar charts, UML diagrams and even HTML pages and XML.

Why go for the Professional version instead of the Standard version? It adds 25 more libraries to the already abundant list. And you can even make your own. DXF formats, PowerPoint and text outline, PDF or EPS files can be imported and exported even to FTP servers and the links stay live. It also adds a few more graphics formats to the mix. And it allows for dialog between itself and other files located on an FTP server. It also allows for substitution of library objects.

Sadly, it doesn't convert Visio Libraries though but it does do CAD DXFs. It doesn't do CAD DWGs though.

What got me started with ConceptDraw® a few years ago was the neat feature of "Smart Connectors", where intelligent objects can get moved and the links follow. This is a pretty cool feature for webification. That and hyperlinking.

Even though it isn't a CAD program, it does have 9 layers that can be locked, hidden or printed individually.

Want to see some work? Check the following out from an earlier version of ConceptDraw®.

Here is a sample of charting. There are about 30 different libraries to choose from.



And one of network diagramming. It can also do 3D and web-modeling using about 5 libraries to play with.



And even though it isn't "supposed to" work as a CAD program, this comes pretty close, don't you think? It is designed to draw to scale, too.



It doesn't do too bad a job putting together science, chemical and engineering schemes, either.

And it has libraries for mapping. Okay, at least for adding a few lines over existing maps to trace routes, etc.

So do you think you can handle over 2,700 library objects so you don't have to keep reinventing the wheel? I thought so! Got a concept? Go draw it!



## EarthDesk 2.0.1 Realtime Worldtime Dynamic Desktop

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Trygva H. Inda

Constantly traveling

<http://www.timepalette.com/>

<http://www.timepalette.com/download.html>

<http://www.timepalette.com/support.html>

\$20 USD Ordered online, Site License, \$200 USD,  
Worldwide license, \$500

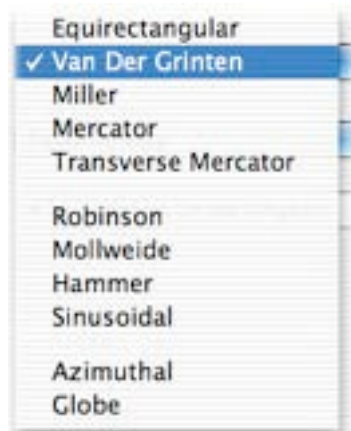
Requirements: A desire to "get global", OS X 10.1+, 7  
MB RAM, 3.6 MB hard drive space, screen resolution  
1024x768

**Strengths:** Puts us in  
"perspective" with the heavens  
and each other on earth.

**Weaknesses:** Still no "realtime  
weather", but does have a  
weather station ID capability.  
Look at Trygva's Time Palette  
5.4 for that information.

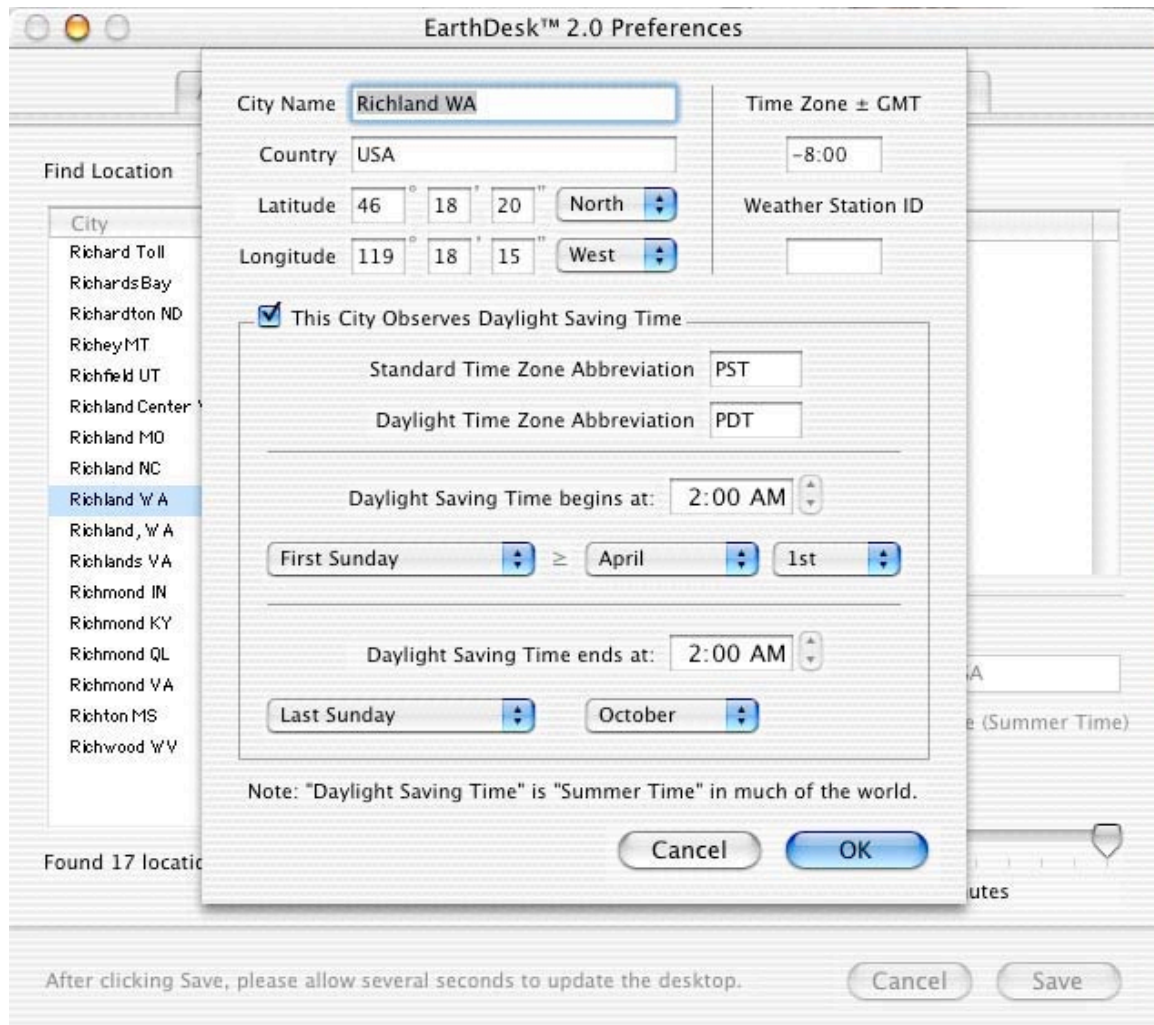


Trygva H. Inda has improved his Earthdesk 2.0.1 Dynamic Desktop product once again. See, he travels a lot around the world and needs to know where he is and what time it is so he can follow his faith and pray at the appropriate times.

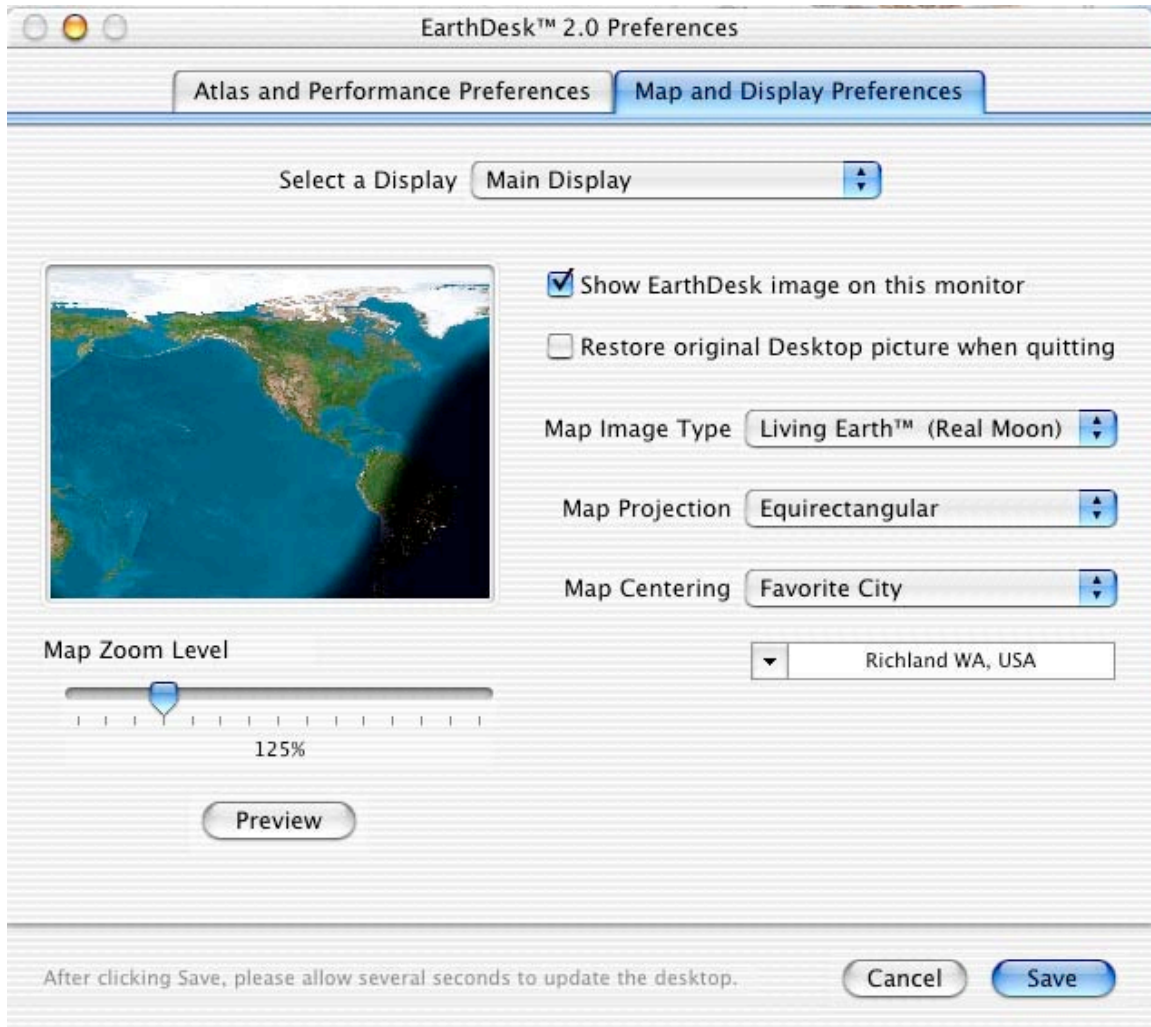




What is nice is that he has put together a number of "World" geographically-based mapping concepts seen here.



And then he arranged the geographical information so even people like me can appreciate where we live in the global context based on longitude, latitude and time zone.



Then he gave it a heavenly perspective by letting us look at ourselves from off-world and in both sun and moonlight in a dynamic fashion so the desktop appears to change over time based on solar, lunar and evening city lighting and twilight shading.

You may be hard-pressed not to find your city in the 10,000 city Atlas database that comes with the package.

I can either let the map move under the heavens or keep it stationary and let the light and darkness pass over my "favorite" city.

So even if you aren't the roaming kind of person, this package does put things in a different light. This is one neat "screen saver"!



## Epocrates RX Online

Reviewed by Randy Cypherd

ePocrates, Inc.  
 1800 Gateway Drive  
 Suite 300  
 San Mateo, CA 94404  
**Phone:** 650.227.1700  
**Fax:** 650.227.2770  
<http://www.epocrates.com>  
[\[https://www.epocrates.com/catalog.do?catalogmethod=showProduct&product=3&node=Epocrate\]](https://www.epocrates.com/catalog.do?catalogmethod=showProduct&product=3&node=Epocrate)  
 \$50 USD Subscription (not a pun)

**Strengths:** Works with just about everything...

**Weaknesses:** Except the HandSpring device with



ePocrates RX, a PDA/Pocket PC drug database aimed at nurses, pharmacists and physicians announces a new application: ePocrates RX Online. ePocrates RX Online offers all the features and functions of the handheld versions used by over 800,000 practicing clinicians plus the advantages of daily-updates, a larger screen and the ability to print. Subscribers can save \$20 by ordering both the ePocrates Rx Online and ePocrates RX Pro versions.

A core drug database is the heart of ePocrates. It can be searched by generic name, brand name or drug class to make sure that a specific medication can be found regardless of what it is called. It's not intended to contain everything about a specific medication: it just provides high-level easily accessible information that can inform medical decisions. ePocrates provides links to "useful clinical resources" for occasions when the high-level detail calls for further research.

Basic information available in ePocrates is dosage, cautions, drug interactions, adverse reactions and cost. This basic information can be tailored to any unique requirements or rules a health plan, hospital or insurance company has through a unique service called Formularies. There are 10 such formularies for health plans in the state of New Jersey (24 in California) and more can be added based on clinician input. The formulary may prescribe generic or other alternatives, choose to restrict dosage or may deny administration of the drug completely. ePocrates not only provides information specific

to a medication, but places the administration of that medication within a specific health plan or hospital. If the health plan denies prescription of the medication, ePocrates attempts to offer alternate therapies.

Not only does ePocrates offer high level detail on virtually all standard medications, a section on Alternate medications (such as St. John's Wart) is included to cover treatment and supplements that patients might be picking up at their local GNC or Walmart. Julee Waldrop, a pediatric nurse from Chapel Hill, North Carolina writes, "I find I am using the exhaustive alternative medications list more and more. Like many practitioners trained in a conventional medicine system, I am trying to learn more about alternative medicine. When a patient reports use of a medicine I haven't heard of before, I can go to ALT MED and quickly find out something about it."

One of the most valuable features of ePocrates RX Online is Multi-Check. It's one thing to know what a drug does and what its side effects are but it's another to know how that drug interacts with other drugs - including alternate medications. Multi-Check allows the clinician to enter up to 30 different drugs and alternate medications/treatments to check for any potential conflict. This is especially important as the practice of medicine in America becomes increasingly specialized. I personally have three specialists in addition to a primary care physician. Each specialist maintains his/her own set of records and doesn't know what another specialist is prescribing. The primary care physician brings this all together, but Multi-Check provides a quick and easy way to check for conflicts before a new medication is prescribed.

In a study conducted by TNS Intersearch, ePocrates scores well for credibility, influence and usefulness. Usefulness, to a clinician, may be the most important score and ePocrates RX Online is sure to make an already useful product even more useful.



## ConceptDraw™ MindMap Professional 2.0

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Computer Systems Odessa

2A Chkalova Street,

Odessa 65012

Ukraine

380-482-266576

<http://www.cs-odessa.com.ua>

[info@cs-odessa.com.ua](mailto:info@cs-odessa.com.ua)

<http://www.conceptdraw.com/en/>

<http://www.conceptdraw.com/en/products/mindmap/applications.php>

<http://www.conceptdraw.com.ua/en/resources/suppdwnl.shtml>

<http://www.conceptdraw.com/en/resources/supplwres.shtml#mindmap>

Standard, \$100 USD, Professional, \$150 USD

Requirements: An ability to think, OS X, 32 MB RAM, 30 MB Hard Drive space, CD-ROM.



**Strengths:** Works cross-platform. Some integration with other applications, mostly importing.

**Weaknesses:** Could improve some on exporting capabilities. Acts as an afterthought companion to ConceptDraw.

Have you lost your mind and can't find it? This application may be a mindmapper, but it isn't designed to help you locate what is missing. It just helps bring together what you've always been thinking and captures it in one place.

Well, what have you been thinking about today? Have you had a vision of what you want to do and you'd like to, somehow, capture it? Have you participated in any brainstorming sessions recently? Did the session ever get transferred into electronic form? If you'd like to do any of the above, then take a peek at ConceptDraw™ MindMap Professional 2.0 from Computer Systems Odessa (CSO).

What does the Professional version do that the Standard version doesn't? The Standard version handles basic MindMapping® techniques, some drawing tools, and libraries to get us started. The Professional version does more by supporting more file formats, multi-page documents, creating websites (and exporting to them in HTML), and presentations (working with PowerPoint, Outlook, and PDF files).

I included a link above for a page on the CSO website showing a few dedicated locations that provide extra information on MindMapping® on this package as well.

You can also do the "try before you buy" process by going to their multilingual site and trying it yourself. The demos are full versions and like all of CSO's stuff, this package is

also cross-platform.

So what can we do with this application? How about planning a website?



Or perhaps you want to establish a business plan or other project?

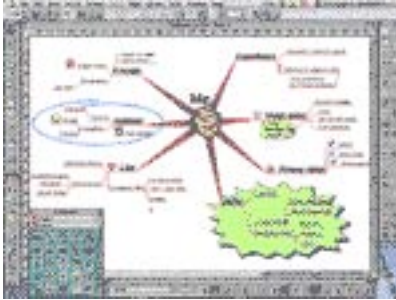


Then there's that report or presentation you've had rolling around in the back of your brain that has just been waiting for an opportunity to express itself.



I have a friend who has been working on his own processes for self-improvement, and I asked him to take a look at possibly using ConceptDraw™ MindMap Professional 2.0 as a vehicle to do his thing. Just an idea. He's working on a doctorate and has his own research he's done on thinking processes and goal setting. He *really* needs to look at it!





Oh, there are lots of things you can do with this! All the way from simple to complex! Including brainstorming. Go to the applications link above to learn more and take a tour of their MindMap library. It shows a few .cdl files for artwork, building blocks, business, computing, connectors and callouts, maps, signs and symbols, and, of course, mindmapping itself. And do you think in more than one language? Try French, Spanish, or German. I'm sure there is a Russian version, too.

Well, if you take nothing else from this review, at least the mindmapping link above shows a lot of stuff from around the world on MindTools™, Mental Literacy®, Radiant Thinking®, and other mental applications. Please take a look.

So what does ConceptDraw™ MindMap Professional 2.0 do for me, anyway? How about capturing the way I think and planning and putting that down in an electronic form that is almost hand-drawn in many ways. CSO calls it "Creative Freedom". I call it a "pretty neat idea".



## **QuicKeys© X2**

Reviewed by Dr. Eric Flescher



CE Software, Inc.  
P.O. Box 65580  
West Des Moines, IA 50265  
Phone: 515-221-1801  
Fax: 515-221-1806  
Sales: 800-523-7638  
<http://www.quickeys.com>

\$20 USD upgrade from 1.5 \$35 USD  
upgrade from 1.0 New \$100 USD

**REQUIREMENTS:** G3 (or greater)  
PowerPC, Mac OS X 10.2.3 (other  
versions for Mac OS 8.5 or later), 128MB  
of RAM, 20MB of free hard disk space,  
CD-ROM.



**Strengths:** Extremely easy to install. QuicKeys© X2 has a multiple arrays of options, while difficult at first to learn, add to the power and flexibility of the software and accomplishing numerous tasks now and in the future. This is a plus once learned, the use of the software will grow with your needs which makes it even more useful in the future and even better buy. Various versions for users of OS X and OS9 are available (features vary with different versions).

**Weaknesses:** Since this version only works with OS X 10.2.3 and above (other versions are available for different OS systems), users will have to upgrade accordingly or purchase a different version of the software. Multiple choices and options may prove to be a challenge to learn at first and quite intimidating. While the book is helpful, a flowchart process might have been helpful to guide the users through the multiple processes. Many of the task windows do not have a “Done” button. To finish an operation, one just pops out of the window or closes it. User guide needs to be improved and is missing topics to find more information more easily (like “inspector”). But the software’s help section covers troubleshooting questions and more. Need to be careful to differentiate among the names of the commands, toolbars, palettes and windows, so that you do not get confused. There is a noticeable little pause as the software engine automates the shortcut but this is not an extreme problem.

Perhaps you have a number of repetitious tasks you perform with your Macintosh on a daily basis. Some of these might include typing in your name and by lines in all email letters, opening up your favorite websites and/or starting software packages and applications each day. Wouldn't it be nice if you could automate the system and procedures and save yourself some time? If so you need a macro program, software that allows the programming of keyboard commands of your choosing to automate the operations. A popular macro program QuicKeys© X2 is now available for OS X users (other versions are available for OS9 and previous OS versions).

This version of the software requires OSX 10.2.3 or later. Installation is easy. Dragging the QuicKeys© X2 application icon on the CD into the OSX Applications folder on the hard drive starts the process. You don't have to restart after doing a new install. QuicKeys© X can be operated ready to go. However if you are upgrading you will need to log out/in after installing.

To start, in this version, the software requires that the Accessibility preferences be turned on (why is not really explained). This is accomplished by System Preferences> Universal Access> check Enable access for assistive devices checkbox. Next is the preferences section, instead of the control panel or extension area in OS 9 and below. Upon opening the QuicKeys© X2 menu and choosing preferences, a window opens.

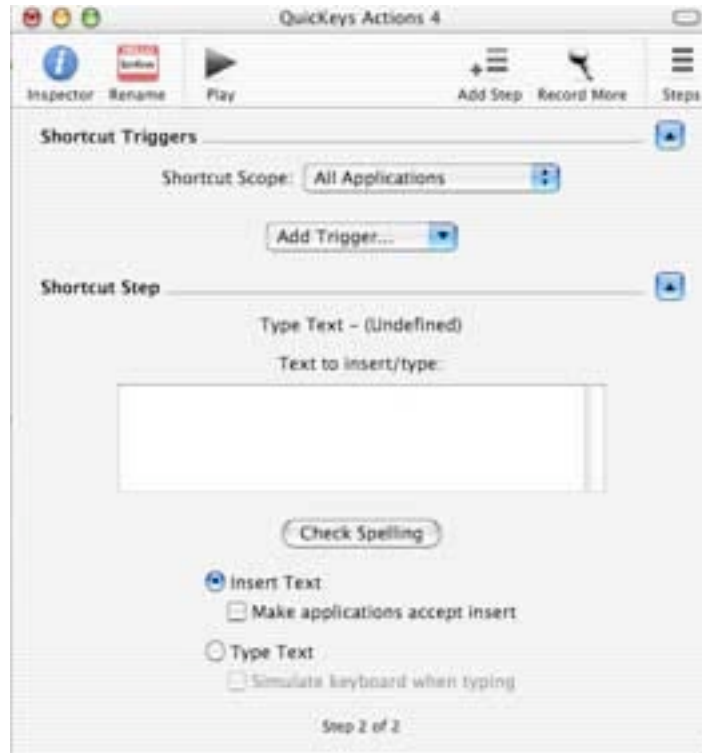
It is best to have the option "Open QuicKeys© at log in" checked, so that your macro shortcuts are available on startup. Another option which can be selected to customize the software is "display QuicKeys© Editor window on open". Show QuicKeys© Menu in Dock option" and " Show QuicKeys© System Menu option" (which places a menu of the automated system in the upper right hand corner of your monitor display area).

Even with the 155-page booklet, one might get confused as to where to start and what to do first. The software is set up in a possibly daunting and bewildering array of modular sections and options. In fact, many users may find the software Intimidating, as I did at first (and I have used other macros programs previously). The place to start is by asking yourself "What do you want to create as an automation first?"

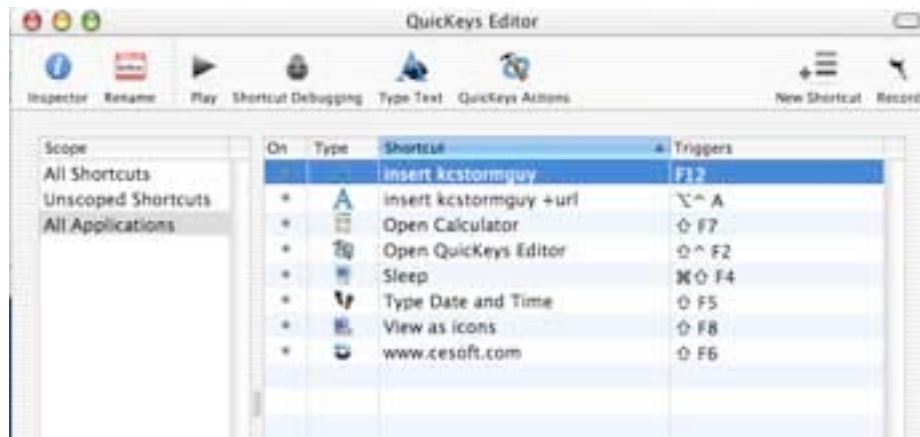
There are quite a few options (inserting text, opening folders, launching mail, opening websites and many more options) available with this software. The fact that the company has tried to make this software flexible for many uses, makes it difficult to use, at times, especially in the beginning and if you have not used a macro program before. But this array of options, offers the ability to grow with you as you become accustomed to QuicKeys© and want to use the software in many ways now and in the future.



When the “Customize Editor Toolbar” is selected from the “View” in the toolbar, these options are displayed. A way to simplify the learning is to choose a task that you want to automate. One popular macro is ability to automate the insertion of text (your name, email address, home address, website or other text), into written letters or emails you create. A handy feature available is that by dragging, for example, the icon “ Type Text,” from this area to the QuicKeys© Editor toolbar on the top of the screen, that shortcut option is even more easily accessible.



The QuicKeys© Editor is the area to create, modify and delete the shortcut- macros that perform operations. This window shows whether the macros (which the software prefers to call shortcuts) are currently operational, indicate the type (folder, button, type of operation) of each macro, indicates the name of the shortcut and the scope (which application the particular shortcut is configured to work with). If a shortcut icon is placed in the toolbar (or is placed as an icon in the OSX dock), clicking opens up the Shortcut Editing Window (which includes the “add steps option”).



A good place to start is to select which Application this macro can be used with (in this case All applications). Upon clicking the Shortcut Step triangle, a menu appears popping out downward. In the window, whatever text to be typed is added. This is the text that will be show itself when the shortcut is in operation and can be started with the “trigger.”

The “Add Trigger” button allows the configuration of the keyboard commands, which once pressed, will insert the text in this example (or any other shortcut you are working with). The keys you desire (you can choose any set of keys), for each operation, then appear in the Hot Key window, as well as in the window of the editors. Clicking on Rename button renames the shortcut that then appears in the Editor. Then you can test this shortcut out, add more individual shortcuts, create multiple step shortcuts from these smaller shortcuts and create shortcuts to handle all types of tasks and operations.

QuicKeys© has an array of options and many paths to complete tasks. One of these options is the ability to build macros separately in a number of independent procedures (each called a step). The flexibility of the software also allows grouping a series of macro “steps,” (called multi-steps), into a “super-macro. ” When triggered, the shortcut accomplishes a series of tasks, in order of operations. Clicking on the “Add Steps” button, displays to the right of the window, a step drawer window that lists all the steps using in that particular shortcut. This is helpful to keep track of your macro and its progress.

New improvements for this version include Recording & Playback, a new Clips shortcut for storing and retrieving collections of images and text and many more new and improved shortcuts. The software can also trigger shortcuts with voice commands (using your Mac's speech recognition feature that can be accomplished using an AppleScript but it is not a supported feature of QuicKeys X2). Scripting tools are also available to modify and work with AppleScript functions, to write scripts that are designed to control applications via Apple Events. In addition, there is also an online message board area at the company's website that shares information about the software, favorite uses and macro-shortcut applications. Updates are also available through the company website.

QuicKeys© X2, which has won many awards, does take a little work to understand and configure to meet your needs. Upon becoming accustomed to the software and its windows and the multiple array of choices and windows, you will have a lot fun using the software and the macro shortcuts. In fact, you will possibly wonder how you “survived” before you had the ability to use macro-shortcuts and QuicKeys© X2. Try QuicKeys© X2 to streamline your specific needs and tasks today and in the future.

## simplyVR

### SimplyVR

Reviewed by Dr. Eric Flescher

Tech4learning, Inc.

<http://www.tech4learning.com>

6160 Fairmount Avenue Ste. C

San Diego, CA 92120

877-834-5453

Single - \$30, Lab Pack (5) - \$105, Site License (350)-  
\$600



**Strengths:** Flexible and easy to use in terms of browsing and selecting the images to be included in the panorama/movies. Fun to use and see what you can accomplish. The finished VR movies are marvelous. The price of the software and support makes it a good buy for those teachers and students who want to create panorama and VR movies.

**Weaknesses:** The package does not differentiate when is it better to use the object part of the software versus the panorama. The documentation is wanting in terms of setting up and making the Object part of software produce VR movies. Once you understand the concept of lining up each picture back to back, objects can be rendered. The Panorama mode is easier to use initially. While the smartstitch and manual stitching do a good job, the key is having compatible photos. Creating your movies with a set of pictures will take a lot of trial and error that can be a chore or fun depending on the quality of your photos. If you are web authoring or hardware system does not have the QuickTime Player plugin, you must download the free

Computers are marvelous tools. With the right software, tools and techniques, students and teachers can be actively engaged in a creative learning process that enhances exploration on a variety of learning topics, with ways that are not normally possible. One piece of software that allows for students to be engaged in hands-on constructivist process is SimplyVR.

QuickTime, software developed by Apple, has pioneered Virtual Reality (VR) technology that lets students interact and explore graphic oriented movie-like productions as if they were at the location, observing a sculptor, around a museum, observing the pyramids, or other outside natural wonders. The difficulty lies in finding and using appropriate tools that allow the creation of VR objects and panorama movies. SimplyVR bridges this gap by bringing to the classroom and home a multifaceted tool for the creation of VR products.

First you need a set of digital images taken with a digital camera or scanned, that show an object, nature scene or a set of photos that you would like to set up in a panorama mode and then as a QuickTime VR movie. (The helpful booklet gives added insight into methods and equipment that can be used). After storing the pictures, you can begin working with the software.

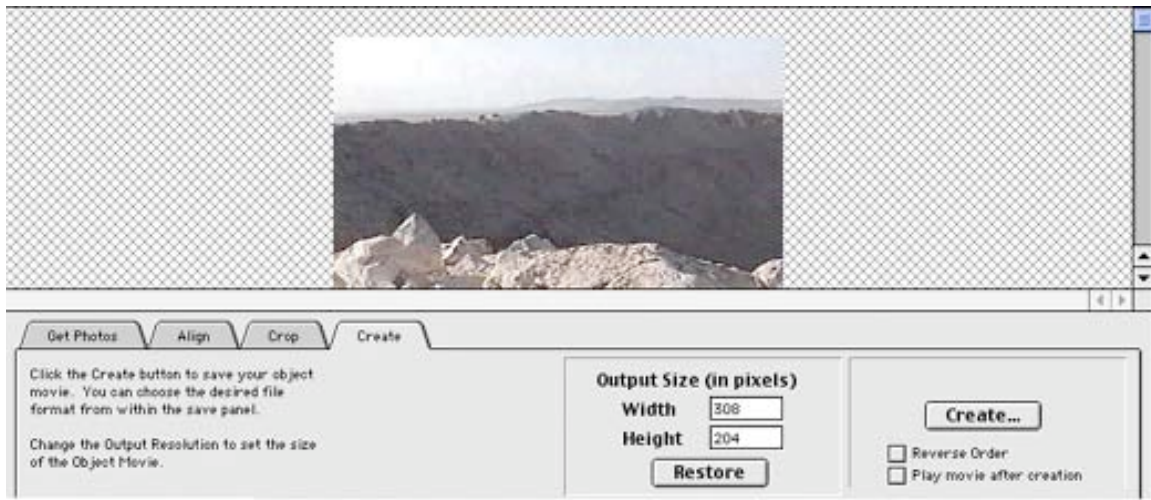
Installing the software is simple and a straightforward process. A 47-page booklet details this process and how to start the programs. Once installed, opening the Spin PhotoObject brings about the SimplyVR main interface,



A storyboard window, where photos can be placed, appears at the top of the software application window that opens. The command palette appearing at the lower left has four tabs. The “Get Photos” tab is launched automatically and three options show below. Clicking on “Browse” allows the searching and finding of pictures to be used whether on the hard drive, desktop or external device as a disc or CD Photos when selected. First



appear in the “Get Photo windows.” If a folder is selected, all the photos are inserted into the windows below the main storyboard. Single photos can be inserted instead of multiple files by clicking on the “Insert Selection” icon button. The command “Insert All” command will insert all of the photos chosen. The other way to insert photos is to “Drag and Drop” the photos into the storyboard. When inserted, the photos line up and appear in the storyboard. Clicking and dragging can rearrange the order of the photos. By clicking, choosing and then hitting the “Delete” button, takes out any unwanted photos. Then you can start working with the photos.



The photos might not to be synchronized. Part of the “ chore or fun” involves the process of lining up the images. Clicking on the Tab “Align” allows the fine tuning process to begin. The “Overlay Option” allow you to see the other as they overlap. Guide lines that you can choose also can be used when you are clicking on the “nudge” buttons that move the pictures in different position over each other. There is also a “jump preview” arrow buttons that once clicked, flips back and forth between pictures. This also can help visualize the process of lining up the images. This stage may be a little confusing. Once it is understood that the pictures need to be lined up over each other straddling the middle of the storyboard and the “Guide Line,” you can try the next step.

Once lined up, clicking on “Crop,” produces a square-like photo, lining all the photos more accurately stacked behind the first one that shows. Clicking on “Create”. A QuickTime VER movie is then created. At this moment, saving can be performed as a VR movie or an image file (to work with again). Other options involving adjusting the size of the movie (in pixels). Another allows choosing whether you want the program to launch the QuickTime software (which you must download separately from Apple if you don’t have it on your computer already) and previewing your movie. Playing and viewing your movie involved taking the cursor and moving the hand over the window. You will then see the virtual reality environment move as you scan and look at different parts o f the movie. If corrections are needed, at this point, clicking back into the storyboard window and continued adjusting can be performed and then repeat the rest of the process.





The second part of the software is called Spin Panorama that can be used to create a 360-degree cyclical movie sequence that means you can explore the finished product in whole circle sequence. Loading one more pictures using the “Browse” command is the first step. Inserting all or single selections will display them in the above storyboard. The individual photos can be moved around or deleted while working in the storyboard by dragging the one you want to move to the extreme left or right of the picture to exchange with.



The next operation uses the “Stitch” command to align the pictures. Blue control arrows appear on the top of the storyboard above the area between two pictures. Clicking on these blue controls changes them to red controls accompanied by a pair of green small circles (one on each side of the dividing point) connected by a green line. Clicking and dragging these green circles shows close ups of the pictures which appear in the little windows in the stitch palette area below. To stitch correctly, the circle both the control points should be placed over the exact same location that is found in two corresponding images. You can also zoom in and zoom out as well.

When finished stitching, clicking on the red control turns these to blue controls and the stitching alters the photos to line up. If the results are not quite what you want (it depends on the quality of your pictures and placement when taken and your ability to move and

use these green control points), you can start all over. Another option is to use the “SmartStitch” command. These will automatically do the stitching for you but sometimes the results are better in manual stitching mode.

Once done, clicking “crop” makes a green box around the whole photo, to make it ready for movie composing. This green box can be adjusted if desired. Next the panorama should be saved as a graphic (jpeg) file. Before making the movie, you can choose to make the movie show itself via the QuickTime player after you create the VR movie. The compression settings (small file to high quality), the window size and using the web size reduction options can be selected. The movie is made, then saved. Upon reviewing, you can then go back and make adjustments. The movies can be viewed on the Internet via the companies website but does not cover the integration, placement and viewing of the finished QuickTime VR panoramas on web pages (you will need to consult the documentation in your favorite web authoring program).

Once you become acquainted with the way it works you find many uses. There are free training materials and step-by –step tutorials and project ideas, located on the website online that can help becoming acquainted with the operations of the program. The manual is a big help but all in all experimentation and a little trial and error helps make your panoramas. Lots of educational and home possibilities. SimplyVR is simply a lot of fun. Give it a try and amaze your friends and students.

Sample of the meteor crater VR movie can be see at the following web page (takes a little while to load).

<http://members.aol.com/kcstormguy/stormsatori/panoramas.htm>



## **Norton SystemWorks 3.0 AntiVirus™9.0 and Norton Utilities™8.0 Package**

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Symantec Corporation  
20330 Stevens Creek Blvd.  
Cupertino, CA 95014  
1-408-517-8000

<http://www.symantec.com/sabu/sysworks/mac/index.html>

Price: Upgrade \$50 USD, \$130 USD

Requirements: Mac® OS X 10.1.5 or higher with PowerPC G3 or higher processor (excluding the Beige G3 or PowerBook G3), 128 MB of RAM, 120 MB hard disk space, 15 MB hard disk space for Aladdin Spring Cleaning®, 50 MB hard disk space for Dantz Retrospect® Express Backup, DVD or CD-ROM drive. Internet connection required for LiveUpdate™.



**Strengths:** Works well, once loaded with "one-click" installation. No keycodes to run.

**Weaknesses:** Can't load AntiVirus or the other apps from the CD once you start from the CD. May require reinstalling the OS if the earlier Norton AntiVirus (NAV) version has expired. It doesn't .sit or .sitx well. Can't seem to get into those to examine for "gotchas". There's that recurring NAV annual fee, too.

If you have been doing the software updates for OS X, why would you fork out so much money for Norton SystemWorks 3.0 from Symantec? Is being a good netizen worth the effort? Is not being a "Typhoid Mary" important to you? Do you care about things like Network Insurance? Well, if not, then maybe you should. I'm constantly battling nasties on the 'Net that affect the customers I deal with on a daily basis where I work. It's not a pretty sight, and it makes me feel all warm and fuzzy that I own a Mac at home.

Okay, maybe I could care less about the Trojans, worms and viruses that plague the WinTel world bugging me at home, but the same viruses do affect performance on a Mac even though they don't directly bother us who use the Mac.

And, what the hey, I can have this running for 1 full year before I have to give any more money to Symantec for the auto-updates known as LiveUpdates™! Like the Mac environment cares! Sheesh!!

And I have the option of turning off the Antivirus program so it stops bothering me when I insert a CD.

I didn't get this package for the Dantz Retrospect® Express Backup package. I really got it for the Norton Disk Doctor™ and the Speed Disk™ applications. Those work really, really well. I also needed the update to iClean from Aladdin Spring Cleaning® 5.0.1, so that was a nice "extra".

And, no, I haven't used the Norton™ Scheduler either. I run Norton when I have to. Okay, maybe I should work smarter and not harder, but this Norton stuff is a "back-burner" activity and I don't like having it in my face when I want to get work done. Scheduler runs in the background and you can set it up to run off-hours, assuming you leave your computer on. I don't.

Now about that "one-click" installation feature. Here's my installation experience:

I ran DiskDoctor™ and it found major and minor things it could fix, which it did. I ran it twice. Lots of Bundle and Custom Bits were off that should have been on and vice versa. Things like Creation Date fixes also needed to be resolved. And it seems some Microsoft software was misbehavin'. Surprised? No. Then I ran Speed Disk™ to optimize just to see how it would run. Remember, I'm still using a "small" 6 gig hard drive. I need every ounce of performance improvements I can muster. Very nice! So far, so good.

Then I installed Spring Cleaning® and saved another 20-some megabytes of space. So run it before doing a Speed Disk™ activity, okay?

When I tried to load Norton SystemWorks 3.0, I got a "This software cannot be installed on this computer" error. Nowhere in the 176+ page documentation does it mention this error, and neither does the website, as far as I could find. I deleted the version 2.0 hidden NAV files, and ran the PRAM, and finally ended up having to reinstall the OS X package to get it to go. I dumped a lot of files, folders and programs in an effort to get this loaded. Kind of reminiscent of burning down a village in order to save the people, but I had a review to do, so to heck with it! I did it. I had to go do all the updates again for OS X, too.

That "one-click" installation took all day and evening just so I could see if I had a virus on my system. I left it running all night because I had over 88,000+ items for it to churn through and I wanted to go to bed. In the morning I saw that it found one file that was a Microsoft Sound Preferences file it didn't like. Really!

Now look, I know how well this works on a PC. I was dealing with a fellow IT person in California the day before the 4th of July. He experienced viruses that took down his entire network and the package I support was unscathed, but the other applications had been quarantined by NAV. I hope I never have to test this part of NAV on a Mac, but, if I do, then I know it will work.

I left AutoProtect™ on just to see how it worked. Seems to be okay except it tends to get in the way too, so I turned it off. It is intended to find viruses inside file archives Speed Disk™ for .sit and .sitx. Do we as Mac users use anything else? (Yes, we do, but...) And it removes nasties from downloads, email attachments, file transfers and other stuff. Now don't you feel, oh, so much better? I do! Hummm. I guess I better turn it back on.

Do I mess with Norton FileSaver™ and Volume Recover™? No, I don't, but I could if I wanted to. I do use Wipe Info™, however. And I've had occasion to use UnErase™ every

once in a while to restore deleted files.

Now, if I had a backup system, Dantz Retrospect® Express Backup would be important to me. This is another single-click application now.

And I love how Aladdin Spring Cleaning® operates. It does a great job dumping unwanted applications, extensions, preference files, fonts, aliases, cache files, cookies, history logs, and other Internet files.

If you don't need all the Norton-like Utilities, and Antivirus apps, etc., in one package, go spend some money on TechTool Pro 3® If you do, then go pay a premium on this system insurance. When the rest of the world's baddies discover the Mac and begin to target it, you'll be glad you were prepared!



## Stone Studio

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Andrew C. Stone  
Stone Design Corporation  
PO Box 6799  
Albuquerque, NM 87197-6799  
1-505-345-4800

<http://www.stone.com/>  
[http://stone.com/Stone\\_Design\\_Resources.html](http://stone.com/Stone_Design_Resources.html)  
<http://www.stone.com/dev/DevCorner.html>  
\$300 USD

**Strengths:** Cocoa-based and 15 years in the maturation process as stoneware Multilingual products.

**Weaknesses:** Needs better marketing. It is the unsung hero for the rest of us.



Stone Studio just keeps improving with time. It is a suite of applications designed for use with OS X. I got it 2 years ago and I haven't had to pay for any upgrades, even though there have been a few.

If you do any kind of consulting at all, you can use TimeEqualsMoney™. It pays for itself quickly if you handle various projects at the same time, by allowing you to do weekly billing based on hours spent per project. This alone is worth the price of the package.

If you do any kind of web design, then Create® may be something you can use. This is the meat and potatoes of Stone Studio. It competes with other web design packages and if you go to the website, you will see a few examples of just how well it does as a web-design package.

If you do slides and photos, try PhotoToWeb® and iPhoto-PhotoToWeb to do your work.

One application I've used a few times is PStill™ for doing conversions for PostScript to PDFs.

I used DOctor™ to take Word documents to PDFs when I didn't have Adobe Acrobat.

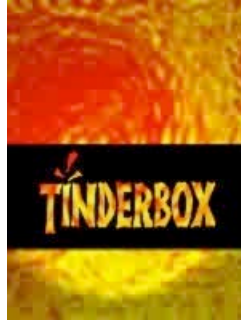
I haven't had to do any web animations, but GIFfun™ does that for you.

I also haven't done much webifying lately either, but SliceAndDice™ does roll-over navigation bars.

And PackUp&Go™ handles cross-platform archiving nicely.

StampInStone™ does watermarking of PDFs if you don't have Adobe Acrobat.

Get them separately or get them together. They add quite a few tools to your arsenal for being creative on a shoestring budget. And there is nothing wrong with having something built from Stone!



## Tinder Box™ v. 1.2.2 for Macintosh

Reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad

Eastgate Systems Inc.,  
134 Main Street  
Watertown MA 02472 USA  
(617) 924-9044 or (800) 562-1638  
<http://www.eastgate.com/Tinderbox/>  
[info@eastgate.com](mailto:info@eastgate.com)

Price: Update, \$70 USD, Tinderbox for Macintosh, \$145 USD

For OS 9.2.2, OS X



Editor's Note: Tinderbox 2 is now available from the website

**Strengths:** Free-form notes can be easily organized, linked, and placed into hierarchies. There are multiple ways of viewing related information. You can export all or some notes in HTML or text formats using modifiable templates. Links to static or active Web pages (URLs) can be created. Agents effectively turn a Tinderbox file into a database of notes. Actions can automate processes based on content.

**Weaknesses:** Its interface is not intuitive. It has a steep learning curve. It has no tutorial. It has a mediocre manual that seems disorganized.

I found Tinderbox to be both intriguing and frustrating: intriguing because of its many ways of displaying relationships among bits of information (Notes) and because of its potential power for organizing and acting on information (Attributes, Agents, and Actions). My frustrations are amply described above and need not be repeated. If you have both the need and the patience to get comfortable with the software, its rich features allows establishing relationships between notes, capturing and organizing brainstorming results. It allows the tying together of random notes on the elements of a project, and graphically illustrates the logic between those elements (notes).



By all means, add Tinderbox to your software collection if you have complex data organization needs. But I had neither the time nor the motivation to get past the initial learning curve, so I do not at this time plan on using it to support my consulting and volunteer efforts. But it will remain on my hard disk.

Ideas and information tidbits don't exist in a vacuum, especially for those of us who are tied by heredity to think in a non-linear (cause-effect) manner. One thought leads to another, often by almost devious routes. So when we take notes on paper, or even as clippings, the only way we have to link ideas together on paper is with paperclips or staples, or with PostIt™ notes on a wall. On our computers, we can dump all related notes into a folder, cross-referencing those that apply in other places (projects) by using the Macintosh's Make Alias function. Cross-referencing helps, but that requires an extensive system of physical or electronic files, and someone (me?) to keep them updated. Just the information on the developer's website led to great hopes for using Tinderbox to help organize the stacks of tidbits-snippets-random thoughts of information I accumulate when in my information junkie mode—any time I'm not asleep.

According to the developer, “Tinderbox is a personal content management assistant. It stores your notes, ideas, and plans. It can help you organize and understand them, working much like your brain does (non-linearly) to allow you to capture, link, and organize ideas in a flash. And Tinderbox helps you share ideas through web journals and web logs. Tinderbox maps your notes as you make them. Build relationships by arranging notes, organizing them with shape and color, linking them. Tinderbox lets you record ideas quickly and keep them where you'll find them again when you need them. Tinderbox's agents automatically scan your notes, looking for patterns and building relationships. Agents help discover relationships and help make sure important things don't get lost. Agents are easy to make and easy to modify. They're flexible and powerful.”

I seldom have become both so intrigued and so frustrated by a piece of software as I did when attempting to learn to use the rich and varied features of Tinderbox. According to the developer, Tinderbox is a place to store your notes, thoughts and ideas. Tinderbox keeps them handy and makes sure you can find your “fired-up” ideas when you need them. As a long-term user of the now unsupported Gramotki, as a database for notes and other keep-it-at-your-fingertips stuff, and at times a user of StickyBrain [‘Stickies on Steroids’], I had great hopes. So finding that I could not even dent this program without constantly referring to the manual—my normal practice being ‘Who reads manuals?’—I succumbed and printed it, all 136 pages!

The basic unit of Tinderbox is the Note. Notes have titles and may contain text and graphics. Movies and sounds are not supported. Notes are created and displayed within a Tinderbox window. The window types are, in-part, Map, Chart, and Outline. The Map window allows you to arrange and organize multiple notes visually. The software has a number of features, such as the “Tinderbox Map” that should help collect and organize related information. I got that far, adding notes to my new map by pressing the return key



and starting typing. I was indeed able to drag related notes together, link them, and colorize them. I also felt comfortable dragging notes into other notes (as promised), and making “new maps”—as deeply as one likes. A bit more complex than I needed, but still a potentially valuable feature. Yes, as promised, each note can hold styled text, images, and a whole list of attributes like dates, numbers, names—whatever your task requires. So far, so good!

But by then I had burned more time than I could afford getting to the most rudimentary level of this software, and stirring up too much adrenalin in the process. Although templates can be downloaded from the Eastgate Systems website, nowhere is there a step-by-step, “newbie-oriented”, getting started tutorial, an item common to PowerPoint, FileMaker Pro, and, of course, the venerable AppleWorks. So “trial and error” again *must* triumph or one abandons the software. My best guidance, as a beginning user, came from the detailed and varied information on the Eastgate Systems—Tinderbox web site, but that was no substitute for a tutorial.

Some reviewers (Tinderbox 1.1.3 — ATPM 8.08[<http://www.atpm.com>]) noted that Tinderbox was somewhat unstable and crashed numerous times during their review. In OS X, most crashes simply quit the application. However, during my leaning experience, I did not notice such instability when using the updated 1.2.2 version.

Unfortunately, all of the glowing testimonials to Tinderbox, which I read after completing my review, did not match my experience. My high level of frustration in learning this program to a level that felt *natural* led to my missing several editorial deadlines. I really wanted to be able to prove the developers and reviewers claims and, thereby, to add a new tool to my arsenal, allowing me to better manage the ever-growing pile of notes I accumulate on my hard disk—they grow like mold. I was really ready to believe the published review comment on the Eastgate Systems website by Sean Carton, "A fantastic tool for interoffice brainstorming, meeting note-taking, or just sitting down to think by yourself." Since I also needed a tool for to use for simple flow diagrams associated with project management, I hoped Tinderbox would also meet that need. Tinderbox maps make a wonderful brainstorming tool, for individuals or for groups, but for me the learning curve was too steep. I viewed the potential, but never really achieved comfort.