

The Macintosh Professional Network Presents

macCompanion

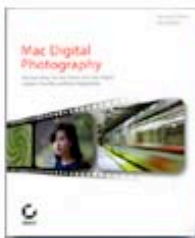
Your Guide To All Things Macintosh

December 2003 Issue 6 Volume 1

Features



Books



Derek's Views



Hardware



Audio



Calling All Macs...

Software



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Cover by Derek Caudill

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And our special thanks to those who have allowed us to review their products!

Letter From the CEO

Down to the Wire

By Robert Pritchett

Here we are ending the year 2003 with some weird news. Competing operating system manufacturers having a feeding-frenzy over legal issues against each other like sharks going after bad blood. School District Board-members were being ousted for pushing Macs in their school districts. Non-Apple manufacturer's leaders were openly using Apple products as personal preferences while some of their employees were getting fired for taking pictures of Macs being delivered to their places of business. We saw people who live, eat and drink computers for a living, literally cower in the corner in fear when they saw Steve Job's Keynote presentations.

The year 2003 had apparently become the year of the throw-away computer system. Non-Apple equipment and software both have tumbled down in both quantity and quality and have become just so much technological fertilizer. Systems are still rapidly falling apart even more quickly than when they were set up in times of "expediency". This one-way process has become what is being known by trade journalists as "an extremely vulnerable monoculture" comprised of lowest-common denominators oozing downwards into the quick-sands of short-term gains at the expense of long-term productivity. No wonder many companies treat their IT folks not with awe, but with skepticism and derision, while keeping them on a short leash and on-call 24x7. I find this to be simply criminal, but IT departments have brought this wrath upon themselves. The other shoe has dropped.

Kern Trembath, Ph. D., has posted a well-written article online showing that the Total Cost of Ownership is an investment of both time and money at <http://138.202.192.14/~trembath/smon/tco.html>. Please take time to read it. Then go read Mark Gibb's BackSpin article, "The other side of IT Vision" at <http://www.nwfusion.com/columnists/2003/1117backspin.html> for some sobering WinTel guilt-tripping facts. Yes, rather sobering. Then please come back here.

Those of us who also use Macintosh computers for a living continue to enjoy the luxury of both good gear and good software that not only works well, but lasts a long time. We get what we pay for. Quality counts. The bar of computer system quality has risen! And the Macintosh computer is being recognized for what it is – good stuff.

Now come inside our *macCompanion* walls and peek at some great opinions and articles of our own. We want you to feel at peace, happy and satisfied. We want you to be able to make an informed decision of your own. You are intelligent and self-motivated and can perceive the difference between tin or silver, brass or gold. We hope that during these coming "holy-days" you will find, give and receive, both quality time and quality gifts to those you both appreciate and love. We honestly feel that you may find some of what you are looking for here with us.

May peace and prosperity be yours wherever you are on this big, blue planet throughout this coming year as we bring this challenging year of 2003 down to the wire.

Letter From the Editor

Wrapping it Up

By Robert Pritchett

Wow! What a year 2003 has been! We've been saddened by the loss of loved ones and gladdened by gaining new friends this year.

While the Internet has been bombarded with cyberwar activities in the midst of real war, we've managed to slide by most of that awful silliness by not being directly affected by Worms, Viruses and Trojans, crackers and other "gotchas" on this Macintosh computer platform. Mac OS X still has no viruses detected even as we moved from Jaguar to Panther.

We've seen Apple become a hot commodity while the rest of the computer industry has languished. And non-Mac folks are taking notice that they have a real choice now and are joining us.

Meanwhile, *macCompanion* switched hosts, added more staff, increased visibility online with other sites linking to us and we've started getting paid subscriptions to the PDF version of this monthly magazine. Why not wrap up a gift for yourself, or for those you love, by getting on our notification list at notify@maccompanion.com?

Come on inside and look what kind of feast we've managed to cook up for December. It's a great way to end the year! We are looking forward to MacWorld and expect even more new technological surprises from Apple this coming year!

It's a great time to be alive, isn't it?

Views from the Ivory Tower

By Ted Bade

As we close out this year and wonder what the next year might bring, we should take a moment to consider the things we are thankful for. I realize that neither our world nor our nations are without problems, some very severe. Yet I believe we should focus on the good in the world and strive to eliminate the bad in those ways we are able.

In the world of technology and especially for us, Macintosh users, we have seen many advances: the iTunes Music Store, the PowerMac G5, Panther, and the newly released 20" LCD iMac(!) to name a few. While I expect that the Macintosh platform will never become the majority platform, we have seen much in the way of popularity, positive PR, and technology awards this past year. This can only mean that our platform of choice is sure to be there for us in the future.

Should we as dedicated Mac users be satisfied? Not really. We should enjoy these improvements, but keep demanding more. Apple is a company that sell things. Their bottom line is to make products that people will buy. We need to keep them aware of the improvements they still need to make. Don't be afraid to voice your concerns to them. I would rather Apple remain a smaller company that listens to its customers, than a mega-company where the phrase: "Resistance is futile" is more reality then a humorous statement.

I hope a new technology product finds its way into your life this holiday season. If it happens to be a shiny new Macintosh, be sure to share your old one with a friend or family member. If you don't have a new home for your old machine consider donating it to a charity. Senior centers, schools, and even some libraries might be interested. Don't let your old Mac retire to the attic, put it to use.

Quality control - I recently read an interesting article posted on the ArsTechnica site <http://www.arstechnica.com/> . The Article concerned recent problems associated with Apple products. (Visit <http://www.arstechnica.com/etc/mac/> to read the entire article yourself.)

You probably heard about the FireWire drive disaster associated with the MacOS X 10.3 (Panther) upgrade. Apparently if one installed Panther with certain FireWire drives connected to the Mac (those with the Oxford 922 bridge chips), the data on that drive could be damaged. How could Apple let a major bug like this get by? I find it hard to believe that none of the people Apple has doing the Beta testing owns such a drive.

The ArsTechnica article points out several other recent nasty bugs associated with Apple products. The bug with the Windows version of iTunes (but then Windows people are so used to problems, they probably didn't notice anything different), and the major bug associated with the first release of 10.2.8 (they released it and immediately unreleased it because of the bug), not to mention those VERY NOISY G4 MACS!!

I personally have been very lucky and have not been affected by them. (I was either too slow, too cheap, or not in the right place to be affected by them). But other people weren't as lucky.

Apple updated its Tech note on restoring an earlier version of Mac OS X a few weeks after the release of Panther. Not a good sign.... This indicates to me that people are asking how to downgrade to an earlier system. My short experience with Panther has been really good. It has a couple of noteworthy features and does seem faster (but I have a G5 so....). I recently installed it on my old Titanium PowerBook, with no apparent problems, but we'll see how it goes.

As Mac users, we tend to point out the defects of Window's based computers. It's fun and gives us a way to retaliate against the masses of Windows users. I truly hope that Apple will do what is needed to prevent products from being releases with bugs in the future. We don't want to loose our bragging rights ;-)

XBox moving to PPC chip? - Microsoft announced that a 2005 version of Microsoft's Xbox would use a CPU chip manufactured by IBM. Could this chip be the PPC? Perhaps even the G5 or whatever will be available in 2004?

The press release <http://www.ibm.com/news/us/2003/11/031.html> doesn't give much in the way of detail. But it does indicate that the chip is made by IBM.

If this chip is the PPC it *could* mean something to Mac users. If new Xbox titles were being made to work on a chip similar to that in the Macintosh, this *could* mean that it might be easier to move said games to the Macintosh platform. We can only hope ;-)

Supercomputers - We mentioned the Virginia Tech supercomputer in previous editions. Recently this supercomputer was ranked 3rd most powerful in the world!

A site that rates supercomputers, called Top500 recently released the 22nd Edition of TOP500 List of World's Fastest Supercomputers. The press release located at <http://www.top500.org/lists/2003/11/press-release.php> points out that the Virginia Tech supercomputer is the third system to **ever** exceed the 10 TFlop/s mark. (That means 10 Terra flops or 10,000,000,000,000 Floating Point Operations per second. aka, pretty darn fast).

Its pretty cool what 1100 G5 Macs can achieve when they work together! Just imagine the things millions of Mac users could achieve if we all worked together!

iPods Protection Plan - As my first generation iPod's battery begins to show signs of old age, Apple announced an AppleCare Protection Plan for iPod which extends the warranty to two years! This includes tech support (does anyone really need that for an iPod?) as well as included accessories such as included headphones, dock station, and remote.

The iPod is still being heard in the news. Recently Time magazine included the iPod in the list of coolest inventions for 2003. <http://www.time.com/time/2003/inventions/invmusic.html>. But we already know that!

A new form of Digital Music sharing - There seems to be a new, perhaps rather odd, type of social interfacing that is being discussed. Someone has coined this phenomenon as "**Jack Sharing**". In an article posted on the Wired web site <http://www.wired.com/news/mac/0,2125,61242,00.html> writer Leander Kahney, describes this action. Apparently a stranger walk up to you, unplugs their ear-buds from their iPod, and offers

you the opportunity to plug your ear-bug jack into their iPod for a listen. Sounds like a cool way to learn about new music! As described in this article, one could keep a log of new items listened to and liked for alter purchase.

It sounds downright socially positive to me. I can remember the "Boom-Box days" when people were in your space with loud booming music that was often not of your taste. Something like this is a lot more friendly. Then there are dreams of Blue-Tooth iPods, where one can, for a short distance, share a tune or two!

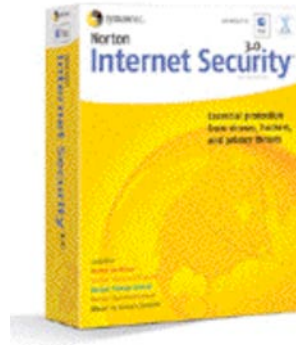
Now I wonder, will our friends in the RIAA consider this a copyright infringement of some form? Perhaps one will have to keep a log of whose iPod one plugs into and exactly which songs one listened to, so a fee can be paid.... But until they do, share your music with a stranger!! I like that. Very friendly and very, well Mac-like ;-).

Digital Music - The struggle with digital music still continues. Recently U.S. appeals court has ruled that web broadcasters must pay a copyright fee. This is a problem especially for smaller web broadcasters such as public radio stations that re-broadcast over the Internet, since this requires a lot of additional book keeping as well as the additional fees.

In a move that actually makes things easier, the International Recording Industry announced a plan that allows International web broadcasters to sign a single agreement with 33 different countries, including the US and UK. If it goes through a plan like this would make it a lot easier to keep track of copyright licensing for Internet broadcasters. <http://news.com.com/2100-1027-5105457.html>

Derek's Views

[Editor: Derek's review was a major undertaking that took a while to bring together. Here it is!]



Norton Internet Security For Macintosh 3.0™

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Edited by Julie M. Willingham

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http://www.symantec.com/sabu/nis/nis_mac/index.html

US \$100; upgrades available for US \$70

System Requirements for Norton Internet Security 1.0 for Mac OS 9

PowerPC-based Macintosh system

Mac OS 9.2 or higher

24 MB of RAM

25 MB of available hard disk space

DVD or CD-ROM drive

Internet connection required for LiveUpdate

System Requirements for Mac® OS X

Macintosh® system with PowerPC G3 or higher
processor

Mac OS X version 10.1.5 or higher

128 MB of RAM (required for Mac OS X)

80 MB of available hard disk space (without Privacy
Control URL List)

150 MB of available hard disk space (complete)

DVD or CD-ROM drive

Internet connection required for LiveUpdate™



Strengths: Easy to install and set up. Very user friendly, it provides a great deal of protection without a great deal of confusion. Is generally very stable. It has a wonderful user interface and a great manual. Symantec provides full versions of the last releases of the products for Mac OS 9.

Weaknesses: Symantec really hurts themselves with the lack of recent updates to the Protection Updates on their site. They backhand the customers by essentially forcing them to pay for an annual subscription service, and then, in a move worthy of Microsoft, doesn't tell the price anywhere until the complimentary subscription runs out. Some features of the product can be system resource hogs, so a more powerful Mac with a lot more RAM would be best.

Compatible instant messaging clients for Confidential Data Blocking include:
iChat 1.01
MSN® Instant Messenger 3.0 for Mac
Yahoo® Instant Messenger 2.5 for Mac
AOL® Instant Messenger 4.5 for Mac
ICQ 3.2 for Mac

Symantec hasn't made these product upgrades compatible with Mac OS 9; you have to use the older included versions. And Aladdin iClean 5.0.1 isn't the most current version

Norton Internet Security For Macintosh 3.0™ provides a valuable set of tools in a world where even Mac users can become victims to those who seek to steal data and cause trouble just for the fun of it.

Contrary to popular belief, the Macintosh computer is not hack proof, nor is it "vaccinated" against all viruses. This is especially true with Mac OS X. While Mac OS 9 posed a very difficult challenge to those wanting to hack into the computer, so difficult that Mac OS 9 itself has been mislabeled as hacker proof, the Unix underpinnings of Mac OS X serve as another way for the experienced hacker or a virus to damage your system. Protection on the Mac is two-fold: while Unix makes the Mac OS more secure, it also catches the attention of more hackers who at one time simply ignored the Mac platform. Now we are in a sense like Windows users, because we have become targets.

Symantec is the first batter stepping up to the plate to try to defend us from these threats. The suite of applications that they provide in Norton Internet Security For Macintosh 3.0 helps to make the Mac users experience in this networked world a more secure one.

About The Applications:

Norton Internet Security includes several programs that serve various functions, the first two offering protection from several fronts:

Norton AntiVirus 9.0:

Norton AntiVirus (formerly known as SAMS) is in charge of protecting your Mac from malicious bugs that may affect how your system acts. It scans your files for viruses, trojans, worms, and any suspicious macros. Norton AntiVirus (NAV) has the ability to wipe your files free of these, and can even detect them before they become a problem. It can scan e-mails for infected attachments, and has an auto-repair feature that will scan and repair infected files in the background, notifying you when such an event occurs. NAV can even quarantine those files that are infected, so that they can't be repaired. This will stop the infection from spreading, letting you feel secure that it poses no additional threat. NAV also protects Windows users from Mac users who inadvertently spread Windows-only viruses and worms. NAV can detect and clean these files, and help keep down the spread of these Windows-only terrors.

Norton Personal Firewall 3.0:

This is the heart of the entire package. Norton Personal Firewall 3.0 (NPF) acts as a filter between your computer and the Internet. With features such as the ability to block the sending and receiving of network packets and connections, and the ability to let the user decide what applications should allow access to the connections, NPF provides a basic set of protections that are worth their weight in gold. The fun doesn't stop there, however. NPF also has a Visual

Tracking Feature, which provides information crucial to tracking down and identifying any attacker. With this feature, the user can find out the geographic locations, IP addresses, and even the Internet service provider of the network delinquent. It also informs you when any type of file sharing application is started from your Mac. Included with all this is a detailed log of all allowed and denied access attempts from outside connections, as well as from applications on your system. For an even bigger boost of protection, NPF also has a Stealth mode, which Symantec promises will make a user's computer invisible to hackers anywhere on the Internet.

The next two applications allow users to customize their families' online experience:

Norton Privacy Control:

If you purchase items online, or file sensitive documents through the web, the risk of identity theft is greater than ever. Experienced hackers can sift through the data on your computer, and find information, such as credit card numbers, bank account numbers, and other sensitive information, that you would prefer to keep private. Norton Privacy Control (NPC) can help stop this by alerting you whenever any of this information is being sent out. All you have to do is input your personal information into NPC, and it is protected. Whenever any of that information is accessed through a connection, be it in an e-mail or on a site where you input, NPC will alert you before the data is sent, letting you allow access or deny it. NPC doesn't just feature personal information protection, it also protects web surfers from irritations. NPC's Ad-Blocking capabilities prevent ads from being downloaded onto your Mac. These ads are part of a built-in list, but you can also specify ads not be downloaded. This helps speed up the loading of web pages, and allows you to control more of what you see. An added benefit of NPC is the ability to take the spring out of pop-ups!

NPC also protects parents' privacy. It includes a Parental Control feature that allows the user to block a list of pre-defined sites from Symantec. This pre-defined list can be updated with a paid subscription, The parent is also allowed to choose other sites to block from their children.

Aladdin iClean[®] 5.0.1:

While a Symantec product, Aladdin's iClean 5.0.1 is bundled with Norton Internet Security 3.0. iClean cleans out the mess left behind from your browsing adventures. Removing cache files, browser history data, cookies, and even emptying the trash afterwards, iClean sweeps away extra files that clog the innards of your Mac's hard drive. An added bonus is that it also fixes aliases, helping orphaned shortcuts find their home.

The last two applications help make your experience with the Symantec products even smoother, offering automation and efficiency:

LiveUpdate:

Norton Internet Security also comes with LiveUpdate, an application that helps keep your virus definitions for Norton AntiVirus 9.0 current, updates the pre-defined list of blocked sites for the Parental Control of NPC, and provides updates to the applications themselves. LiveUpdate works for only the three Symantec applications discussed above.

Norton Scheduler:

Norton Scheduler allows you to set specific times to scan for new virus definitions and product updates. You can also set up times to scan the computer, or individual items, with Norton

AntiVirus 9.0. From the Norton Scheduler window you can see the list of scheduled events, enable or disable them, edit or delete them, and even create new events.

Installing Norton Internet Security For Macintosh 3.0 (Symantec Applications):

NIS For Macintosh 3.0 is installed by inserting the CD, opening the "Install for Mac OS X" folder, and double-clicking on the "Install Internet Security" icon.

The NIS3 installer works the same as any other installer using Apple's Installer application. An administrator password is required to install, as is agreeing to the legal documentation. Near the end of the installation, LiveUpdate will open, asking if you want to update the software installed so far. I chose "yes", and, after 7 minutes of downloading over 17 MB of data, I was returned to the installer where it finished and asked me to restart. The whole process took around 12 minutes for me. Your time may differ, of course, based on your hardware.

The Norton QuickMenu

The first thing you will notice after installation is the Norton QuickMenu, which sits along the menu bar as a yellow and black circle. It gives you, by default, quick access to turning Norton AutoProtect on or off. It also gives you access to its own preference pane, allowing you to choose which Symantec product you want access, and lets you turn the menu on or off. By default, Norton AutoProtect is activated, and Norton Personal Firewall 3.0 isn't.

Norton QuickMenu and Norton Scheduler aren't specific to just Norton AntiVirus 9.0 and Norton Privacy Control. They also can interact with other Symantec applications that you install, such as Norton Utilities.

The primary applications making up NIS3 are installed in the Applications Folder, under the folder name of "Norton Solutions", where LiveUpdate and Norton Scheduler also reside.

The Norton Solutions Folder

You will also see in the Norton Solutions folder an application entitled "Norton Launcher", which is a control board for all of the installed Symantec applications. From here, you can open any installed Symantec product including LiveUpdate, Norton Scheduler, and the documents folder containing all the Read Me files for your Symantec products. The window is divided into three main sections: Performance and Maintenance, Security, and Data Recovery. Each of these sections contain buttons for the applications installed by NIS3, and by Norton Utilities, if you have them installed. Those applications not installed are grayed out.



The Norton Internet Security Launcher

There is also a second Norton Launcher application outside of the Norton Solutions folder. This is entitled "Norton Internet Security" and, when opened, is just an enlarged view of the other Norton Launcher, though it only features the Security section.

There are also two URL files in the Norton Solutions folder. "Register Your Software" will take you to Symantec's product registration page where you can register any Symantec product you own. Registration qualifies you for technical support, disk and manual replacements, and other valuable services. After you register, you can edit your Privacy settings. I suggest you uncheck the boxes saying that you want Symantec to send you postal mail and phone calls relating to your products. "Late Breaking News" will open your default web browser to Symantec's press release page of Mac products.

Installing Aladdin iClean 5.0.1:

Installing Aladdin iClean 5.0.1 (iClean) is a simple process. All that's required is opening the folder on the Aladdin iClean CD; selecting which OS you want to install for, and opening that installer (Works for me Julie OK.). The installer isn't the OS X installer—it functions more like those used in OS 9. You can customize your installation as well as uninstall from this installer. You also have your choice of where you install iClean. Your administrator password, as well as agreement to the legal info, is required before installation. iClean, like NIS3, features a menu addition that allows you to access its components, but you must log out after installation to activate it.

The iClean Magic Menu



The iClean Folder



The

iClean application and its PDF User Guide reside in a folder entitled "Aladdin iClean 5.0.1". In this folder you will also find the "Read Me First" folder, the iClean Help folder, a Plug-ins folder, and an iClean Guide.

The iClean Control Board

When you open iClean, you will see a control board, from which you can perform five functions:

Alias Fixer:

This will search your hard drive for aliases that are orphaned and for aliases that just point to your mounted volumes. You can have iClean attempt to repair the orphaned aliases, delete them, delete aliases to mounted volumes, or delete all aliases found.



Cookie Tossor:

This will find all the cookie files for Microsoft Internet Explorer®, Netscape Navigator®, iCab®, and AOL®. From its interface, you can get details on cookie files, and you can delete cookies individually, set up list of cookies to exclude from your view so you don't accidentally delete them, and set up a list of servers to delete cookies from automatically.

Web Cache Files Remover:

This will find all the cache files for Microsoft Internet Explorer®, Netscape Navigator®, iCab®, and AOL® and delete them.

Internet History Files Remover:

This will find all the History files for Microsoft Internet Explorer®, Netscape Navigator®, iCab®, and AOL® and delete them.

Empty Trash:

iClean moves all the files you choose to delete to the Trash. This option only empties it.

The above five functions are referred to by Aladdin as searches. By default, they are all enabled when you open iClean. All you have to do is click "Clean" and iClean will search your hard drive for the aforementioned files. You have the option of running them all, individually, or in any combination. You can access each of these searches and run them all at once from the iClean Magic Menu as well. After a search is run, iClean will display a reports window that lists the findings of each search and allow you to see more details of each search.

You will also see three other applications in the iClean folder: iCleanDockApp, iCleanMenu, and iClean Super Access. The first two applications work only in OS X 10.1. iClean Super Access allows you to run the iClean searches as an administrator, allowing you to modify more than just your User files.

There isn't a LiveUpdate application with iClean, but it does check for software updates automatically at startup. This can be disabled or enabled from preferences.

No registration is required for Aladdin iClean 5.0.1, and the version shipping with NIS3 isn't the most recent. The most recent version is 6.0, however, it is available only as a purchase, not a free update.

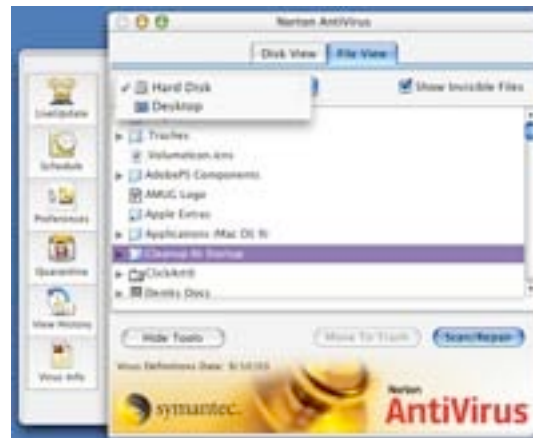
My Experience with Norton AntiVirus 9.0:

Norton AntiVirus is an application that I have been using since Mac OS 7.5 (when it was called SAMS.) I've been pleased with one major feature with each version: the program's visual layout. Norton AntiVirus 9.0 (NAV) is no exception; the layout is clean and not at all confusing.

The NAV Disk View Window



The Nav File View Window



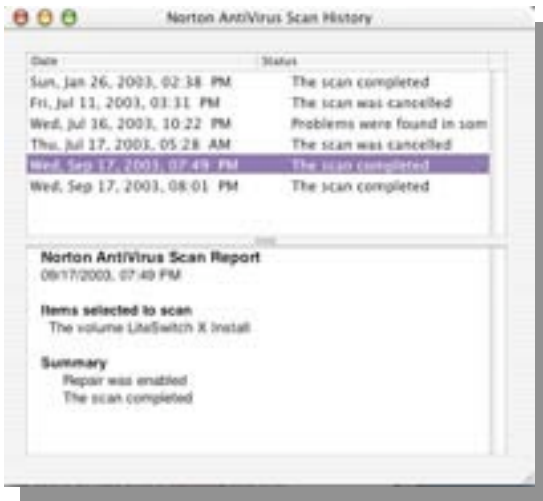
The default view is Disk View. It shows every mounted disk detected, even those downloaded from the Internet. The second view is File View, which lets me select individual files and folders for scanning, I can tell NAV to show invisible files to me, so that I can scan them, too. I can move files to the trash from the File view with a click of the mouse, and File View updated immediately to show the change. Navigating my drives and folders was as simple as double clicking; in fact, it was just like viewing a Finder window in List View. I even had a path list allowing me to jump from a folder nestled in my hard drive to the desktop. In either view, I can select a single item, contiguous items using the shift key, or multiple items in any order using the command key. I can also tell what version of Virus Definitions I'm running, which lets me know if I need to upgrade or not.

To the left of the main section of the window is the Tools drawer; from here, I could run LiveUpdate, or Norton Scheduler with the click of a button.

The NAV Quarantine Window

I could also see any files I had quarantined. I could choose to try to repair them again, or delete them from quarantine with or without restoring them to my hard disk. I couldn't do any of this, though, without my administrator password.





The NAV History Window

I also could view my history of files and drives scanned and their results by clicking the date I wanted information about. The results would display in a bottom section of the window

The NAV Virus Info Window

The button here that I was most interested in using was the Virus Info button, which opened up a window that listed over 29,000 viruses and the version of the Definitions file where it got its information. It listed the type of each virus; and, no, I'm not ashamed that seeing the screen filled with names of PC-only viruses gave me a smile.☺ I was able to sort the viruses by name, and by type, and I was even able to type a partial name to get a list of all viruses that



matched. I started to type "Simpson's" to see if the Simpson's worm from a few years back was listed, and I got 18 results. The virus I was looking for was the first one on the list.

The only thing about this feature that disappointed me was that I wasn't given any information about the virus itself other than its name and type. I expected at least a link to Symantec's online virus description pages, [<http://securityresponse.symantec.com/avcenter/vinfdb.html>], but didn't find any.

In the preferences, there were four tabs: Scan, Repair, Auto-Protect, and Reminder.

With the Scan tab, I could enable or disable scanning of compressed files. I usually leave this off, as NAV has to decompress the compressed files to scan them, which usually results in taking more time than I want. NAV will always scan archives, but this option scans the files that are compressed inside the archive, not just the archive itself.

I could also decide whether or not to show only infected files in the scan reports, or show all files scanned. I could specify what to show in the reports from the scheduled events scans, as well. I could list permission errors in my reports, and I could even choose the document formats for reports to be saved to disk. The default is TextEdit, but I was able to change it to other formats, such as a Microsoft Word® document, or an Appleworks 6® document.

With the repair tab, I could set NAV to automatically repair infected files, or to notify me and let me decide whether to repair them or not. I could also decide whether or not to quarantine files that couldn't be repaired. In case you're wondering, quarantining a file that can't be repaired causes NAV to block it off from everything else. The file can generally still be run, in case it's

something you absolutely can't delete, but it is blocked off from infecting other files or the rest of the system. PC virus utilities have had this ability for a couple of years now, so it's nice to see that feature come to the Mac.

The NAV Auto-Protect Preference Pane

The Auto-Protect tab provided me a way to access the Auto-Protect Preferences Pane. It can be enabled using the administrator password from either the Norton QuickMenu, or from System Preferences. Auto-Protect constantly monitors your system for any suspicious activity and any file changes. It's sort of like running a continual scan from NAV in the background. It can be set to automatically or "manually" repair infected files, to quarantine those it can't fix, and to scan media disks when they are mounted, including CDs, DVDs, Zip disks, and more. There is the option to show the scan of media, and the option of scanning compressed files.



I usually leave Auto-Protect off, because it uses a lot of system resources. As I said earlier, my Mac crawls with OS X anyway, so I would suggest using Auto-Protect only if you have powerful hardware and a lot of RAM. I'm running a 300 MHz G3 with 448 MB of RAM, so you can imagine that Auto-Protect would take up a lot of my resources..

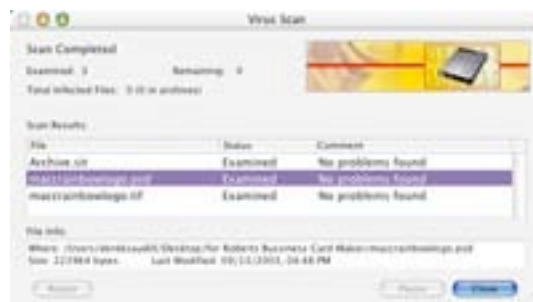
The NAV Virus Definitions Update Dialog



The last tab is the Reminder tab, which checks the date of my Virus Definition files and checks to see if I need to update them based on my date and time settings. I set the calendar a couple of months ahead, reopened NAV, and was prompted with a dialog box informing me that my Definitions files might be out of date. I was given the option of updating then, updating later, or turning the notification off.

The NAV Scanning Window

As for actually scanning, there isn't much interaction. All I had to do was select the drives or files I wanted to scan, and press scan. A window comes up listing any files that NAV has problems with or finds infected. It also lists more detailed information about any files listed as infected or unable to scan. It shows the number of files to scan, and counts down as it scans each file. Since the scanning function can take a bit of time, I like the fact that I can pause the scanning midway through instead of stopping it and having to start over. In fact, as I type this paragraph, I have the scan of a folder paused. I have found, however, that any files I added to the



folder I was scanning after I paused the scan weren't scanned, so I assume from this that Symantec would recommend not doing file modifications while paused. I can also cancel the scan altogether, if need be.

I have scanned folders, individual files, and mounted drives, including disk images, and haven't had any trouble. I'm impressed with NAV, and especially the fact that it can scan and repair PC viruses, so that if I somehow get one, I can't transfer it to my PC-using friends. Let's face it; they already have enough trouble by just using Windows! 😊

The NAV Scan Animation I love the user interface; it's very well organized. That doesn't just pertain to the main window, but to everything from the four tabs in preferences to the scanning window itself. One other little thing I like that is just eye candy is the animation of the hard drive while scanning. I just think it looks cool, and it adds some character to NAV!

My only real complaint was what I mentioned earlier about not getting more information on viruses other than their name and type. I'm curious, and would like to know the symptoms. Also, I would like to be able to add a file to a folder that I'm already scanning and have it scanned, too. It just seems like a good idea.

I wouldn't recommend doing much with your system while scanning because NAV and Auto-Protect are both resource hogs. Considering the thousands of files on hard drives, scanning can take a lot of time. I suggest scanning when you're away from your computer, possibly at night when you're asleep. Using Norton Scheduler, you can set specific times. I will discuss my experience with Norton Scheduler later in this review.

Despite my two complaints, I am really happy with Norton AntiVirus 9.0, and give it a 4.5 by itself.

The NPF Protection Settings

My Experience with Norton Personal Firewall 3.0:

When I first activated Norton Personal Firewall 3.0 (NPF), I was pleasantly surprised to find that a Set-up wizard opened and led me through a five-step configuration process. It was very self-explanatory, finding the Internet services that I run on my Mac automatically and giving me the choice of allowing outside activity to that port or service. I was also really impressed with the option of alerting me if the settings I chose conflicted with OS X's built-in firewall. The setup also let me determine one of 3 pre-set protection settings, minimal, medium, or maximum.



Medium is recommended, and changing to another pre-set showed me a list of what the effects would be.

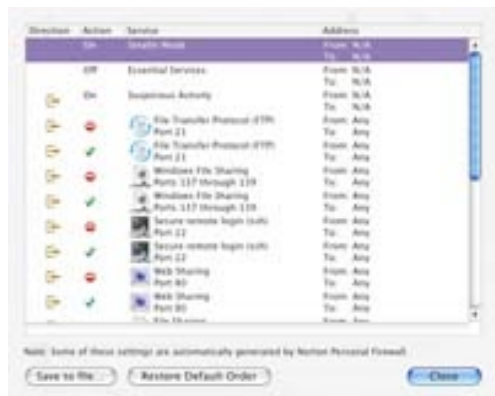
The NPF Main Window

Once the set-up was finished, I was shown NPF's main window. From here, I could select whether to allow or not allow outgoing or incoming access to the main network ports on my

system. I could further customize the access by specifying individual IP addresses, or even whole ranges of IP addresses, that would be denied or granted incoming and outgoing access.

I could also change my Protection Settings, as well as access the Set-Up Assistant again from the Tools menu.

NPF Summary



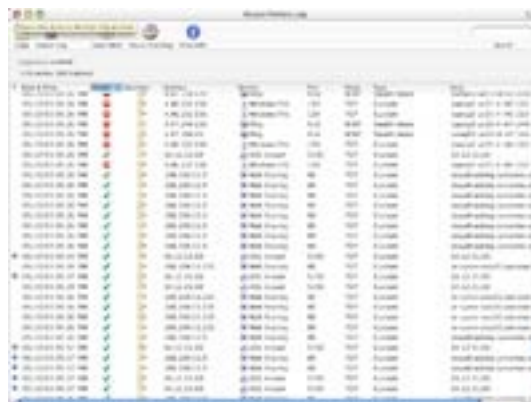
NPF Summary Exported



From a built-in list of ports used by different applications, I could add services to protect with NPF. I was surprised at the different types of services that could be protected, from Hotline Servers to Quake 3. I could customize protection for the ports associated with these services and many more! I was thrilled to find a summary feature that listed all the rules I had set up for which services, I was even showed the direction of access, and the IP range these services used. The ability to save the report as a Text file was also a welcomed benefit.

The NPF Access History Window

The Access History feature allowed me to see a log of all the incoming and outgoing attempts, what services they were from, and where they were coming from. I was able to copy selected attempts, or export the entire log to another file for viewing later. I was also able to find more detailed information on each item by selecting it and clicking the Learn More button. There was also the Visual Tracking button. After clicking this, Safari would open, displaying a page with a large Java Applet inline window. Unfortunately, even after several attempts, the Java would never load. Even more distressing was finding that the malfunction wasn't NPF's fault, but Safari's, as Microsoft Internet Explorer had no trouble accessing the Visual Tracking feature.



NPF also will log the access attempts from any connected users, and give the same information for them as it does with random access attempts

NPF Self-Test Window

NPF also will allow you to do a self-test on every service it lists. I was able to simulate access attempts through ports I had disabled, and see NPF's actions. Every attempt is logged, and I was able to specify whether the attempt would be outgoing, incoming, and through which port.



NPF Notification Dialog



I was also able to see that if I turned notify on, NPF would display a dialog box, telling me what was going on. I like the notification feature, because it can be set for either direction on every service, and be set to notify depending on NPF's

action taken.

Security Check Results

I was also able to see that if I turned notify on, NPF would display a dialog box, telling me what was going on. I like the notification feature, because it can be set for either direction on every service, and be set to notify depending on NPF's action taken.

Norton Personal Firewall 3.0 Enabled



First Test: 491.6 K

Norton Personal Firewall 3.0 Disabled



Second Test: 504.4 K



First Test: 657.4 K



Second Test: 535.5 K

At first glance, it seems that with NPF enabled my connection speed dropped quite a bit. However, the speed at which a machine connects is always in flux. I have DSL, and most of the time it runs at around 491 K. I don't run a firewall in OS 9, and I have only OS X's built-in firewall running in OS X most of the time. The tests were done within a few minutes of each other, and, as you can tell from my results, the second test showed a gain in speed with NPF enabled, and losing speed with it disabled. So, what does this all mean in the long run? It means that I can still surf the web at a fast speed with NPF enabled. Like I said, in earlier versions of firewall software, I could barely reach beyond 14 K with the firewall on. For me, this is a vast improvement, and one that makes me very happy.

Suggestions for Improvement:

I can't really say that I'm disappointed with NPF. It does what it's supposed to, and does so with a user-friendly interface that doesn't take a network administrator to figure out. Though not a great security solution for a corporate environment, for a consumer like me, it's just what I need. One of my favorite features is that Norton QuickMenu allows me to disable and enable NPF without opening the program. I can even disable or enable it temporarily by setting time limits. This is a quick and efficient way to handle the firewall. Way cool!

My main complaint is that when viewing the log, it continues to update while I'm reading it. This slows down my system and makes it difficult to select an item, or read much of the information. I would click on one item, and an item 10 places below would be selected, a huge lag. I would like to see that fixed, as well as the incompatibility of the Visual Tracking feature with Safari 1.0; but, other than those problems, I'm very pleased with NPF.

I give Norton Personal firewall 3.0 itself a macC rating of 4.5.

There's still much more to review, so stick around. After all, this is a review of Norton Internet Security, not just Norton Personal Firewall 3.0!

My Experience With Norton Privacy Control:

The NPC Ad Blocking Window



Ad On

The NPC Ad Blocking Details Sheet



Ad Off



Ad Blocking:

When I first opened Norton Privacy Control (NPC), I found that the ad blocking feature was enabled by default. This meant that (a built-in list of) ads were already being blocked. I was anxious to try out this feature, and quickly began scouring my favorite web sites for those that displayed ads. I found that Macintouch [<http://www.macintouch.com>] displayed an ad at the top of their page, so I set about trying to block it. Blocking ads was easy enough; all I had to do was drag and drop the offending image onto NPC's ad blocking window. Once added, depending on settings, either the ad wouldn't show up, or I would see a small icon telling me that the ad was blocked. I noticed a window slide open as soon as I dropped the offending image on the Ad Blocking window. It listed the name of the ad, the directory it was in, and the domain name from which the ad was retrieved. I could also type in this information myself, but dragging and dropping saves me the trouble. I dragged and dropped the ad, and immediately started browsing the rest of Macintouch's pages. My results were fantastic, as I never saw that ad again.

From what I understand, according to the user guide, Ad Blocking works by blocking ads in certain locations on a page. It not only records the name of the ad, and its domain, but also its position on the page. This prevents ads with different names from showing up in that same place.

Ad Blocking can be disabled with a click of the mouse, so if I want to, I can see any ads that I've blocked. The ad blocking feature was straightforward, and I was impressed with the results, as well as with the ease of blocking the ads.

I only had one major problem, and it occurred several times. Now, remember that I am running OS X on a blue and white 300 MHz G3. Despite Apple's claims of average usability, OS X crawls on my Mac, even with 448 MB of RAM. I had to disable several shareware items just to be certain that I could successfully start and complete the install of NIS3 on my Mac. With that in mind, I figure that the reason I got the following error is because my system got too busy.

The Error

NPC began to lag quite a bit. It took longer to add the ads to the lists to be blocked, and the details sheet took over a minute to appear. This didn't happen all the time, just occasionally.



Immediately following this program and system slowdown, I got an error message saying that NPC was having trouble communicating with its extension, and that it would quit, which it did. I had to restart my Mac or log out to free up enough RAM to open NPC again without it giving me that error message and quitting. Like I said earlier, this

probably has more to do with my system than it does with NPC or NIS3. But the main thing I learned from this is that NPC takes up a large amount of system resources, so the more powerful Mac you have, the better this will probably run.

Despite this problem, Ad Blocking impressed me, and I was excited to check out the rest of NPC's features.

The Confidential Data Window

Confidential Data:

I don't send out much personal information when surfing the Internet, on either OS 9 or OS X, so I'm not one who would use this feature very often. I did, however, look at it, and played around a bit. In order to add any of my personal data, I first had to unlock the feature by typing in my administrator password; afterwards I could add my info. If I let the window stay idle for 15 minutes, NPC would lock it again, requiring me to reauthenticate it.



Confidential Data Window Lock Out

After I enabled the feature, I saw a warning that having confidential data blocking enabled could increase file transfer time. It even suggested that I disable the feature when transferring large

files. There are two separate sections on the Confidential Data window to add information. The first one is for the data to block, and the second one is for a list of websites that are allowed access to your personal data. Confidential data has several fields for info, including bank number, partial social security number, and partial credit card number, just to name a few. These go in the first section. To test the feature, I input my name, address, phone number, and e-mail into their respective fields, and then went to the New York Times to register for their free service. [<http://www.nytimes.com>]



I also input my ZIP code into the other category, I did this because the NY Times asks for it, and I wanted to see if NPC would catch it. When you choose the other category, you are actually asked to define a category. I like this, because now I can have my state and city monitored.



Email Information Leaving Dialog



Zip Code Information Leaving Dialog

When I went to submit the form, NPC automatically displayed a dialog box for each piece of data being sent out that I blocked; my e-mail address and ZIP code. I was given the choice of "Always allow", "Allow once", or "Block". I clicked Block on them both, and Safari displayed a message saying that the page couldn't load.

Safari Couldn't Load Dialog



I then signed up again, and set "Allow once" for the sending of my e-mail address. I was asked to enter my administrator password to do this. Next, I chose "Always allow" when it asked about sending my ZIP code and was once again asked to enter my administrator password.

After I first did this, the page still wouldn't load, according to an error message I got in Safari. I remembered that I had signed up previously under the e-mail address I was using. I then chose another e-mail address, input it into NPC, and registered again; since I had said, "Always allow" on the ZIP code previously, I wasn't asked about it, just my e-mail address.

After doing all this, I was allowed to register, and was taken to my member page at the New York Times website.

Overall, I'm impressed with this feature; it works quickly, and lets me define what information I want to have sent across the Internet. I didn't have any problems using this feature, and was impressed that Symantec even took the time to develop it where unless I am logged into the feature, my information isn't displayed, just the categories. The fact that it works with data being sent out from cookies in my web browser also caught my attention.

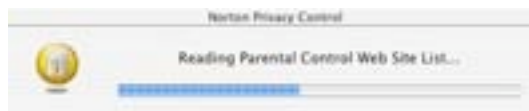
My only complaint is that it doesn't track data sent out by Classic applications, I still use Mac OS 9 as my primary system, and use Microsoft Entourage as my e-mail application. I fired up Classic, then Entourage Classic, and sent an e-mail with the information in the message body, and NPC just ignored it completely. This really isn't a big deal though, but I thought it was worth mentioning.



The Parental Control Window

Parental Control:

Not being a parent, I wouldn't use this feature either, but for the sake of review, I played with it. The main interface is separated into a list of categories of sites to block, a list of sites to block that I have specified myself, the option of allowing or disallowing access to sites not in either list, and a list of sites to always allow.



The Web Blocking Bar

With Web Blocking enabled (the secondary feature name of Parental Control), the sites I try to access are tracked, and when I type in a domain that it recognizes, it will search its list of sites to block before letting the page load. If it blocks the page, a page saying that NIS3 blocked access to the site will appear each time I try to load that page.

This is the same behavior for sites in the built-in list, and sites that I've added to block.

Site Blocked Window

To test, I, of course, attempted to access a site that I knew had to be blocked. You guessed it, Playboy's website <http://www.playboy.com>. A search bar from NPC immediately opened and after waiting for it to see if Playboy was blocked, I was sent to the page telling me that I could not access it. I attempted to access the site later, and was



immediately sent to that same no-access page. I was able to reproduce this by specifying Apple's site as one to block, and everything worked the same.

Everything for this feature worked well, and I found only several irritations. The searching for sites to block took a little longer than I expected, and I would like to see the sites that it blocks by default, just for my information. I like that I can enable and disable categories to block from the default list, and I like that I don't have to rely on the built in list at all, and just block the sites I designate. I also like that if I mistype the individual site I get a warning telling me so.

The NPC Statistics Window

Statistics:

This isn't a modifiable feature. It is just for information, and Symantec suggests using this to make sure that NPC is working. This lists the number of ads blocked, and the amount of data that was saved by not downloading those ads. It also lists the number of attempts to access blocked sites, and the number of confidential items blocked and allowed.

I like this, but would be happier if I could get more details on what was blocked, and the ability to perhaps unblock them if I want right from the Statistics window.



All in all, I would have to say that NPC is a very good product. It may not be something that I personally would use all the time, but that's just me, I know plenty of people who could get better use out of the Confidential Info and Parental Controls than I could. Aside from the few problems and irritations I saw, I'm impressed. The bottom line is that it works, and that's what matters. If I were reviewing just this product, I would give it a rating of 4. I'm not though, but this, just like Norton Personal Firewall 3.0, gives me an even higher opinion of NIS3.

My Experience with Aladdin iClean 5.0.1:

Before I tell you my experiences with each feature in iClean, you should know that each search displays in the same Results window, but with different results. And each search, except for the Cookie Tossor, each has a similar Details window.



The Alias Fixer Search Dialog

Alias Fixer:

I usually don't have any problems with aliases on either OS 9 or OS X, but I thought that I would test

Alias Fixer all the same. After all, that's my job here!

The Alias Fixer Details Window

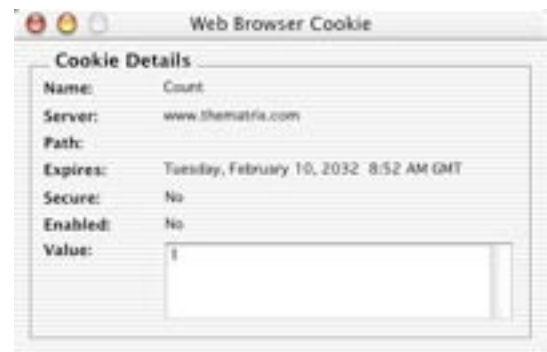
I clicked on the Alias Fixer button from the iClean control window, and the search was on! Much to my surprise, it found 200 aliases that could not be reattached. I looked at the details and found that most of them were from one of my partitions. After clicking on an item, I was shown its path location. I found it frustrating that I couldn't designate specific aliases to fix, a feature that I would like to have. However, it wouldn't matter, as I saw that all 200 invalid aliases would remain untouched. This confuses me, as I still had a Finish Cleaning option.



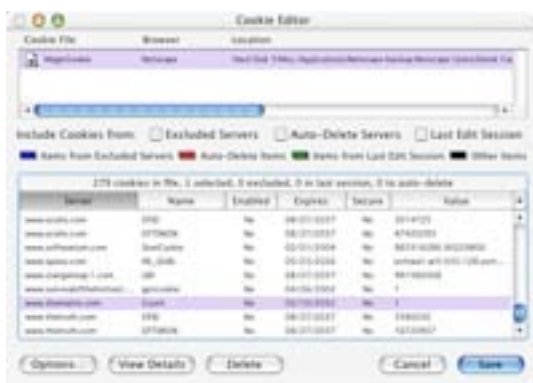
Against my better judgment, I clicked "Finish Cleaning" and was shown a dialog box that said nothing was modified. I reran Alias Fixer and found only 198 invalid aliases. They could not be fixed again, and I was told again that they wouldn't be modified. Now that two were missing from the first scan, I was getting worried, so I decided to run the search a third time and got the same results as the second test. I wish I could have had aliases to fix, but I didn't. Nonetheless, the two different numbers worried me, and I was reluctant to move on to the next search.

Cookie Tossor:

When I opened Cookie Tossor, I was shown a dialog that basically said that all applications relying on cookies had to be quit, which it said that it would do safely. I had Safari open, so I assumed that it would be quit. However, no applications quit. Cookie Tossor searched my startup hard drive and returned 18 results, which I could delete or edit. When Cookie Tossor edits a cookie, it opens the cookie file of the browsers it recognizes (Netscape, IE, iCab, AOL.) Safari didn't quit because Cookie Tossor does not recognize it.

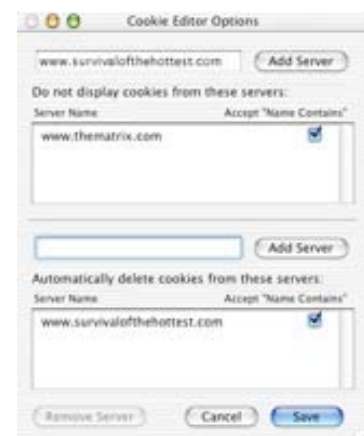


The Cookie Editor Window



The Cookie Editor Options window

I clicked on a 28k cookie file from Netscape 6 in Classic, and in the Cookie Editor window saw that there were 279 cookies. I could delete them now, set to always delete them, or exclude them from showing up in the search results. I



decided to add a cookie from thematrix.com to my exclude list,

and found that I could also choose to accept cookies whose name contained the name of the domain server. In the same window, the Cookie Editor Options window, I could also choose to never download cookies from that domain, and I had the same "Accept Name Contains" option as in the exclude list.

The Cookie Details Window

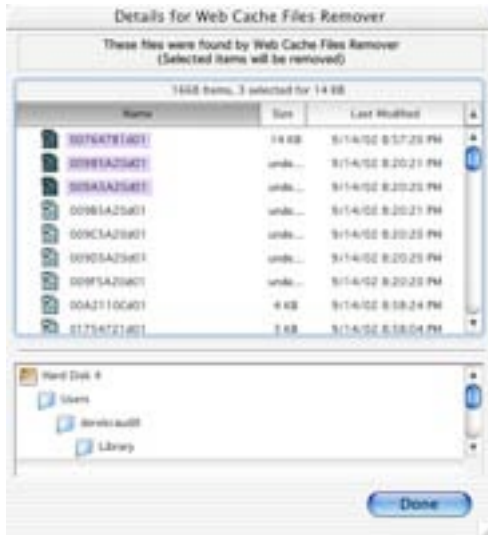
From Cookie Tossers's Details window, I could view the details of my chosen cookie. This displays basic information about the cookie, such as its value, expiration date, and more, but I couldn't edit any of this information.



All I had to do to delete the cookie was click delete and it would disappear. However, any changes I made could be undone all at once by clicking cancel and not saving. I decided not to change anything, so I clicked "Finish Cleaning".

The Web Cache Files Remover Search Dialog

Web Cache Files Remover:



I ran this search and was shocked to find over 1600 files that took nearly 400 MB of disk space. I clicked details and found that these files were from all three of my partitions and my second hard drive. I could double click them to open them in their respective browsers. And I should note that Safari was again overlooked. I selected three items, clicked "Finished Cleaning", and regained 14 KB of space. Yay!

The Web Cache Files Remover Cleaning Results Window



The Internet History Files Details Window



Internet History Files:

This search was little different than the Web Cache File remover search. It found 92 files that took up 11.6 MB of disk space. Those files that I left selected would be removed. I was surprised, however, to find that the history files weren't all from browsers. I develop several websites, and one of them <http://www.finewinelineinc.com> has a history.html page. Since I have several backups, this file appeared several times. So, what I learned is that when using the Internet History Files search, check your details very

carefully, or else you could end up deleting files you didn't mean to.

I selected a few Netscape history files, clicked "Finish Cleaning" in the results window, and regained 388 KB of disk space. Once again, yay!



The Internet History Files Cleaning Results Window



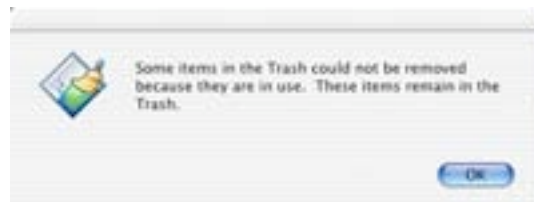
The Empty Trash Details Window

Empty Trash:

The Empty Trash feature is self-explanatory. These aren't files that iClean finds in the other searches, just files you or an application have sent to trash. I had 18 items in the trash, taking up 8.1 MB of disk space. The procedure for getting rid of files here was the same as in the previous two searches, whatever I left selected in the details window would be deleted.

The Empty Trash Error

After I clicked "Finish Cleaning", I got an iClean error saying that some items were in use and couldn't be deleted. I clicked "OK", and then got a results box saying 18 items had been deleted. I had regained the 8.1 MB of space, and any files in use remained in the trash. I don't know about you, but by this time, I'm confused.



I clicked "OK", and went to see what was in the trash. There was a file that I had attempted to open from iClean's Empty Trash details window, but it never opened. I ran the Empty Trash

search again; got the same "items in use" warning, then a window saying I had recovered 892k of space and items being used would remain in the trash. That same file was still in the trash, so I took it out, put it back in, and ran the search again, to no avail. So, I tried emptying trash from the Finder, and got the same results.

I decided to open the file from the Finder, and was surprised to see that it had opened up from the trash originally when I tried to open it from the Details window. I didn't see it because of a constant bug I've been having with iClean: whenever I open a file from the Details window of any search, it opens in the background or is hidden. I quit the application that was open, and was able to successfully empty the trash from iClean.



The Search All Results Window

The Search All Feature from the iClean Magic Menu: I decided to run all the searches at once from the All feature in the MagicMenu, and each search was performed one right after the other. The only real difference I saw was that the individual searches took a lot longer than they did when I ran them earlier, which seemed odd to me. I got a results window just like I had been getting, and could either view the details about the searches, or "Finish Cleaning". I decided to clean the cache files, and was able to delete them all except one that said it was still in use, even though I quit its parent program.

My Experience With LiveUpdate



LiveUpdate is Symantec's version of Apple Software Update. It provides downloads to two types of update files: product updates, which are patches and minor upgrades, and protection updates, which are the virus definitions for Norton AntiVirus 9.0, as well as the updated list of inappropriate web sites for the Parental Control feature of



Norton Privacy Control.

The LiveUpdate Main Window

Running LiveUpdate is as simple as a click of a button. LiveUpdate can be activated from several of the NIS3 products, or can be accessed on its own in the Norton Solutions folder. The main window of LiveUpdate features three buttons: a "Customize this Update Session" button, which lets me check for new updates and select only those updates I want; an

"Update Everything Now" button, which downloads and installs all available updates for my Symantec products: and a Norton Scheduler button that opens Norton Scheduler and allows me to set specific times to run LiveUpdate. From this window, I am also told the date of the first time I checked for updates, and the date of the last update I ran. LiveUpdate said that I haven't updated anything, which is odd, since during the installation of NIS3, LiveUpdate opened and I downloaded and updated 17.1 MB of data.



The LiveUpdate "Search for" and "Receive" Updates Window

The LiveUpdate Search Results Window

Customizing my update session was simple enough. I clicked on the button, and LiveUpdate began searching for updates to my software. This took well over a minute, which is a bit longer than I would like. LiveUpdate found that my virus definitions file was out of date, and that a newer one for September was available. LiveUpdate displayed a list of updates to install, and their file sizes. I could also turn off the updates I didn't want installed. If I clicked on an update, I could get a description of

that file. I wasn't shown anything but a period for the virus definitions file, probably because it was just a minor update to the Definitions file.

The LiveUpdate Summary Window

I chose to Update, and it took about 3 minutes, which seemed a little long. It also listed two files being updated, despite it earlier listing one file. After the update was complete, I was shown a summary window that showed all my Symantec products, and if they were already up-to-date or if they were updated successfully. The window also suggested I restart, which I decided not to do at that moment, as I was writing this review. I could quit LiveUpdate there, restart my computer, or click "OK" to be taken back to the main window of LiveUpdate.



I then clicked the "Update Everything" button, just to see the differences. The "Determining What Is Available" stage took a lot less time than when I attempted to update individual items, and I was shown the same results screen as before. I suspect that if I had quit LiveUpdate, or restarted, the summary would have listed everything as already up to date, and not just one item as "Updated Successfully".

I clicked on the Norton Scheduler button just to see if it would open the program, and it did so with no problems.

Symantec LiveUpdate works well, just slowly. But despite this, I have a major problem with Symantec and LiveUpdate. Whenever you purchase a Symantec product that requires protection updates, namely NAV, NIS3, and Norton SystemWorks, you are given a complimentary time-limited subscription to use LiveUpdate. That's right, a subscription. This subscription doesn't apply to the product updates, for, even after the subscription expires, LiveUpdate will still work and download product updates. But protection updates, virus definitions, and the inappropriate websites list have to be paid for if you want to be able to download them automatically.

Sure, you can go to Symantec's website and download everything yourself. Symantec even lists the site in the manual, and the manual says that to download the protection updates from the site requires an active paid subscription. I don't like this at all. I went to the home page first to see if I could download the virus definitions myself, and I could. I didn't need to input any subscription information to do it, either. On the download page, Symantec noted that the last update to the virus definitions were made on the 16th of September, and they showed up in my LiveUpdate window on the 19th. However, when I went to actually download them from the site, I found that those available were in fact from August 28th. Again, I found all this from links on the main site.



The Symantec Intelligent Updater Site

So, I decided to look for the updates by going to the site Symantec lists in the manual, and, lo and behold, it was the same site. The site said that the best way to get updates was, of course, through LiveUpdate, which Symantec updates once a week unless there is a major alert. In that case, they would change the LiveUpdate servers as soon as possible.

They update the Intelligent Updater servers (what they call downloading from their site) on business days only. This left me with a bad taste in my mouth. The newest update listed was for the 28th of August, and the newest update for download was

actually created on the 16th of September, but it was only available via LiveUpdate.

Now, since I have a complimentary time-limited subscription, I can download all I want, but in all my research, I never found a price to renew or purchase a subscription. So, I attempted to renew, hoping to find the price before having to sign the bottom line. In order to find this price, I needed to renew my subscription from within NIS3, but I wasn't told where, and I couldn't find it listed in any of the NIS3 applications that require updates. After rereading the manual, I found that the option to renew appears only when LiveUpdate senses that the subscription is about to expire, and then it will prompt me to renew. I still couldn't find a price anywhere, and this upset me even more.

I understand that Symantec needs to make money, and I'm happy that they provide the minimal product updates free of charge, but I think that should be the case with the protection updates as well. After all, how effective can a virus checker be with one-month-old virus definitions? These are required, "must have" files, yet, unless I pay an annual fee, I can't get them. This is a very underhanded practice in my opinion—I'm working with Symantec, not Microsoft, after all! Why should a person who buys a product continually pay for it, unless it is a major program update?

Symantec is pushing customers away with this practice. But, hey, if supporting their competition is their goal, then so be it! I'm sure that MicroMat [<http://www.micromat.com>] appreciates it.

As far as my overall rating of LiveUpdate, well, it works, but works slowly. That isn't a big deal, as it downloads, installs, and deletes the old files for me. But Symantec's update tactics are a part of LiveUpdate, and must be figured in with the overall rating. In my opinion, Symantec is robbing the customer, and also hurting themselves. So I rate LiveUpdate a 1.5.

The Norton Scheduler Main Window



My Experience with Norton Scheduler

Norton Scheduler can be accessed from several places: Norton AntiVirus, the Norton Internet Security Launcher, and even LiveUpdate. Norton Scheduler, as I mentioned earlier in this review,

allows me to set times to run NAV or LiveUpdate.

The NAV Scheduler Window

For the NAV Scheduler, I'm able to specify the time to scan, as well as if it should be monthly, weekly, daily, or annually. I can specify more detail by selecting a certain day of the week or month, or the day of the month and the year. I can also drag and drop, or browse for individual items to scan, so I can set it up to scan, say, my downloads folder at any time I specify.



The Product Scheduler Window

In the LiveUpdate Scheduler, I can assign the same settings, but instead of selecting which item to scan, I can set which product to update, or just update the Virus Definitions, or update them all at once.

I decided to test the NAV Scheduler by setting it to scan my "archives2" folder at 7:10 p.m. Pacific Standard Time. I was also able to designate a name for the scheduled event, and chose the name "macC Test."

The Norton Scheduler Event Alert Dialog

When 7:10 rolled around, I was surprised to not see Norton AntiVirus open. At first, I thought that the event didn't work, but then I got a

dialog box informing me that the folder was scanned successfully. I like this scan in the background approach. I also like that I can have several scheduled events, and turn them on and off at my discretion. I should note that any scheduled events will not occur unless the user who added them is logged in at the time that the event is to occur, and the computer must also be on. If neither of these are the case, then the event



will occur at the scheduled time the next time the user is logged in and the computer is on.

I like the degree of customization in Norton Scheduler. From what I've seen, it works well. I only have one complaint. It would be nice if I could select more than one file or folder to scan at a time with NAV, and if I could select more than one product to update without using the all command. These aren't really big deals, as the number of events is, as far as I know, limitless. I'm impressed with Norton Scheduler, and if I were reviewing it by itself, I would give it a 4.5.

My Experience with the Norton Internet Security For Macintosh 3.0 Manual:

The manual for NIS is very well organized, going into specifics of how to do each function. Not only does it tell how to use the features, it explains why they need to be used, and the possible outcomes of not using them. The manual even features clear screen shots, with pointers to the parts of the image that the manual is discussing.

The manual is separated into several chapters and sections, with a table of contents, two appendices, and a good index. It is 154 pages, and is, unfortunately, in black and white. However, the manual is in full color on the CD as a PDF version.

I wouldn't say the manual is something that needs to be read cover to cover, but if you have specific questions, as I did, turning to the manual is a great help. Bottom line: this is one of the best manuals I have ever seen.

My Suggestions for Improvements of Norton Internet Security For Macintosh 3.0:

While I am not a programmer, and I don't know if what I would like to see is even possible, there are two major improvements that I would like to see. One is that Norton QuickMenu be given access to more features than just turning off or on the firewall and Auto-Protect.

I would also love to see more contextual menu support. For example, make it where I can control-click a file or folder and select scan with NAV. Or instead of having to open up the Norton Privacy Control Ad-Blocking window, how about just control clicking on the ad and selecting something like, "Add to Ads Blocked" list?

These are minor suggestions, but I think they would greatly improve the effectiveness and usability of all of the Symantec NIS packages. I would also suggest ending the LiveUpdate subscription service, or making it a free service like Apple does with their Software Update Preference Pane. Or, make it an extra service for those willing to pay for the convenience of not having to search for updates themselves, while still having the latest Protection Updates on the website for download.

I've examined each of the Symantec Products that make up NIS 3.0, and I can truthfully say that I'm impressed and really pleased with the product. My complaints are documented throughout the review, and with the exception of LiveUpdate, each program is a beautiful piece of "art". Yet, all pieces of art have their flaws, and LiveUpdate is the biggest one in this piece. Adding up my complaints, and ratings, I'm going to have to give the Symantec products a total macC rating of 4.

My Experience with the Aladdin iClean 5.0.1 Manual:

There is no printed manual with this bundled version of Aladdin iClean 5.0.1. It is in the form of a PDF on the CD that is installed when iClean is installed. The PDF is in color and is only 14 pages. The help system for iClean is basically a copy of the manual, except that its one huge page, instead of 14 pages. And, for some reason, it won't show scroll bars, so you have to highlight the text with your mouse to scroll down. The manual tells you the basics, but since there aren't many complicated functions in iClean, that's enough. It's a quick read, and I suggest that anyone who buys the product read it.

My Suggestions for Improvements:

I understand that a 6.0 version of iClean is out now, but maybe they haven't fixed my little irritants. I think that whenever a search is performed, and "Finish Cleaning" is completed, that iClean should return to the main search window instead of quitting altogether. It's very annoying. In the details windows, I would like to be able to see the location of a file without having to click on that particular file. I would like to see the history.html confusion fixed, and would love to see Safari support. I would also like to be able to pick which searches to "Finish Cleaning" when I run the "all searches" function. Right now, I have to go into each Detail window and unselect everything. Another bug I would like to have fixed is where everything opened from a Detail window opens either hidden or in the background. Finally, I wish that I could specify the location of the searches, instead of searching all the partitions on my Mac.

I wasn't exactly devastated by disappointment over iClean. It did what it was supposed to do with only little supervision by me. The few problems I found do affect my rating, though, and I really hope that the new version is a lot better. I like the concept of iClean, and think that it could really help those wanting to recapture disk space without resorting to searching through Browser preferences and Finder windows. As far as iClean is concerned, I rate it a solid 4.

My Final Thoughts:

The entire package of Norton Internet Security is definitely one that I would suggest to anyone with a broadband Internet connection. I've been very pleased with its performance, just like I have been with other Symantec products. I really feel that NIS is one of those products that are great, but still have a lot of room for improvement. I think Symantec will eventually make a newer version that will put this one to shame. The bundling of Aladdin iClean 5.0.1 simply adds more value to this already outstanding suite, and makes common tasks on the Mac happen more quickly and easily.

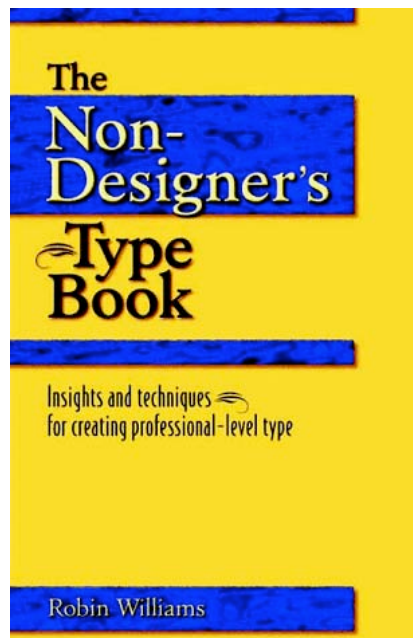
This package may not be the most advanced, and it may not be enough for large corporation security, but, for casual customers, and even small businesses, the protection offered by Norton Personal Firewall 3.0 and Norton AntiVirus 9.0 is outstanding.

I've mentioned my more detailed pros and cons throughout the review, so there's no need to repeat them here. Even with them in mind, I would happily suggest Norton Internet Security 3.0 to other people. Try it—you won't be disappointed.

Despite the LiveUpdate snafu, I whole-heartedly believe that the entire suite that is Norton Internet Security For Macintosh 3.0 deserves a macC rating of 4.5.

Keep up the good work, Symantec and Aladdin!

Real World



The Non-Designers Type Book™: Insights and techniques for creating professional-level type

A Book Review as an Open Letter to Robin Williams by Harry {doc} Babad with the Assistance of Julie Willingham

Author: Robin Williams
Peachpit Press; ©Robin Williams, 1998
<http://www.peachpit.com/>
240 pages
\$22.50 USD
ISBN: 0201353679



Strengths: Read it; you'll like it, whether you use MS Word™ or something more elaborate such as Adobe PageMaker™. Even for individuals with simple page or web design needs, this book can make even your input to your church, club, or society newsletter look ever so good.

Weaknesses: Wouldn't a new edition, Jaguar and more, be fun and even more useful? After all, typography in the age of the Power PC computers and typography mavericks has evolved since 1998 and I wonder at the tales you would tell.

Dear Ms. Williams, AKA Robin:

I agree with your publisher that your "*Non-Designer's*" line of books not only defines the principles governing type, but explains the logic behind them so readers can understand and see what looks best and why. Armed with this knowledge, and putting into practice the secrets (you

reveal for making type readable and artistic, readers can then go on to create beautiful ... professional-looking pages on their computers for output as hard copy or for use on Web pages."

Introduction

As a long time admirer of your writings and more recently a reviewer for macCompanion.com, I requested a few of your books from Peach Pit Press. Once again, although I own the first edition, I enjoyed and was helped by your update of "The Mac is Not a Typewriter," and reviewed it in our August 2003 issue. My more recent review of your tasty and helpful "The Robin Williams Mac OS X Book, the Jaguar Edition" appeared in our October 2003 issue. But because of the references you've added to the update of "The Mac is not a Typewriter," I am reaching back in time—catching up with your books. Books that I lost out on reading or never found. Needless to say as I turn pages, I've been annotating the margins, and tabbing items I want to refer to in the future, so I am *de facto* reviewing the book even though it was first published in 1998. Since this book, and "The Non-Designers Scan and Print Book," amongst others on my "must read" list predate Jaguar, this must, as is my whim, be a *virtual* review of a past classic. This is doc_Babad's way of having a virtual monologue with you, while sharing with our readers the things I learned from "The Non-Designers Type Book."

Your quiz helped to kick-start this review. After all, I took the quiz entitled "Telltale Sign of {bad} Desktop Publishing" and barely scored a three (or maybe five of twelve—I was having a senior moment. Anguish followed! Then a sense of relief in reading "If you scored above three, don't worry. Creating professional-level type is mainly a matter of becoming more aware of details."

And My Plight Thickens

And in the beginning, I took your mini-quiz, found in the introduction to your book, and kept flunking out on "I always use true apostrophes (' not '), and *I always put them in the right places.*" But, I've scanned your "Helpful Chart" (page 56) and dropped it into my reviewer's active to-do folder for to check as I cleanup my reviews. I'm still not comfortable about *always avoid leaving widows and orphans on the page.* MS Word just ain't got no couth! And, of course, as you pointed out, doing even some of the less challenging things I read about, while using MS Word causes grief, anguish, and frustration. I can readily see where in my recent missives and reports, I could have made my copy easier to read by using "leading" (Chapter 15), and kerning. Obviously, sayeth Robin, kerning in MSW is nonexistent except for a few ligatures, and hanging punctuation literally is a real drag.

Anyhow, Robin, I am not a designer of pages, and my needs extend only slightly beyond Microsoft Word X™. If Adobe's educational discount for Page Maker™ software falls within my budget, I may break down and chippie with it. But I'll never—well, likely never—become a serious page layout software user. That, as is obvious in this review, did not stop me from feeling comfortable with the book's sections on readability and legibility, something on which you spend a chapter as well as use as one of your "über" themes in your lessons. And, as always, the use of apostrophe *thingies* for contractions, to indicate the use of a possessive pronoun or noun still eludes me. Hey, public school grammar was like metaphysics when I was in the 3rd to 6th grade, especially since my parents spoke an Austrian dialect of German, as did I for a while. But those are the errors that Julie our talented macCompanion technical editor fixes for me, hoping eternally that I'll get the message.

In your book, I finally got a more than a long-needed hint about fonts, their styles, and uses. Thank you for pointing out that there is a world of typography out there! You've even enlightened me, but I'm a long way from attaining the 12-fold way, on understanding the specifics and nuances of font characteristics that font publisher ramble about. Fonts and their specifications that constitute the font design elements are now glimpsed as if a fog was lifting. Now, I always knew, as a previously active time font junkie, that fonts came in many flavors: expert sets, small caps, condensed and extended type formats, as well as the ubiquitous display type which includes dingbats and ornaments. But, Robin, swash characters, initial caps, oldstyle numbers, and ligatures were new to me, and their potential uses to make text interesting to see as well as read were...eye-opening. I also still own lots of shareware or freeware fringe and decorative TrueType and Type 2 typefaces all now trapped on CDs. But before reading your book, I could never figure out how to use them effectively.

I do, Robin, wonder why you never used or commented on the ubiquitous Times New Roman, Geneva, or Arial in your examples. Did I miss something or is your ire only with Helvetica?

Lessons That Last

I got totally captured by this book by citing a few examples of what likely will be parts of a steep leaning curve—Let me Count the ways!

Robin, your reinforcing of the dual set of themes, which I paraphrase below, help make a complex subject matter *almost* understandable to me, a typography newbie.

Both readability and legibility count, and, where practical, both should be optimized, a theme reemphasized in the section on "Choosing a Typeface" *and*

The concepts of font design and typographic design, both of which you introduce in this book. I found the latter concept more difficult to internalize. Okay, I know the differences between individual Lego™ blocks and the things you build from them, but my leaning curve will perforce be steep, since type as a visual element is more multi-dimensional. (As an aside, your "The Non-Designers Design Book" is next on my reading list. Digital photography will just have to wait.) The concept of typographic color was *errrrr*—enlightening. Furthermore, as a research scientist before retiring, I totally empathize with your "Play—Don't be a wimp" concept. Being bold might be okay as long as I document my successful experiments, so I don't have to start cold turkey on new projects.

Not so subtle, but new to me, was the practical differences between mono and proportionally spaced figures (e.g., numbers) wowed this often rigidly constrained writer of technical documents. In most of my past writing, I chose a font, usually the corporate standard, and slogged ahead—only using the number that the font contained. Oh well "Viva the corporate standards."

Summing up this section—Learning new things both about my computer, its software and finding new ways to reach out and share messages with people is in part, Robin, that's why I do these reviews. It's a combination of being a Macintosh evangelist and my delight in being unchained from corporate and federal "style" guides that makes the hours spent...well spent makes reading books like yours a reenergizing experience.

Minor Inconveniences and a Petty Irritation

For those of use who haven't yet had to and so have not evolved beyond MS Word, it would have been nice to note the specifically applicable software for chapter narratives by putting little application icons in the margins.

Your Book's Unforeseen Siren call. With so many wonderful fonts used as examples in the book, I am troubled that I can't justify their purchase. No, I'm not still a font addict; but Robin, your book sorely tempts me. Oh well, as I use your book for reference, Appendix B: "*Typeface Samples*" will continue to keep tugging on my post-depression WW II baby's need to collect things, it's like needing a coffee fix. Make that 3 shots of espresso please!

Conclusions

I hate it, Robin, when a great Macintosh-related book demands as much of my time and attention as a good sci-fi space opera. But, as Peachpit notes on its web page, "Each short chapter explores a different type secret including use of evocative typography, tailoring typeface to project, working with spacing, punctuation marks, special characters, fonts, justification, and much more. It is written in the lively, engaging style that has made Williams one of the most popular computer authors today. And it uses numerous examples to illustrate the subtle details that make the difference between good and sophisticated use of type."

I will heartily recommend this book to any of our readers who want to do more than crank out a report, document, or short story. Your lesson is that after we provide our manager with just the facts, there is more that can be done. If you, our readers, personally demand that your work be both legible and attractive, add this book to your library.

As an aside to our readers, who might worry about why I reviewed a book published in 1998. I don't give a hoot that some of the references to OS capabilities, shareware, and other products are out of date—our readers, as I did, can reach out to macUpdate™ or VersionTracker™ and find font related shareware that works with Jaguar or your Wintel System. Indeed, now late in 2003, reading John Tollett's chapter on "Trends in Type" was a joy—an exercise in *seeing* typography both in the past and future tense.

The core of what you present is timeless. It even made me, a typography ignoramus, more aware of what I see, and, within the limits of MS Word, of what I can do. Robin thanks for both being and writing. In closing, a thought from the other Robin Williams seems proper.

"No matter what anybody tells you, words & ideas can change the world."
– From the Dead Poet's Society

Feature



The Ultimate Toaster

A Review of Toast™ 6.0 Titanium from Roxio

Reviewed by Michael Bean (Guest Reviewer)

Reprinted with permission and originally posted at:

<http://www.amug.org/amug-web/html/amug/reviews/articles/roxio/>

[Editor: This is a "follow-up review", since the "Toast 6 Plus Hints" *Real World* article was published last month at <http://www.maccompanion.com/archives/november2003/realworld.html>]

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1-408-848-5594 or 1-866-280-ROXI (7694)

sales@roxio.com

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

<http://www.roxio.com/en/support/toast/v6.jhtml>

\$100 USD boxed. \$90 USD Downloaded.

(rebate offers provided for upgrades)

Requirements: Power Macintosh G3 or higher, Mac® OS X 10.2 or later, 200 MB free hard disk space, Approximately 2 GB for every 10 minutes of digital Video, QuickTime® 6.0 or later, Recordable CD or DVD drive.



Strengths: Most diverse product for producing CDs and DVDs on the Macintosh. Creates wide variety of data CD/DVDs. Can import many video formats. Chapter markers made in iMovie 3 can work in Toast. Encodes Video CD/DVDs. Can save video CD/DVD as an image file. Creates Audio CDs from many formats. Easily copies CD/DVDs (non-encrypted). Allows you to use a DVD recorder over the network. Includes DeJ Vu for automatic backup to a server, hard drive, CD/DVD (bootable). Includes Motion Picture for making moving slide shows with audio. CD Spin Doctor 2 included for converting analog audio. Provides a vast amount of CD/DVD recording options Writes to DVD-R, RW, DVD+R, RW. Supports a wide variety of recorders and media.

Weaknesses: Lacks the cool animated themes of iDVD. Chapters are created but cannot be menu navigated. Lacks the ability to "auto-play" through your video DVD menus. Documentation is light on some features.

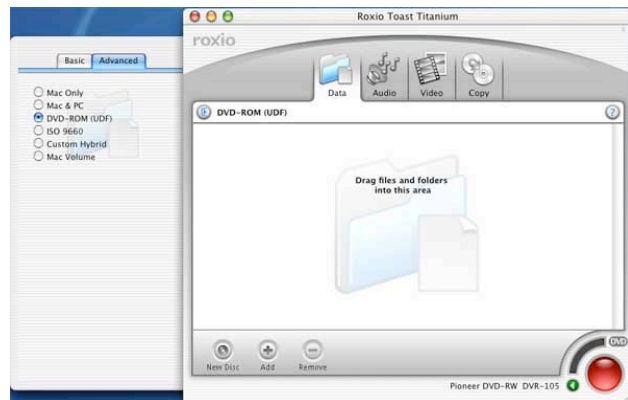
Most software upgrades improve the product a bit and perhaps add compatibility for a new operating system. Not Toast™. Toast 6.0 is a HUGE upgrade from Toast 5. It's almost another program. So many features have been added that you may find yourself using Toast 6.0 as a multimedia creation tool, as much as a CD/DVD burner. It took me a while just to get my arms around all the features Toast 6 provides.

New Features

Toast 6.0 new features include Toast It (The ability to burn with one click from the desktop), ToastAnywhere (use any burner on your network), QuickRecord, 128-bit encryption with password protection, data compression, automatic backup to CD, DVD, or network storage. Converts WAV, AIFF, MP3, AAC or any iTunes track into an audio CD, creates photo media shows with sound, creates VCD and SVCDs with menus, create DVDs with menus, buttons and chapters, Plug & Burn (burn disks automatically from your camcorder), universal video converter and Disc Extractor (extract and reuse an iDVD or Toast disc). Wow, that is a mouth full. Lets take a more in depth look at these features.

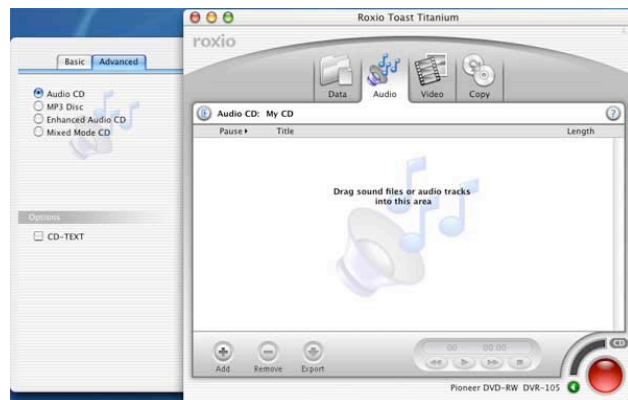
Data Tab

Toast 6.0 uses tabs to open four different areas. Data, Audio, Video and Copy are the options. In the Data area you can format your disk in several ways. Mac Only, Mac & PC, DVD (UDF), ISO 9660, Custom Hybrid and Mac volume are all available. You can use the new disk and add buttons or just drag and drop your content into the data window. Using the data area you could backup your computer data, archive your photos and create disks that can be used on both Macs and PCs. You can also decide if you want the data compressed or encrypted and password protected by clicking on the disk name.



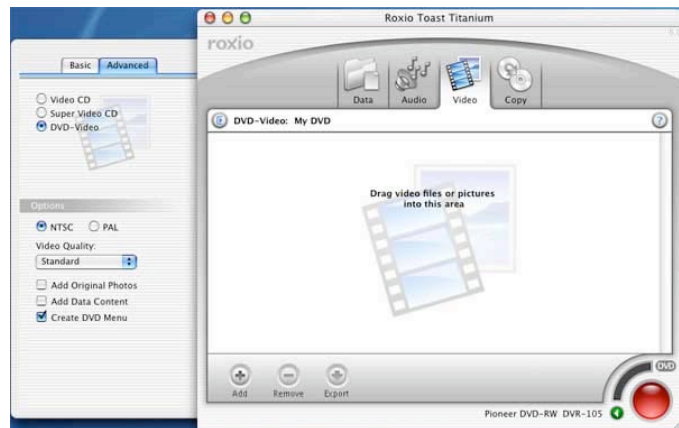
Audio Tab

In the audio area you can create an Audio CD, MP3 Disc, Enhanced Audio CD and Mixed Mode CDs. You can also record CD-Text to your disk if your equipment supports reading it. Pressing on the "Pause" button allows you to set the amount of silence you want between music tracks. Toast can convert any format that Quicktime can recognize into an audio CD. This makes conversion very simple. However, you will get the best quality sound using AIFF files for creating an audio CD. An MP3 disk is a nice option for creating larger collections of music on a disk. Using 320kbps stereo MP3 format is very close to CD quality. This may be important to you if you will be playing back the MP3 disk on your home theatre.



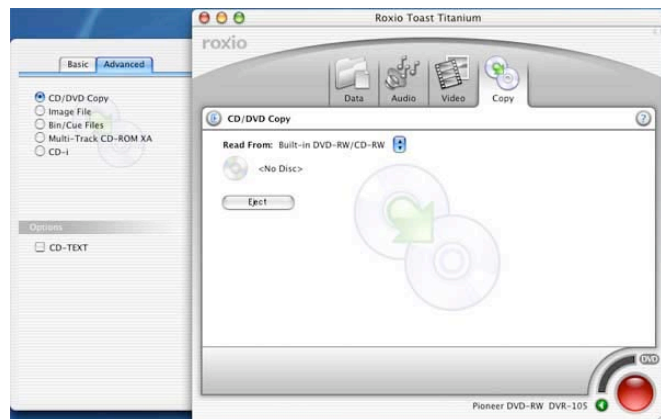
Video Tab

If you want to make a CD or DVD that contains photo slideshows or videos that are playable on your DVD player or computer this is the place. You can combine video and photo content or import directly from your DV camcorder. Each imported source becomes a button with up to three buttons per screen. With the Plug & Burn option you can import video directly from your camcorder, add other video or slideshows, choose which portions of the video files from the camcorder you want to use and record a final video disc. I found that while Toast video DVDs do not have the fancy themes of iDVD it works well controlling a firewire camera and importing video. It also allows you to save the project as an image or burn to an internal or external burner. You can do transitions and effects in iMovie with Toast captured movies and burn them with Toast.



Copy Tab

The copy area is where you go to copy a CD or DVD. You can mount images of video DVD/CDs you saved and test them or burn them on your Macintosh. Lots of formats are supported as you can see.



More on New features

Creating a Video DVD

Toast does not have the option for cool animated themes like iDVD. The background and menus are all the same. According to Adam Fingerman, the Sr, Product Manager for Toast 6 the focus is on good video and keeping it simple. "Menus are important to people, but you spend a few seconds looking at your menu vs up to 90 minutes looking at your video", said Fingerman. Another feature Toast lacks is the ability to "auto-play" through each video you label with a menu button. Instead, Toast 6 plays the associated video or photo slideshow and then returns to the menu where it stops. This means you cannot use the menus to mark chapters, instead they are treated as totally different movies and cannot play continuously. This is the reverse of how most DVDs work. To have a series of video segments play continuously, Roxio recommends joining them in iMovie and then burning the iMovie project in Toast. This solves the continuous playing issue but leaves DVD menu navigation limited. Toast can create chapters but there is no way to navigate through the chapters from the menus. When pushing the chapter advance button on the DVD remote, users never know what segment of the film they are going to next. You can set chapters to be created after a certain amount of play time, but if you want to go directly to the "Birthday Party" its impossible,

unless you want to treat it as its own movie using menus. It would be nice if chapters could be navigated by menus like most other DVD software allows. iDVD and ADS Instant DVD [<http://www.amug.org/amug-web/html/amug/reviews/articles/ads/>] using CaptyDVD both have "auto-play" capability. This allows menus to be used as chapter designators. Roxio's Adam Fingerman sent us an email on this topic saying, "*Roxio tests indicate that our video quality equals iDVD & DVD Studio Pro (at considerably more affordable prices) and very much exceeds CaptyDVD (in quality and encoding time). The auto-play feature is something we will certainly consider for a future update, and since we have provided free updates every few months for previous Toast versions this may arrive soon*".

Chapter Creation

It is possible to use chapter markers made in iMovie 3 in Toast. Simply create your project in iMovie, add the chapters at the desired scene (e.g., the birthday party), add the iMovie file to Toast, and select "Automatic" from the DVD Chapters option in the Edit sheet. Toast will detect the chapters and write them to the finished disc. You can then use the DVD player remote to jump forward and backward to a specific scene in your video. This chapter detection also works with Final Cut Pro chapters as well. This procedure will not allow you to navigate to a chapter with a menu but it is a nice feature that can help.

DVD Player Compatibility & Media

When testing Toast video DVDs on several players I found it played on all of our newer players well. Toast video DVD meets the official specifications from the DVD forum. Tests showed DVD players older than two years have a 50% chance of iDVD and Toast video DVDs failing to play on them. Part of the issue is that some older DVD players were never designed to play DVD-R media. The other issue is that different DVD media has different compatibility. For instance, from my tests the Accu DVD-R media [<http://store.yahoo.com/cdrdvdrmedia/accu100.html>] and the Matrix DVD-R 4.7GB 1X-4X [<http://www.shop4tech.com/item1600.html>] bulk media had the best chance of working on the widest list of players I tested. The DvdPro DVD-RW 4.7GB Media [<http://store.yahoo.com/cdrdvdrmedia/dvdprodv47me1.html>] had the best compatibility for a DVD-RW media tested. I also tested DVD-RW 2X 4.7 GB [http://www.shop4tech.com/user.htm?go=view_item&id=1735&cata=1&s_cata=] by optodisc and found that while it recorded easily on the Macintosh, DVD Player compatibility was limited to only one of the five players tested. Understand that DVD-RW media will always have more chance of failing to play in an older player than DVD-R media. The Optodisc DVD-RW OW470-000 burns and plays well on a Macintosh but will not play on any of the five video DVD players I tested. The HQ 1X-4X DVD-R 4.7GB Blank Media [<http://store.yahoo.com/meritline/hq-dvd-r-4x-dvdr.html>] I tried would not even burn a DVD 75% of the time on a Macintosh with a Pioneer 105 DVD-R recorder (*ROM ver. 1.33*). It did not matter what speed I tried to burn at, they just kept failing to write. Most DVD media resellers do not test their product for Macintosh compatibility even though Mac users buy a substantial amount of media. Be sure the media you buy has been tested on a Macintosh or has a return policy that does not leave you paying to test their media.

Moving Pictures & Toast Video Strengths

Another cool program that also ships with Toast 6 is Motion Picture. It lets you make photo slide shows with transitions and music. It does a very nice job of making still images look like moving video. Even though Toast video DVD has some limitations it also has some advantageous. For

instance, Toast will burn on almost any CD/DVD recorder internal or external. Not iDVD. Toast will burn on DVD-R RW and DVD+R RW disks. Not iDVD, only on DVD-R. Toast can burn your digital video to disk directly from the camera with plug & burn. Toast can save your video to a disk image without having to burn it first. Not iDVD. Toast video is one more option in your bag of tricks at no extra cost. It's hard to argue with that.

Backup

Toast 6 includes a backup program called Déjà Vu. It is installed in the Mac OS X System Preferences. You can schedule backups of certain folders or an entire bootable volume. You designate where to backup the files to. If you want the backup copy bootable you select an entire volume. You can schedule daily, weekly or monthly backups. You can backup to a local disk, remote server or a CD or DVD. You decide if the backup is a mirror of the original or cumulative. Only new files are backed up to speed up the process. I found no way to cancel a backup once started and documentation is limited. However, you can monitor the progress in the menu bar and it provides a log once completed. Over all, it's a nice backup program and a wonderful addition to Toast.



Even more stuff

CD Spin Doctor 2 is also included. This program allows you to import audio from LPs and tapes into Toast to create CDs. Spin Doctor allows you to reduce hiss and pops that are found in many older analog recordings when importing them into your computer. Another program included is Discus RE label creator. With this program you can create disk labels and CD liners on your computer. It's a nice program to give your CDs and DVDs a professional look.



Roxio Toast 6.0 gets 5 AMUGs out of 5

Toast is THE standard for burning DVD and CD on the Macintosh. If you are looking for a CD/DVD program that provides lots of options making video, audio, and data CD/DVDs, Toast is it. As if that weren't enough, Toast 6 adds automatic backup, networked recorders, moving photo slideshows with music, and video DVD encoding. Toast can encode any file QuickTime can handle to DVD or Audio CD format. There is a lot of value in this package.

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Audio



X-PRO[®] , The Mac's Missing Internet Telephony Phone Link Reviewed by Robert Pritchett



Xten Development Headquarters
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Burnaby, British Columbia
Canada V5C5T5
1-604-878-0440
fax:1-801-640-0011
sales@xten.com
<http://www.xten.com>

\$50 USD for X-PRO[®] , Free for X-Lite[®]

Pre-requisites: SIP server registration. Ability to tweak your SIP-enabled router for port processing. And permission to tunnel through your local Internet Service Provider to the rest of the world.

Requirements: Multi-platform, but for the Mac, use Mac OS X. Internet capability with good throughput, preferably a noise-canceling stereo headset with mic. And a SIP-enabled router for safe networking. Optimized for G4-G5 systems.

Difficulty: Intermediate to Advanced.



Strengths: Open-source cross-platform phone technology.

Weaknesses: Instructions are not exactly Mac-specific. Pre-requisites keep this from being "plug-and-play" for the "rest of us".

Well, I think I finally got my wish. I can now "Xten"d my system even further by having it *do* Internet Telephony using a product called **X-PRO** from some folks I know up in Burnaby, BC! I interviewed them a long time ago when I was involved in reviewing Internet Telephony-specific products back when such things for the Macintosh were considered "hands-off". Well, guess what, they are now "hands-on", even if what we get is a **virtual telephone** as seen above – but it works!

Background

May I indulge in even more background? Michael Byer (<http://www.ctexpert.com/>) practically invented Internet Telephony when he worked for Apple. Then Apple gave that technology away, and it bloomed into well over \$1trillion-per-year business and abandoned the Mac almost entirely. Now I'm proud to say, despite some industry fits and starts, Internet Telephony for the Mac is really back!

Xten has continued where others have dropped off in "high-tech". The way they have done this is by partnering with some other great Internet Telephony outfits that do such things as



at <http://www.freeworldialup.com/>.

I had been approached about 3 years ago by some of the Internet Telephony Intelligentsia at the *Voice on the Net* Expo powered by <http://www.pulver.com/> in 2000. They wanted me to help establish an alternative to the Bell Labs-established Internet Telephony protocol standards. While there, I discovered a little-known protocol that was up-and-coming named SIP or Session Information Protocol. Right then and there I squelched any further development and stated publicly that SIP was the direction to go. It is now also an RFC (Request For Comment) item known as RFC-3261 (see <http://www.ietf.org/rfc/rfc3261.txt>). For even *more* information on SIP, go here: <http://www.sipcenter.com/>. Okay, now come back here so we can discuss X-PRO.

Getting Started

I need to caution you, if you think Computer geek-talk is full of esoteric terms and TLAs (Three Letter Acronyms), you haven't seen anything until you tiptoe into the Telephony world!

Guess what protocol X-PRO is using? Yep, you guessed it; SIP. The only downside for Mac OS X is that there are two protocols the Mac OS X version of X-Pro doesn't handle yet. Those are G.723 (now G.723.1) and G.729. That may not necessarily be a bad thing, since G.723.1 is a low-quality audio codec that doesn't handle music or sound effects very well and works with QuickTime (QT) 3 (we are now at what, QT6.4?) [see http://www.vocal.com/data_sheets/full/g723.html] and G.729, which is another speech codec [see <http://www.hellosoft.com/products/hellovoice/g729.htm>].

Call Status
Displays the current call status

Call Data
Dialed number, Call Timer
SIP Caller ID

Do Not Disturb [DND]
Auto-Answer [AA]
Auto Conference [AC]

Hang Up [Red Phone]

Dial [Green Phone]

Microphone Fader Control
Click on Microphone icon to enable/disable LEDs. Click again to enable Silence Threshold Control.



Help, Minimize, Close

CODEC Selection Control
Black type is active.

Lines 1 – 6
Click to Select Line, 2nd
Click to place on hold.

1) Phonebook Control
2) Clear / Backspace
3) Menu Control

Speaker Fader Control

**MUTE, Call Transfer,
Conference**

Pre-Prep

Step One

There is a 7-page X-PRO Quick Start Guide, but the first "gotcha" is that I needed to register for at least one SIP account number and establish a phone number for access. This was done by going to <http://www.exten.com/providers.php> and then obtaining a User ID and Password. **This can be a show-stopper** if you don't feel comfortable handling this process. This is Step One, however. I went to <http://www.addaline.com> and <http://www.fwd.pulver.com> to get mine.

Step Two

Then I had to learn something about SIP proxy servers and ports (ports 5060 and 5082 for both inbound and outbound through my firewall and port 8000 through 8020 for TCP/UDP communications). Knowing how to make X-PRO work through your router is going to be Step Two. There is a learning curve here. Just watch taking the corners as you drive around it. And I'm assuming you use a router. I'm using an Asanté FriendlyNET™ device and after one month of bit-twiddling and trying really hard to make that router work, I finally discovered it is **NOT** SIP-enabled and I was told it won't be either. We'll see what the Asanté team and the Xten-Team do with each other. Xten has an alternate solution named X-Tunnel™... I finally ended up just using the internal Mac OS X firewall instead. I felt so exposed and naked... Thank goodness the internal firewall in Mac OS X functions, or I'd stop right here and now.

I tend to be a slow learner, so I got stuck at this point even after I had the SIP info registered. And I had Internet connectivity issues that resulted in starting from scratch and took me a while to get back up to speed on my old iMac.

Step Three

Are you still with me? Once that is all done, then testing the process is accomplished using the DialPad (it is a "SIP User Agent" softphone and not to be confused with the DialPad program for Mac OS X from 3 years ago) shown at the top of this review. The Quick Start Guide does have a

handful of login troubleshooting suggestions. The screenshots are all of an older X-PRO version, but that's okay for now.

The free X-Lite version is really a "try-before-you-buy" function, but the X-PRO option gives a lot more and could even be considered as a quick-and-simple digital PBX (Private Branch Exchange, or localized multi-line phone switch).

Xten is also releasing a later version of X-PRO in December to help resolve the "router-blues".

I strongly suggest that you go to the website and check out the FAQs!

I'm not going to repeat them here. They answer such questions as how to use X-PRO, create multiple proxies, make conference calls, change preferences and settings [very critical!], set up services with Addaline and also with Free World Dialup and others.

Once that is all done, then the phone can be used. And it works – sort of. I noticed even with my old iMac running on the Cable Modem, there was a lot of latency and crosstalk between services as I dialed both addaline and the "Tellme" services on the Free World Dialup. Frankly, I was rather disappointed by the quality. But then again, I'm running through some rather hefty gauntlets. I'm sure that if I did this on our eMac, a G4 or G5, the bottlenecks would be somewhere else.

Remember that X-PRO was originally designed for the WinTel environment and just recently was ported over to Mac OS X. When Panther arrives, the local processor-intensive process will improve, I'm positive of that. When I tried working through my router, I noticed it tended to peg the busy lights on the network box too.

With the router not being SIP-enabled, all systems were go - except for the nagging fact that I could not hear any conversation. I suspected that the other end could hear me just fine. The X-PRO session-log showed everything was as it should be.

Once I bypassed the router, I could both send and receive, but the systems I was connected to had their challenges as well. It got better over time as the systems cleaned themselves up, showing some tendencies towards artificial intelligence technology at work somewhere along the way.

Teleconferencing

A few companies make a living setting up teleconferencing sessions for business activities such as webinars, etc. Xten has allowed the X-PRO device to act as a teleconferencer with either 7 regular phone or Internet Protocol connections at the same time. And this is done at no extra cost.

X-PRO offers the following promising features:

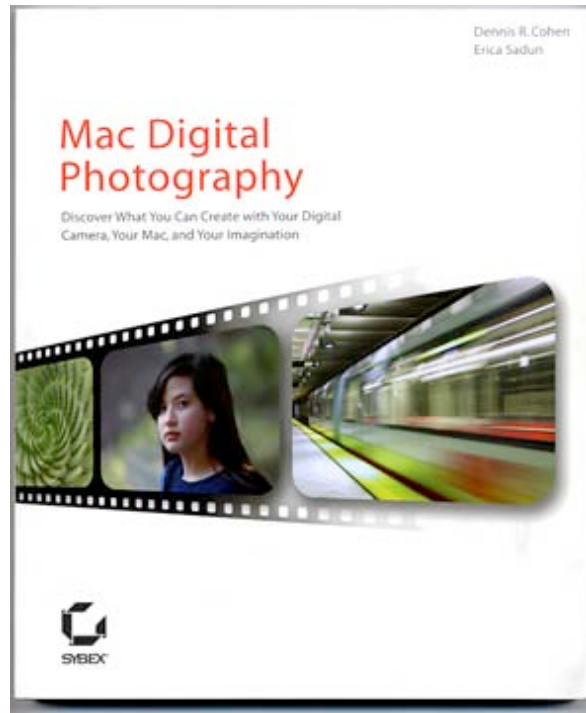
- Touch-tones [DTMF] (the tone protocol and also RFC-2833)
- 6 Lines with 7 Party Conferencing [IP & PSTN] (PSTN is the legacy phone system)
- Line Hold and Transfer (Blind and Supervised)
- Do Not Disturb
- Inbound Call 'Ignore' and 'Go to Voicemail'

Call Forwarding URI/URL and Voicemail URL
Auto-answer and Auto-conference
Caller ID [SIP ID] and Multiple SIP Proxy Registration [10 Proxies]
Dial/ Redial/Hangup and Last Caller-ID and Recent Calls Dialed and Received
Dynamic CODEC Selection
Call Timer
Silence Threshold
Backspace/Clear/Delete
Mute and Microphone & Speakers Levels and Meters
Push-to-Talk [PocketPC] (Non-Mac device)
Sound Device Selection
Direct IP to IP Calling
Familiar-looking Menu
Phonebook [Import/Export CSV]
Speed Dial
X-Web 'Click to Talk' Control, X-NAT, X-Tunnels
Follows G.711a+u/SPX/iLBC/GSM Codecs
NAT/Firewall Traversal [Reverse UDP]
STUN [RFC-3489] (soon to be made available for the Mac)

Right now, this X-PRO technology holds a lot of promise and I can't wait until I can *truly* use it to do real toll-free telephony online using my *own* Mac. I'm just really surprised my router doesn't play nicer...

Stay tuned, this Mac-telephony thing is going to get really interesting, very quickly. I urge you to step into it. It is almost as adventuresome as Ham Radio with Voice! And who can't afford an IP-PBX for \$50 USD?

Books



Mac Digital Photography

Reviewed by Roberta B. Taylor

Authors: Dennis R. Cohen and Erica Sadun

SYBEX Inc. Publisher, 2003

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

208 pages

\$30 USD, \$445 CAN, £23 UK

ISBN: 0782142729

Beginner



Strengths: Light on technical jargon.

Weaknesses: Few to none.

This review is about the book, **Mac Digital Photography** by Dennis R Cohen and Erica Sadun. Is there anyone out there in digitalcameraland who considers his/her photo taking talents to be a "cut above" the legions of other phototaking folks primarily because he/she takes thousands of photos and now and again one or two actually turn out well because the law of averages says "he who takes a thousand photos will occasionally manage a one good one", not because of any particular talent or training or skill? For those of us (note: I include myself) in this slightly egotistic category who belong to the legions of 'point-and-shooters', this book is a great beginning for an awareness of the elements compromising

a great shot. With this book one will gain an awareness allowing the amateur photographer to increase his/her odds of obtaining great shots from an occasional lucky one to more frequent planned occurrences, thus changing the good outcome from an occasional stroke of luck to planned and carefully crafted events with the person behind the camera in control instead of lady luck.

The book starts where all good books should start, at the beginning and with the basic steps required to take that one in a million award winning photo we all hope for. We start with a primer on lighting and positioning the subject with tips on avoiding the most common pitfalls leading to a photo accentuating a person's worst features.

A short discussion of how to select a camera covers the all important mega-pixel, camera size and addition of external lenses issues. However, most of the built in flashes are good for a distance of ten to fifteen feet at most and the buyer might want to consider a camera with a built in flash attachment if the camera will be used for photographing events such as weddings and graduations. And if one travels a lot with the digital camera, it's nice to know there are alternatives to downloading photos to a laptop each evening. The authors did a nice job of explaining what those options are and describing the types and care of batteries and included a short discussion on the use of optical lenses. Let's face it--not all folks are content to limit their lens usage to the one that comes with a camera and the lens doesn't have to be attachable to be usable.

The authors do a nice job of introducing the novice digital photographer to the world of digital photo manipulation. The chapter on "Photo Elements" is written well enough to allow a beginner success in his/her initial photo editing project using this program. And the authors lead the newly initiated through more advanced photo imaging techniques such as creating 3D photos and viewers, photo-stitching and enlarging photos beyond poster size with a demo of "Genuine Fractals PrintPro".

The discussion on printers and printing covers most of the basics such as the differences between ink-jet, dye-sub and laser printers. However, the advantages of using a printer with 6 colors of ink was not mentioned, and a discussion of printer paper did not broach the paperweight issue, which might be important depending on which printer is used for what purpose. And the price advantage of buying bulk card stock over pre-folded card stock was brought up, but the authors failed to mention the difficulties encountered when trying to put a crease in the unscored bulk card stock. From my experience, it usually just isn't worth the savings if the cards are going to have a sloppily folded crease.

Several photo finishers and their cost were well covered with advice on resizing the photos prior to sending them out via web or CD. And the authors make sure the reader knows how store the photos, create slide shows and photo albums and burn all the DVD's.

Over all, this book is an excellent resource for the beginning digital photographer. The authors restrained themselves from injecting weighty computereeze

into the text, thus preventing the reader from bogging down in a swamp of technical language.

On a scale of one mouse to five, I give it four and a half macC's.

My criticisms are limited to the few minor oversights already mentioned.

"This book is a riot and a must-read for any Macintosh believer."
—GUY KAWASAKI, CEO, Garage Technology Services

Macintosh...



The Naked Truth

An irreverent, off-the-wall, PC-slamm'n', totally biased look at what it's like to be a Macintosh user in a Windows-dominated world.

SCOTT KELBY



Macintosh...The Naked Truth™

Book Subtitle: "An irreverent, off-the-wall, PC slamming, totally biased look at what it's like to be a Macintosh user in a Windows-dominated world."

Reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad

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

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ISBN:0735712840



Strengths: A great book that was impossible, once started, to put down.

Weaknesses: A great book that was impossible, once started, to put down.

This book is recommended to one and all—Macintosh Newbies to old timers, almost switchers.

Overview

I agree with the publisher's overall assessment of Kelby's book! (I must be getting old.) It is a book about a computer platform and the people who love it, and the love/hate relationship they

have with Apple. It's brash, unapologetic, insightful, controversial, outspoken, and often hilarious, peppered with 100% Macintosh attitude. Although it pokes lighthearted fun at everyone from Apple CEO Steve Jobs to the PC users manning the Apple section of CompUSA, each chapter contains an underlying message of Apple evangelism, and it can often be as inspiring as it is funny."

It is "an irreverent, off-the-wall, PC-slammin', totally-biased look at Apple, and what it's like to be a Mac user stuck in a Windows dominated world. **Macintosh...The Naked Truth** is definitely not another Mac how-to book; it's a mass-market, personality book about a computer platform and the people who love it, and the love/hate relationship they have with Apple. It's about what you feel, how you're treated (and mistreated), and what it's really like living life in the computing minority. A recurring theme underlies the book. It tells, for all of us to see, what it's really like living life in the computing minority—a long awaited group therapy session. The book, based upon the author's hugely popular magazine column, takes a humorous, evangelical look at Apple Computer and what it's like to be a Macintosh user living in a PC-dominated world. The success of Kelby's column lies in the fact that although it makes serious points about Apple's shortcomings, and what it's really like being a Mac user, it presents them in a humorous, often sarcastic, and occasionally sophomoric way that Mac users love. It's brash, unapologetic, insightful, controversial, outspoken, and often hilarious, peppered with unrepentant Macintosh attitudes that make up our beloved culture." [material used in this part of the overview is taken in part from an unnamed reviewer at <http://www.halfpricecomputerbooks.ca/book/0735712840>.

Let the reader beware. I am a Macintosh evangelist, so those of you who are PC aficionados will be branding me as, at best, biased, and, at worst, bigoted against PC's and those who by choice are dedicated to them.

Kelby's book is worth at least 5 macC's, but then no scoring system is perfect. More if you have a Macintosh user as a friend with whom you can share it over your favorite beverage. Remember, you will need a designated driver, since you will be too high to be attentive to mundane things like the rules of the road.

Setting the Stage

There is a time in every reviewer's life when he or she needs a last word on a book or piece of software that has been previously reviewed in our eZine. My moment came soon after I received, from Scott Kelby himself, a copy of **Macintosh...The Naked Truth**. A week or so later, from mid-afternoon through a short, mostly sleepless night, I completely read the book and made notes. The next morning some details remained fuzzy, and some notes illegible or cryptic, so allowing a week to recover from reader's shock, back I went. This review is the result.

Kelby starts by warning prospective Mac users that the road less traveled is filled with hardships, scarcity, and humiliation by PC users. He notes that it takes a strong person to jump into the Mac world, but once you're in, he shows you a world in which ease of use, community, friendship, and cooperation prevail above all obstacles. Was he ever right!

You Might Ask Why the Responsive Chord in Me?

Does it have anything to do with the 25+ years I was trapped in mainframe and then Wintel PC using corporations? I managed, when desktop computers were introduced, to first buy an Apple Lisa™, then, every three years, a Macintosh™. Or was it the joys of my first home computer, a Macintosh II? The latter, coupled with joining a local MUG and starting my shareware collection vice, brightened my evenings and weekends. During this multi-decade period, the Information

Technology (IT) folks at work (aka the Orwellian computer police])made it clear that except for their maintaining my connection to the site e-mail system, I was on my own. Remember, even in those days, a Macintosh could easily be connected to a network via built-in AppleTalk™. What a joy! I was free from the gray-suited IT guys. (No ladies; seems it was always an old boys club.)

Or maybe my enthusiasm for Kelby's book was triggered by memories of all the fruitless arguments, from lost souls of the PC world, on why Macintosh was an inferior program and all its users were weird. Anyway, take your pick—enjoy this review. In Kelby's own words, "parts of the book will be sheer joy, like the moment when you uncover the 'secret of Macintosh' and can't believe that you've gone this long living in the dark."

Now, the Book—Well, Its Highlights, Anyway

Kelby's book pushes my buttons, reviving memories I thought long buried. As was noted by Christopher Murphy, "Throughout the text, Kelby reveals himself to hold a razor sharp awareness of the realities of present-day Mac culture, the sense of isolation mingled with empowerment and pride." <http://www.usedrobotparts.com/archives/000528.html>.

The book is divided into an introduction and 11 very readable and rib-achingly funny chapters. The chapter titles, which are rather a tale in themselves, are enough to tickle you into wanting to settle down with this book. Chapter 1 is about "Life after Switching to Macintosh. Using a Mac is Easy; Being a Mac User Sometimes Isn't." Chapter 2 is titled, "'I Can't Believe You Actually Use a Macintosh!' and Other Stupid Things PC Users Say. Congress should rethink giving PC users Freedom of Speech." Other chapters follow in a similar, far from straight-laced vein. So here are a bit and a byte about my favorite chapters.

One gets pigeonholed as a PC or Mac person in Chapter 4 by taking psychologically invasive quiz called the "Definitive Platform Test." It's similar to the skills or attitude test that were in vogue in the '70-'80s. (You know—"Would you rather..." It's life in the corporate lane.) The quiz helps you assess whether you and the people you know are using the right computer platform. As Kelby assures you "To take this test, you'll need to set up a proper testing environment. First, go into your desk drawer and get out a number 2 pencil. Ah-ha! See that was a trick question—only PC users have things like number 2 pencils. That's because their therapists are constantly making them take written personality tests to prove their self-worth, which incidentally, they generally fail, or they'd be Mac users in the first place." Especially pleasing was Question 20. "Answer from the heart please—People who don't follow the crowd are: (a) Leaders, people who think differently. (b) Taking too big a risk. (c) Unstable and should be watched closely. (d) Making me very, very angry."

Among my other favorites is Chapter 9, "Pot shots at Microsoft, the Media, and Anything Else That Gets in my Way" Here's where our fathers that art in Redmond and their worshipers get their almost just desserts. Kelby shares the pseudo-logic behind the traditional "PC versus Macintosh" argument. This is slowly and carefully unraveled for you, gentle reader, using assorted auto brands for comparisons. Owning a Buick or Ford Escort vs. Lexus or Mercedes is part of the metaphor. The logic is as much about the inherent value of the cars as their functional specifications. The author provides a list of 9 attributes of the "generic" PC user; attributes more sad than funny; but well worth reading. In the "making the news" section, Kelby recognizes and shares the motives of the media's hostility to all things Macintosh. Good stuff, Charlie Brown.

Near the end of the book, Chapter 20 deals with "The 20 Most Important Things I've Learned About Being a Mac User." Kelby introduces the chapter by noting "Back when I first got into the

Mac, I had to learn every thing the hard way. I'm not talking about the simple things like 'Don't forget to rebuild your desktop once a week' or 'Disable your extensions at start-up by holding the Shift key.' I'm talking about life. Mac life. Real life. The things you could only learn from veteran Mac users (people who used Macs in the {PC} war). ... Frankly, I don't want to see you go through what I had to. So I'm going to do for you what I wish someone had done for me back when I was still a Mac private. I'm going to share with you the 20 most important things, the most important truths I've learned about being a Mac user."

Readers, seek out this book. Pay special attention to doc's favorites among the top 20's list, or go for broke and pick your own—you're not a PC user in disguise, are you?

- Macs are more expensive than PCs
- Stay out of the computer sections of office supply stores or big consumer electronics stores
- The nightmare that Windows and PC users face every day
- When you first meet new people, don't tell them you use Macintosh
- Some of the best things about the Mac OS don't come with your Mac
- Don't expect a two-button mouse

More of Doc's Musings

MacCompanion readers, this book is not all fun and games. Even while it provokes laughs and tears, Kelby's book will teach you about Apple, the Macintosh, and the Mac-PC wars. You'll start to empathize with us long time users, and recall your encounters with PC buffs. Nowhere is safe. They seek us out, like dark evangelists, even at church socials and the team boosters meetings. Such unfortunate encounters, of the third kind, occur almost daily with our otherwise kindly neighbors and co-workers, the PC weenies. Which reminds me...What masochistic tendency keeps me from canceling my subscription to Consumer Reports™? Their ignorance of things Macintosh so biases their computer advice and reviews! In the best of all possible worlds, after Steve Jobs is beatified, they would lose all credibility. These and other folks prove the "Zenism" that "Ignorance can be cured. Stupidity is forever." After all, they keep clapping for PC's with one hand.

To me, the only low point in the book was Chapter 8, "Don't Pick Fights With People Who Buy Ink by the Barrel. PC Users Write Me Nasty Letters, and I Give Them the Public Flogging They So Richly Deserve." This section seemed to be underdone and almost timid...Scott is so very restrained in his response to anally retentive PC know-it-alls commenting on his columns. I guess he has editors, too, or maybe he is just a genuinely nice person! Then again, I'm less tolerant of big-mouthed fools than is Kelby.

Conclusions

With all I have written above, I'd like to conclude this review, not in my own words, but with the words of an individual experienced in both using Macintosh computers and PCs. David Chandler-Gick of Backyard Productions Dynamic Media Group http://www.creativecow.net/articles/chandler-gick_david/macbook_rev/ wrote the following in 2002. Kelby's "latest title, is another sampling of 'Us versus Them Mac Lore', but (on making platform) decisions as well. ... I (David) couldn't put the damn book down! Even when he blasts the 'PC Weenies', I had to turn the page and continue laughing my butt off. ... If you are a Mac fanatic, this book is an absolute must read. Period. No discussion, just drop everything and go buy it now. If you are an open-minded PC user, and you are willing to see the light, then go. Now. Buy. Read. Learn. Realize. But, if you are a close-minded PC Weenie, and cannot accept

the fact that a Mac is simply better than any PC out there, then feel free to have a grand ol' time fixing all the bugs in the next release of Windows." You know there'll be plenty.

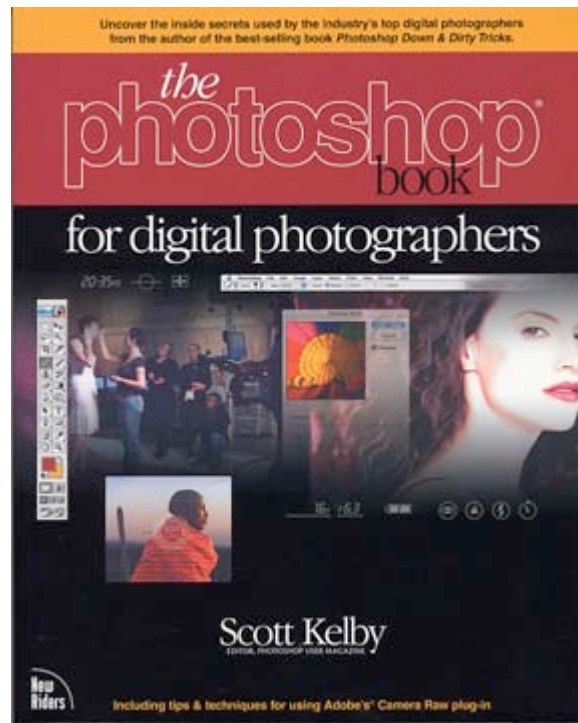
Some of you folks who run AC/DC about computing platforms might think Scott Kelby's humor is overdone, off-the-wall, and irreverent. Great—have at it! As a fan of Monty Python, early "Saturday Night Live," and Smothers Brothers, the only thing Scott could have done to better hook me would have been to sprinkle anguishing puns throughout the book. But then I'm also a devoted reader of Piers Anthony's pugnacious "Worlds of Xanth" books. And again, heart attacks caused by an OD of mirth are not cool. They could cause us to lose our regular hitters on *macCompanion* and they could lose Kelby readers. In these tense days, he even might be branded a terrorist for attacking the sanctity of "The Microsoft™ way and WinTel machine in every household.

This book is full of wit and tongue-in-cheek humor and, surprisingly, absent of pious platitudes and serious preaching. I laughed-snorted-giggled so hard while first reading **Macintosh...The Naked Truth** that I had to leave the comfort of the four pillows on my bed for the isolation of the family room couch lest I awaken my wife.

Fellow travelers and *macCompanions* —Buy it! It's worth 5 macCs, and beats banned recreational substances for reaching a healthful high.

One last Kelby quotation to ease your journey to the next page of *macCompanion*.

"There will always be skeptics.
There will always be disbelievers.
And there will always be Apple to prove them wrong."



The Photoshop Book for Digital Photographers

Reviewed by Roberta B. Taylor

Author: Scott Kelby
<http://www.scottkelby.com/>
New Riders Publishing, March 2003
201 W. 103rd Street
Indianapolis, Indiana 46290-1097
Phone: Toll free 1800-571-5840 +9 +7477
Outside US: 1-317-581-3500 Ask for New Riders
Fax: 1-317-581-4663
nrfeedback@newriders.com
<http://www.newriders.com>
365 pages
\$40USD, \$63CAN, £31Net UK
ISBN 0735712360
Intermediate



Strengths: The book is interesting, easy to read, understand and is well illustrated. Scott provides step-by-step illustrated instructions for every project which will walk the user from beginning to completion.

Weaknesses: No book can be all things to all people. In Scott's next book I would like to see more of Photoshop's tools featured. In "the Photoshop Book", he devoted twenty-five pages to sharpening techniques. Wouldn't it be great to see all the tools and their tricks described in such detail?

Scott Kelby does it again! Another informative book that is written

simply and clearly enough for the novice to understand.

Scott walks the reader through various Photoshop tools such as the browser, the crop tool, straightening crooked photos using both the measuring tool and by creating a grid, and added innovative ways to resize photos. He also shows how to fix various photo problems such as repairing a photo washed out by too much flash, fixing underexposed photos and the addition of a fill flash “after the fact”. He also taps “Photoshop’s” arsenal of color correction tools and leads the reader step by step through the correction process of the most common color problems such as red-eye and hue correction.

Adobe has two plug-ins for Photoshop that offer a great deal of promise. The first one is “Camera Raw”, a plug in which allows custom presets to process the raw photo, yet leave the original image untouched as a “digital negative”. The second plug-in mentioned is “JPEG 2000” which compresses the file into much smaller sizes than the current JPEG mode without losing as much quality.

Also covered is masking, 16 bit image selections and saving highlights as selections. He really revs into high gear with his chapter on retouching portraits. I’ve been digitally botoxing photos for some time but didn’t consider elongating a photo to make the subject appear slimmer or using the liquefy tool to remove ‘love handles’. As I read through that chapter I wondered what these techniques will mean to the legions of people who post their photos on-line in the personal ads.

Scott also demonstrated some pretty interesting techniques for replicating photography filters, suggestion on collaging, adding depth of field to objects and photo stitching. He finished the book with black and white photo editing techniques and a primer on sharpening techniques, along with other tidbits of interest and use to any avid photographer and “Photoshop” fan.

The book is well laid out and easy to read for the novice as well as the professional “Photoshop” user. I’m taking off .5 on the macC rating because his attempts at humor get tedious.

Hardware



Asanté FriendlyNET GX5-800P 8-port Gigabit Ethernet Workgroup Switch

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Asanté Technologies, Inc.

821 Fox Lane
San Jose, CA 95131
USA

1-408-435-8388

Fax 1-408-432-7511

Released: October 13, 2003

sales@asante.com

<http://www.asante.com>

\$190 USD or about \$23.75 per port.

Requirements: A desire to go to 1 Gig and computers that can go the distance! And a copper-based network that can run 1,000 Megabits per second.



Strengths: All ports are auto-negotiating auto-uplinking at 1 Gig speeds using 2 Gbps full-duplex while non-managed over copper.

Weaknesses: The power supply cord is about 2 feet too short for me.

Which Macs would benefit from using Asanté's **FriendlyNET™ GX5-800P 8-port Gigabit Ethernet Workgroup Switch**? Both the 15" and 17" PowerBooks and all the G5s have Gigabit Ethernet connections on board. But then, don't let that stop you if you own any of the other Macs, because the GX5 also handles 100 Mbps and 10 Mbps systems as well. From experience, a faster switch means less of a strain on the network bandwidth as well for "slower" network cards. It no longer is the bottleneck on the network. And it does it running at 2 Gbps full-duplex over copper using a data RAM buffer of 512K per device.

The GX5 also has no cooling fan, relying on the metal cover to act as the heat-sink. It runs at 32-104 degrees F (0-40 degrees C) in anywhere from 10%-95% non-condensing humidity (don't run it in the rain). And the 110-120 Volt Direct Current switching power supply is a fist-sized wall-wart sucking 0.4 Amps while providing +5 Volts Direct Current, 2.4 Amps output. I just wished the power cord were a little bit longer.

The system uses Auto-Uplink™ technology (MDI/MDX), meaning that it knows whether or not the cable you plugged in is straight-through, or crossed over on any of the ports.

The case seen above is 7.5(W)x4.75(D)x1.5(H) inches or 19(H)x12(D)x3.8(H) cm in size or about 1 hand-span wide and 1U (rack-mount standard) in height.

Is it standards-compliant? Yes, with Ethernet, IEEE 802.3 (10BaseT), 802.3u (100BaseTX) and 802.3z/ab (1000BaseT) and for emissions, FCC Class A and Class CE.

And it has a 2-year warranty and with 2-year, 24-hour online and phone support.

Setup is truly "plug-and-play". The "Quick Start Guide" is a 6-page double-sided fanfold not much bigger than the power supply. No management required.

How do you know it is working? The diagnostic LEDs blink. If there is green link blinking activity, and both the 1000 Mbps and 100 Mbps lights are off, then the port is running at 10 Mbps. Otherwise either the 1000 Mbps or the 100 Mbps green LEDs are on and the Link/Activity LED blinks.

Can the GX5s be "daisy-chained"? Yes. Any port to any port between boxes. We are no longer limited to a single port for backbone connectivity.

And at a price this low, straight from the manufacturer, it is a sin *not* to get it when compared to 10/100 Mbps switches that don't cost much less and Gigabit Ethernet competitors that cost considerably more.

Asanté just turned Gigabit Ethernet into a commodity item! And since we are now an affiliate, you can go get one or two or more from our link at <http://maccompanion.com/computeraff.html>. Go check this unit out and look at their other products.



24x Internal CD-RW Drive for iMac

Reviewed by Eddie Hargreaves

MCE Technologies, LLC
30 Hughes, Suite 203
Irvine, CA 92618
USA
1-949-458-0800
Fax : 1-949-458-1803
info@mcetech.com
<http://www.mcetech.com>
\$179 USD

Requirements: Revision A-D iMac (233-333MHz tray-loaders)



Strengths: Adds fast, internal CD burning capabilities to tray-loading iMacs. Buffer underrun error prevention. Toast Lite included.

Weaknesses: External appearance not as nice as original drive.

The original iMacs have their strengths and their weaknesses. I consider their tray-loading CD-ROM drives a strength, because you can use irregularly-shaped CDs, unlike the slot-loaders, which have been known to get even normal discs stuck inside.

But one weakness is their lack of high-speed connections. If you want to burn CDs, you have to get an external USB device. And the transfer rate of USB only allows for a top burning speed of 4x, if you're lucky.

Thanks to MCE, though, you can replace your slow, external burner with a fast, internal one, reclaiming desk space and an outlet.

The drive I reviewed is a 16x model, which has since been replaced by the 24x model. It burns CD-Rs at 24x, CD-RWs at 10x and reads CD-ROMs at 24x. It is compatible with Apple's built-in CD burning software in both Mac OS 9 and Mac OS X and iTunes®. It also comes with a copy of Toast 5 Lite, which also runs in both OSes. The copy that came with mine was slightly out-of-date, but a free update was available from Roxio's Web site <http://www.roxio.com>.

The drive can be self-installed or done by one of the MCE Authorized Dealers in your area. If you've replaced the internal hard drive in your iMac, you'll have no problem doing this switch. Even if you've just replaced the RAM, this install won't be too much more difficult. The instructions that came in my box accidentally had some pages missing, but were easily downloaded from MCE's Web site.

One of the iMac's other strengths is its design and visual appeal. Because the original CD-ROM is connected to the door, the CD-RW replacement puts a new door on. It is not as attractive as the original door, even with the color-coordinated eject button, which is basically just a beveled sticker.

If you can stand to have your iMac's tray-loading door uglified-up a little, the benefits will be tremendous. You'll never want to go back to 2x-4x burning speeds again.



Showcase - iPod cover
Reviewed by Ted Bade

Contour Design, Inc.
10 Industrial Drive
Windham, NH 03087 USA
Phone: 800-462-6678
Fax: 603-893-4558
info@contourdesign.com
<http://contourdesign.com/>
Product site:
http://www.contourshowcase.com/cdi_showcase/
Cost: \$40 USD
Special requirements: Works with a 3g iPod
(Touch control models)



Strengths: Strong slip-resistant case. Access to controls while in case. Shows off your iPod rather than hiding it.

Weaknesses: Operating controls feel awkward, especially for people with larger fingers.

Contour Designs recently released the Showcase, an innovative outer cover/protector for the latest revision of the iPod. (Specifically those with the touch controls in a line just below the LCD.) This cover covers the iPod in a sturdy plastic case while allowing access to the controls.



Showcase is constructed of clear plastic on the front and the back, surrounded by a softer rubber-like material around the edges. The clear plastic lets the beauty of the iPod to shine through, while the rubber-like material on the side makes it easier to hold the iPod. Openings on the top and bottom as well as in the appropriate places on the front allow access to the iPods controls and connections.

Putting the iPod in this case is simple. Open the case (like a book, the front and back open apart), drop in the iPod then close the "book". A latch on the side of the Showcase is snapped into position to ensure it doesn't reopen.



The front and the back of the Showcase are made of clear plastic. The backside, presumably because one might want to see the engravings on the back of the iPod. However, if your iPod is 20GB or less, you need to insert a rubber pad to prevent this thinner iPod from rattling around in the Showcase. The pad blocks the view of your engraving.

I would complain about this, but, as my wife pointed out, this rubber pad adds a layer of protection. A good point. But this leaves me with a quandry. Do I complain that the larger iPods are less well protected or that one cannot view the engravings on the smaller ones? I guess it all depends upon the iPod you have! Ultimately, if you have one of the bigger iPods, you will be able to showcase its backside as well as the front; as for protecting the iPod, the backside is protected in either case (though perhaps better on the smaller ones).

The Showcase is designed such that openings in the top and the bottom of the case allow access to the connections and controls there. These openings are designed such that you can remove the iPod from the Showcase even while things are plugged in.

My wife almost never remembers to insert that little plastic cover onto the iPod's dock connection. More than likely, she has already lost the one that came with the iPod; (keeping track of little pieces of plastic is not our forte'). Because of this, I would have liked to see some form of a cover on the bottom of the showcase, something easily moved aside but firmly attached!

The design of the Showcase is such that when the little protective cover is inserted, there is no problem closing the Showcase. However, getting the insert off might require opening it.



The Showcase comes with a belt clip that is both easy to snap into place and to remove, yet holds onto the Showcase quite securely. The clip holds the iPod lengthwise along your waist, rather than up-and-down. I personally feel this is a more comfortable position to keep the iPod in.

Once the iPod is in the Showcase, you can access the controls both on the front and the top. If you have really big fingers, you might find it awkward accessing the touch buttons on the front and the lock switch on the top. Since the iPod's touch buttons are pretty sensitive, just gently placing one's fingertip in the right hole usually does the job. It's not terribly hard, just awkward.

The outer edges of the Showcase are made of a softer plastic that feels like rubber and is easy to grip. This is something we like, since the iPod, being so smooth, often gives one the impression that it might slip from one's hand.

But, as with any softer plastic like this, I am concerned that it might easily pick up stains and dirt. The Showcase comes with cleaning instructions, which are easy enough. In the short time I have had the Showcase, it has always cleaned up well. I didn't try staining it with any tough stains like wine or blood. I am a little concerned about how well the Showcase will clean up in the long term. But don't forget, if the case is stained, the iPod hasn't!

With all this protection, the Showcase doesn't make the iPod that much larger. In the Showcase, the newer iPod is only slightly bigger than my older first generation iPod without a case. However, unlike Contour's iSee cover for earlier iPods, the Showcase doesn't come with a place to keep your ear buds. (does anyone other than myself hate those ear buds?)

Want to see their commercial? If you have a high bandwidth connection, click on this link to view a video of the Showcase. http://www.contourshowcase.com/cdi_showcase/.

Overall I like this case. It looks cool, protects the iPod, and is easy to grip, yet provides access to the controls. Like the name implies, this case is designed to "showcase" your iPod while protecting it! If you are looking for a cover for your 3rd generation iPod, definitely check out the Showcase.

Shareware



ArcherPro™ Version 4.0.4

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Parker Software Development, Inc.
251 N.W. 118 Avenue
Coral Springs FL 33071
USA

1-305-388-4683

Fax: 1-305-940-0747

support@parkersoftware.com

<http://www.parkersoftware.com/products/archerpro/>

Updated November 23, 2003

Free to try, \$30 USD online through either
esellerate or PayPal. Or Combo Pack with
NewsHunter for \$50 USD.

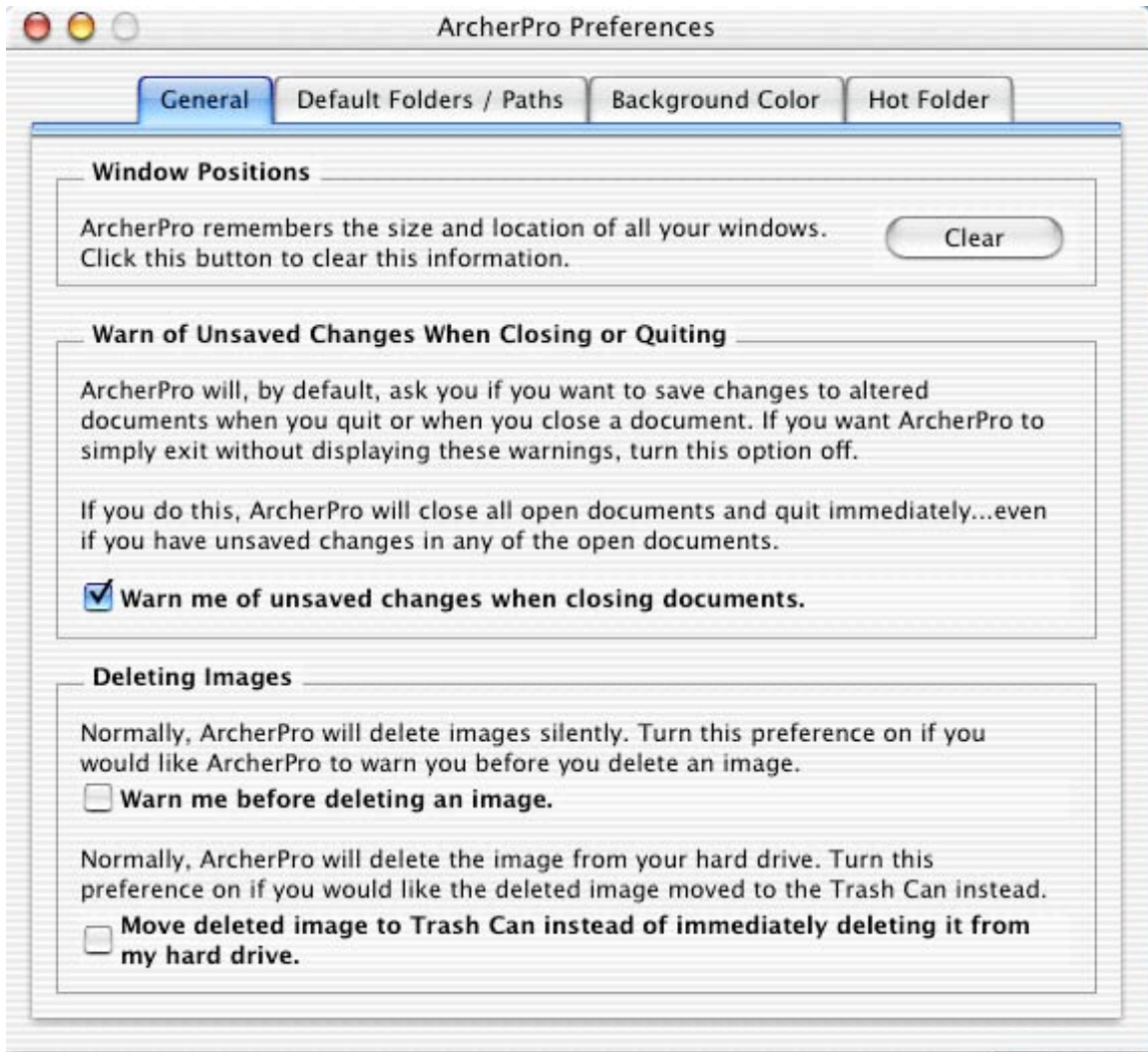
Requirements: Mac OS X, 4.2 MB hard drive
space.



Strengths: Quicksort routine. Viewing,
organizing and cataloging of still images,
movies, or audio files.

Weaknesses: Maybe it is "too simple" for
a tutorial? (Use the Help button.)

If you are using iPhoto, why would you spend another \$30 on another Image Viewer such as ArcherPro™ from *Parker Software Development, Inc*? Well, wouldn't you like to slideshow your way through thousands of images? And maybe you don't already have a copy of ACDSee™ (\$45) or iView Media Pro™ (\$160) or Photoshop™ (much more spendy). Or even the latest version of Apple's Panther with its wowsey document management processes.



So what comes with ArcherPro 4.0.4? There is a Hot Folder that is pretty much a scratch folder for new images, but then they are added to the current slide show process. And then there is an ArcherProDB which places where the images are indexed in ArcherPro's own database connected to Destination folders so images can be flagged for future reference and processing.

And the process then becomes pretty much a one-button activity for viewing still images.

There are 3 ways to use ArcherPro; Menu Commands, Command Key Combos or Single Keystroke Commands. I prefer the Menu approach. But when presentations are used and KeyNote™ isn't being used, the keyboard commands come in handy.

Open ArcherPro into a blank document, then import images to it or export from it. One command that is rather touchy is the "Delete from hard drive". It skips putting stuff in the trashcan, unless you go to preferences and specifically tell it to. IF you care to, you can mess with the background color or throw images together and then watch them play through.

If an image is too large, panning is permitted and the images can be seen in actual size. Toggling can be done to take over the screen or not. If movies are encountered, those can be played and

audio can be included.

Double-clicking on an entry in a Destination folder opens the viewer and begins loading the images found there.

Because it uses its own database process, it runs through the images at a pretty fast clip. (Those really are stills, right?)

Give it a whirl if you are on a tight budget.



Nisus Thesaurus

Reviewed by Ted Bade

Nisus Software, Inc.
P.O.Box 1300
Solana Beach, CA 92075
U.S.A.
Phone: (858) 481-1477
Fax: (858) 481-6154
sales@nisus.com

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

Software site:

<http://www.nisus.com/Thesaurus/>

Cost: Free!

Download site:

<http://www.nisus.com/Thesaurus/>

System requirements: MacOS X 10.2 and a G3

Experience needed: Moderate - need to understand OS X system services

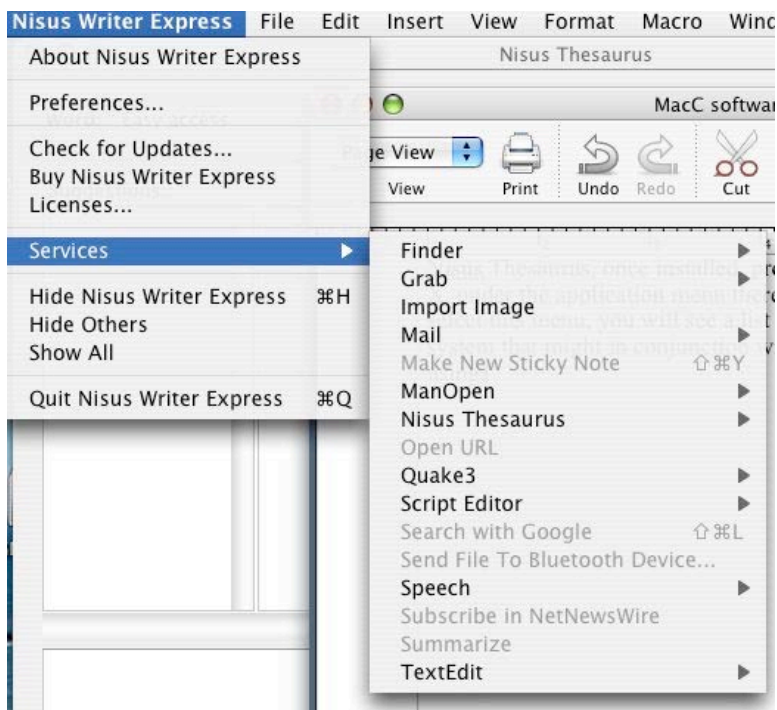


Strengths: Easy access, large dictionary of words, accessible with any application.

Weaknesses: Moving selected word to document is cumbersome.

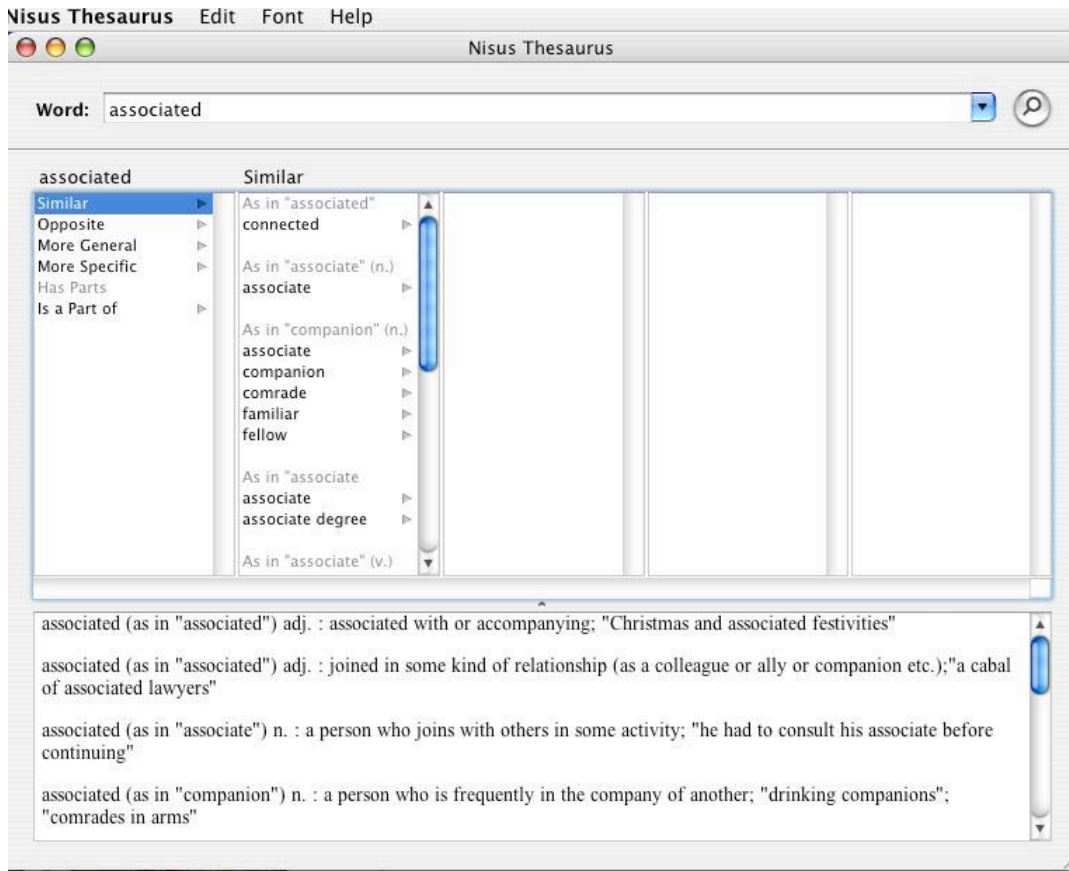
I recently reviewed NisusWriter Express for *macCompanion*. One of my complaints in that review was a lack of a Thesaurus. Although I realized that the people at Nisus were working on one to use with NisusWriter Express, I didn't realize that Nisus Thesaurus would be a program

that would work with any application and that it would be free!



Nisus Thesaurus, once installed, is accessed as a system service. In MacOS X, under the application menu there is an item called "Services". If you select this menu, you will see a list of applications installed on your system that might provide a service to the program you are currently using. (I am not sure what determines if an application shows up on this menu. Most likely it is something in the program files. But I often see items that make me wonder!! Take a look at the above image to see what I mean.)

To access Nisus Thesaurus you select it from the services menu. If you have a word selected, Nisus Thesaurus will bring up the entry for that word. The entry will include a definition of the word, and a list of other words associated with it. If you don't have a word selected, the same window shows up, but you will need to type in a word.

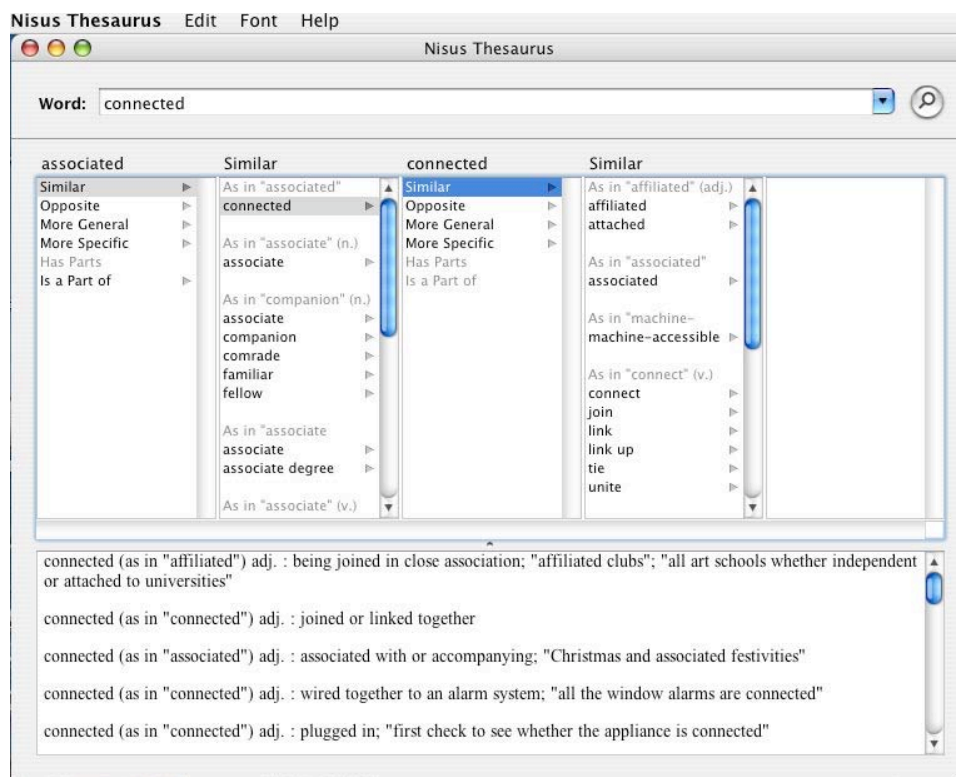


As you can see from the image, Nisus Thesaurus provides this information in a column view window. The word under consideration is on the top and the definition is below the columns. The first row lets you choose what type of match you are interested in. Depending upon the word and what the Thesaurus has available for it, the items in the first column change.

When you select an item in the first column, the second column shows a list of words that meet this criteria. The items in this list are grouped by specific meanings of the chosen word and how the word is being used (verb, noun, etc). Selecting any word in this second column makes that the word you are working with. A third column appears with the Thesaurus entry for that word, and the definition window at the bottom and the word window at the top changes to reflect the word you selected.

You can click on a word in the next column, which will bring up yet another column and so on. I don't know how far one can go, but I went as far as I normally would be interested in and it does more than that.

What I didn't like is that the word in the top window changes and you progressively select words in the column, but doesn't change back as you return. This means you might loose track of the word you started with. You can move backwards in the columns to the entry for the original word (with it choices and definition), but the word listed in the top window remains the same as the last one you last selected. I found this a bit confusing.



There are two ways to bring a word from the Thesaurus to the document you are working on. First you can lookup a word, select a choice from its entry, then return to the document, and finally use the Nisus Thesaurus Service menu choice to "Replace Selection". This method is a bit clunky for my taste.

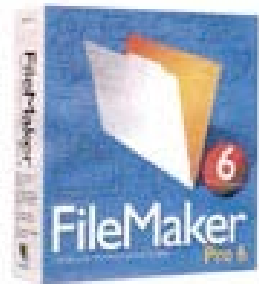
A less clunky method would be to select a word, then use "edit/copy" to bring the word back to the document and finally paste it where it belongs. Neither method is as elegant as the built in Thesaurus of Microsoft Word.

However, While I am comparing Nisus Thesaurus with Microsoft Office, don't forget that Nisus Thesaurus can be used with any application, not just Nisus WriterExpress (either through the Services menu for Cocoa service aware applications or as a stand alone application). This means you can access it in an email program, TextEdit, or any other application where you might be dealing with words. Even if one isn't looking for a synonym or antonym, Nisus Thesaurus provides a dictionary entry. A feature I find useful when I need to see if a particular word really fits. With MS Word's built-in thesaurus, you cannot access it in any of the other program, even other Office applications!

Overall I really like Nisus Thesaurus. It works well, can be used in conjunction with any application that allows access to the Services menu, and is free! I would recommend buying it even if the cost was \$20!

Visit the Nisus website and download the Thesaurus. While you are there, purchase NisusWriter Express or one of the other great applications from Nisus!

Software



File Maker Pro 6 MacAcademy Volume 1 (Structure Setup - Flat-File)

Review, Presented by Keith Keil

Reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad



MacAcademy®

MacAcademy/WindowsAcademy
102 East Granada Blvd.
Ormond Beach, FL 32176
1-800-527-1914 or 1-386-677-1918
Fax: 1-386-677-6717
<http://www.macacademy.com/indexmac.html>

And

The Pleasaunce
Buckenham Road
Attleborough NR17 2LZ
United Kingdom
Tel: 01953.457.600
Fax: 01953.456.458
<http://www.macacademy.co.uk/indexmac.html>

The FileMaker 6.0 tutorial series contains seven CDs priced \$39 USD each, with the whole set occasionally available from the publisher at below \$273 USD.

Requirements: The tutorials can be used both by Windows and Macintosh platform users with computers capable of viewing "video-style" CDs. The CD reviewed will work on both MAC OSX and "classic" OS version supported computers, after all it's a flexible, work at your own speed, personal training film.



Strengths: Clear, well written, easy-to-understand

Weaknesses: FMP5 illustrations for an FMP6 product.

Overall Summary

Volume 1 of 7 in the *MacAcademy's* FileMaker Pro™ (FMP) version 6 tutorials provide an excellent introduction to the basics of creating and using simple effective flat-file databases. Since Filemaker Pro, in its multiple variants, is the most broadly used and popular database software for users who need a serious tool for data management, the availability of a rich and easy to understand tutorials is a blessing. The volume reviewed is a great place to start learning about FMP for both newbies and advanced but likely not needed by FMP solutions developers. Although the tutorials are Invoice file-business oriented, there was much for me to either learn or appreciate, despite having lived with FMP from the earliest Claris published versions. Using the CD is as simple as dragging the provided Mac OS or MAC OSX Player to your desktop [or hiding it in your utilities folder] and double clicking on its icon. The standard "player" controls to pause and restart the lessons work in the usual manner simplifying the "playing and replaying" the course elements.

Introduction

As a serious user of Filemaker Pro™ 6, I create many flat file databases (DBs) ranging from those collecting income tax inputs, Macintosh hints collections, associated address books to the databases for the various collectables [music-books-movies] that are part of my family's hobbies. When the opportunity to review the "X" Filemaker 6 tutorials, I both welcomed the chance to do so—and procrastinated. Would my spending at least 3-5 hours in front of a screen per CD be worth the spent time and energy? I have created, both for my own use and for friends, dozens of simple flat-file databases, which although they were graphically and stylistically simple, worked. Most of my databases contain from 800 to 8,000 records. I, over the years, checked out FMP database templates that I downloaded from the web, as well as the many templates provided by Filemaker, Inc., itself. As I procrastinated, a question kept nagging me—why bother? My databases mostly do what I need them to do although they are as plain as a slice of white bread.

Early on in my, mostly ignored, desire to become a more sophisticated user of FMP, I reviewed Nolan Hester's excellent [4.5 macCs] book *FileMaker Pro 6 for Windows and Macintosh: Visual Quick Start Guide* (Peachpit Press, 2002) published in our October 2003 edition. The book began a process filtered through even my thick skull, that I was using less than 1% of FMP's capabilities, often doing database entry and information searches the hard time-consuming way. My interest in learning more was also periodically tweaked by admiring nifty graphically attractive, and shortcut-enhanced commercial and freeware templates I occasionally stumbled upon when doing my monthly new shareware sweeps on MacUpdate™ and Version Tracker™ or on the MacAddict™ disk. ... So okay, under the gentle prodding of our editor-in-chief, I bit the bullet and started checking out Volume 1 of the *MacAcademy* Filemaker Pro 6 tutorial series. Was I in for a surprise!

To start with, the clear graphics and crisp to this hearing impaired reviewer, narratives made using the MacAcademy tutorial a painless experience, compared to other tutorials I have tried and with which I've gotten frustrated.

In Section 1, the usual comparisons about creating and using a database to more common household and computer related information storage objects such as index cards and file folders stored in a file cabinet, helps orient the new user to databases and their functions. In the initial lesson sections, Keil follows database definition with an introduction to DB creation (starting with a yellow pad) then helps through starting to define fields for creating an initially simple "customer" address (contact) list.

The specific sections on the Volume 1 CD logical and well organized, but much of the materials emphasized by the author-instructor contained DB creation and use related information that was new, even to me. A few topics were of no present interest to me since the tutorial is oriented to a small business needing to keep track of its customers, suppliers and company products. But the details, even in those "application areas," provided me with insights to processes for enhancing the efficiency and usefulness of my own databases.

The Logic behind the presentations in Volume 1 is clear-cut. The instructor leads us through the process of creating bins for our data (the fields), carefully identifying available data bin types (e.g., text, numbers, dates, calculated and summary information). Keil moves on to discussions on filling those newly created bottles, jars, bags and bins for data storage manually and ultimately in a predefined semiautomatic manner.

- The CD covers the more obvious subjects for beginner orientation; namely, the definition of a database (Section 1 {S. 1}), defining {data} fields (S. 2), creating {data} records (S. 3).
- It then moves on to the more complex subjects of, Replacing Data Sets (S. 4), defining {data} value lists (S. 5).
- The CD continues by demonstrating how to Auto-enter [AE] serial or customer ID numbers (S. 6), AE information by calculation (S. 7), and look-ups (S. 8). Since typing errors are the major cause of database use glitches, validating entered data becomes a critical issue.
- Keil then moves on to a discussion of the concepts (S. 9) of and methods for validating data entry including validating entries by calculation (S. 10), and
- Introduces the subject of performing basic calculations (S. 11) to create new "derived" data.
- Finally, the lessons move to the heart of database use searching for stored information by finding your records (S. 12).

After all, if you can't find and use your data, which might be scattered among thousands of records, why bother creating a database?

In this review I'll only share in detail, as examples of the richness of these tutorials, some of my newly learned insights from lesson sections 2 and 12. In part, resulting from *macCompanion's* informal but real page limitations, and out of respect for you the reader, by minimizing my tendency to lecture. As a fallen academic, this is an unbreakable habit. But, even more to the point, this will give you, who are soon to be serious database gurus, an excuse to by this CD.

Keith Keil, as had Nolan Hester before him, started by reminding potential database authors that the most important starting point was outlining needs and characteristics (functions and requirements for all you teckies) on a sheet of paper. This is something I never did while creating my own databases so they "grew like Topsy" or perhaps Alice. An additional general feature of this, and likely the other volumes in this seven CD set series, is that when dealing with more complex tutorial elements of using FMP, Keith Keil suggests that the viewer pause and replay any material not clear to them. After all this is personalized, work at your own speed, training. I used these stopping points to check out possibly applying the lesson element to one or more of my databases. Starting to make incremental changes to my database structure, has slowly led to my tuning up the field structure in the multiple address books I keep (e.g., Suppliers, Family and Friends, Professional Contacts and Crafts Contacts—a not necessarily exclusive set of entries).

Field Naming Standards

For me, Keil's introduction (Section 2) of field naming standards for use with Text fields and number was a rich new experience. Hither a to I'd named database fields somewhat arbitrarily using words (descriptors) that at the time described their data content. It did not occur to me that types of data could be generally grouped. Alternatively for various address lists or collections of stuff, I cloned my initial databases, which over time were then individually altered to fine-tune their specific needs. What a mess!

In the table below, I have tabulated some general examples of field naming standards. Text items are associated with [a] an individual (e.g., first and last name, middle initial, title, business name, department or branch, street address, perhaps 2 data fields, City, State, Zip Code, country) or [b] Contact information such as phone and internet data (e.g., home phone, business phone, mobile phone *or* email, 2 fields, Web page UR), These groupings allow one to more easily keep track of the large varieties of fields found in many complex databases. These naming conventions, about which *MacAcademy* actually teaches a course, both identify generally related data categories. This organization method will ultimately simplify retuning a klutzy database, even by you when you get smarter about field creation. The concept of naming standards can also be applied to establishing database(s), as I do, for collectables, by establishing fields that identify activities and sub-activities associated with my individual records, making it easy to search for software developers or jazz musicians. In helter-skelter databases like mine, this is both a blessing and a burden. The contents of my activity field names (read that as focus or subject if you like) evolved without creating a data dictionary. But I'm getting a head of myself by impinging on later volumes.

	Text Fields	Number Fields
nameFirst	contactPhonehome	priceItemsordered
nameLast	contactphoneWork	priceUnit,
nameTitle	contactPhoneMobile	priceItemtotal
nameAddressone	contactEmail	priceTotalDue
nameZipcode	contactWeb	
	contactWeb	

You caught me! Yes macCompanion readers, a zip code is not really a number since you never need to use it in a calculation—it's a text field. And anyway, as you'll find when you check out this CD, text fields are easier to specify specifics in when doing focused "advanced" *searches*. Another reason, fields need to have unique naming conventions is to assure that they will sort properly in the define field lists. If you named your fields "First Name" and "Zip Code" they would be far apart in an alphabetical sort order. However, by naming the same fields "nameFirst" and "nameZipCode," they would be just a few fields apart no matter how you sorted them in the "Define Fields" mode.

Searching For Needed Data

Finding information in records was as rich a leaning experience as anything in this the first CD. For years I have been doing simple, compound, and multiple criteria based searches (using FMP's find function) recognizing that FMP could either search for information by using a Boolean *and-or-or* criteria. Keith Keil discusses and illustrates Finds of a variety of complexity and power. Yes, for database use complexity is often power to data mine!

One can evolve, important in databases larger than 50 records, searches ranging from one field simple, compound searches of multiple fields or the use of parallel multiple finds to find the data you need. New to me was the ability to more broadly use a wide array of search criteria even for data that was incorrectly spelled or whose letters were somewhat uncertain. In addition, the ability to narrow or constrain information in found data sets allowed me more powerful search tools when data mining. Even the use of wildcards [undefined letters in a search entry] and finding the eliminated record set proved immediately useful.

Minor Observations and Gripes

The early introduction of distracting information on creating developer fields, useful only to folks who should know how to deal with multiple inputs to database creation, irritated me no end. This material would be suitable in a later CD but not in Volume 1.

All the FMP illustrative graphics are mostly in FMP 5 formats, but all the examples work in FMP 6.0. The training material on this disk does heavily focus on the new and enriched features found only in FMP version 6 [.fp6]. Illustrations of finder related file structures are shown in column view, supporting understanding by both Windows and MAC OSX users.

Conclusion

Although the arrangements of the sections in this volume, aimed at small retail business mailing lists was not completely to my liking, this volume was eye opening. Even the sections for which I had no immediate need, as a creator of primarily address and collectables lists each lesson provided me with tools or approaches for using FMP to creating more flexible and easy to use databases. Hey, I'm not in the database creation business...yet. Despite my initial discomforts the personal relevance of some of the lesson contents, nothing that Keith Keil presented on CD #1 distracted me from my mission—to make my homegrown databases either easier to protect against data entry mistakes by this two-finger typist. In future *macCompanion* reviews, I will be providing you with my thoughts on the other six volumes of this series-stay tuned.

Volume 1 of the MacAcademy Filemaker Pro series is a must buy, which by yet unproven speculation I suspect will be true of the other CDs in this series. This, first in a series, CD is an outstanding learning tool and deserves 4.5 macC's.



iPulse 2.0 - System Monitoring Tool

Reviewed by Eddie Hargreaves

Iconfactory
7204 West Friendly Ave.
Building 2, Unit H
Greensboro, NC 27410-6211
<http://www.iconfactory.com>
\$13 USD
Requirements: Mac OS X 10.2+

Strengths: Graphically represents numerous system activities. Pop-up info windows replace trips to Terminal. Highly customizable.

Weaknesses: Can't monitor Internet traffic to/from Classic applications. Measurement of disk usage not updated frequently enough.



Though iPulse™ 2.0, the Iconfactory's system monitoring utility, is a free upgrade for owners of 1.0. It has far more additional features than such a move would suggest. In fact, it's positively overflowing with usefulness!

The previous version monitored various aspects of your system including: CPU activity, system load over time, network activity, memory activity and usage, disk usage and the current time and date. This newer version adds battery power, wireless signal strength and the amount your disk is being accessed.



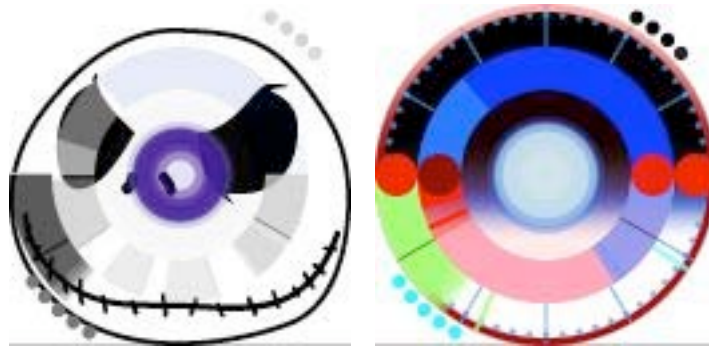
All of those measurements can be displayed by other utilities in other ways. And Panther's new Activity Monitor - a combination of CPU Monitor and Process Viewer with some extra features thrown in - is home to a few of them. But iPulse can display them all in a single 128x128 pixel window. And if that size is too large, you can shrink it all the way down to 32x32 pixels.

Of course, the smaller the window is, the smaller the gauges are, and the more difficult to read it becomes. Thankfully, unlike OS X itself, iPulse is highly customizable and allows you to pick and choose any combination of gauges you want and the colors you want them to use. Added in 2.0 is the ability to use a background image.

That customization is the true star of iPulse, whose preferences are almost limitless. You can

choose to have a floating window in addition to the Dock icon, no Dock icon, hover above all windows, hover above the Dock, never hide, don't show gauges in the Dock... the list goes on. You can now even use a hotkey to toggle the floating window, handy for laptop users.

The new iPulse Jackets in 2.0 plays off of the customization theme, allowing you to save custom appearance settings as Jackets. A number of pre-built jackets are bundled with iPulse 2.0 and more are available at Iconfactory at http://www.iconfactory.com/ip_gallery.asp. Here are a couple of examples:

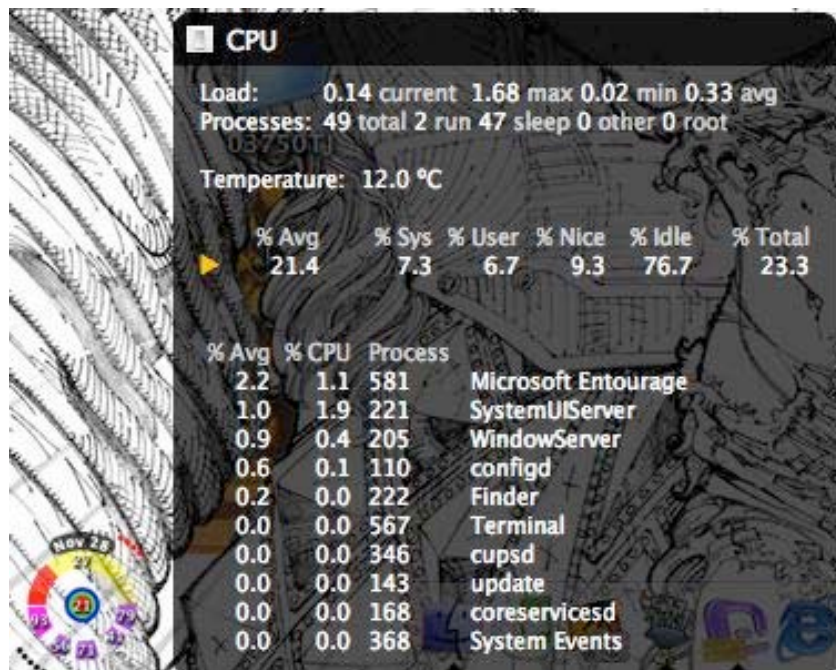


Those improvements alone make the upgrade a "must-have". But the topper is the addition of pop-up windows that show more information about the gauge you mouse over. For instance, if you set your mouse over the CPU gauge, you'll see statistics from the UNIX top process, giving you a detailed analysis of what programs are using the processor. The memory usage gauge will break down exactly how much RAM is in use and how much is free, in addition to a list of which programs are hogging it. The memory swapping gauge shows detailed statistics on pageins and pageouts and how many swapfiles the system has built up. Even the clock gauge will tell you your uptime.

The pop-up windows add a new dimension to an already extremely useful utility and will save many a trip to the Terminal to run top, uptime, cal, or other UNIX processes.

Of course, any utility constantly measuring your system is going to use resources of its own. And the more often it measures, the more it will take. I've noticed that it seems to use less CPU on Panther than it does on Jaguar. With updates every 1.5 seconds, mine takes 8 percent of my CPU on average.

Running the top process in the Terminal uses more than twice as much of the processor.



If you only want to measure one thing on your computer, Panther's Activity Monitor is your utility, especially since its square shape is better at displaying percentages of use and history. But to measure nearly *every* aspect of your system in a highly-customizable manner, iPulse is the best choice.



pxi SmartScale® Version 1.0 (a graphics plug-in for PhotoShop® & PhotoShop Elements®)

Reviewed by Derek Caudill

Edited by Julie M. Willingham

Extensis, Inc.

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Fax: (503) 274-0530

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

[<http://www.extensis.com/pxismartscale/>]

199.95 USD

169.95 USD competitive upgrade for owners of other registered Extensis Products

System Requirements for Macintosh: Adobe

PhotoShop 6.0.1 or higher (OR Adobe

PhotoShop Elements 2.0; Mac OS 9.2.2 or

Mac OS X 10.2.5 and higher; PowerPC G3,

G4, or G4 dual or equivalent; 128 MB RAM minimum, 256+ MB recommended;

QuickTime 5.0.2 or higher (if running Mac OS 9.)

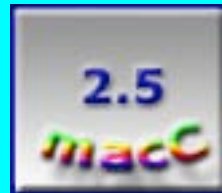
(System Requirements for Windows:

Windows 98, 2000 or XP; Pentium III, 4 or

faster processor; RAM and Adobe

requirements are the same as for Mac.)

Level of Experience Needed: Intermediate



Strengths: User interface is wonderful, and easy to understand. Works well with Photoshop, anticipating the user's actions and telling Photoshop to do them before the user has to. Can be controlled via the keyboard quite a bit. Preferences are straightforward and easy to use. Features file protection. Mac OS 9 compatible--Extensis isn't neglecting us faithful mac OS 9 users!

Weaknesses: Black and white printed manual. Manual is redundant and full of self-praise for Extensis. Help system gave me errors, and was hard to find. Help system is only a color pdf of the manual. Results can be duplicated using Photoshop's built in settings. Price is questionable

Many people like to resize images to fit their needs; however, problems often crop up. When you take a picture with a digital camera, or scan a picture, you create a bitmap: a collection of pixels that fit together to make the picture, like a puzzle. Depending on the physical size of your picture, the file size can be enormous. When you save that file into another format, you compress the picture by merging pixels of different but similar colors, and by removing pixels as well. But, this degradation is so small that most of the time people can't discern a compressed image of a rose from an uncompressed image of a rose.

If you shrink an image's physical size, you are essentially getting rid of pixels. This can reduce quality, but usually doesn't because all the pixels needed to create the image are already there. Enlarging a picture is another story, because you don't have enough pixels to recreate the image accurately. Your graphics application then doesn't have an accurate table of colors and brightness settings to use, so it guesses and makes its own settings. The added pixels make the picture blurry and its edges blocky. So you see, making an image larger can seriously reduce image quality. You can see the problem better in the pictures below:

110x90 pixels, original image



There are several options that we have at this point. You can recreate the image somehow, find a larger copy

365x299 pixels, original image enlarged with Photoshop



of the image, or continually sharpen the newer image. None of those options is all that great. Thankfully, there are some software applications that solve, or at least alleviate, this problem.

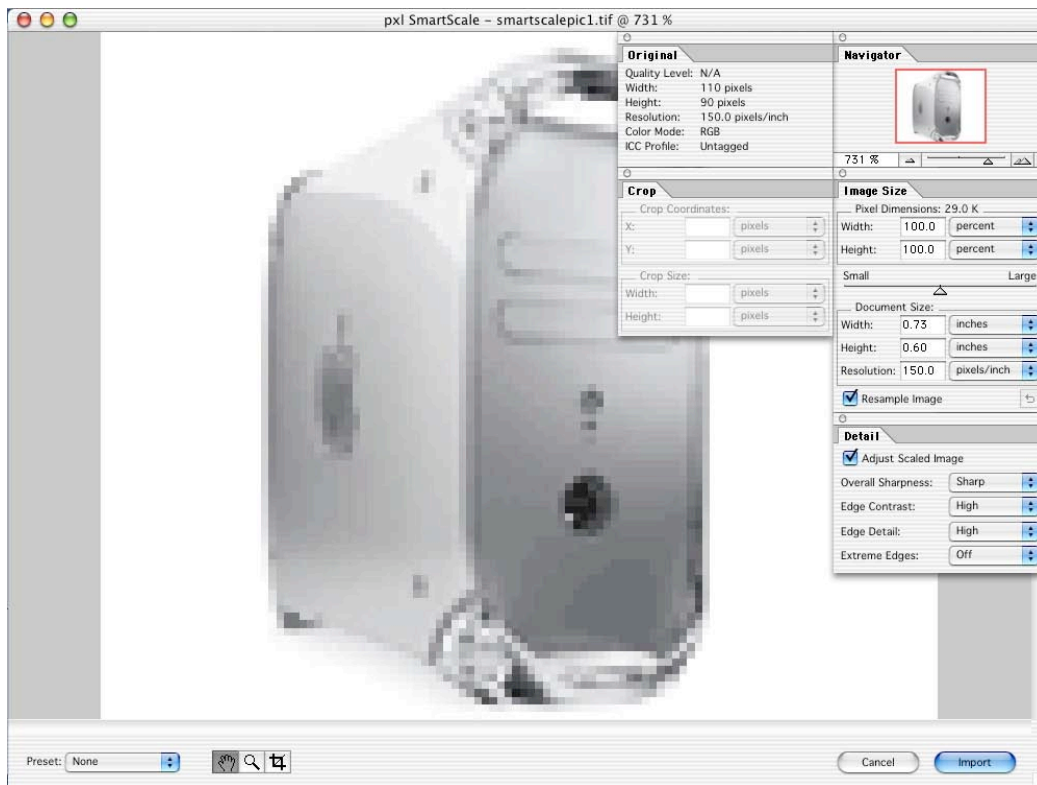
One of those programs is the new pxl SmartScale from Extensis, which allows you to resample an image and scale it up or down. The big difference between it and other graphic enlarging applications is that it retains the brightness and color settings for the pixels, allowing the image to have a much higher quality. This quality extends to resizing an image 1600% percent larger than its original size. I don't know about you, but to me, pxl SmartScale sounds really cool! Let's see if I still think so at the end of this review.

Installing pxl SmartScale was very easy and familiar. I had the choice as to where I wanted it installed, and if it finds two different versions of PhotoShop, say 6 and 7, it will install plug-ins for both versions. This is a nice feature if you switch back and forth between two versions of PhotoShop, which I occasionally do. After it was finished, all I had to do was quit the installer.



The Extensis Menu

As you notice in the picture above, pxl SmartScale can be applied in two different ways. When you have a graphic open in PhotoShop, you can select Scale Current Image. As long as you are in RGB color mode, pxl SmartScale will open. You can also Scale Image from File, which allows pxl SmartScale to open the image, and bypasses PhotoShop. Extensis claims that this saves time, and I agree, especially if all you want is to scale the image to a certain size and save it. (This saves you one step.) After you Scale Image from File, you have the option of closing it or having pxl SmartScale send it to PhotoShop for more editing.



pxl SmartScale, like other Extensis products, doesn't bring up just another dialog box like filters do. Instead, all of PhotoShop's tools and palettes disappear, and are replaced with pxl SmartScale's own palettes and workspace. There are four windows in the pxl SmartScale interface that I will discuss. The first is the Workspace itself, in which you have several tools at your disposal:

First off, you can use a "preset" from a drop-down menu. The advantage to a preset is that if you have a collection of photos you want to scale to the same size using the same settings, you can define a preset, save it, and then use it again on any open file in pxl SmartScale. This is one area that I found lacking, but only because the manual says there are 13 default presets in this drop-down box. However, there aren't any. Luckily, the manual does describe the measurements and resolution of these 13 presets, but it's irritating that they are not preinstalled like the manual says they are.

Next, you have the Hand tool, which allows you to drag around the graphic if it has gone off the visible area of the screen, and the Crop tool, which allows you to focus on one part of an image. You also have the magnifier Zoom tool, which allows you to click on the graphic and get a more detailed view. Starting with the original image (100%), you can zoom in to 200%, 300%, 400%, 500%, 600%, 700%, 800%, 1200%, and 1600%. If you hold down the option key, you will see the Magnifier change to display a minus sign. You can zoom out like you zoomed in, then to 66.7%, 50%, 33.3%, 25%, until you reach 1%.

There are also two buttons in the Workspace window: The Cancel button cancels the pxl SmartScale process and returns you to PhotoShop. The Apply button will send PhotoShop any changes you made to the image. If you hold down the option key on your keyboard, the Apply Button will change to Export. Clicking this will bring up a Save As dialog box, allowing you to save your image in four standard formats (BMP, JPEG, TIFF, PNG) or two proprietary file formats, PixelLive and PixelLive Protected.

Extensis claims that their PixelLive formatted files are reduced in size to about 60% of comparable TIFF files, even at the highest quality level. They say that these files can then be converted back to their original format without any visual loss in quality. PixelLive Protected has a section for inputting your username and password. After you do so and save the settings, you are given a warning to remember your username and password. This information is saved within the file itself, so that if the file were transferred to another computer, it would still be protected. You can override this protection on the local machine so that you don't have to type in that information every time you open the file.

Next, we move on to the three palette windows, and their five sub-sheets. Each sheet can be accessed through the Window menu, and by pre-assigned F keys shown in the Window menu. You can also rearrange the display order of each sheet. You can even drag the Original and Crop sheets to make their own palette windows, or you can make them part of the other palette windows. The windows also dock to each other like in PhotoShop. You can turn the display of your palette windows on or off by simply pressing Tab on the keyboard.

The Navigator Sheet is similar to PhotoShop's Navigator sheet in that it shows a thumbnail view of the entire graphic, and allows the user to click to go to a certain spot in the image. You can also zoom in and out using a sliding bar and buttons on this sheet.

The Original Sheet lists information about the original graphic: width, height, resolution, quality level, color mode, and ICC profile.

The Image Size Sheet lets you can use a slide bar to adjust the Pixel Dimensions and the Document Size settings in inches, percent, centimeters, millimeters, points, or picas. You can

also adjust the resolution in pixels/inch or pixels/cm. There's also a Resample image button. With this checked, you can edit the number of pixels. If this is unchecked, you can, or should be able to, adjust only the Document size, but it just doesn't happen. This seems off to me: why have the feature there if it won't adjust or do anything? I have to assume that it is just there for the user to see what the size would be in the various measurements without actually changing the picture, kind of like a preview. The last button in this sheet is an Undo button that will reset all the settings to their original values.

The Crop Sheet goes hand in hand with the Crop tool of the workspace window. You can refine your crop selection here with X and Y crop coordinates or by width and height, using the same units as above.

The Detail Sheet is where you find the settings to make your enlarged pictures look less pixilated. When enlarging your pictures, you can do it using just pxl SmartScale's default technology, or, you can set various options by checking the Adjust Scaled Image box. The settings include Overall Sharpness (sharp, normal, smooth, smoother), Edge Contrast (low, high), Edge Detail (low, high), and Extreme Edges. Extreme Edges sharpens the edges quite a bit, and, therefore, it is suggested that this be used only on computer generated art, or drawings and comics, rather than on photographs.

The Preferences are really straightforward and organized very well, having four tabs: Presets, Identities, Proxy Settings (which allows you to set up your access to the PixelSafe servers if you are behind a firewall), and Servers. When you save a file as PixelLive Protected, you can save the username and password information in the file for local access, or on a special PixelSafe Server that allows the server administrator to determine which users get to open and modify the files. Support for this server is built into pxl SmartScale, but the server software itself is sold separately.

The manual and documentation for pxl SmartScale is very fundamental. It tells you the basics and then pretty much throws you into the program. This is fine for the most part, as a lot of the program is self-explanatory. The thirty-two-page manual features black and white images of the program in action on Mac OS X, with a few Windows XP screenshots. I like the pictures, as they accurately show what they are talking about when discussing the Details sheet. My favorite part of the manual, however, is the list of all the keyboard commands for both Mac and Windows, because I was really impressed with how much program control it gave me.

OK, now you know how it works and what it does. So, does it live up to its promise of scaling an image and keeping its color and brightness properties, while making it look smooth and less pixilated? Well, in my view, yes, and no. The scaled-up image still looks really blurry, so it seems that it would be best to use pxl SmartScale only if the image is going to be viewed from a distance, rather than from close up.

Remember my sample picture above, which was enlarged in PhotoShop? Let's see how my image looks using pxl SmartScale. I would like to take the same 110x90 pixel image and make it 365x299 pixel width. I want to view it close up, so I determine that I should make the Overall Sharpness sharp and have the Edge Contrast high, and have the Edge Detail high as well. Here is the image in its original PhotoShop scaled form, and in its new-scaled form:

**Scaled from 110x90 pixels to 365x299
in PhotoShop**



**Scaled from 110x90 pixels to 365x299
in pxl SmartScale**



Wow, not much difference is there? Why not? Well, I assume that the settings I used by playing around a bit probably matched quite closely to PhotoShop's default. I wonder if I could make PhotoShop produce the same effects as pxl SmartScale's settings by just using PhotoShop's built in smooth and sharpness controls?

Wow, not much difference is there? Why not? Well, I assume that the settings I used by playing around a bit probably matched quite closely to PhotoShop's default. I wonder if I could make PhotoShop produce the same effects as pxl SmartScale's settings by just using PhotoShop's built in smooth and sharpness controls?

My Final Thoughts:

There are a lot of things I like about this software. I really like the addition of the Extensis Menu to PhotoShop's menu bar. I like the interface, too. It isn't cluttered and it responds a lot like PhotoShop's interface. I also like the new file formats. I like being able to password-protect my images, but it's a shame that I have to save through a proprietary format to do so. I like the speed of the program: it's not slow on my 300 MHz G3, which is nice to see. I love the fact that Extensis hasn't forgotten us faithful OS 9 users. I have no reason to move to OS X yet, and this keeps me in current technologies. I also like the fact that Extensis provides on the CD and for download a royalty-free plug-in allowing people to view PixelLive and PixelLive Protected files without having pxl SmartScale! I also like how it interacts with PhotoShop.

My favorite feature however is the keyboard commands. They are simple to remember and provide a lot of control for a product where the mouse would seem the prime choice. You can't do everything with the keyboard, but what you can do, you can do faster than with the mouse.

My only problems with the interface are that the scroll bars are mostly covered up, and that the workspace window doesn't fit only the image. I also was disappointed that all that Help opens up is a PDF of the User Manual, but at least it's in color. And besides the actual lack of help, I had

to dig through the Finder folders to find this PDF. I had to, because when I selected Help from the program, I got a "Could Not Open The Help File" error because it couldn't be found, and I didn't move it!

Another thing that bothered me was that a lot of the manual was repeated instructions. After 1 or 2 times, I already knew the different ways to access pxl SmartScale. After reading both the reviewer Evaluation Guide and the manual, I was surprised how much of the text was duplicated. A lot of it was promotional information, telling how great Extensis is. I didn't need them to beat that in my head; I like to decide that for myself. I also wish that the printed manual were in color. I also wish that I could open GIFs directly into pxl SmartScale.

My main problem with the program is that after all is said and done, I can recreate the quality and sharpness using just the stuff that comes built into PhotoShop 7. It forces me to ask why bother buying pxl SmartScale at all? It seems to me to be a waste of money, providing only the benefit of having all the tools needed in one place, the pxl SmartScale Interface.

After reviewing all this, I find myself disappointed; but, I think, "Its only version 1.0!" Maybe Extensis should have waited further down the road before releasing it, though. It seems more like a beta to me than it does a final product. I hope they improve it quite a bit, because the promise that wasn't fulfilled is still exciting to me.

So, how do I rate it? Well, I will be generous. Considering the fact that it doesn't do what it's supposed to, in my view, I should rate it a 1. But, due to the wonderful user experience, interaction with PhotoShop, user interface, and the keyboard commands, I'll give it a 2.5.



Spector v3.0 - Spyware for Mac OS X - "What you see is what they did" SuperSnooper Software

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

SpectorSoft Corporation
333 17th Street
Vero Beach, FL 32960 USA
1-888-598-2788
1-772-770-5670 (Outside the USA)
sales@spectorsoft.com

<http://www.spectorsoft.com>

\$150 USD

Requirements for Computer being recorded:
Mac OS X 10.2 or later. Mac OS 9.x,
PowerPC G3 through G5 processor running at
233 MHz or faster, at least 16MB of memory
(32MB or higher for best performance).
Approximately 80MB of disk space for a
typical day of recording.



Strengths: Works like a charm! Clean install.
Works as advertised as a stealth device. Very
impressive playback process.

Weaknesses: Doesn't record audio-feeds - and
won't.

Spector™ by *Spectorsoft* is the kind of software you'd put on your system if you were expecting someone on your network to be doing something really, really bad - and you needed evidence in order to have them change their ways or leave the company.

And face it, there are a lot of nasty darkside folks out there that are ready, eager and waiting to scarf down your children or spouse at any given moment - known as pedophiles, perverts and offenders of all that is decent and good. Now you can catch them red-handed - and perhaps even save a life. Really!

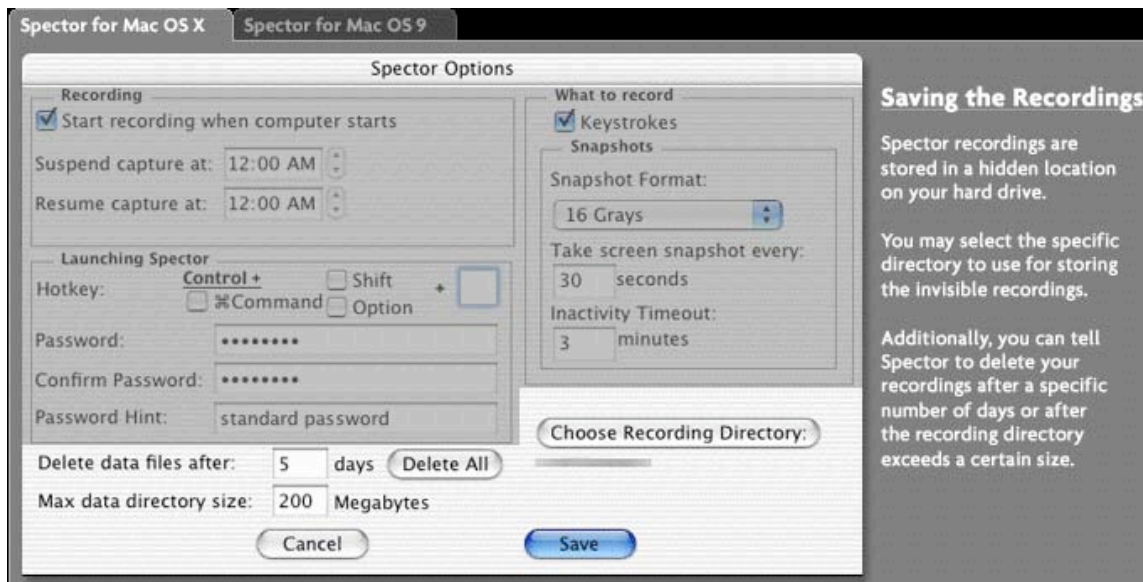
Maybe even *you* have felt tempted to do really dumb stuff online - but what if you *knew* that someone was watching your every move and recording every keystroke [and you might as well face it, they are]? Religious folks call them "angels". Governments call them "intelligence services". You'd think twice before you did something really, really stupid, right?



Now you can install this "babysitter" and keep tabs on what is going on your system at home or at work, or even when you are away from your system. Boy! I sure could have used this when my system was compromised. I'd have known whom and when they got into my stuff and had *hard* evidence of their misdeeds. Can you just see this being used in a honeypot environment? [pseudo-site for crackers attracted by site goodies and who want to do damage.]



Claims by *Spectorsoft* indicate that this product runs in the background - way in the background - and doesn't affect system performance. I believe the claims. It does however require one license per machine and runs in stealth-mode. However, I do see one flaw. That is, it takes up a lot of hard-drive space when in use using the system to log everything - so it won't take long for the offender to catch on if he or she isn't already aware that this has been implanted on that system. 80 MB per day is a lot of stuff!



So what gets noted? Sites, chats, keystrokes, displays, emails. And no, it doesn't record audio-feeds. Too bad...or not. I'd personally like that option, what with iChatAV and Voice over IP options now coming forth for Mac OS X.



How does it work? Very well! It runs in password-protected Stealth-mode using a VCR-like playback scenario and it does time-out when the system isn't actively being used. Screenshots can be scheduled. Documentation can be exported in most standardized image formats and can be saved locally or on a network. I found this to work really, really well.



So is this a "Big Brother" product? Yes, but it depends on how it is used and for what purposes. Logging keystrokes seems to be a bit heavy on the spymaster stuff, but when it is needed, how else are you really going to "get everything"? Like any technology, it can be misused. But if you are living a clean life and doing your job, what have you to be afraid of? It may actually protect you from others as well. That is why I want to use it – self-preservation. And it can be turned off.

Can it be accessed remotely? I was told, "no". I'm thinking, yes it can with Rendezvous, and knowing where the file is located. It is a hidden file findable in Unix. And you can go from there, a trivial hack really... Or do the Command-+Control+Shift+S at the workstation where it is installed - if the original setting hasn't been changed and you know the password to access the file.

The product has been around for a while and I looked into it a few years ago, but it wasn't available for Macs and not until very recently for Mac OS X.

Now wouldn't you rather be using something like this, rather than constantly updating filtering software that can't keep up with the darkside anyway?

Spector puts the onus of responsibility back where it should be - on us. We are responsible for our own actions and not for the transgressions of others. This package will protect us from litigation activities - when used properly. And you wouldn't use it incorrectly, now would you? Blackmail? Leverage? Industrial espionage? No, no, a thousand times, no. To protect, yes.

Why do you think it was named, "Spector"? Humm?

Store Anything.



Your Information



Your Second Brain

StickyBrain X 2.0.2

A review by Harry {doc} Babad

Chronos L.C.
3080 West Pinebrook Road
Suite 2050
Park City, UT 84098
1-435-615-7335
1-435-615-7336

sales@chronosnet.com, or
support@chronosnet.com
<http://www.chronosnet.com>

Free to try; \$35 [USD] to buy
Uninstaller included? No, but the StickyBrain
2 Guide.pdf provides a How-to.

User Manual, Yes 37 pages [PDF].

Requirements: 10 MB disk space 5.2 MB,
Mac OS9 or Mac OS X, Apple iMac, iBook,
Power Mac G3 or G4 or PowerBook G3 or G4
computers



Strengths: StickyBrain is the new absolute Gold Standard for gathering and using bits and pieces of information using a stickies interface. To start creating "stickies" in StickyBrains is easy. To become an expert user and to most effectively create meaning categories of note takes a smidgeon longer, but is well worth the effort.

Weaknesses: There are a large number of features that the average user will not need. However, since these can be ignored or may not interfere with your use of the product, this is not a serious flaw.

Overview

StickyBrain is a powerful, user-friendly, free form flat-file format information manager that you don't have to be organized to use. You can treat StickyBrain like a really big drawer--just throw everything into it. Use the built-in Web page grabber, sticky browser, hot keys, and system-wide contextual menu to store everything that captures your interest, and find that anything with one click. Its built-in word processor makes it easy to compose letters and other documents including letter and eMAIL contact boilerplate. Stickies can contain text, pictures, sounds, file links, alarms, to-do lists, contacts, Web and e-mail addresses, and more. StickyBrain

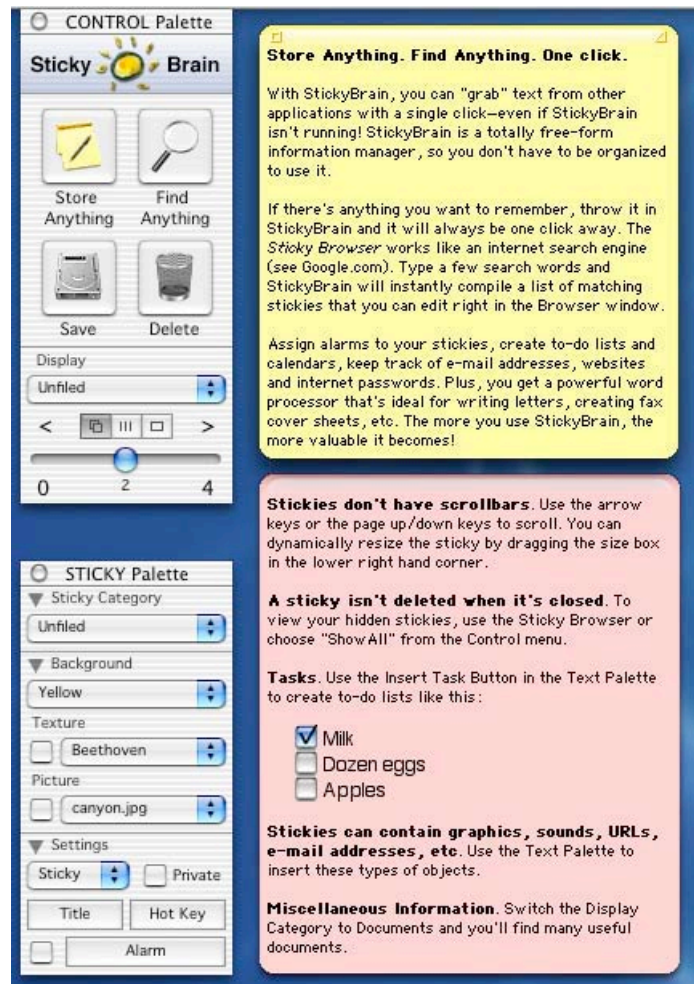
makes it easy to store almost any kind of information. You can save text, pictures, sounds, web and e-mail addresses, file links, calendars, etc. StickyBrain is a powerful, free-form information manager with two-dimensional sticky note interface. The product I reviewed is, according to its publisher, a major upgrade to the previous Version 1.2.1.

Are you not organized or are a compulsive tidbit information junkie? No problem. You can treat StickyBrain as a collector of tidbits of information stored in an easy to search humongously large drawer. Just throw everything into it—if you ever need to find that certain something, it will be one click away.

Introduction

Folks, once upon a time Apple in its infinite whimsy developed a piece of software called Stickies™. This, as you all know, was a software version of 3M's PostIt™ notes—notes which sat taking up space on the desktop, and at the least version I tried years ago, disappeared forever when the "file" was closed unless you saved it to your hard disk. Having, in those days only a 15" monitor, I started to collect bits and pieces of aberrant thoughts (as text). This was a plethora of miscellaneous information that I might want to again refer, well, someday. I collected these factoids with a piece of software called Gramotki™. Gramotki (now version X 2.0b7 can be downloaded on VersionTracker) uses a database framework to create a multi-page notebook. Gramotki could be made instantly available, initially via the Apple Menus, and now in Jaguar as an icon in my dock. If a factoid I had written, but was useless in my current document, I copied the words and pasted them into Gramotki. Alternatively, lassoing them as a clipping file on my desktop, and when that piece of purple prose was needed, I accessed it with the editable clipEdit™ now OSX v. 2.7 (See *macCompanion* September, 2003). For longer-term storage, those clippings were added to a suitable Gramotki file, reducing the number of scraps of information that either cluttered up my desktop or added "depth to my assortment of nested folders.

I have been using the StickyBrain program for only a few weeks, since I read of its capabilities in some web posted review or magazine article. Now if I'd had StickyBrain, then that information would have been easy to store and retrieve. StickyBrain is a grownup and empowered version of Apple's Stickies matured to adulthood. It's been easy to get started in and is a relatively undemanding tool. StickyBrain is a tool that I shall now continue to use on a daily

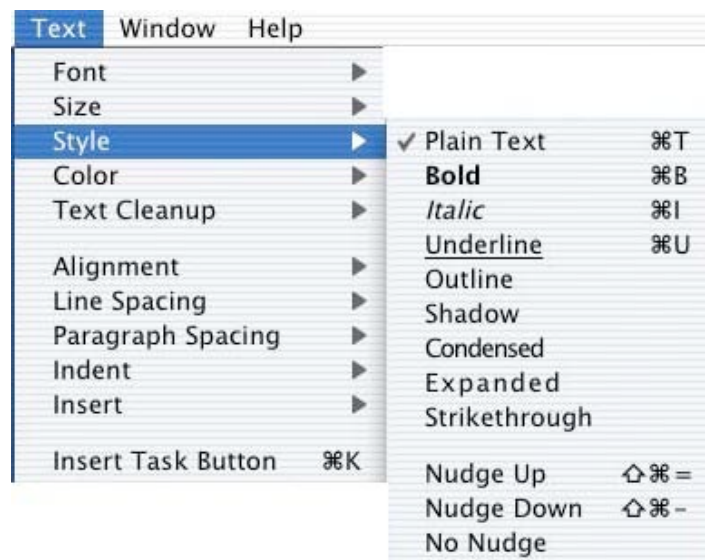


basis. This piece of software, unlike most of my review subjects, will not be uninstalled after this review is completed. Rather, it will, along with MS Word, Filemaker Pro, GraphicConverter, Toast, Eudora X and Acrobat remain one of my core software tools.

Since the premise underlying StickyBrain's functions meets my information gathering and storage needs, I rather quickly became an aficionado of the *Chronos* product. The Raison de Etre behind StickyBrain is "store it while it's hot." You can use StickyBrain to store important information at the moment see it. In fact, you don't have to bother with copy/paste and switching between applications, a rigmarole you normally go through to stash text factoids or images. Simply press a pre-defined hot key or use the system-wide contextual menu to store stuff, like your web receipts or health tip articles at once. *Store it while it's hot*, and you'll have it when you need it, in one searchable location. Since StickyBrain stores all of your stickies on your computer's hard drive in one place, it is fast—Stickies are easy to create and retrieve.

The Basic Software

Three tool pallets will appear on the screen when StickyBrain first launches: Control, Sticky and Text. These pallets provide fast access to most of StickyBrain features. StickyBrain can gracefully store any type of information including text, pictures, sounds, file/application links, contacts, and functioning URLs and e-mail addresses. It can import all your old Stickies with one click. It handles all the miscellaneous tidbits of information that don't cleanly fit in other software programs like your contact manager or word processor or database. You won't have to go to Google™ to find basic info, like weights and measures, a U.S. map, time zones, and many more, because StickyBrain 2 gives you a starter set of such references containing stickies. StickyBrain has a simple built-in word processor with features such as automatic spelling checker, search and replace, page formatting, and multiple undoes.



What good is information if you can't find stud on your 40-80-120 GB hard disk? I've noticed I can never find or remember something when I, in a hurry, really need to? This is particularly the case when your brain doesn't know if or when you will need to recall the information again and so loses that factoid from short-term memory. (For me, that only takes, in selected senior moments, a few days.) As noted by its publisher, "StickyBrain is a search engine for your mind. Select a word or phrase in any application and StickyBrain will find your information in one click."

The software contains, as a key feature, a Sticky Browser (a find function internal to the software) that works like a Web search engine (e.g., Google). It adds a "Find selected text "hot key" that will perform a Sticky Browser search. There are many applications I own, and have docked for easy access, that can perform some of StickyBrain's functions. But rather than bounce

through your installed applications to store and retrieve information, StickyBrain does it smoothly for you... all under a common interface and in one place.

For example, StickyBrain can also store *live* email addresses and URLs, which you click to activate in your email app or Web browser-tasks Mac OS X's Address Book and Microsoft Internet Explorer's Favorites handle just as well. If you want to write a note to yourself, Apple's free Stickies app does that. However, StickyBrain lets you create and store information on stickies in color-coded user defined categories. Oh, and you can search StickyBrain's notes—something Sherlock and an indexed drive or folder can manage just as well, but not as effortlessly.

Finding Your Stuff

Once you put data into StickyBrain, you'll obviously want to, at least occasionally, retrieve it. If you can't find it quickly by browsing an appropriate category, you can try StickyBrain's two searching options; either a simple Find dialog or through the Sticky Browser. The Sticky Browser works much like a Web search engine interface (e.g. Google) overlaid on your sticky note collection, and makes it easy to find matching notes. You can enter one or more search words and the Sticky Browser will compile a list of stickies that contain these words. If you select a sticky from the list, the text will appear in the lower section of the browser window, where you can view and modify it. There are various search/display options; you can also select one or more stickies from the list and open them. **Note:** Browser searches occur *ten times* faster under Mac OS X than OS 9 (thanks to OS X's better memory handling features)!

More StickyBrain Attributes and What I'll Store in my Inflatable Electronic Drawer!

Contextual Menus—The system-wide contextual menus tool makes StickyBrain available in any application that supports such menus is of tremendous help in finding missing factoids you know exists on your hard disk, somewhere. (Of course you should have added that stuff in a sticky note to being with—today is a good day to start.) The StickyBrain contextual menu contains commands to grab text or images or other data types, paste sticky information into other applications, search for selected text, find passwords and of course to launch StickyBrain. It allows quick, let's call it clipping creation, using either a simple copy function or a "copy this non-text item function, handy for all recording those online purchases for your records. You, the knowledgeable Jaguar user, knows that one can also preserve online purchase receipts or other 'read-me' files by printing to PDF, but the StickyBrain approach is surprisingly easy and takes fewer keyboard steps.

StickyBrain's Web Page Grabber Feature—Whenever I need to grab text from a web browser, the web page title and the URL is appended to the end of the text along with an Internet access button so I can easily return to that page. This feature doesn't replace Print to PDF for capturing combinations of text and graphics, but for most of my needs, it saves time over using Acrobat 6 for capturing snippets of text from mixed HTML and PDF files.



Creating and Using Categories—StickyBrain ships with nine predefined information categories (e.g., Documents, Friends, Miscellaneous, Receipts, Tasks). Each predefined category has its own default settings for text, background color [11 available] or background pattern. StickyBrain's categorizing capability is a design feature that is key to data retrieval because it lets you quickly view only those notes in a specific category. I have refined the original categories to match my needs.



Categories I Initially Created

- A Borrowed and Loaned List
- Unique Categories for Each Professional or Non-Profit Organization for which I volunteer
- *macCompanion* Review Tasks, one sticky for each to review item.
- A Computer General category with stuff including my wish and or general download list
- FMP database management status of my collection of stuff
- Family related including letters to be written or unanswered and favorite rare cheeses
- Crafts Hobby-Business Associated Factoids and to-dos
- Nuclear Waste Management Consulting Stuff by client and perhaps soon by major focus
- Internet Radio and Other Neat Web Stuff

By combining note color and font attributes (serif and sans serif fonts) I potentially doubled the number of available easy-to-discriminate stickies categories. As an aside, I've never really stuck to labeling color schemes I created in either OS 9.x or by using Unsanty.com™ Labels X™ haxie in OS 10.2. I just put colored labels, for now, on icons of items that seem to go together. (Helpful, since my desktop contains an ever-changing group of 36 icons.) Yes, I know, I can add such icons, temporarily, to the dock, but my dock is so full of important folders and documents, I can hardly, but for the dock-magnifying feature, recognize the various custom icons I've parked there. Alternatively, I can add such frequently accessed folders and key documents to my modified Apple Menu using Unsanty.com™ powerful "Fruit Menu™ haxie. But as a belt-and-suspenders person, as one who is both under disciplined and somewhat disorganized user, I do all of the above including using StickyBrain. Perhaps next week, I can thin out the dock.

Items Easily Stored in StickyBrain

Resumes	Family history	E-mail boilerplate	Movies to Buy
MacC Review Inputs	Birthdays	Anniversaries	Contact Lists
Books Wanted	Gardening schedules	To do lists	Nationwide Area codes
Fax cover sheets	Credit card accounts	URLs by Focus	Nationwide Zip codes
Medical Phones	Grocery lists	Menus and recipes	Exercise Instructions

Other features I am or might find useful include:

- A "Text Cleanup" submenu to the Text menu—A useful feature, since some documents I create for clients may not contain the stylistically correct quotes so beloved by Robin

Williams, is the Quotation Marks Preference. If set to "Curly", StickyBrain will automatically convert regular straight quotation marks to curly marks as you type.

- Page Break Indicator—Ruler windows display page breaks in the text allowing you to see exactly where the current page ends and a new page starts.
- Export Stickies—An Export command for saving the text of one or more stickies to a text file on your hard drive. If you export multiple stickies, the text of each sticky is separated by a special delimiter character (¶). This makes it possible to import the text file back into StickyBrain as individual stickies.
- Import Text Files—That command will read any text file and create a sticky. If you import a text file created by the StickyBrain Export command, it will import it as individual stickies as described above.
- For your protection, StickyBrain makes automatic backups of your collected stuff. Such backups, according to the publisher are user-configurable but since I do dual backups to an external drive and to DVDs, I've not checked this out.

The software, in a manner similar to FileMaker Pro, automatically saves your changes as you work. StickyBrain can export to text, just in case I ever want to extract information into a work in progress.

And for the Next Update- If wishes were horses, I could ride.

StickyBrain needs a feature creating a hierarchical notes listing to subordinating some sticky notes as subsets of some notes. This means moving away from it's excellent but still flat-file structure to allow notes to be hieratically related as is the case in an outline. A math class I once just passed had an axiom that things belong to the same thing, belonged to each other.

The StickyBrain Guide needs to include screen shots to make it easier to use for most readers who need such clues (well...me). Albeit well written, if a bit redundant, screen shots would have save me time while checking out the more sophisticated features.

Conclusions

The ability to effortlessly grab, store, and categorize text from any application is unmatched by any other application I've tested. The interface is smooth, integrated and easy to use. The search and categorizing functions including the Title Insta-Filter feature is awesome—as you type in the title word you are looking for, with each letter you type, the list of potential hits narrows. You can also at the same time delimit the search any way you want (comparable to Jaguar's find function) -- date created, date modified, and delimit by categories (unlimited categories) and type of Sticky notes. As noted in the TidBITS#668/24-Feb-03, Tonya Engst calls StickyBrain an Info-Clutter Organizer Extraordinaire. I, a recent convert to this software enthusiastically agree. (Thanks Tanya for the descriptive words.)

As also noted by Tonya Engst "StickyBrain is fun: you can color sticky notes and even give them scenic backgrounds; you can put them wherever you like and rearrange them as often as you wish. StickyBrain has an organic, imprecise feeling that should appeal to people who don't want to work with orderly fields and grids or whose personal data doesn't fit neatly into a linear set up. I see StickyBrain as a tool for those of us (particularly those who shy away from scripting) who want to customize the way we interact with our data, but who need a free-flowing environment that requires minimal setup, that respects our short attention spans, and that doesn't spit up all over when we make mistakes."

StickyBrain is a must-have product that will foster your ability to packrat data for future use and allow you to retrieve it. The interface is straightforward and the users manual helps you chase any other information needed to put StickyBrain through its paces. It is certainly a macC 4.5 rating.



Studycard Studio 2.0.1

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett



Digital Meadow

Created by Terry Bird

Rolling Meadows, Illinois, USA

1-510-652-5244

info@digitalmeadow.com

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

\$29 USD, Site License \$250 USD through Kagi.com

Comparisons with other flashcard systems:

<http://www.digitalmeadow.com/studycardstudio/compare/>

Released: October 14, 2003

Free download of *Studycard Studio Lite* from the website.

Requirements: Mac OS 9 (The Language Kits extensions are required for using international language scripts on Mac OS 9. Spanish speech requires the Mexican Spanish Text-to-Speech extensions for OS 9, or Mac OS X 10.1 or later. "Spanish speech is not yet available for Mac OS X" (unless you use one of MacSpeech's iListen modules!

<http://maccompanion.com/computeraff.html>).



Strengths: For Mac OS X, it really uses the technology!

Weaknesses: None found yet.

I personally think Terry Bird should get the Apple "Teacher of the Year" Award for creating and distributing **Studycard Studio™** from *Digital Meadow*. The 55-page User Guide is excellent

and Terry Bird keeps updating the product based on feedback from users. The latest version is 2.0.1.

So what is the reason for even looking at a product like this? If you teach subjects requiring "rote memorization", this beats just about anything else hands-down.

My wife teaches and her college-level course would appear to be able to use this, assuming her students would want to use flashcards to memorize foreign language vocabulary words. If her students had access to computers in a language lab, using **Studycard Studio** would really make her job a whole lot easier!

Are you familiar with flashcards? My wife has a few card sets that cost us hundreds of dollars covering various topics that she used while home-schooling our children. She has "willed" them to one of our daughters, (who is now working on a degree in Teaching). She won't loan them out. Well, maybe now she won't need to hold on to them so tightly, once she really uses this program.

Studycard Studio generates multimedia (QuickTime™), multilingual cards (using world scripts and international fonts) that can be printed individually or in groups with questions on one side and answers on the other.

Oh, but it does so much more! The cards can include tutorials using pictures, quality sound effects and video. They also work nicely with Apple's Speech technology in Mac OS X. These cards can then be transferred as PDFs or even to Keynote™ (for slideshows) and also to other computer environments including Palms (<http://www.palm.com/home.html>). It can do this by "importing and exporting text, CSV (comma separated values) and iFlash (<http://www.loopware.com/software/iflash/>) files encoded as styled text, RTF (Rich Text Format) or Unicode, allowing users to create their cards using virtually any text editor or spreadsheet application". It also can import from Japanese EDICT (<http://www.csse.monash.edu.au/~jwb/edict.html>) and Chinese CEDICT (<http://www.mandarintools.com/cedict.html>) dictionaries and use them to enhance student vocabulary with up to 100,000 or more cards created in a document.

How does **Studycard Studio** keep all those files organized? It does it using Sebastian Leitner's ingenious card-file system (<http://www.flashcardexchange.com/leitner.php>) and builds on Konrad Larson's Flashcard Wizard "Interval Study" process (<http://www.foolsworkshop.com/fw.html>).

Study options come in Flip (Shuffled, Timed or Custom), Quiz (Shuffled, Answer Preview, 3-Try, Spelling Quiz with Speech or Custom) or Slide Show (Timed, Slide Show with Speech or Custom).

Testing and evaluation can follow any of the following paths; Fill-in-the-blank, Multiple-choice, Multi-Answer, Flip-mode, Quiz-mode or True-False. Explanations can be created after either a right or wrong answer is chosen. And answers can be set up with time limits.

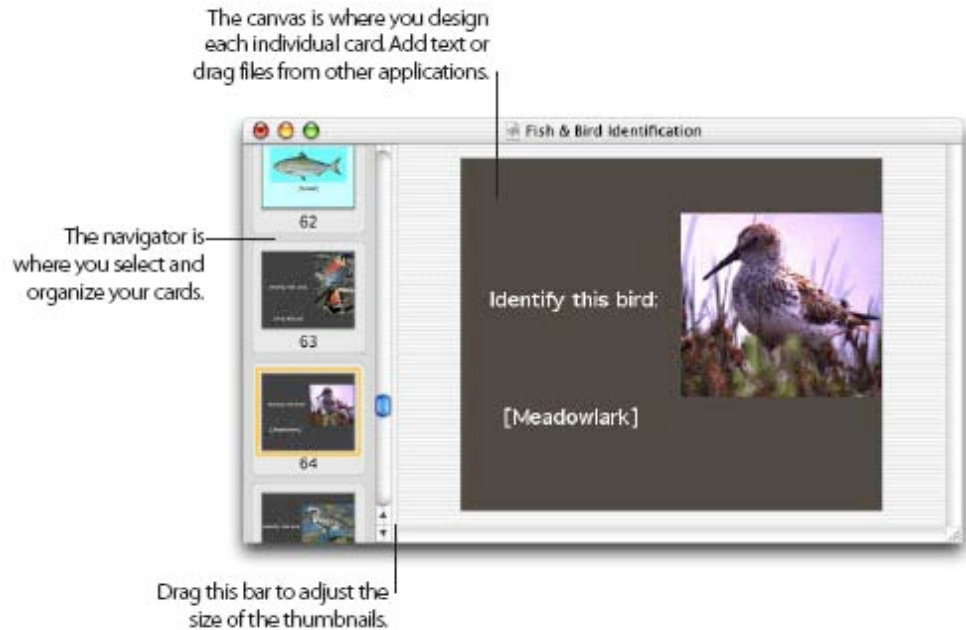
Now that we've whetted your appetite, would you like to see what **Studycard Studio** looks like? Check out the next graphic:

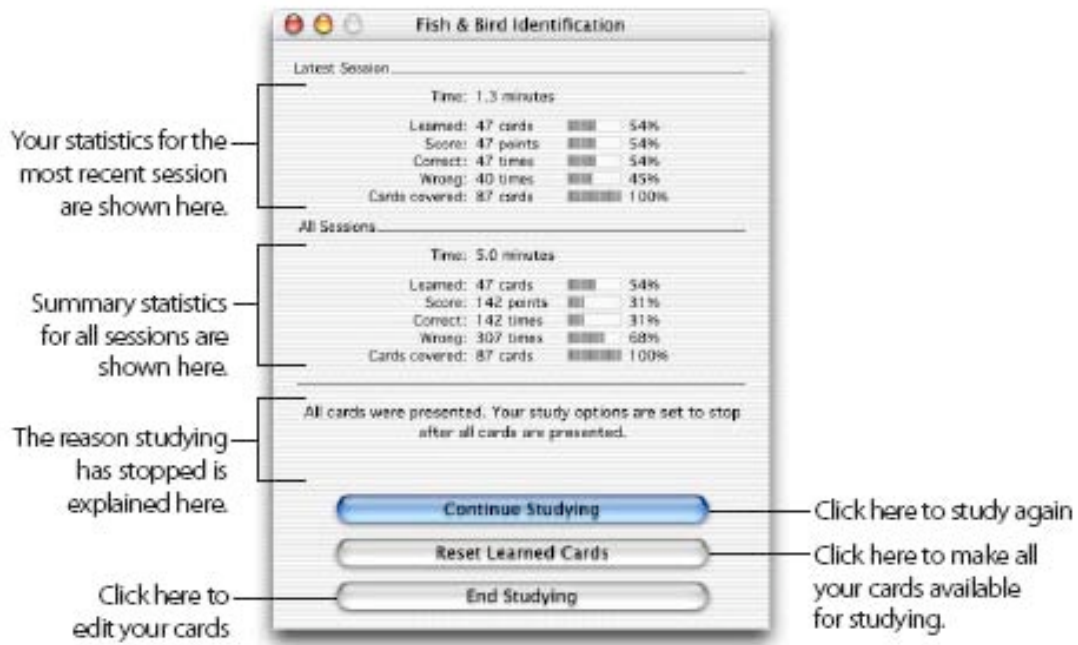
Thumbnail images allow for quick view, sort, reshuffle, move to other lists, etc.

Cards can be shuffled, grouped or categorized by difficulty level (Level 1 through Level 5 or Level 1 to Level 1, Level 5 to Level 5 or any combination in between). Typing isn't required, except to click buttons, if necessary.

And for creating question cards with answers simply [bracket] the answer as seen above. Multiple-choice answers can be in rows, columns or wrapped around pictures. **Studycard Studio** also permits for printing complex math equations.

And here is what the management screen looks like:





Now students can know where they stands on a topic, then pick up where they left off.

Once a particular field of study has been created, stepping through what is known, versus what is not known yet using this process is going to make "study efficiency" a "killer app" for educational institutions or any process requiring memory-intensive learning on the Mac. This isn't the Osmosis-method of learning, but darned close!

I would think that just about any instructor who has already created a syllabus, curriculum or rubrics similar to what can be found at educational sites such as <http://www.edhelpernet.com/> or <http://www.rubrics.com/> could easily use **Studycard Studio** to best advantage.

If you'd like to see what other programs are available that compete with **Studycard Studio**, please take a look at the link provided for a comparison chart. I think for the features listed, the price can't be beat for this learning application. Go give it a try!



ThinkFree Office™ Version 2.2 for OSX Revisited

Reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad

ThinkFree Corporation
19200 Stevens Creek Boulevard, Suite 100
Cupertino CA 95014
1-408-861-9494
<http://www.thinkfree.com>

Cost: \$49 USD

System Requirements for version 2.2—Mac OS X v. 10.2 or Mac OS X v. 10.1.3, with Java 1.3.1 Update 1 or later; a G3 or G4 PowerMac, iMac, PowerBook or iBook; minimum of 128 MB RAM (256 MB or higher recommended). The items listed above are all trademarked by Apple Computer, Inc.



Strengths: Great Office suite for \$50. Cross-platform.

Weaknesses: Not quite MS Office.

Overview

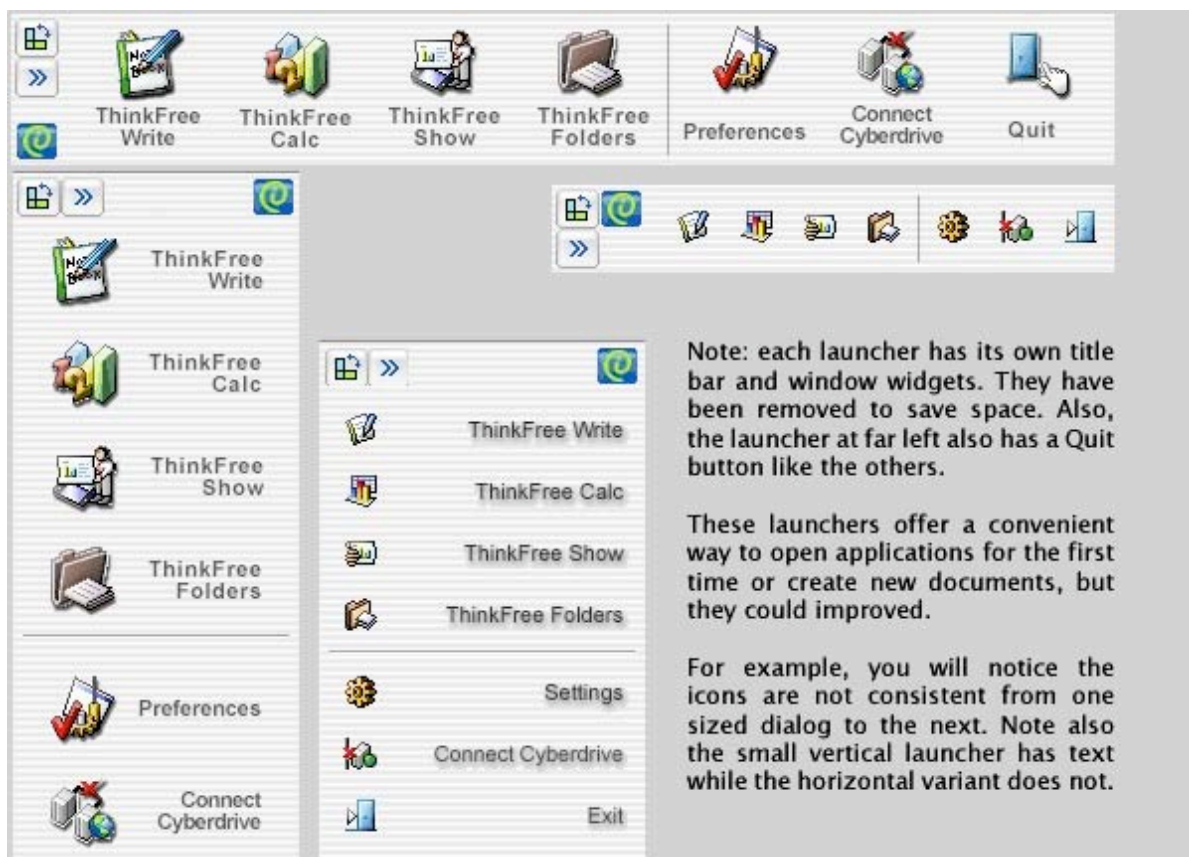
Do you need an easy to learn and use, integrated suite of software that contains a word processor, a spreadsheet, and a presentation package? Tired of the limitations in AppleWorks™ 6.2.7 and its inability to edit documents viewed in icWord™ and icCalc™ shareware applications? Try out ThinkFree Office (TFO). The new OS X Version 2.2 has enhanced the product's stability and Jaguar compatibility, and expanded its foreign language interfaces. It has also, based on user feedback, incrementally strengthened its capabilities in working with and importing Microsoft Office™ documents. (Remember, our fathers in Redmond ain't givin' nothing away to third party software developers.) ThinkFree Office remains a powerful suite of productivity applications that enables you to access both your files and your applications from virtually any Internet-connected computer anywhere, anytime, if you choose to use the publisher's 20 MB online Cyberdrive™ feature. TFO also provides an easy to use navigation tool for access to, and the creation of, folders called ThinkFree Folders™. All of the major interfaces and features of the word, calc, and show modules will be immediately familiar to any MS Office user. This OS X native, Java-based application gives you access to Office's most-used features in a package that won't leave you wishing you'd spent more money. The entire suite is under 14 MB of software that is easily

downloaded from the company's website, even at 58 Kbps.

Introduction

Until about two years ago, Macintosh users had only two "almost credible" choices if they needed an office suite: Microsoft Office or the somewhat limited AppleWorks, both currently available in Classic and OS X versions. (I own and use both, the later only in the draw and paint modes.) Macintosh users now have a third option at bargain prices. As previously noted in my January 2003 MacNUT review (available on the macC website), TFO doesn't attempt to provide every feature of the Microsoft original. The publishers have focused on about 60% compatibility, emphasizing the features most often used in document creation.

So if you've sworn off Microsoft, or don't have \$200-400 to spend on MS Office even with an educational discount, consider ThinkFree Office. It hardly dents your wallet or your hard drive. It is compatible with MS Office, reading and writing .doc (Word), .xls (Excel), and .ppt (PowerPoint) files. When TFO is running, a floating palette presents ThinkFree's applications, shows its unique folders, and provides a button that connects you to your Cyberdrive (the first-year is free) online storage space. The ThinkFree Write™ button launches Write and presents your first word-processing page. Likewise, the Calc™ button launches ThinkFree's Excel counterpart, and the Show™ button starts the PowerPoint counterpart. Each application looks and behaves much as you'd expect it to, relative to the comparable Microsoft application. According to its publisher, it is designed to be a "helper" application for users who don't have immediate access to Office or who can't justify Office's hefty price for the occasional work they would do with it. But TFO sure works well on it's own merits.



TFO's potential competitors are programs such as Panergy's icWord™ and icExcel™ [<http://www.panergy-software.com/products>], which allow you to read, but not edit or create, MS Word and MS Excel files. Other powerful alternatives to meet your word processing and spreadsheet work are Mariner Write™ (see the November 2003 issue of macC) and Mariner Calc. [<http://www.marinersoftware.com/>].

In the end, it's always your choice, based on document complexity needs and individual computing preferences. In this review, I try to provide you with information about the current ThinkFree version 2.2 for OS X to help you make an educated, preferred software choice.

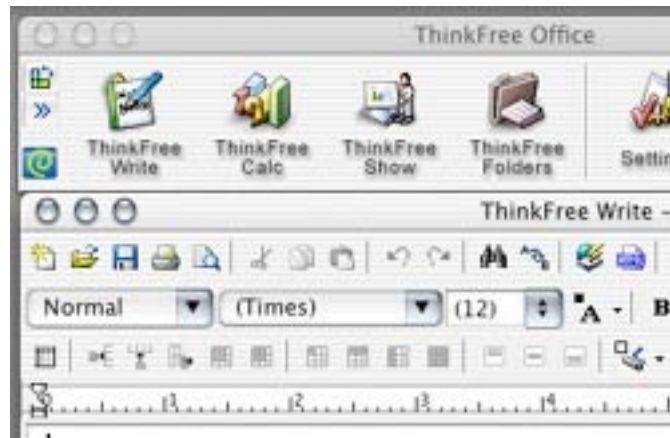
Software Characteristics—The Techie Stuff

ThinkFree Office is a fast, Java-based software suite that runs on multiple platforms. In addition to running on Mac OS X, TFO runs on Mac OS 9.x, Windows, UNIX, and Linux. You can create documents from any operating system that has a supported Java virtual machine installed. TFO works smoothly, but with limitations, with MS Office file formats without requiring an additional file conversion process. ThinkFree Write, ThinkFree Calc, and ThinkFree Show will open, edit, and save .doc, .xls, and .ppt files. According to its publisher, "ThinkFree Office is not intended to be a direct replacement for Microsoft Office. ThinkFree Office is lean by design and makes no attempt to match Microsoft Office feature for feature. ThinkFree customers are people who may find Microsoft cost-prohibitive and/or users who only require basic Microsoft Office functionality and file compatibility. ThinkFree Office file compatibility is generally considered to be excellent when compared to non-Microsoft alternatives; however, no Microsoft alternative can credibly make the claim to be totally feature and/or file format compatible with Microsoft Office."

I found that to ensure the Office files open in TFO, you need to add a standard file extension to the templates (.doc, .xls, .ppt) Then they will all open. Since most of my contacts are Wintel users, I always use extensions as a part of document names.

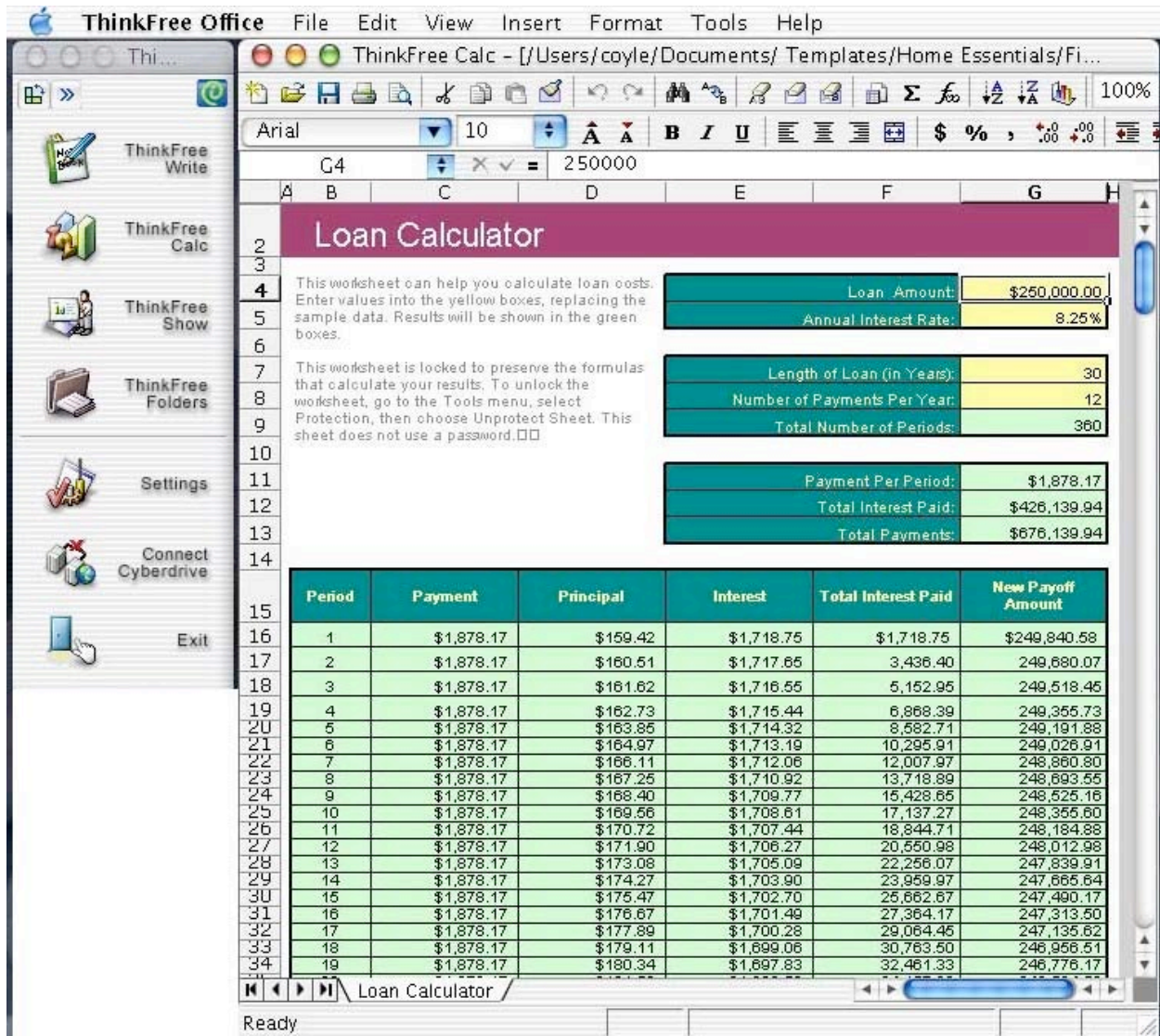
ThinkFree Write

By default, ThinkFree Write uses the Microsoft Word™ format, although the program can also save documents in RTF, HTML, text, and ThinkFree's proprietary format. The program easily opened our existing Word documents, maintaining formatting, as long as it wasn't complex. ThinkFree Write had difficulty with Word documents that had the Track Changes option turned on. While the changes we made in ThinkFree Write appeared when we opened the document again in Word, they weren't highlighted or editable via the accept or reject Changes option in the "Track Changes" Word menu. But ThinkFree always lets you know what formatting you may lose if you save your changes. ThinkFree Write lacks support for Word templates, which limits its usefulness for anyone who uses Word regularly, but it does offer a number of other frequently used features including multiple undos, find and replace, bulleting, numbering, and tables, as well as standard paragraph formatting features such as line spacing and paragraph indentation. ThinkFree Write allows you to edit any document as an HTML source file, which you can then publish directly to the Web.



ThinkFree Calc

ThinkFree Calc is a spreadsheet program that supports complicated functions (financial, statistical, and mathematical functions) as well as basic spreadsheet calculations. It provides 300 computational functions, and 40 types of charts, enough for most serious Excel users. Charting is relatively straightforward using its intuitive step-by-step Chart Wizard. A selection of more than 600 clipart choices enhances your ability to make your documents more visually attractive. Using the Calc program is straightforward. The software can handle moderately complex Excel spreadsheets. For most users, this would not be a serious limitation. As those of you who have become regular readers of mine know, I am a spreadsheet novice with an active phobia about creating anything in a spreadsheet that I can do equally well using FileMaker Pro. (I'm the guy who the instructor patted on the head after I didn't get it the three separate times I took the company sponsored Excel short course... said I must have a genetic block against Excel.) The Excel spreadsheet samples I tested, all received from clients and friends, caused me no problems in either opening or doing minor editing. Its resemblance to Excel likely makes it easy to move between the two programs. Although not an expert on spreadsheets, I readily believe that Calc, as is claimed by its publisher, would have no trouble opening a variety of Excel spreadsheets that included more complex operations, functions and formatting. I did note that for creating graphs of my data, Calc is strictly two-dimensional, which my untrained eye prefers. I could not get Calc to open Excel templates, and it is not clear from my reading whether that is a supported Calc feature.



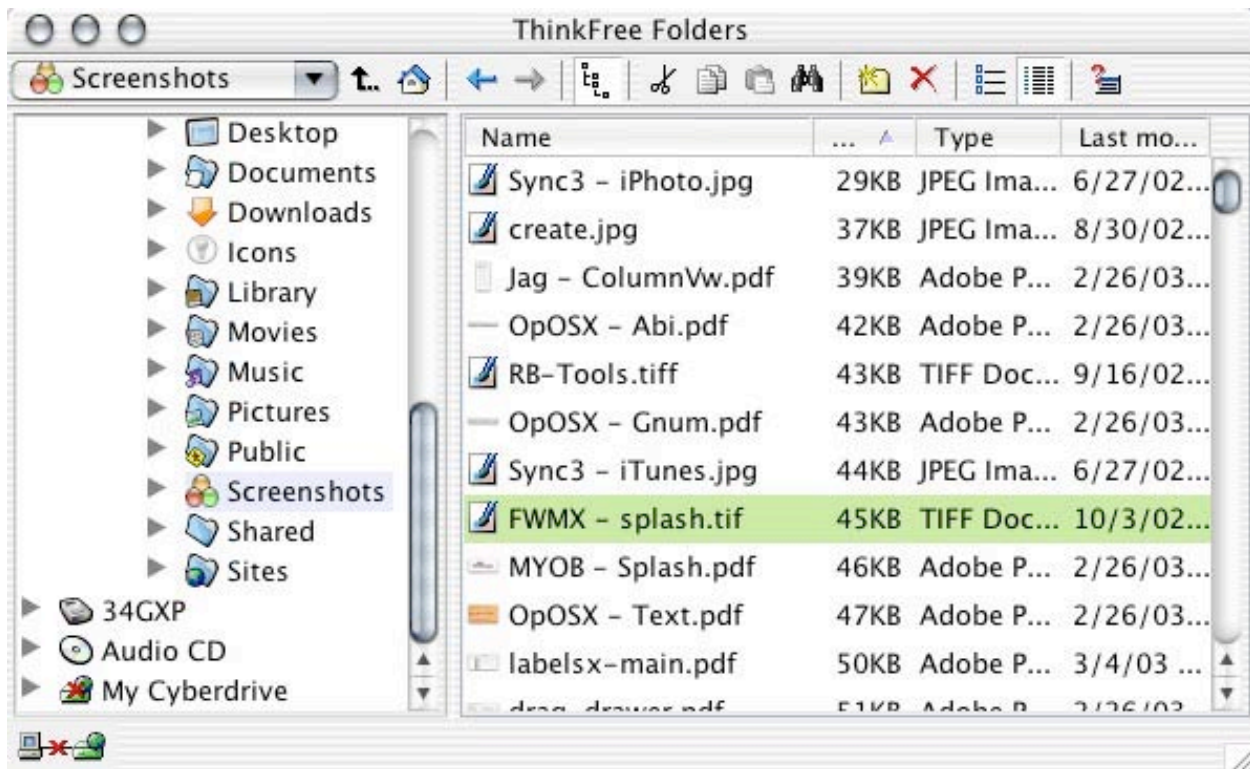
ThinkFree Show

ThinkFree Show is a presentation graphics program that enables anyone to create professional looking slide shows and presentations. It provides various graphic tools and contains 140 shapes and diagrams, including lines, flowcharts, banners, and stars. It can also utilize the previously mentioned 600 clipart images. Show is the only program in the ThinkFree suite that lets you use templates, but it seems to work best when you're creating or editing very basic PowerPoint presentations that don't make use of sounds, unusual transitions, or certain text animations. Unless my testing was amiss, it does not do well working with PowerPoint presentations that include Microsoft's WordArt. As is the case with the other two ThinkFree programs, Show doesn't support three-dimensional objects. This is the weakest of the TFO applications.

ThinkFree Folders

ThinkFree Folders is a unique file manager that allows you to centrally manage all of your files and folders, whether they reside on your local drives, networked drives, or your ThinkFree Cyberdrive. Using Folders, you can create new files and folders anywhere on your storage system and drag-and-drop them freely between your local drives and the web-located

Cyberdrive. Folders also supports floppy drives, CD-ROM drives, networked drives, and even removable drives, such as the Zip™ drive.



Concerns and Issues with TFO Version 2.2

According to the ReadMe file, ThinkFree Office 2.2 contains "many performance and stability enhancements." Although this version has been strengthened to support international users, a feature I don't need, I could not find significant enhancements on extending Write and Show compatibility when importing complex MS Word and PowerPoint documents. The publisher did not exercise any bragging rights on this subject, despite reviews on the Internet asking for enhancements of specific compatibility features. Going the other way (exporting to MS Office) still remains easy to do, effectively capturing both formatting and style features from the TFO documents.

I am generally troubled by the lack of specifics, on the TFO web site, of MS Office compatibility enhancements to Version 2.2 features, that I could explicitly test and verify. All of the information on the publisher's site was so generalized that I could not, as a heavy MS Office X user, use it to develop test cases to support this review. Also troubling was the fact that the manual that I downloaded from the TFO website was last updated on 05-07-02, and therefore it is not in sync with version 2.2. Not having an updated manual made little difference to me, an experienced user, but may be important to new users.

There are a significant number of places that the software doesn't take advantage of the OS X Finder's features. These range from the way open and save dialog boxes work, to aspects of the TFO launcher when dealing with two open application modules. I was also troubled by the fact that two of the three primary applications didn't have a Window Menu, which even Wintel applications now use.

In addition, in limited tests, I could not open TFO documents by dragging icons onto the

ThinkFree icon in my Macintosh's dock, an otherwise normal feature of the Jaguar OS. Of course, I would welcome the opportunity to be able to customize TFO toolbars, a feature that drives users of my installed and altered MS Word nuts.)

Dan Moughamian's fine review of TFO 2.2 provides additional information on Version 2.2 that goes beyond that discussed herein. I tripped on Dan's article after completing 95% of this review when I checked the Internet for material to reference. I recommend you check out this article. See: www.hubblemac.com/analysis/software/business/thinkfreePg1.html, and the five sections that follow.

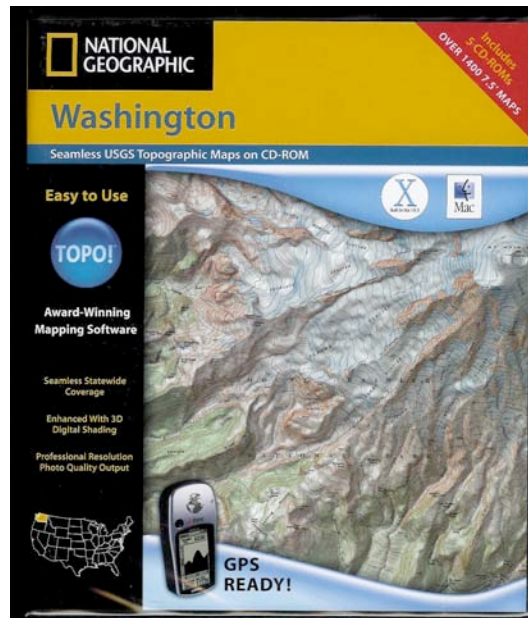
Final Thoughts

ThinkFree Office really does free you from the Microsoft monopoly, but still allows you to communicate with anyone using Word, PowerPoint, or Excel. TFO works on Macintosh system 9 and X, as well as Windows. It contains a word processing, spreadsheet, and slide show program that will be familiar territory to anyone used to MS Office. TFO is sufficiently compatible with existing MS Office application file formats. While no application can be 100% compatible, TFO comes close enough for most users' needs. If you're just a casual MS Office user or you need MS Office application compatibility mainly to work and exchange documents with MS Office users, consider ThinkFree. Spend the \$50; it's a good software investment!

Those of us (me-me-me) with special feature needs must continue with MS Office, a love-hate relationship at best! Unfortunately, my addiction to MS Office is further sustained by my own compulsive use of tables for organizing, sorting, and presenting various views of experimental or modeling data, and the even more constraining requirement for tracking changes in co-authored documents produced by my friends and associates who are predominantly Wintel-MS Office users. In addition, when preparing to give papers at professional society meetings, I show off by using most of the bells and whistles PowerPoint provides. If you use MS Office's power features such as version and change tracking, table of contents generation, or create complex sortable tables and/or mail merge... TFO is not for you.

So I shall, not quite reluctantly, remain a MS Office user and will de-install the ThinkFree suite after completing this review. Should I buy a lower-end Macintosh portable computer, then that would be another matter.

If you use MS Office regularly and you need most or all of its features, then pony up the money for the real deal. If you are a student or work for the government, check for discounts. If your needs only include power word processing and spreadsheet functions, the more expensive Mariner Write and Mariner Calc (Combo Pack, \$140), are potentially viable, if more expensive, alternatives. But if you will use the total feature set of TFO including network access through ThinkFree via Cyberdrive ... this software suite is a best-of-breed program that will likely exceed your expectations.



TOPO! State Series version 3.3.3 for Mac OS X

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

National Geographic Maps
PO Box 4357
Evergreen, CO 80437-4357
1-800-962-1643

topo@ngs.org

<http://www.nationalgeographic.com/topo>

FAQs:

<http://maps.nationalgeographic.com/topo/support.cfm>

Released: October 2003

\$100 USD

Requirements: Mac OS 9.0 or above, or Mac OS 10.2 or above. 60 MB hard drive space, CD-ROM, capability of setting the screen to millions of colors. Maybe a printer.




Strengths: Way cool interactivity with US State topology maps at 5 levels of depth and 3D contour shading. Lots of customizing options.

Weaknesses: Better to use with a two-button mouse. Unable to download maps directly to GPS systems. Regional Series not available yet for Mac OS X.


National Geographic just released TOPO! for Mac OS X (it was available for earlier Mac OSs in August), so now we really have what has been available for some time on competing platforms.

Since I live in the State of Washington, I asked for the TOPO! for my state. Naturally, I beelined to my city and street to see if I could see my house, much like can be found on <http://www.mapquest.com>. It shows the streets from some time ago and they are not labeled. There is a very good reason why this package series is marked "Topo!". Topology maps are not street maps. They are elevation maps.


Here's the back cover of the 5-CD package.



**NATIONAL
GEOGRAPHIC**



USGS
science for a changing world




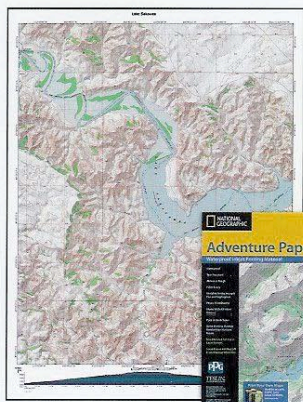
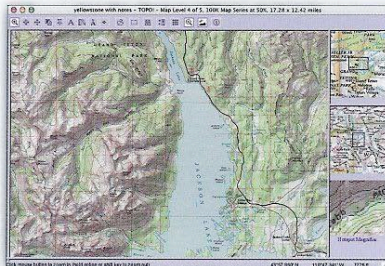
UPC
6 41152 10060 8
L001

The Definitive Map Set for Washington


Great adventures begin with the best maps

TOPO! Features the Best Maps

By drawing upon the best maps from National Geographic and USGS, each of the five levels of detail in TOPO! is guaranteed to be the most accurate available. Get an overview of the entire United States or plan your backcountry trip with 1:24,000 scale topographic maps - you choose the level of detail needed for your trip



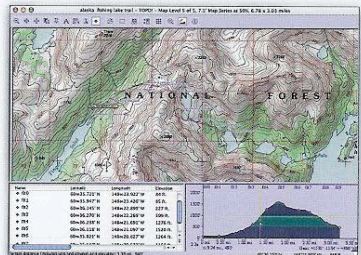
Link your digital photos to maps!



Create Your Own Custom Maps


TOPO!'s powerful and easy-to-use suite of features gives outdoor enthusiasts and map professionals the ultimate interactive map.

- Customize maps with routes, symbols, notes, and photos.
- GPS users can upload and download waypoints to track their location in real time.
- Export maps for use in other applications



Print Perfect Trail Maps

TOPO! allows you to select the exact area you want to print — even if it is larger than the screen, or covers multiple quad maps. And the true color imaging uses millions of colors to optimize maps for viewing and printing. Print maps in color or black and white, include elevation profiles, select latitude/longitude or UTM grids, or choose from a variety of other navigation aids. **Print waterproof trail maps on Adventure Paper (sold separately).**



ISBN 0-7922-5359-0
EAN 9 780792 535594

Visualize Elevation Gain with Elevation Profiling

Simply trace a route anywhere on a map in TOPO! and the software will generate a profile showing distance and all the ups and downs. Now you can get a true sense of the terrain before heading out.

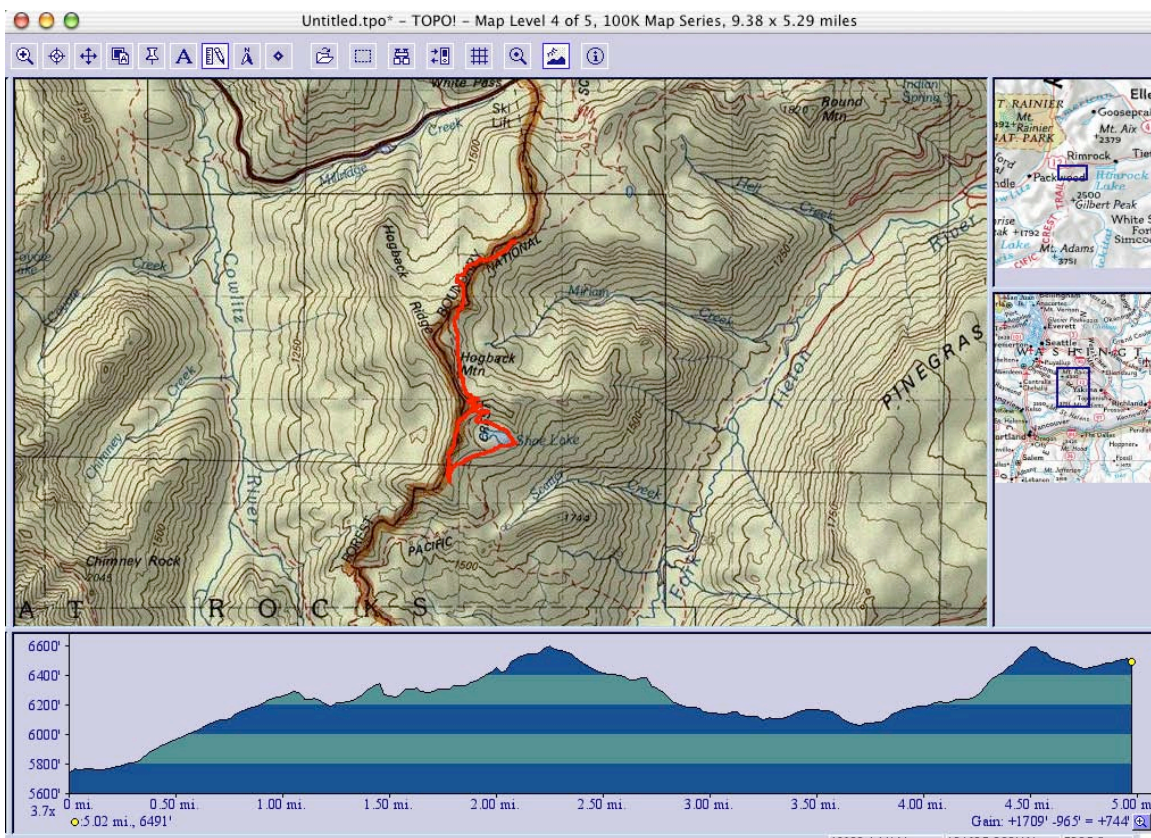


Your support is vital to National Geographic's mission to increase global understanding and promote conservation of our planet through exploration, research, and education.

Where I live, I can go into just about any mini-mart and pick up trail maps for the wilderness areas in the Pacific Northwest for anywhere between \$2 and \$5, so what do I get for \$100 when buying TOPO! ?

Okay, how about "interactive? We can turn on and off such things as shaded relief. Just look again at the front cover above. It demonstrates enhanced digital shading that really shows off elevations. This kind of information is critical in areas such as the Goat Rocks wilderness area where hiking trails run along razorbacks in the Grand Tietons that were created by such men as my once-upon-a-time step-grandfather did when he was in the *Civilian Conservation Corps* in

the 1930s (<http://www.cccalumni.org/>). North of this is White Pass, west of Yakima. The red line is a "profile" that created the elevation map seen below. Notice also this map shows Level 4 of 5 levels. The back-and-forth squiggles show up on level 5 (7.5' scale USGS map) as a steep back-and-forth climb north of the lake.



As I ran the trail pen along, it moved the map around to follow the trail. And when it did the profile for the elevation map, it walked the map back down from the upper end to the lower area when I was "up-close-and-personal" with the level 5 map around the lake. This kind of thing is way cool! The zoom in and out at 5 levels (General, National, 500K, 100K and 7.5' grids) is a great feature. Down in the lower right corner of the screen is the Latitude and Longitude and it changes as the pointer goes along the trail for Global Positioning System (GPS or <http://www.trimble.com/gps/what.html>) and Geographic Information Systems (GIS or <http://www.gis.com/>) functions.

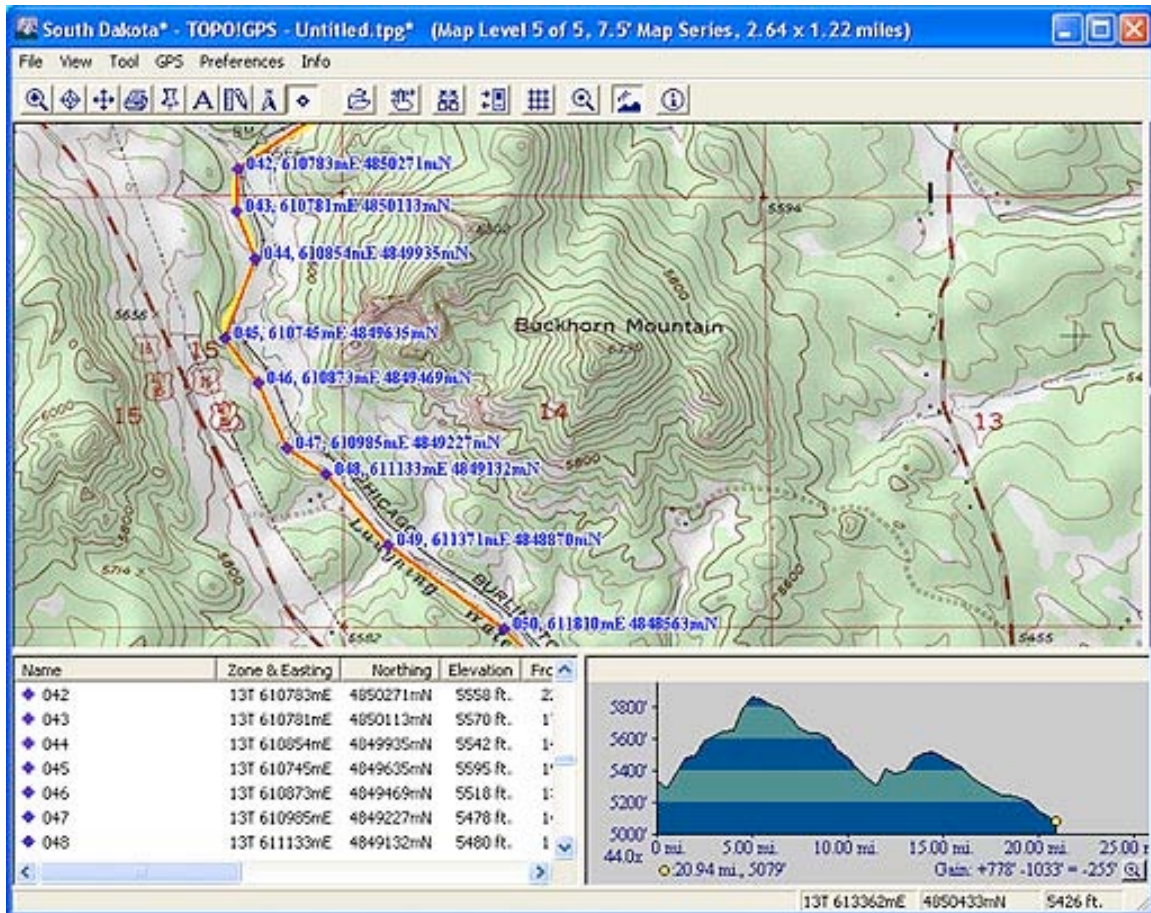
For my state there are 1,400 maps on 5 CDs. The first CD has the TOPO! State Series installation program on it. The other 4 are Regional map data CDs labeled, "Washington Map Data Disc 2 of 5:Seattle, then "...3 of 5: North Cascades", "...4 of 5:Spokane" and "...5 of 5: Yakima". Customization of the program is allowed for creating routes, adding notes, establishing web links for more information and inserting photos. All the most recent US Geological Survey (USGS) maps are there.

The well-written interactive TOPO! PDF-based 48-page User Guide comes on the CD and the TOPO! installed package takes up about 60 Megs of hard drive real estate. An 8-page CD-ROM-sized "TOPO! Quick Start Guide" is also included in the package.

You can share your trail files with others using the online National Geographic mapXchange (<http://maps.nationalgeographic.com/topo/search.cfm>). And there is a search function included for finding just about anything.

Exporting files is easy with rasterized formats such as GIFs, JPEGs, etc. And if you are into orienteering, then you will love the other features TOPO! offers, besides the GPS stuff, such as true and magnetic north declination, latitude/longitude grids and reading Universal Transverse Mercator (UTM) Grids (<http://www.nps.gov/prwi/readutm.htm>). It also allows for toggling between NADS27 (<http://www.nad27.com>) and WGS84 (<http://www.wgs84.com/>) systems.

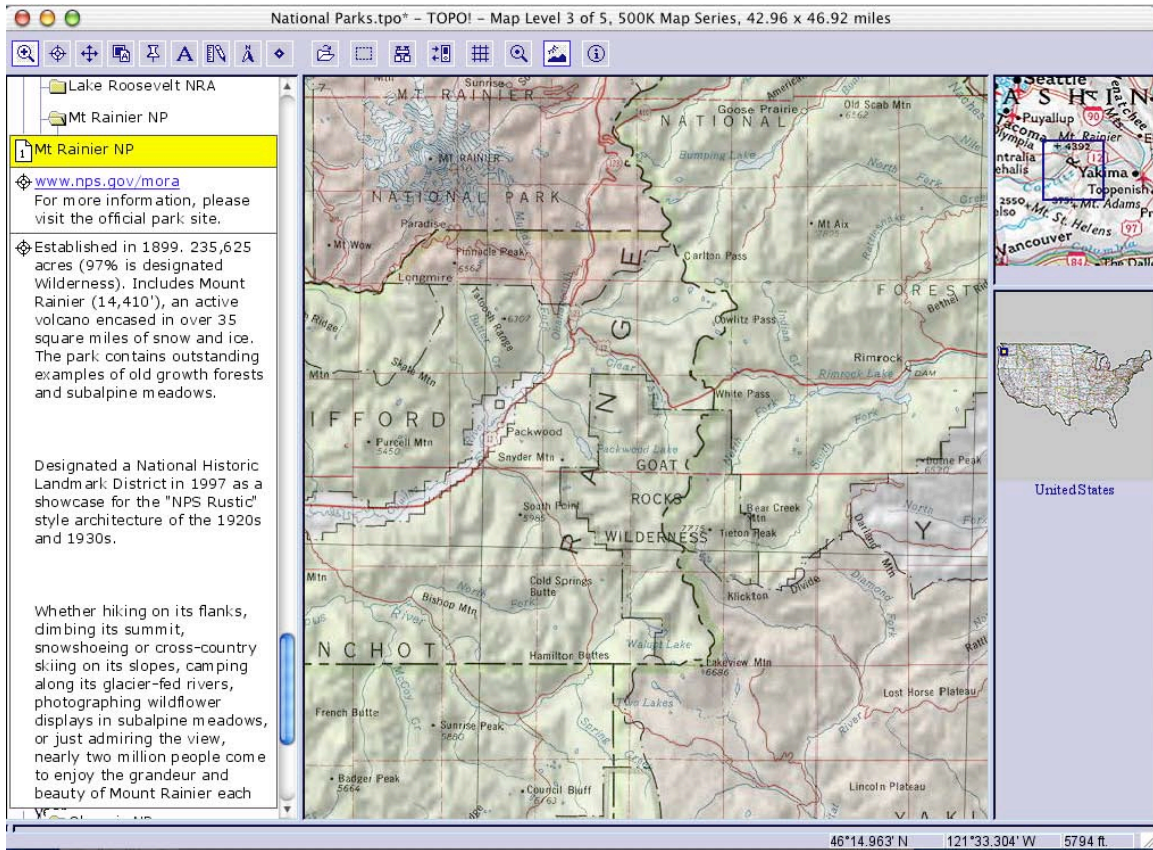
Here's a sample GPS-based map off the National Geographic TOPO! website. The capability comes with the program to generate your own. I don't have a GPS receiver, but it is nice to know I can move that direction when I do get one.



And before we leave you, I just wanted to show you a Level 3 map that shows the notes section on the Mount Rainer National Park off to the upper left and the Goat Rocks Wilderness area in the middle of the map. I think one of the things I like about this program is that it "drills down"

so nicely with the insert maps off the to the right of each screen. Now you have an idea of what kinds of notes can be added to any map at any time.

This is the kind of program that should be on the backseat panel LCD screens of *JetBlue* and other airlines as we fly over areas of the country and we all say such things as "gee, what is that"? With this TOPO! program we would have a much better idea and I think that would make trips much more enjoyable.



Back on the ground, knowing elevations and seeing notes from others online about a particular area takes a lot of the surprises out of either a road trip or a hike in the woods. Being able to say that you know the names of those ridges or valleys could just make you appear to be a geographical genius! Why not check it out?

This is the TOPO! State Series. A Regional Series exists, but not for Mac OS X yet. And so far, this is USA-specific. I'd like to see it go "global". If anyone can make it happen, National Geographic most certainly can.



VisualRoute 8

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Visualware, Incorporated
937 Sierra Drive
PO Box 668
Turlock, CA 95381-0668
USA
1-209-668-3673
Fax 1-209-391-2202
Released: November 12, 2003
sales@visualware.com
<http://www.visualware.com>
\$50 USD, Annual upgrade \$20 USD

Download:

<http://www.visualware.com/personal/download/index.html#visualroute>

Requirements: Mac OS X 10.0.x and 10.1,
MRJ (Mac Runtime for Java) 3.0, TCP/IP
Stack, Internet Connection

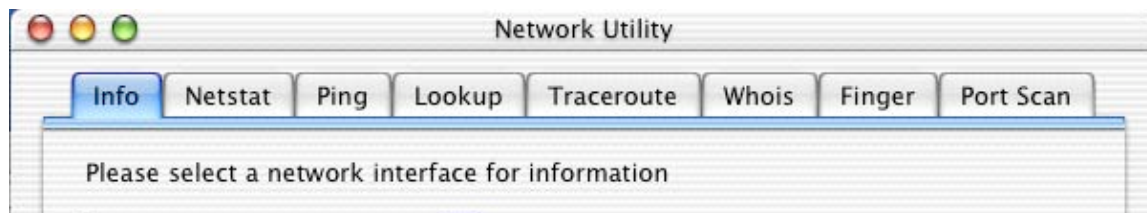


Strengths: Way cool, quicky process for tracing graphically from your place on the planet to another online. And picking up a lot of dynamic information along the way from you to them.

Weaknesses: Price? No. Just wish their other products were ported to Mac OS X already as well.

VisualRoute 8 (VR for this review is for VirtualRoute and not Virtual Reality, okay?) from *Visualware* seems somewhat redundant when compared with Apple's Network Utility. So what does it offer for \$50 USD? Before we answer that, let's look at Apple's Network Utility for a second or two.

Here's Apple's product that comes with Mac OS X:



I found the Network Utility by going into Mac OS X>Applications>Utilities>Network Utility. I paid nothing extra for this utility.

For a long time, I didn't have full functionality (someone bit-twiddled my system and I have my suspicions as to who that was). Then after I got it all back (reinstalling from scratch), the Cable Company decided that because Crackers were misabusing their network system, they would remove both Ping and Traceroute capability for a while.

[See, I've been trying to get back with an individual (who I co-signed an Apple account with and now I am left holding the bag, so to speak – and it is a BIG bag! So "no good deed goes unpunished"). I am trying to track him down. More on that later.]

Visualware made VR available for Mac OS X and the graphic below is what it looks like when it is running [okay, without the top-notes and the background is from version 7.3]. Symantec has a similar visual network analysis function in their Internet Security package (and that is being reviewed by Derek elsewhere), but it costs more, and from my experience, does less.

Address: http://www...
 Analysis: 'www.visualroute.pl was found in 24 hops (1.15 sec), it is a HTTP server (running on port 80) (B.V. 1e).
 25.193.123
 Automated analysis, identification of lost data packets and slow response for each hop between the VisualRoute and the desired destination provides information to quickly determine the 'owner' of a connectivity problem.
 Identification of the network service provider and network Whois for each hop provide instant contact information for problem reporting and investigation of suspects.
 Automated reverse DNS provides the IP address and node name for each hop, and domain Whois provides quick contact information.
 The geographical location of an IP address is a key element in determining the identity behind an IP address and understanding routing problems. Locations are indicated in the routing table and world map.
 The time zone indicator for IP addresses provides additional location information.
 NETWORK: NET-64-15
 OrgName: Level
 OrgID: LVL1
 NetRange: 64.152
 CIDR: 64.152
 NetName: LC-ORG
 NetHandle: NET-64
 Parent: NET-64
 NetType: Direct
 NameServer: NS1.LE
 NameServer: NS2.LE

DOMAIN: sprintlink	Hop	%Loss	IP Address	Node Name	Location	Tzone	ms	Graph	Network
Sprint Communic	13		144.232.19.7	sl-bb21-lon-14	London, UK	*	88		Sprint SPRINT
6330 Sprint	14		213.206.128	sl-bb20-lon-15	London, UK	*	96		Sprintlink UK
Overland Par	15		213.206.129	sl-bb21-par-14	Paris, France	+01:00	92		Sprintlink UK
US	16	33	217.118.224	sl-bb20-par-15	Paris, France	+01:00	103		Sprintlink FR
Domain Name:	17	66	213.206.129	sl-bb21-fra-13-					Sprintlink UK
Administrative Contact	18		217.147.08	sl-bb21-fra-15-					Sprintlink DE
Sprint-Advanced Net									

Konfabulator has a widget someone else created that also links to an online Internet per continent source for viewing Internet health, but it doesn't bring it all together on one window like this does either.

If you can read the fine print in the graphic above, there is an Analysis window that shows spots between you and the desired destination on where stuff may be temporarily broken. See, for a while I couldn't even get to maccompanion.com and Apple's Network Utility was blinded by the Cable Company's lack of Ping and Traceroute access. When it did work (it does for now, by the way), it only showed asterisks out beyond my cable modem, which was of no help at all. Thankfully, I had ping and traceroute info before it was shut off so I could tell, more or less where the problem existed (the hop right before I could reach our host).

With VR, I can analyze (okay, VR analyzes, I just see the results) what is going on *everywhere* between me and where I am looking and see where the Internet "hurts". It also shows what server software is being used at each "hop". And it can now check specific ports.

I also can see the reverse DNS (Domain Name Server) at each hop so I can also make contact with that system if it is behaving badly. I can see where it is located physically anywhere on the

planet and what time zone it is in as well as who "owns" that hop. What I think is really neat is that by clicking on the live links, I can see all current contact info for the owner of that link. Really!

And there is that little line graph that works vertically instead of horizontally, but it *DOES* work in real-time. It shows performance status. Some hops are bad performers.

As far as the geographical info, that helps too. At least I can identify the location, time, etc. of each hop, but I don't know yet just how helpful zooming in on a particular location is on the world map. It says it can drill down to County and City, but my experience so far is drilling to a location per state (USA).

I'd love to see the other applications Visualware has on the PC-side such as Email Tracker Pro v2, but what I *can* do right now is enter an email address instead of a website or IP address and let VR show me the server the email address is located on so I can drill deeper and make contact with the provider. As a result of using that feature, I was able to make contact and discovered that the person I was tracking covered his own tracks pretty well enough that even though email wasn't bouncing, it wasn't "live" either. His website had been shut down months ago by the provider, so that explained why I and others were "blocked" from access. This took minutes rather than days. At least I now know where NOT to look for that person. I checked again and clicked on the link. It shows his supposedly real location, address, and phone number (no answer yet) as well as another email address (which I know is already "dead", by the way). All of this is outside this country according to what I found at the bottom of the 3rd column of VR by clicking on the IP address (WHOIS info, actually). If you legally registered a domain, you can't hide too far away.

So this search-and-research process becomes simply a point-and-click Apple-easy activity. I wish Apple had it as part of *its* OS package.

Notice I said this process took minutes? Actually, micro-seconds. VR processes all hops concurrently instead of one-at-a-time and is a joy to watch as the graph morphs quickly.

macCompanion recently moved from one host to another. Using VR, I was able to discover that the old location was littered with %loss red numbers (2nd column in VR). The route to the new location is clean, pristine and is a lot shorter hop-wise than the former location was, so I'm very happy with the decision to switch over from a PC-based host to an Xserve host. I doubt that the server change has much to do with the route process, but it sure helps having a server that isn't subject to the WinTel environmental detritus going on of late!

Now a couple of more things you might like to know; VR is multilingual – as in languages such as Czech, Dutch, English, French, German, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish and Swedish. It is also multi-platform – FreeBSD, Linux, Mac OS X, Solaris and Windows.

So if you care to know about where Internet bottlenecks are in real-time, you are now enabled by using VR to do something about it. It is quite possible that the IT folks at the offending location are not aware that they do indeed have a problem. It can't hurt too much to at least let them know you know there is an issue that needs to be resolved. And with Mac OS X and VR, you can now send them a screenshot to prove it.

I went around and around with our cable company with them telling me that my router needed to be shut down, firmware upgraded and everything reset to fix "my problem". I gave them the benefit of the doubt, because at the time I didn't have the tools necessary to pinpoint where on the Internet the real problem resided. I even went so far as to wipe my system and start over from scratch. Drastic, but at least I was able to prove it "wasn't me". I just couldn't get through to them that it didn't matter whether or not I bypassed the router (results were the same), but now I have a tool that helps me show where problems beyond my personal control lie. Coincidentally, on the day we decided to finally switch hosts, the "old" site began to once again work correctly. And no, I still don't know why. I can only speculate that into a Tom Clancy novel. A few of days later, the cable company turned Ping and Traceroute back on.

So for \$50 USD, you can now own a tool many security specialists, police organizations and even, dare I say it, intelligence organizations, are using to track down Internet nasties.

Just so you know, here is the screenshot from me to the new location for where maccpanion.com now resides.

Report for maccpanion.com [208.187.226.119]

Analysis: 'maccpanion.com' was found in 15 hops.

Left-click on the map to zoom in; right-click to zoom out

'maccpanion.com' was found in 15 hops.

VisualRoute was able to connect to the host that you entered. The number of hops indicates how many times data is forwarded in the route between you and the host. Thus, the greater the number of hops, the more chance there is of data being lost, and, in general, the longer it will take for data to reach its destination.

For further information, visit Visualware Product Support:
<http://www.visualware.com/personal/support/index.html#visualroute>

Hop	%Loss	IP Address	Node Name	Location	Tzone	ms	Graph	Network
0		192.168.123.144	-	...			0	208 (private use)
1		192.168.123.254	-	...		3		(private use)
2		10.210.0.1	-	...		60		(private use)
3		172.29.32.161	-	...		70		(private use)
4		172.29.37.6	-	...		71		(private use)
5		12.127.79.149	-	...		71		(private use)
6		12.123.44.61	gbr2-p70.st6wa.ip.att.net	Seattle, WA, USA	-08:00	66		AT&T WorldNet Services ATT
7		12.122.12.161	tbr1-p012601.st6wa.ip.att.net	Seattle, WA, USA	-08:00	74		AT&T WorldNet Services ATT
8		12.122.12.113	tbr2-cl1.sfca.ip.att.net	San Francisco, CA, USA	-08:00	77		AT&T WorldNet Services ATT
9		12.123.13.194	ggr2-p390.sfca.ip.att.net	San Francisco, CA, USA	-08:00	49		AT&T WorldNet Services ATT
10		209.0.227.29	so-1-1-0.edge1.sanjose1.le	San Jose, CA, USA	-08:00	52		Level 3 Communications, Inc. I
11		209.244.3.137	so-5-0-0.gar1.sanjose1.le	San Jose, CA, USA	-08:00	51		Level 3 Communications, Inc. I
12		209.247.10.137	so-1-0-0.mp1.seattle1.le	Seattle, WA, USA	-08:00	71		Level 3 Communications, Inc. I
13		209.247.9.62	gig11-2.hsa2.seattle1.le	Seattle, WA, USA	-08:00	64		Level 3 Communications, Inc. I
14		4.25.148.146	s0-1.ipns.bbnpplanet.net	-		113		Genuity GNTY-4-0
15		208.187.226.119	maccpanion.com	...		110		Internet Professionals & Netwc

Roundtrip time to maccpanion.com, average = 110ms, min = 54ms, max = 198ms -- Nov 18, 2003 3:29:15 PM

Being able to "see" using this application is sure worth it to me!

Go check out the Visualware website for other goodies, such their excellent tutorials on tracking email to its source and other stuff as well.

I'm eagerly awaiting any ports of their other products.

Some competitors:

Apple's Network Utility in Mac OS X

WhatRoute 1.8.14 <http://homepages.ihug.co.nz/~bryanc/>

IP Monitor 1.3.2 <http://www.skytouch.com/soft/mac/ipmonitor.html>

Well, that's it for this issue of *macCompanion*. May each of you be blessed with Peace and Prosperity throughout this coming year and may your "Holy-days" be safe ones!