macCompanion

Your Guide To All Things Macintosh

August 2004 Issue 8 Volume 2

Book Reviews

BURN, BABY, BURN! RECORDING AUDIO CDs

THE ROBIN WILLIAMS Mac OS X Book — PANTHER EDITION

Hardware Reviews

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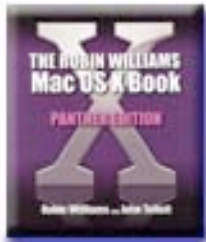
Hardware Reviews

VONAGE
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VONAGE

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

Letter From the CEO by Robert Pritchett

What's Cool – What's Hot

Tiger (Mac® OS X™ 10.4) is hot and much of what it promises is cool technology, according to what I've seen so far come to light from WWDC. Once it is released officially, expect the server farms to switch as soon as XSAN is also distributed. I just wish we didn't have to wait another year to get it!

Next month we will see the G5 iMac®. We've already seen the latest iPod® rendering.

IBM has new chip technology that Apple is intimately familiar with, so expect some great offerings for a new platform also within a year.

All these topics and more can be found in our BLOG at
http://www.maccompanion.com/pmachinefree23/weblog.php.

We also offer our *macCompanion* Forum. You have access, so take advantage of it at
http://www.maccompanion.com/forum/.

For finding past information, we have indexed the *macCompanion* website, so if we published it, you should be able to find it at http://www.maccompanion.com/index/indexindex.html.

And to do site translations into other languages besides English or to see our other services, check out
http://www.maccompanion.com/services/servicesindex.html.

So we can stay solvent, we also offer a host of online buying opportunities when you visit our Bazaar at
http://www.maccompanion.com/bazaar/bazaarindex.html. If you would prefer to donate directly instead, we offer that as well at http://www.maccompanion.com/donate/donate.html.

We continue to add links to other Mac-related locations through our Companions section found at
http://www.maccompanion.com/companions/companionsindex.html. It continues to grow as more folks discover us and want to become a part of our globally-extended Macintosh Professional Network.

If you want to see who is currently on our staff, go to http://www.maccompanion.com/info/infoindex.html. We are constantly growing that all-volunteer team.

We are extremely excited by the fact that you make us possible by your attention to what we write and discuss. You have been instrumental in spreading the word about our site and what it offers.

We hope that as more and more people discover us, as they look for a low-maintenance computer platform (that apparently from all indications has the least operating-and-use challenges of any on the planet), we can provide a way for them to learn and feel comfortable with this wonderful, magical platform Apple Corporation calls Macintosh®.

Keep spreading the good news about *macCompanion*! It's contagious in a good way, as we strive to be "Your Guide To All Things Macintosh".

Go to our Forum and let us know what interests you. Maybe we can discuss it further or at least lead you to where the information you seek can be found.

Apple technology is cool and *macCompanion* is hot!

Letter From the Editor by Robert Pritchett

We were a little late in getting the July issue out the door as the *macCompanion* website was being revamped. Our apologies. We will repent by getting the August issue out in a timely manner.

As you can see, all back issues are now freely downloadable, so if you missed the July issue, you can go back and get it, along with all the other issues since we began *macCompanion* over a year ago.

This project is still a labor of love and a learning experience as we work together to bring you book, hardware and software reviews that are of interest to us and to those who asked for our opinions and indulged us with their products.

Step into this issue of *macCompanion* and see what our team has reviewed and discussed as we try to keep up with all the new hardware technologies, books and software packages that have flowed our direction recently.

And let us know what you'd like to see in future issues by going to our own online Forum located at http://www.maccompanion.com and writing your own opinions about our reviews.

Together, we can make the world a better place to live in peace, harmony and love using technology that can give us the promise of a better quality of life. Don't you agree?

Views from the Ivory Tower by Ted Bade

MacWorld Expo in mid-July turned out, at least for me, to be a bit disappointing. The excitement and energy was definitely there, as well as an impressive list of Mac-famous. For the pro and even semi-pro, there was a plethora of seminars covering a variety of topics. But the floor show was nothing to write home about.

Everyone I spoke with about the classes and seminars said they were very satisfied with them. Apparently some speakers went over the 1-hour time limit, providing the attendees extra information. The speakers were knowledgeable and in some cases, quite entertaining.

But I don't go for the classes or the discussions. I am not a professional that uses Macs in his day-to-day job. I am a part-time "almost-journalist" who enjoys spending his free time playing with new technology. What attracts me to shows like this (besides the very important camaraderie of being in an almost totally Macintosh® environment), are vendors showing their new wares, providing an opportunity to try them out, speak with knowledgeable company representatives, and perhaps to acquire a demo version for more thorough testing on my own system.

The exhibitor's floor was small. I knew that it would be. I don't know why it was so small. Perhaps the cost of floor space, perhaps vendors were leery of a new show that was not officially sanctioned by Apple, or perhaps they were waiting for "the other guys" to commit before they did. (And since few really large vendors actually attended, many smaller vendors didn't show as well). Probably it was a combination of this and several other factors. Whatever the reason, the floor show was small.

However, this doesn't mean that what was there was bad. There were a number of interesting vendors at the show. Companies such as Audible.com, Ebay.com, and Versiontracker.com were represented there. Each of these companies is terrific in what they do. Obviously their purpose at the show was to acquire new members (I couldn't talk them into anything interesting for someone who already is a participant;-)). There was also a handful of smaller software companies showing their wares. Mackiev http://www.mackiev.com/ was there showing and demonstrating their line of products such as PrintShop for Mac® OS X™ and KidsPic™. They had machines to let attendees try the products and their floor people were friendly. The people who created "Sketch-up" http://www.sketchup.com/ were there as well. MacSpeech™ http://www.macspeech.com/ did a great demo of how a handicapped person can make use of their products. One group, called Mac Specialists Marketing Co-Op, took up a lot of floor space and provided excellent demos of a variety of products. It wasn't that the vendors weren't interesting, but that there were so few, the floor show could easily be completed in a few hours. And you couldn't miss the "Spy-Mac" booth. http://www.spymac.com/, these guys are offering some serious competition to the dot-Mac service. Their capacities are larger and the cost is a fraction of a .mac account. Check them out.

In the hardware arena, Belkin http://www.belkin.com/ had an impressive area. Although they weren't selling anything at the show, they were displaying many of their products and demonstrating some of them. I was quite intrigued by a USB-based game controller they were promoting called the Nostromo n52. It could be a gamers dream, offering easy access to many (user defined) keys in an ergonomically designed device. (I'll have a lot more to say on this in a future article.) This reminds me that I should mention that there was a definite lack of game companies at this show. Other then the Belkin space and a company selling some kids stuff, I didn't find many games.

The best shows were being put on by the book sellers! O'Reilly http://www.oreilly.com/ provided talks by some of their most famous and fun authors (my two favorite being Adam Engst and David Pogue). Just having the opportunity to hear them speak and promote some of their books was worth the cost of entry into the show. (If either of you guys read this, thank you for making the show!). PeachPit Press http://www.peachpit.com/ was also there, selling and promoting their books. There was always a lot of excitement and activity in the vicinity of the book booths! Noticeably missing were the catalog sales stores I have seen at previous MacWorlds. There were a couple smaller dealers, but none of the big guys.

What surprised me most was the large number of non-Mac or even non-computer related vendors that were

there. There were memory resellers (some very good deals), people selling related clothing, Internet and network security people, the Nada-chair people (they are a real MacWorld institution!) R-Quest http://www.r-quest.com/ CD duplicators, as well as Noren, http://www.norenproducts.com/ makers of cabinets with sound insulation and cooling systems for computers. There were at least two massage booths, and even a company selling an electronic device that helps relax muscles and relieve pain! (recommended for people who use Windows™).

The best part of the show was the people. Being with a group of Mac enthusiasts is always a blast. Sit at a table with them and you find yourself in an interesting conversation. Sometimes sharing stories or tales of computer-woes, helping resolve problems, or just watching some funny videos on a PowerBook®. There were lots and lots of iBooks® and PowerBooks. It was amazing the ways people stored then, especially the small ones.

Like members of any small anti-establishment group, Mac people need to stick together. But I believe there is more to it then that. There is a quality to Mac owners, a friendliness, a willingness to help others as well as asking for help from others. At a show like this you don't feel alone or out of place. If there is anyone near you, the only reason you don't know them is because you haven't started speaking to them yet. It's the people that make up the Macintosh community that make the community so wonderful.

Well, that sums up my views on MacWorld Expo, Boston held in July of 2004. I really hope that the poor vendor turn out doesn't kill the show. Perhaps next year some of the bigger companies will decide to show. I would like to see that. I will attend the show next year if it goes as planned. Who knows what will happen?

iTunes Music Store passes the 100 million song mark – Apple spent considerable time and money pushing the number of ITMS songs sold past the 100M mark. When the number reached the mid-90 millions, they announced a number of prizes to be given away at different points as the number of songs sold worked its way to the 100M mark. Everyone who won a prize did very well, but the guy who bought number 100M got an incredible prize including a new PowerBook, a iPod®, and a gift certificate for 10,000 songs! (Not to mention a call from Steve Jobs himself, who was apparently happy to hear the guy was already a Macintosh owner!) Incredible. I doubt I have time in my life to listen to 10,000 different songs!

In any case, congratulations are in order for the winner as well as for the ITMS for selling so many songs. Apple has done a good thing making buying songs on the Internet both easy and economical. While this won't stop dishonest people, it certainty provides a path for honest people to get their music. For more information visit http://www.apple.com/itunes/100million/.

Apple Financials – Apple released its third quarter financial numbers during the week of MacWorld Expo in Boston. Overall they were pretty good. They had a profit of $61 million, up almost 30% from the same quarter last year, this performance slightly surpassed what the industry pundits expected.

Internet music sales were up 162% over last year and Apple sold almost as many iPods as Macs! They saw a large increase in sales in Europe, the education market and record iBook/PowerBook shipments. G5 sales were constrained because of a problem on IBM's part on being able to deliver them in adequate quantities and speeds. They also used words like "staggering demand" when referring to digital music and pre-orders of iPod minis.

One interesting announcement was that Apple is developing a G5-based iMac, although the release of this machine as well as G5 based desktop Macs would be delayed due to the supply of G5 chips.

What exactly is "Market share"? – Right after the release of Apples quarterly financial statement, the annual market share numbers were released. Apple holds the number 5 position with 3.7%. While this might sound terrible compared to Dell's almost 33%, instead compare it to IBM and Gateways 5.6%.

Also don't forget that market share is generally calculated on computer sales and does not consider the total number of computer owners. One interesting discussion I got into at the MacWorld show concerned this topic. The way market share is calculated doesn't consider the installed base of computer users. It is generally

agreed that people don't replace their Macs as often as people replace their PCs. I would like to think this is because people are happier with their Macs for a longer time then they are with their PCs. Many times I have heard of big problems with Wintel machines, problems that pop up after a while, lost registries, damaged system folders and so forth. While similar problems exist for Macs, in my experience, even basic Mac users generally resolve these problems. I have a PC friend that has restored his machine about four times since he got it a few years ago. I know of only a few instances where a person using a Mac has had to give up, reformat their disk, losing everything, and start over. Most of the time, repairing the Mac with Apple's disk utilities is enough.

What does this mean? It means there are a lot more Mac owners out there then so called market shares account for. I have given away a couple of machines to friends that couldn't have afforded them otherwise. I track how these machines are doing and usually provide support as well. I can say, except for some work in the beginning, support is easy and there is little in the way of repair issues! The machines just continue to work.

Digital Lifestyle Expo – It seems the idea of a digital lifestyle has really taken off, and there is enough interest to justify an exposition, called the Digital Lifestyle Exposition. What is this new exposition? According to their web site:

"The DLexpo is a unique education and awareness program involving the latest tools and solutions in digital technology. It specifically targets the areas of digital video, photography, music, the Internet, wireless communications and home entertainment."

There will be Macintosh related information including information using Final Cut Pro as well as a presentation by David Pogue and other technology favorites. A variety of digital lifestyle products will be presented, including G5 Macs, iLife® suite, Adobe® PhotoShop™ and Photoshop Elements, Lacie hard drives, HP printers and much more. The dates and locations include:

August 14 – 15, 2004; Long Beach Convention Center; Long Beach, CA

September 25 – 26, 2004; Marriott Marquis Hotel; New York, NY

November 13 – 14, 2004; Cobb Galleria Centre; Atlanta, GA

For more information, visit the Digital Lifestyle Expo site: http://www.dlexpo.com/.

iPods showing up everywhere – It was interested to hear that the incoming class of freshmen at Duke University will all be given iPods. Apparently the iPods will contain information about the University to help the freshmen orient themselves. Any guesses as to how long it will take for the iPods to be filled with music?

Next, there is the **new iPod** that Apple released in July. http://www.apple.com/ipod/. This new edition brings the control buttons back down to the wheel, which is still a touch pad. The new iPods come with either 20 or 40 Gbyte capacity and are supposed to provide 12 hours of listening time on a fully charged battery (which is better then the original iPod's 10 hours). New features include 25 minutes of skip protection (they say you can jog with this new iPod), the ability to sync and charge with a USB 2.0 cable, Shuffle songs menu item, and adjust audio book speeds (I am not sure why one would want that feature – I don't want the "Chipmunks reading my books!).

IDG http://www.idg.com announced that they would be producing a **new magazine** dedicated to the iPod, walled, iPodWorld. There is not a lot of information about it yet. They had some information at the MacWorld Expo, but it was sparse. I wonder, just how many articles can one write about the iPod? Then again, perhaps IDG is just seeing how much interest they can create...

Poor quality of digital music – An article printed in the NY Times, complained about the poor quality of digital music. The complaint is that one is led to believe they are getting CD quality music, but of course they are not. You have to register at the NY Times site to read the article (visit: http://www.nytimes.com/, which requires a free registration, but you pay for the article). I found the reference to this complaint in the Mac

News Network site http://www.macnn.com/news/25336.

People like to complain. I can remember in the 70's making comments about the cheap quality of "boom boxes", low-end speakers, and cheap cassette tapes. Was I technologically correct? For the most part, yes. But did this stop people from buying them? No! What did I learn? When it comes to music, many people have "tin-ears". As long as they can identify the melody, it is fine. Sure there are losses with MP3s, but this won't deter people from purchasing them. The "masses" are more concerned with instant gratification and ease of use then with quality. Not to mention they have that extra step of ripping the CD if they buy one.

I think that the quality of MP3s is an issue only for high-end listeners, who have spent many thousands of dollars for audio equipment (and they can certainty purchase CDs or even Original Master LPs for that matter, if they are so inclined!). I am afraid that most people can't tell the difference between the audio out of a set of Bose AM series speakers, pumped through a Sony Reference receiver and an average all in one set from WalMart (speakers and reciever/CD/Tape, etc, player all in one unit), that cost less then half of either of the two high end items.

All this means I don't expect the music quality issue to really affect the iTunes® Music Store. High-end people will continue to purchase high end stuff and everyone else will go the cheap route. High-end music is nice. And I have bought my share of it, but digital music is good enough for most casual use.

iTunes on your cell phone? – Late in July Steve Jobs announced a partnership with Motorola, which will allow people to transfer music from their iTunes library to a next generation cell phone. This will work for people using either Macs or Windows, as long as they use iTunes. Connection includes both Bluetooth and USB. I guess this means that Steve is actually considering other MP3 players to play Apple's protected AAC music format. However, just as would be expected, the device he allowed is something completely different from the standard MP3 player. Probably something that is easily controlled.

So now I guess I can change my voicemail message to a warning that I might not answer a call because I am in the middle of listening to a favorite tune! Sounds like a cool idea.

Well, it has been an interesting Macintosh month. I am always looking for a good story, so if you hear of one, please take a moment to send email. I am always glad to hear from our readers. Until next month, keep on computin'!

Rants, Raves and Revelations by Harry {doc} Babad Edited by Julie M. Willingham

Shareware—A Baker's Dozen that Appeal, including my Favorite Game

I love shareware, and whenever I come up for air from practicing my other vices ...collecting recipes or reading science fiction ...I surf to check out the new goodies: the software that talented, and some not so talented, people are creating for our Macintoshes. Since I don't have time to do formal reviews on most of the shareware I download, I'm using this month's 3 R's column to share a few of my long-time favorites and some of my more recent finds.

If any of this shareware pleases you, browse MacUpdate.com, VersionTracker.com, CNET.com, or TuCows.com. (These are not listed in any particular order since I'm already too organized as it is. I'm so organized, according to my wife, that I can never find the things I put away safely at home, other than on my computer.)

I'm likely to review EazyDraw™ in a future issue of *macCompanion*, since the last vector-drawing program I liked was Claris MacDraw™ II (which, by the way, will run under the Classic environment in Mac® OS X). As for the others, I chippied around with a few, but have not worked with them enough to know whether I'll keep them. The information below is toned down from a combination of enthusiastic publishers' blurbs and few bits that crept out of my head, mostly after midnight. Later in this issue, you'll find my review of Checklist™ software, which helps me avoid senior moments (unless, of course, I forgot to check or print my list); and my review of KeyCue™, a tool to help you learn to remember menu item shortcuts.

Enjoy these and please send feedback on any other shareware items that you find interesting.

Alarm Clock Pro™ 6.4.2 Koingo Software http://www.koingosw.com/products/alarm_clock_pro.shtml $15.95 USD (Single User) **Requirements:** Mac OS X 10.2 or later.	

Product Description
Alarm Clock Pro offers itself as a modern replacement for your old alarm clock. You no longer need to worry about winding your alarm clock or making sure it has good batteries in it. You'll also never wake up with a headache from that wretched ringing.

There are many other computer available alarm clocks out there--just check out MacUpdate. But none of the others appear to offer the number of useful features and flexibility of Alarm Clock Pro. Easily glide through the alarm creation process by specifying what type of alarm you wish to set and what happens when it goes off. Select audio files, movies, Internet radio stations; iTunes play lists, and even CD audio tracks.

Moreover, the software's developers refused to limit you to a single alarm with a basic set of features. After many years of serious development, we have included numerous user requests. This has proven to be an essential element in making Alarm Clock Pro popular throughout the Macintosh community.

ClipboardMenu™ 1.1 Citrus Software http://www.citrussoftware.com/ $11.95 USD (Single User) **Requirements:** Mac OS X 10.2 or later.	

ClipboardMenu is a powerful application that allows you to store up to 99 text or picture clips that you can easily access in the menu bar. With one simple key combination, you copy any picture or text from the OS X clipboard to the clipboard menu in the menu bar. The beginning of the copied text will appear as a new item

in the clipboard menu so you can find the clip with ease when you need it again. To copy any clip back to the OS X clipboard, all you have to do is select it in the clipboard menu! With its ease of use, auto archiving of clippings, creating time-stamped files, and the availability of 3 export features, 'Save to...', 'Open with...' and 'Mail to...' this is a powerful addition to the Mac OS X's Finder's capability.

This is the most comfortable multi-clipboard utility available for Mac OS X. Additional features include:

•Store up to 99 clips in your menu bar
•Copy any text or picture with one single key-combination to the menu
•Your clips are easily accessible with just one click
•No setup required – ClipboardMenu is ready to go

ClipDoubler™ Pro 1.0 – So who has enough clipboards?
Northern Softworks
http://www.northernsoftworks.com/clipdoublerpro.html
$15 USD (Single User)
Requirements: Mac OS X 10.2 or later

The Macintosh Clipboard – it's simple, it's elegant, a core element of the Mac computing experience. Why should there be only one clipboard? ClipDoubler Pro is designed as an application for both Classic Mac OS and Mac OS X. Double click, and you can have all the clipboards your heart desires. Quit, and you're back to one. It's as simple as that. ClipDoubler Pro supports text, pictures, sounds, movies, and many other resources. ClipDoubler Pro can both open and save clipping files, and it can create Internet shortcuts as well. You can put the contents of TEXT and PICT files onto a clipboard with a simple drag-and-drop. ClipDoubler Pro gives you the ability to edit the contents of any clipboard, and convenient menu shortcuts are built in to perform common editing tasks.

Audio Hijack Pro™ 1.3.1
Rogue Amoeba Software, LLC
http://www.rogueamoeba.com/audiohijackpro/
$30 USD (Single User)
Requirements: Mac OS X 10.2.7 – 10.3.4

Audio Hijack Pro is likely the audio utility you've been waiting for – enhance and record the audio output of any application on your Mac. From Internet radio streams [e.g., from Jazz Stations to BBC streams] to DVD audio, if your machine can play it, Audio Hijack Pro can record it. Audio Hijack Pro is an intermediate to advanced tool for sweetening the sound of all of your digitized audio. Apply industry-standard VST and AudioUnit™ audio effects, as well as fifteen custom Digital Sound Processors (DSP filters) written specifically for Audio Hijack Pro, to make your music sound incredible. Enhance, re-record, enjoy!

For those who don't need all of the audio optimization features, or can't hear them try the lite version of this software. Audio Hijack is the perfect tool to record any audio stream onto your computer. You can convert any audio, be it Real Audio™, WindowsMedia™, or AAC™ formats to the AIFF or MP3 formats. With Audio Hijack, you can quickly and easily save audio from almost any application to an AIFF file. The AIFF file can then be burned to a CD, or played in any software audio player like iTunes or Roxio's Toast or any hardware audio player like an iPod. Use Audio Hijack to record Car Talk or any other Real/Windows Media/iTunes/Internet stream and listen at your leisure. Snag game sounds or sound bytes off DVD movies. You can even use Audio Hijack to rip Flash™ audio! And with the software's built-in Timers, you don't even have to be there to record. Audio Hijack puts you in control of all your audio.

Final Vinyl 1.1.2 - An Audio Utility [Freeware]
Griffin Technology, Inc.
http://www.griffintechnology.com/
Requirements: OS 10.2 or later (<10.2 not tested) and a Griffin iMic™
or PowerWave™ device.

Final Vinyl is a free OS X audio recording and editing application for use with the Griffin family of audio products. Final Vinyl has several advanced features, including equalization and built-in RIAA curves. It features a custom digital audio component interface and complements iTunes or QuickTime™ Player. It records audio to disk, enables editing, and provides equalization and noise removal. In addition to being a fully functional general audio editor, Final Vinyl allows the recording of vinyl records using just the Griffin iMic and a turntable. Previously, the entire stereo system would be needed. Now, the record player can be connected directly to the iMic! Final Vinyl can be used to record instruments, microphones, reel-reel tapes and any other analog source plugged into the iMic. It includes a 10-band equalizer that is capable of significantly altering and enhancing users sound input. It also allows auditory and visual editing of your audio. Final Vinyl makes recording your old records and tapes super easy.

Eazy™ Draw 1.6.2 – MacDraw on Steroids
EazyDraw, LLC.
Serious Trial, a 9-month long Demo $20,
$95 USD Full License
http://www.eazydraw.biz/
Requirements: Mac OS X 10.2 or later including Panther.

There are several specialized drawing applications available for the graphic arts professional. We all know how much they cost and how hard they are to master. EazyDraw is drawing for the rest of us who want to have fun exploring the creative potential of this great new Macintosh Operating System.

EazyDraw is claimed to be MacDraw on steroids. It is an affordable drawing application designed exclusively for Mac OS X. It is useful for many creative projects including technical drawings, illustrations, icons, logos, and stylized text. EazyDraw is a vector based drawing application for desktop publishing (DTP) with Apple's Macintosh OS X operating system. It is an illustration or drawing software application that offers vector-based graphics editing and creation capabilities for creating simple, non-photographic drawings, technical diagrams and illustrations such as logos, icons, buttons and stylized art.

EazyDraw is a new design tool for use on the Mac OS X platform. Its uses range from simple technical drawings, flow charts, business communications, commercial line art illustrations to graphic elements for application software and web design elements. Educators are also finding EazyDraw to be perfect for introducing new users to computer drawing.

This product is developed by the folks who gave you Business Card Composer™, which we use to make macC's business cards and I use for identifying me when I volunteer, for my business ventures and just as a "how do you do" exchanging cards in great Victorian style...

LaunchBar™ 4 ß7 — A fine Finder Utility
Objective Development Software GmbH
http://www.obdev.at/products/launchbar/
$20 USD
Requirements: Mac OS X 10.2 or later.

LaunchBar is a productivity utility that offers an intuitive and efficient way to control your computer. It provides instant access to thousands of documents, folders, bookmarks, email addresses, applications, and preference panes just by entering short abbreviations of the searched item's name. It is designed to solve the problem of managing your number of applications, files, and bookmarks that accumulate on your hard disk. It provides an alternative to using some dock expansion utility, which requires, for accessibility, carefully

arranging your most commonly used files and bookmarks. This is the approach its developers believe is severely limited by the number of items can you effectively organize.

You just hit Command-Space to bring LaunchBar's input window to front, enter an arbitrary abbreviation, and as soon as you start typing LaunchBar displays the best matching choices, ready to be opened immediately. LaunchBar provides lightning fast access to thousands of files, web-bookmarks, email-addresses, and applications just by entering short abbreviations. Type OW to launch OmniWeb, AHN to open the "Apple Hot News" web page, BM to write an email to "Bob Miller" or HP01 to locate a folder named "Holiday Pictures 2001". LaunchBar learns from the user's habits and choices.

LaunchBar uses an adaptive evaluation algorithm to find the best matching items based on the abbreviation you type in. A sophisticated rating system considers the position and density of the given letters within the name of each item defined in the setup. The resulting ratings are then adjusted based on the items previous usage. The more often a specific item or abbreviation was used in the past, the better it will be rated.

Pacifist 1.6.3 – Take only what you need from the box.
CharlesSoft, LLC
http://www.charlessoft.com/
$20 USD
Requirements: Compatible with Mac OS X 10.1 or higher, including Mac OS X 10.3 (Panther).

Pacifist 1.6.3 is a shareware application that opens Mac OS X .pkg package files and allows you to extract individual files and folders out of them. This is useful, for instance, if an application which is installed by the operating system becomes damaged and needs to be reinstalled. That now can be done without the hassle of reinstalling all of Mac OS X. Pacifist is also able to verify existing installations and find missing or altered files*, and also has the ability to optimize your system's performance by updating prebinding information {you got me on this one} on your hard disk.

Pacifist is a small program that attempts to do in Mac OS X what *TomeViewer™* did in Mac OS 9 – it opens up .pkg installer packages and lets you install individual files out of them. This is useful if you need to install just one file out of a package instead of the entire package. For example, if you accidentally deleted Sherlock™ and need to reinstall just the application itself, but not the whole Mac OSX operating system) use Pacifist. Alternately, if you experience bugs in Installer.app that mess up your symbolic links, or if you just like a little more control over the installation process, this is the software for you. Pacifist can also update prebinding information for files that you install to optimize their performance. {Help! – Does anyone out there know what "prebinding" means?}
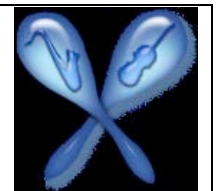
MakingMusic™ 2.4
by: David Ahmed
An Ongoing Freeware Project
www.davidahmed.com
Requirements: Mac OS X 10.2 or later, QuickTime 6 or later, and Internet access.

MakingMusic is an online musical instrument encyclopedia (database) that provides a description, an image, and a sound clip per instrument. This is an ongoing freeware project, a labor of love, with new instruments added to the database as the research for under recognized or forgotten instruments progresses. Each time you launch the application you will likely find you have access to newly added information. The aim of the project is to form a comprehensive database of musical instruments, old and new. The selection criteria include any instrument from any culture or any age that is or was used to make music. This may take some time! With users' help, it has now passed the 210-instrument mark.

David Ahmed says, "If you would like to submit an instrument for inclusion in the database, please email the details by using the link in the application's 'Help' menu."

DockExtender™ 3.1.3 – Why be limited or shrunk?
CodeTek Studios, Inc.
http://www.codetek.com
$20 USD
Requirements: Mac OS X 10.1 or later

Get instant access to your applications, documents, and more. If you use dozens of applications and work with hundreds of documents, but want to access them quickly and easily, you need DockExtender. With DockExtender, you can organize all of your applications and documents into as many as 10 different menus, which are only one mouse click or key press away. You have complete control over DockExtender menus—their content and organization are completely up to you. You can organize the menus into separate submenus, put in labeled separators to break up groups of apps, or just load in the contents of a folder. DockExtender gives you the fastest access to all of your applications and documents.

Total Customization Feature—DockExtender menus allow you to perform a number of different actions, all from the same menu. Group your applications and documents together by task or by function. Put your most common tools in one menu, and the URLs for your favorite websites in another menu. Organize items into submenus and label menu sections with separators. DockExtender does all this and more.

There are 3 Ways to Access Your Menus—You can put your menus in the Dock, use the menu bar tool, or press a HotKey to show your menu. Any which way, you've got all your files, URLs, and AppleScripts at your fingertips. What's more, if you use HotKeys to access your menus, you can navigate them using the arrow keys, so your hands never leave the keyboard.

Multiple Dock Configurations—Another feature of DockExtender is the ability to switch between multiple Dock configurations as you work. Using the DockExtender preference pane, you can set up your Dock configurations without having to modify your current Dock. Add a "MultiDock configs" submenu to any DockExtender menu, and swap Docks whenever you want.

Folder Control™ 1.4 – Take control of the appearance of your folder windows
http://www.derman.com/
$22 USD
Requirements: Mac OS X 10.2 or later with the BSD Subsystem installed (part of the default installation). Activate Enable access for assistive devices on the Universal Access Preferences panel

FolderControl is a utility that arranges the Finder's folder windows into the configuration you define. Numerous preferences give you control over:

- Which folders participate in the Finder reconfigurations processing
- How folder windows are sized, both vertically and horizontally
- How the subfolder windows are arranged, relative to their enclosing folder's window
- How various folder window attributes, such as view kind and sorting, are set, and
- Setting the permissions on the files that control these capabilities.

Since you'll likely want to use a different combination of settings for different situations, FolderControl creates preference sets that you can name and reuse. In addition, FolderControl initially installs a collection of the most common preference sets to get you started. In fact, some users never need any more than these.

Finally you can set all your folder windows, even your spring-loaded pop-up windows, so they open in the configuration you want to see!

This is the tool I use whenever I organize new shareware collection CDs to eliminate the random window formatting [Icon, List or Column] and the window locations before I burn the collection [doc_Babad].

Pop-Up Zapper™ X 2.6.7 – Turn IE and Safari into Zap killing machines!
by: Ricardo Batista
http://batista.org/index.html
$30 USD
Requirements: Mac OS X 10.1 or later, Internet Explorer and now Safari and Mail.

Pop-Up Zapper for OS X is a shareware application for Mac that helps you by "zapping" away those annoying pop-up windows when you surf the web and can filter out large graphics to speed up your Internet connection.

Pop-Up Zapper 2.0 watches the work of your web browser. When it identifies a pop-up window (or pop-under), it first makes it invisible to you and then closes it. Occasionally you may see a window flash by really fast before it is zapped. You can look at Pop-Up Zapper's counter on its Dock icon to see that it is working.

For filtering, Pop-Up Zapper acts as a proxy for your web browser or mail program, and can be told to leave out Flash animations, Javascripts, graphics over 4K in size, all graphics, or a combination of those options. Choosing to load only selected graphics can improve your web browsing speed substantially, especially on a modem connection. If the option key is down while loading, all filtering is off.

Aki Mahjong Solitaire™ 1.0.1
Ambrosia Software, Inc.
http://www.ambrosiasw.com/games/aki/
$20 USD
Requirements: Mac OS X 10.1 or later, including Panther.

I am a long time player of "Shanghai," and was one who mourned when I found that my AcTiVision CDs of Shanghai™ "Great Moments" no longer worked with my new Mac OS X system. Imagine my joy when a MacUpdate search a few years ago turned up not one, but ten versions of my favorite game. In a totally nonobjective manner, I was quickly drawn to Aki Mahjong Solitaire. (Note that Bone Head Software's Mah Jong Solitaire™ http://www.mahjongsolitaire2.com/ came in a close second. (It was too 3-D for my board game oriented taste.)

Aki Mahjong Solitaire for Mac OS X elegantly blends the ancient Chinese game of Mahjong with an enchanting journey through the uniquely fascinating scenery and culture of Japan. It's a modern fusion of two ancient Asian cultures, and is as much an experience as it is a game. Aki Mahjong Solitaire is easy to learn even if you still haven't mastered chopsticks, so don't hesitate to dive right in. We think you'll soon find yourself captivated.

In Aki, you may find your moment of Zen. The principle is simple: you have a number of ivory tiles arranged on a beautiful Japanese backdrop. Your goal is to make all of the tiles disappear by matching them to similar tiles. The catch is that tiles can be removed only if they are unblocked on either side by other tiles, and you have the uncompromising ticking away of the time limit to contend with.

From these simple rules flows a game that has delighted people around the world for centuries. Aki Mahjong Solitaire features an exquisitely detailed ivory tile set from a real antique Mahjong game, harmoniously combined with a thoroughly modern, high-quality gaming engine.

At each step in your path, you will encounter new challenges in the variety of tile layouts presented to you, and a variety of skill levels that ensure you'll always find the experience engaging. As you progress, you will also be rewarded with fragments of Japanese culture and history, making your journey an enlightening as well as enjoyable one.

But be warned, Mahjong Solitaire is a very addictive game that gives you the chance to enjoy the ancient game of Mahjong Solitaire. This is the latest version posted—download it, pay the fee, and enjoy playing!

That's all folks! Since I spend a few evenings a month chasing shareware, If you'd like more on the 'serious' shareware toys I've check, but not seriously reviewed, let us know by sharing your feedback on the *macCompanion* website.

Feature

Vonage - Internet Telephony Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Vonage
2147 Route 27
Edison, NJ 08817
732.528.2600
Fax: 732.287.9119
1-VONAGE-HELP (1-866-243-4357) or 1-732-650-6699
Service began: April 2002
http://www.vonage.com/
Plans: $15 USD per month - Basic 500 Plan (500 minutes of US nationwide long distance, local, regional, plus calls to Canada every month. Only 3.9¢ per minute after the first 500 monthly minutes.)
$25 USD per month - Unlimited Local/Regional Plus Plan (Unlimited local and regional calling plus 500 minutes of US nationwide long distance and calls to Canada every month. Only 3.9¢ per minute after the first 500 monthly minutes.)
$30 per month Premium Unlimited Plan (Unlimited local, regional, US nationwide long distance, and calls to Canada.
$40 USD per month - Business Basic 1500 Minutes Plan - (Calls anywhere in the USA/Canada.)
$50 USD month - Business Premium Unlimited Plan - (Calls anywhere in the USA/Canada.)
800 Number - Extra $5 USD per month for 500 minutes.
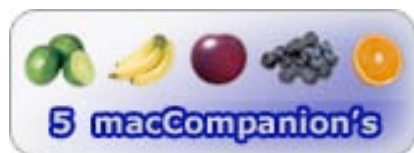Extra Line - Extra $16 USD per month.
Additional Fax - $10 USD per month.
Virtual Phone - $5 per month.
And don't forget the setup fees, shipping charges and taxes.
Billing is only done via credit card.
International Rates: http://www.vonage.com/intrates.php
Requirements: Broadband. RealPlayer™ or QuickTime® for VoiceMail.

Strengths: Internet Telephony without tying up the computer - unless you want to. 911 and 411 works with this VoIP application.

Weaknesses: Some latency issues associated with the Internet. Affiliate program could use some work besides being an anti-SPAM friends and family" approach. If power goes out, you are out. Credit card only for billing. Local calls are still city-specific and where we are there is no "local" except in Spokane, this side of the Cascades. Anyone "local" calls us and they are charged long-distance for the call. The virtual Vonage phone number cannot be found in Directory Assistance.

Remember the review I did on X-PRO back in December (http://www.maccompanion.com/archives/december2003/audio.html)? They combined with Vonage to allow road-warriors to use Vonage to connect just about anywhere to anywhere via voice. Got a portable? Now you

can call home over the Internet from just about any computer system on the planet – assuming you have a broadband connection.

So what did it cost us to get Vonage (pronounced Von-ej) working for MPN, LLC? We opted for the Premium Unlimited Plan to see how this works. I didn't see a whole lot of difference between the Residential Series and the Business Series of plans except for the Fax capability. Am I wrong?

We picked our Area Code and had to choose "anywhere", because we don't live in the Spokane area on the Eastern side of Washington State. The monthly fee had some other fees added to it, like the activation fee (same price as the monthly), a shipping charge for the Motorola Voice Terminal Model VT 1005V (http://www.radioshack.com/images/producthtml/additionalinformation.asp?skunumber=4303606), FET tax (US Federal Excise Tax) and Regulatory Recovery Fee (this is a fee to recover required costs of Federal and State Universal Service Funds as well as other related fees and surcharges. State and Federal agencies collect these fees from communications providers to fund public projects such as rural and library communications programs – also known as the "Gore Tax" [During Clinton's administration, he passed an E-Rate subsidy that was added to all telephone calls to support educational Internet connections and hardware for schools, mainly those that are "poor schools" to assist with providing better education opportunities for the districts with less money.]). Then we added another line, with all the extra fees. Then we also added a toll-free number. Sigh. So first month setup fees, etc. nearly $150 USD. Monthly recurring costs will be about $70 per month for us. Not including per-minute charges for overseas or any charges over the 500-minute limit for the 800 number. If we wanted to do the SoftPhone thing with X-PRO, we would add another $10 USD.

Why haven't we opted for the SoftPhone features yet? System resources, no existing phone transfer (like can be done with the Voice Terminal), inability to change the phone number (can be done with the regular plans), 911 emergency capability (function is possible with the other plans, but require activation [free] for the other Vonage phone processes), Call-waiting and bandwidth-saver functions not possible and no faxing capability. Repeat-dialing and call-hunt (the call rings on another phone if you're talking on the called number) also are not available.

So with the Vonage system what can I do? Get new phone numbers assigned or keep an existing number (Local or Wireless Number Portability) and get it transferred to Digital Voice, call local numbers with 7 digits instead of 11, get caller-ID, call-waiting, call-forwarding, do 3-way calling, do in-network calling, and have a choice of Area Codes. And have voicemail on a separate line. Network Unavailability Forwarding – If the cable modem or DSL is not on, or there is a network failure, Vonage will forward the calls to any number (such as a cell-phone).

What else you might ask? Call-transfer, call-return (*69 a computer voice will tell you the last person that called and ask if you would like to return the call), Caller-ID block (*67), repeat dialing, International call block (if necessary), click-to-call and ring lists. Adding additional lines is quick and so is adding Virtual phone numbers, so folks can dial locally. There are also the 411 (get listings In US, Canada and Puerto Rico for $1 per call) as well as 911 (free emergency calls will go to a central Public Safety Answering Point, then get forwarded to the appropriate agency).

There is real-time billing information available along with account management. Customer support is "live". Calls to Canada are the same as in the US.

If you want to, you can go all-digital and completely disconnect the Plain Old Telephone system now and use this instead – unless you are using DSL of course. The downside would be that if the power is gone, you have no dial-tone. If you specify a land-line, Vonage will forward calls to that, in case of a power outage.

I'm a Computer Telephony Engineer that used to work for the Technology Marketing Corporation in Norwalk, Connecticut in their lab (http://www.tmcnet.com/). That is how I discovered the folks that provide the SoftPhone technology for Vonage. What makes Vonage special is that they finally made their system available for Mac® OS X™ systems. Vonage has a Point-of-presence (POP) with just about every local phone company in the US to do the Analog (POTS)-Digital (Internet) conversion. I suspect it must be the same in Canada.

For outbound calls, voice packets are sent out by the Motorola Voice Terminal to Cisco® Border Routers through dedicated T1 connections at 3 Vonage co-located outbound facilities. The routers transfer packets to Cisco Gateways (5400s or 5800s that are like larger versions of the Motorola Voice Terminal), where digital to analog switching occurs, then on to Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN) switches owned by Competitive Local Exchange Carriers (CLECs), then on to an Inter eXchange Carrier (IXC or long distance company) to the callee.

For inbound calls, they go to phone company switches, based on Area Code, back along the same route as mentioned above. Won't this be cool when they can go worldwide?

As of this writing, these are the states and provinces where Vonage currently is being used.

So how does this system work anyway? The Motorola® VT1005V Voice Terminal (about $90 USD but not costed, unless you factor in the setup and shipping fees) is a modem that converts the analog phone set to digital for use over the Internet. It has air vents on top and covering the whole underside of this device. My Asanté router used to run cool and now runs hot with this connected between it and our computers. As you can see, it requires external power and has two phone jacks and 2 Ethernet jacks. It can be picked up with one hand.

There is a green LED power light that will do various blinking modes on startup to let you know it is getting connected. The interesting installation procedure is that the computer has to be off. The cable or DSL modem gets connected to it, than after the auto-configuration through the router and modem is completed, the computer can be turned on. The Vonage system is independent from the computer and the Ethernet jacks are pass-through from the computer to the router or cable/DSL modem environment. I have not witnessed any slowdown after hooking this up. How do I know it works? After plugging in the phoneset, I heard a dial tone while connected to the router/cable modem and I called my parents.

The VT1000 series Voice Terminal won a CES "Best of Innovations" award in the Small Office/Home Office category for the 2004 Consumer Electronics Show (http://www.cesweb.org/attendees/awards/innovations/2004/default.asp?boi=1). The VT1005V is a DHCP server/router. If I'm doing Software updates, and make a call, there will be noticable latency (voice choppiness). Voice quality is superior to cell phone service. It is not a closely-guarded secret that practically all telecom services have moved to Voice over IP because it is less maintenance-intensive than POTS.

Voicemail can be downloaded via a Dashboard as .wav files. If someone leaves a voicemail, an Email is sent to notify you. Setting up the message system was not much different than the Panasonic phonesets we use at work.

I have a Hello Direct device for use with a stereo headset/mic combination. I found that the Vonage system picked up the noise from that unit and made it unpleasant for listeners at the other end.

You don't want to use this over a 56Kbps Modem. Broadband speeds are required. Test using http://www.testyourvoip.com.

I added the International Rates link at the beginning of this review so you could compare rates with other services. Right now it shows calls can be made to Japan and most of Europe for 3 cents a minute, 7 to 8 cents to Mexico and 9 to 18 to the Caribbean.

In spite of all the Weaknesses I listed at the beginning of this review, I gave Vonage a 5. They are responding to customer requests. They stopped using the Cisco ATA device and went with the Motorola unit. They have added local phone calling capability instead of insisting that we dial the Country Code, then the Area Code, then the local number. They have lowered pricing on some services. And they probably are the first to have figured out how to get 911 services to play nice with VoIP.

Would we buy it? We did! So should you. Just give them our referral number when you do the service request. Use rpritchett@maccompanion.com. Our Vonage number is 1-509-210-0217 and the toll-free is 888-684-2161.

Dig Deeper

http://www.technewsworld.com/story/35177.html

Books

Burn, Baby, Burn!: Recording Audio CDs from any Source, LPs to MP3s An Annotated Book
Review by Harry {doc} Babad Edited by Julie M. Willingham

Authors: Josh McDaniel and Bob Starrett
Peachpit Press
1249 Eighth Street
Berkeley, CA 94710
Phone: 1–510–524–2178
Fax: 1–510–524–2221
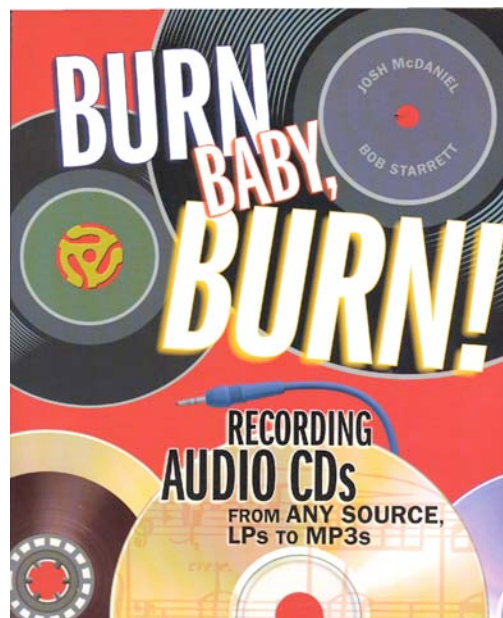http://www.peachpit.com/
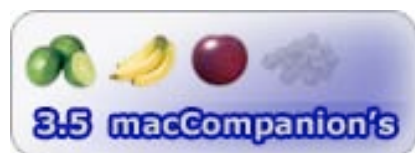Published: June 23, 2004
Pages: 234
$20 USD, $29 CAN, £15 Net UK, €17,20
ISBN: 0321241312
Experience Needed/Audience—This book is designed to help beginners as well as intermediate level computer users learn how to make either good or excellent audio CDs for their archived cassette tape and vinyl collection or their newly acquired mp3s.

PC Users & Mac Audio Heads

Mac Users

Strengths: Finally--a book for the vinyl or other audio medium collector who wishes to convert LPs to CDs! This book, a joint effort by Bob Starrett and Josh McDaniel, bridges the gap between vinyl and computer/CD audio. Providing a wealth of information about hardware and software choices, the authors lead us from desire to fulfillment in the world of digital re-recording of analog LP or tape to computer, or, for that matter, digital mp3 tracks. Extensive use of tutorials and screen shots, as well as clear notes on why attention need be paid to some action when burning CDs, make this volume easy to read, and, for serious users, easy to follow.

Weaknesses: The authors, who are extremely knowledgeable about all levels of recording audio CDs from any source, from LPs to mp3s, are almost completely PC-centric. For a tutorial that aims at supporting cross platform needs, they are unusually Macintosh blind. Although they are exceptional teachers who use clear illustrations to walk the reader from "Getting Started (Diving Right In)" to "Tips, Tricks, and Troubleshooting" in ten easy to read chapters, they will likely lose all but the most dedicated audiophile Macintosh users by Chapter 3.

Review Introduction
Over the last 3 or 4 years, or at least since Roxio Toast™ 3.x, I have been collecting articles on using my burner to capture and restore a large vinyl collection, much of which has never been released to CD. That somewhat eclectic collection, which I years ago named "Burn, Baby, Burn", consists of about 60 articles addressing both the Macintosh and PC platforms. My aim is to restore and preserve my collection for my personal use, likely a long and arduous task requiring I cut back on volunteer activities. But with vinyl to CD

conversion services costing $20 to $30 per CD, I'd have to win the lottery to afford it for the 300 or more LPs I want to preserve. So, it was either get rich, or learn how to burn my own CDs.

Early in the book, the authors provide a list of *Your Arsenal of* (needed) *Tools.* The list is simple and straightforward, so in their words, "Let's quickly run through what you should have:

- "One drive capable of recording CDs. Optionally, you may want another optical drive for disc-to-disc copying.
- "Media (blank CDs not usually CD-RWs).
- "CD recording software. This probably came with either your drive or as part of the software on your computer.
- "A Digital Audio Editor, which you may already have as part of your CD-R software package, but might not know it.
- "A sound card or USB audio capture device. We can say with good certainty you have the former.
- "A tape deck and a turntable-but only if you wish to embark on tape or vinyl restoration and recording projects.
- "RCA cable, detailed in Chapter 7, "Restoring and Recording Vinyl," and/or Y-cable, discussed in both Chapter 6, "Restoring and Recording Cassette Tapes," and Chapter 7.
- "A pre-amplification device. This is necessary only for vinyl restoration and recording, and might be something you already have, but might not know it.
- "A computer speaker system. You've probably got those already.
- "Headphones. These are optional-unless you have a spouse, you live under a covenant in a condo, or your neighbors are mean-in which case they're a necessity."

The book, albeit not explicitly, discusses burning audio CDs at either of two sound quality levels. Getting a good, easy to listen to quality CD for those of us whose ears are not audiophile in function or creating excellent "Red Book" standard CDs from your LPs and audio tapes. Josh and Bob fall into the audiophile category, both being blessed with a well trained discriminatory sense of hearing that I lack. For all you mp3 collectors, there is an excellent chapter on converting mp3s to audio CD (Chapter 4). The resulting CD can be played on all of your CD players, old or new.

The Book Itself
The publisher's blurb about this book, corrected for grammar, states that this is the audio book for everyone! It's essential reading for anyone who wants to rip, mix, and burn CDs. Computers now arrive with CD-RW drives preinstalled, and this book provides readers with the know-how to use them. The book includes chapters on capturing and recording digital audio streams and creating discs with both audio and video in a friendly, breezy fashion. It also shows PC and Mac users how to import, restore, and archive their old vinyl records and cassette tapes to CD. So, I ordered the book, and, of course, read it from cover to cover.

The book is rich in technical details found it its chapters, despite their sometimes obscure titles to the sections in the individual chapters. I've provided you, below, with a copy of the book's Table of Contents…check it out since its sets to tone of McDaniel and Starrett epistle. I've enjoyed much else in the book. For instance, I particularly enjoyed reading about the items highlighted as "Lots of Interesting Stuff You Don't Need to Know." These notes by the authors included, for example, details *Red Book CD Recording Standard*, the basis for creating CDs that will play on all your audio equipment.

In addition, the *arcana* of the ubiquitous, almost Zen-like settings in my burner software have finally become clear. (TAO [Track at Once] avoids closing the disk, but the results can't be played on commercial audio equipment, while DAO [Disk at Once] not only does what is says, but does so in a manner that meets your non-computer audio player standards.)

The authors have a great '50-60's sense of humor that they use to personalize the book by playing against each other. As a person that grew of age in the '60s and surfed the fringes of that movement, I enjoyed and appreciated their comments and asides. Those of you who are a generation or two younger than I am, baby boomers, perhaps, will find the humor goes over your heads, but the book is full of great material, so skip the humor and otherwise enjoy.

I found the authors' anti-establishment view of the way the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) lobbyists railroaded Congress into the restrictive covenants found in the Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA–January 2004) refreshing, as was the authors' feedback on the publisher's comment that copyright infringement is against the law. I know lots of musicians and help put on a large, local, acoustic music festival. It's a shame none of the musicians I know earn royalties for any of the materials they create for the mainstream, or even minor record labels. Enough of my copyright–associated politics for the moment, on with the review.

Burn, Baby, Burn – Contents at a Glance	
Chapter Title	**Contents Detail**
Introduction	
Chapter 1 Diving Right In	Find Your Tunes. Prep 'Em. Burn 'Em. A Word of Caution, or Make That Two Words.
Chapter 2 Hardware and Software	Your Arsenal. Recording Drives (CD–R/RW, DVD–R/RW, DVD+R/RW, and so on). Media (Blank CDs). CD–R Software. Digital Audio Editing and Restoration Software. Possibly Requisite Stuff, Depending on What You're Up To. Hit Me with Those Laser Beams.
Chapter 3 Copying Audio CDs	The Order of Things. The Ubiquitous but Mainly Nefarious Copy Utility. How Bob and Josh Copy CDs (Most of the Time), a Handy Tip, and Something We Bet You Didn't Know. The Burn.
Chapter 4 Recording mp3s to CD	Things You Should Know About MP3 and File Sharing. The Easy Way to Record MP3s to CD (a.k.a., Bob's Way). The Slightly Less Easy but in Josh's Opinion, Better Way to Burn MP3s to CD. The Burn.
Chapter 5 Capturing and Recording Digital Streams	Attended Capture. Unattended Capture. The Burn.
Chapter 6 Restoring and Recording Cassette Tapes	Unplug Before You Plug In. Preparing for Recording on Windows. Preparing for Recording. Taking a Noise print and Dehissing. Track Splitting and Cleanup. The Burn.
Chapter 7 Recording and Restoring Vinyl	Requisite Stuff. Hooking Up. Scrub Before Surgery. Recording. Restoring. Track Splitting. The Burn.
Chapter 8 Polishing Your Compilation CD	Listen. Equalization. Normalization. Fade–Ins and Fade–Outs. Cross–fades. The Butt Splice. Creating a Fake Live CD. The Burn.
Chapter 9 Creating Enhanced CDs	The Umbrella. Gather Ye Rosebuds (But Not All of Citizen Kane, 'Cuz That's Too Big). The Layout and the Burn.
Chapter 10 Tips, Tricks, and Troubleshooting	"My computer doesn't recognize my recorder!" "My drive won't record anything!" "What gets recorded sounds awful!" "My recorder says my blank disc is not writable or will not recognize my blank disc!" "What's this 'Buffer Under run' message?" "My system keeps locking up during recording!" "My disc skips during playback!" "The CD I burned plays fine in my machine, but not in my stereo!" "My drive won't eject the disc!" "There's interminable silence between my tracks!" "Should I check that little 'CD Text' box I keep seeing?" "Can I record and restore my 8–track cassettes and reel–to–reel tapes?"
Index	

An example of generally great advice contained in the book is found in "Unplug Before You Plug In—Before you get started, we're going to have you power down here, turning your computer and other devices off (especially powered speakers, if you have those, this to avert potentially blowing them out). Once that's done, unplug all

extraneous devices, including any printers, scanners, Zip drives, modems, and the like, leaving only your computer, monitor, and powered speakers plugged into one power strip. If you have multiple power strips, pick one, and unplug the other, discarding it for the moment. That done go ahead and plug in your cassette deck." It's one more way to reduce widget-related hum that can distort your recording.

The author's advice, likely to Wintel users, tickled my fancy. "Shut off your computer's automated stuff, such as active screen savers or power management features, and quit all open programs." The latter prevents buffer underruns on "Wintel" systems. It seems that Windows is prone to overloads that can, at times, interfere with burning your audio CDs, thus necessitating the described actions. The active memory allocation of both Jaguar and Panther make such actions unnecessary, a point overlooked by McDaniel and Starrett.

I found the first part of the authors' advice strange. As long as I am actively working on my computer or even a PC, the screen and energy savers never get in the way. Perhaps such care is important when doing hour-long unattended downloads of streaming audio, but, at least on my Macintosh, Energy Saver checks for active and background activity, and my screen saver does not interfere with background activities (e.g., backing up my hard disk).

Last but not least, are the authors' healthy obsessions both with both stamping out equipment-generated hum and cleaning the playback equipment and for Vinyl the source media itself (LPs). Tape decks require though cleaning before use [e.g., the head, capstan, and other mechanical parts of your recorder-player.] Sections like Scrub Before Surgery and Working with Warps (Chapter 7) demonstrated how to best prepare your LPs for digitization. Until I read this last description my only counter to copying warped disks, when making reel-to-reel or cassette copies was to weigh down the arm of my Miracord™ 50H Turntable, Josh and Bob's least favored choice. Now I know I can heat the albums, hey read the book to find out how, in the oven to flatten out the LP. Just don't get distracted by a ringing phone unless you want a LP sized black coaster.

Rants and other Unmentionables
Somewhat troublesome assurances and vapor-talk about the technical details of burning on the Macintosh are contained in statements I've quoted below. Only in Chapter 1 (pages 8-13), do the authors provide any Mac-centric details, namely burning audio CDs using Roxio Toast 6 Titanium. After that, all examples use PC-only software. As noted below, the authors do provide many assurances of the book's usefulness to Macintosh users.

"Naturally, things are a little easier on a Mac. Still, we'll walk you though setup step by step." (Restoring Cassettes on page 117.) However, Chapter 6 only deals with setting of the Mac OS audio preferences, the rest is all told in PC speak using Wintel only software. The extensive, well-illustrated examples provided by the authors for using digital audio editing software on the PC include:

- Adobe's Audion™ on pages 121-143 about *Restoring and Recording Cassette Tapes* in Chapter 6, or
- Using DC Five™ (pages 149-172) about *Recording and Restoring Vinyl* in Chapter 7.

Those chapters make nary a mention of how to do this on the Macintosh. Instead, we Mac users get fed pabulum messages such as:

- "Do continue to pay attention though, Mac people. Though we'll be working with a digital audio editor built for and run on the PC, you'll immediately notice the similarities between what you've got running on your Mac and the software we're using." (Page 121) OR
- "As we mentioned in pretty much every other chapter, digital audio editors all look the same, so it should be pretty easy for you to follow along, regardless of what you're working with." (Page 141)

This provides scant assurance to those Macintosh users who are new to burning audio CDs and would look to this book to provide them with Mac-centric guidance. Under those circumstances, I would *almost* recommend the detailed manuals and Readme files that come with Roxio's software instead of this book for Macintosh users.

However, as I worked my way through the PC-related materials, I learned much about audio recording of tapes and vinyl, if not maximizing my effectiveness in using my Roxio software. For that, I must begrudgingly praise this book, even to Macintosh users.

Macintosh users could have been easily reassured that there is an easily available and inexpensive digital audio editor, which, if they use Roxio Toast 6, they already own. All that would have been necessary is for them to have added Spin Doctor™ to the list of Digital Audio Editors on page 40 of Chapter 2. A brief Google search turned up lots of information on the audio editing features of the software that is part of Roxio Toast, such as Spin Doctor. An interesting review of Spin Doctor's features, written by Nick dePlume, can be found at http://www.thinksecret.com/news/toast6spindoctor.html. The Toast with Jam package contains Spin Doctor, as well as other audio tools such as Peak Express 4.1, software to support, in part, enhanced mp3 to audio CD recording. Overall, Peak Express 4.1 is an advanced audio application that complements Jam by providing superior tools for editing and processing digital audio on the Macintosh computer, adding unlisted tools to the Macintosh user's audio digital editors. Hey there, Bob Starrett and Josh McDaniel, it would have taken only a few more pages to make this a great book for Macintosh as well as PC users.

About the Authors
Robert Starrett has been a contributing editor and columnist for *Emedia™* magazine since 1995 and covers the CDRecordable and digital audio technology markets. He is the Editor of *CDPage™*, the Internet's most comprehensive resource for CD and DVD information, and is considered one of the world's leading experts on CD recording technology.

Josh McDaniel is an associate editor, project coordinator, designer, and Webmaster of *CDPage™*. He also writes for *Emedia* Magazine and performs Internet-related design, consulting, and optimization services for clients such as Yamaha Systems Technology Inc., Adaptec Inc., and Ahead Software Inc.

In Closing:
I read this book from cover to cover and learned much from it that I will apply, when I grow up, to capturing my vinyl collection on CD. It now replaces and significantly surpasses my collections of articles on burning audio CDs. On that basis, I want to recommend it to those serious about transforming their audio media collection to audio CDs. My recommendation applies to those like me who are hearing impaired, those of you who might be tone deaf, as well as to those of you who not only hear perfectly but want to enhance the quality of the CDs made from your old LPs and cassettes. Whether you want to create a good copy of your music that is easy on the ears or want to enhance your used archive music collection, this could be the book for you.

As a Macintosh user—no, let's say fanatic—I was very disappointed by the general neglect of our platform…lip service, they call it. In addition, the underlying assumptions the authors used to define this book's content made it obvious that its primary audience was not Macintosh users. As I understand Starrett and McDaniel's "motives" or "book writing strategy" was based on the following assumptions, assumptions that pervade this otherwise excellent book that resulted in only one tutorial based on Mac software:

- It's easier to rip audio and edit the resulting audio tracks with Macintosh software, so I, the reader, need just follow the more complex PC software steps to find their way, and
- Omitting any details on Spin Doctor, one of the easiest to use audio digital editing software for the Macintosh, and
- Not even specifically enumerating the capabilities of Roxio's Jam (read the five lines on page 36 and lack of info on page 40.)

Now, I'm not accusing the authors (many of whose anti-establishment ideas rung a fond response in me) of being anti-Macintosh. But based only on the book's contents, it sure appears that way. Perhaps their next book can cover both audio and video "burns" with at least 10-15% of the examples coming from the Macintosh world. After all, the Macintosh is the tool that many audio-visual multimedia specialists use in their creative endeavors.

Bottom Line
4.5 macCs for PC or those Macintosh users who are audiophiles and don't mind struggling with largely PC–based tutorials. This book also works well for Macintosh or PC users who finds tweaking sound by ear to create a perfect 'copy.

There's a lot to love in this book but I in good conscience can only give it **3.5 macCs** for a more casual Macintosh using music archivist. I worry about such users patience with having to study PC based tutorials just to burn good quality, easy to listen to, audio CDs from their collections. Although it dates me, I get project that such users would revert back to either the actions in the book *Fahrenheit 451* or the broader Black Panthers 60's adage of "Burn, Baby Burn." For such folks this book becomes a harder sell.

Robin Williams Mac OS X Book, Panther Edition Reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad, Edited by Julie M. Willingham

Authors: Robin Williams and John Tollett
Peachpit Press
1249 Eighth Street
Berkeley, CA 94710
Phone: 1–510–524–2178
Fax: 1–510–524–2221
http://www.peachpit.com/
Published: March 23, 2004
Pages: 712
$30 USD, $43 CAN, £23 Net UK, €25,80
ISBN: 0321232968
Beginner–Intermediate
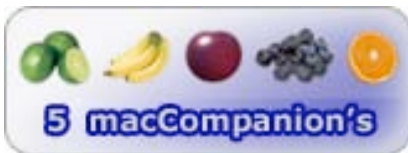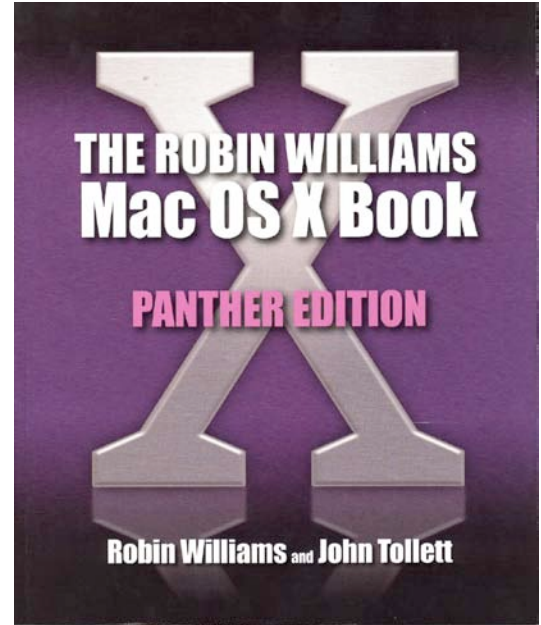
Strengths: One of Robin William's finest.

Weaknesses: None really.

Some books are meant to be skimmed, others to be studied in detail. And then there are a privileged few, including this one, that lend themselves to both. As I noted when I reviewed *The Robin Williams Mac OS X Book, Jaguar Edition (Second Edition)* for the October 2003 *macCompanion* (Volume 1, Issue 4) http://www.maccompanion.com/archives/october2003/books.html#10, in many ways this book is both a joy and a frustration: A joy, because wherever I turned, I either learned something or had my memory refreshed; a frustration, because I did not have time to go though each chapter in detail to fully savor and report on all the items I found of interest. But you don't want another three–page–long 10–point table in these reviews—or do you?

According to the publisher's book description, no matter how many bells and whistles a new operating system offers—and with Mac OS X 10.3 Panther the list is a long one—using that new OS can be an intimidating process. Unless, of course, you have Robin Williams in your corner. In this volume, she once again works her magic by providing a gentle and friendly introduction to Panther. Robin covers not just the basics of using a Mac under Panther—printing, sending e–mail, exchanging files, surfing the Internet—but all of the important new and improved features as well. These include working with Panther's all–new Finder, using Exposé to work with windows, getting started with iChat AV, expanded coverage of networking, improved Web access with the Safari browser, working with Mail, and lots more.

The book is organized around seven sections, for a total of 36 chapters of information geared to Macintosh beginners, Panther beginners, and those of us with more Jaguar and Panther experience. Ignore Peachpit Press' Web Page Table of Contents: the real one is captured below, letter–for–letter.

The Table of Contents

So, having perhaps mastered Jaguar, and with the reported stability of Panther v. 10.3.3, I bit the bullet and decided it was time to hold a panther by the tail. (Aren't mixed metaphors wonderful?) [Editor's note: Panther is now at 10.3.4.]

As noted in my previous review of Robin's Jaguar book, "No other author documents the Mac OS the way Robin Williams does. In *The Robin Williams Mac OS X Book, Jaguar Edition* updated to include Mac OS X 10.2, she brings her inimitable approach to Apple's radically redesigned OS, eschewing jargon for straightforward explanations and a good dose of humor." Now she has teamed with artist, illustrator, and graphics expert John Tollett, who adds his skill and knowledge to Robin's, a collaboration that has led to a book that is both a pleasure to read and to see. After all, I did ding Robin's Jaguar book for its all too many images that needed both a magnifying glass and a high level rasterizer to make them clear.

In this book, Robin and John add a few tools that make using the book even easier to use. To quote from the book's introduction, "Skip the intro. Read the book. New users, flip through the book and notice the gray 'dots' in the upper corners of some pages, like this page.

Finding Your Way Around

If you just got your first Macintosh or if you just installed Mac OS X and don't know where to begin, start with this chapter. It'll give you a visual overview of what things are and tell you where to go for more details.
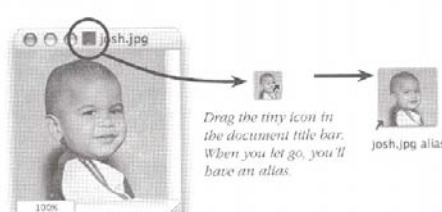
▼ **If you just plugged in your first Mac** and it's asking how you want to get connected to the Internet, skip to Chapter 29, especially pages 502–505, and fill in the information. Then come back here.

▼ **If you're new to the Mac,** after you skim through this chapter, go to the tutorial in Chapter 2. If you run across any confusing terms in either chapter, check the index to find clarification.

Remember, as a new user, all you really need to read in this book are the pages with the "dots" at the tops. Come back to the rest later.

▼ **If you're an experienced Mac OS 9 user,** skip to Chapter 37 to find out where all of your favorite features have gone.

Those are the only pages you need to read. But do check out the tutorial — we guarantee if you actually work through the tutorial you will have more control over your computer than many long–time Mac users.

"Experienced Mac users, use the index and look up what you need. But if you actually read entire chapters, you'll be amazed at the tips and tricks you didn't know. We were."

Now, as you, my readers, know, I neither follow instructions nor can I escape being a compulsive reader, so instead of only cherry–picking materials from the index, I read some chapters from start-to-end. I even took the quizzes (Don't ask!). Because of my flirtation with fonts and design I studied the chapters on fonts (Chapter 25). I am also a control freak with my Macintosh's interface, so I got off on "Customizing Your Mac With System Preferences" (Chapter 22). I also found much to explore in chapter 35, "Ports and Peripherals", and found that I hadn't realized my Macintosh was so flexible, especially with spare expansion slots to add peripheral connection capability.

Even though I'm not a newbie, I did duck in and out of sections designated for new users and, along the way, picked up tidbits of information that were both new and elegant. This is definitely a book worth browsing...in–between frantic searches for information to solve a "gotcha" or learning about something new, like networks that you previously had ignored. Indeed, it can be savored like a good wine, or else rifled like a first–aid kit in times of need.

|	
Now why didn't I know that?	**So that's what RTFD is all about**

Like many such broadly focused, excellent books, it contains topics I'll pursue in detail only when and if I need them. I did not even look at those topics beyond checking on their contents. As a result, I semi-ignored the three-chapter section on Basic Networking and Sharing and the discussions on "Multiple Users and Their Homes" (Chapter 20) and on "Useful Utilities" (Chapter 27.) But don't let that stop you!

If Wishes Were Horses
As I have previously noted when reviewing books by great authors such as these two, when you write about updates, operating systems, or even books about your favorite applications, give me a break! Robin's earlier book about Jaguar focused on both what was new and what had changed from Mac OS 9 to Mac OS 10.2. But in this book, the changes between Jaguar to Panther have not been identified similarly. This book uses a gray tab in the margin (corner?) to identify things that differ between Mac OS 9 and Panther; it would be nice if another symbol could be used to identify the new differences between Jaguar and Panther systems. After all, many of us have migrated up through many Macintosh operating systems and would welcome a mark (margin symbol) that allows us to focus our time and energy on things Panther. [Cat icons would be nice!]

Conclusions
This book is as appropriate for newcomers looking for a gentle introduction to their Macintosh running Panther as it is for experienced Mac users upgrading to Panther. I fully agree with Peachpit's evaluation on the book's back cover: "Whether you're a newcomer or an old hand, you'll find there's no better teaching team than Robin Williams and John Tollett. Their writing is fun, informative, and jargon-free, and their enthusiasm for the Mac is contagious. After reading (using) this book … you'll feel more confident (*with Panther and your Macintosh.*)" Despite my single gripe, like an LP record that skips, this book is a must-buy Panther training manual and reference book that belongs near your computer or, at least temporarily, on your coffee table to read for fun. It earns a well-deserved 5.0 macC's.
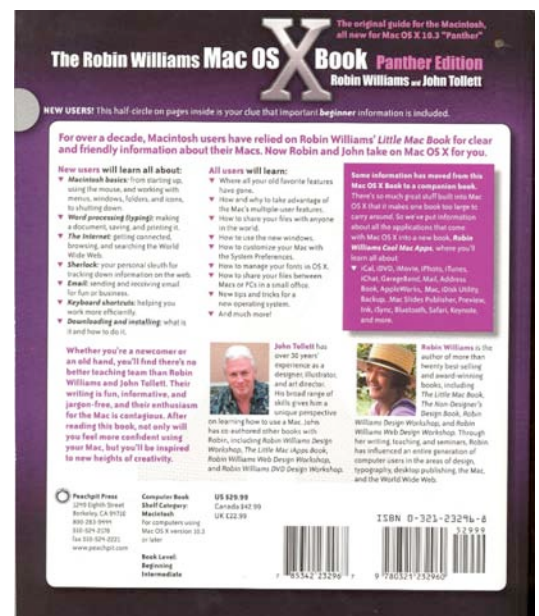
PHP for the World Wide Web, 2nd Edition Visual QuickStart Guide Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Author: Larry Ullman
http://www.DMCinsights.com/phpvqs2
Peachpit Press
1249 Eighth Street
Berkeley, CA 94710
Phone: 1-510-524-2178
Fax: 1-510-524-2221
http://www.peachpit.com/
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Pages: 472
$22 USD, $32 CAN, £17 Net UK, €18,92
ISBN: 0321245652
Forum: http://www.DMCInsights.com/phorum/list.php?f=10
Errata: http://www.dmcinsights.com/phpvqs2/errata.php
Beginner-Intermediate
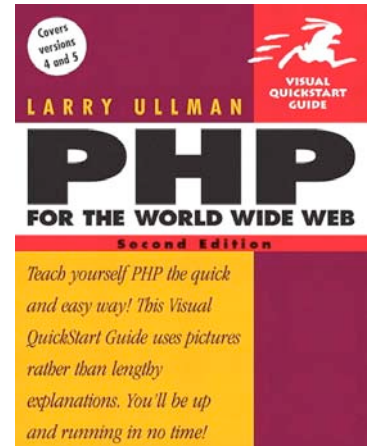
Strengths: Great mature presentation.

Weaknesses: None found (okay, check the Errata link).

If you would like to get intimately familiar with the PHP programming language and use it for mastering web pages, this book is a great place to start. Then check out the website and also the resources in the back of the book.

I found myself heavily bookmarking Larry Ullman's PHP for the Word Wide Web, 2nd Edition. You will also see that the book is kept moderately current by being tied to a website that provides scripts, etc. for the example used in the book.

The book is nicely laid out and meets all the *macCompanion* book review criteria from the Table of Contents, all the way through 13 Chapters and 2 Appendices and back into the Index. This is one of the best Visual QuickStart Guides I've read so far. The staggered tabs organize the book into 3 parts, though the book itself is not organized in that fashion. Each shaded tabbed section is labeled so going to a particular area is made much easier. The Visual QuickStart (VQS) format provides an easy-to-read process with plenty of white space. The graphics are all Mac OS X screens. All steps and script examples are numbered for easy reference.

If PHP is new to you, knowing a little HTML and JavaScript is an asset, but not a requirement. You still get to experiment with scripting and using syntax and variables as you learn to create dynamic web pages and applications. You will also be learning about streaming, XML support and using the Zend engine in the released version 5 of PHP.

Learning advanced features in PHP are not included in this book. That is why it says that it is for beginners and those at the intermediate level. The style is friendly, but it does not repeat itself. You are supposed to have a level of understanding that is mature. There is no fluff here. This book is an excellent tutorial on the language and is designed to get you quickly up-to-speed on using PHP, not just reading about it.

If you want to learn how to build web-based database applications, you will build a foundation using principles found in this book. It provides a sound understanding of files, directories and cookie technology.

This book is a keeper.

Web Database Applications with PHP and MySQL, 2nd Edition Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Authors: Hugh E Williams, David Lane
http://www.webdatabasebook.com/
O'Reilly Books
Sebastopol   (Corporate Headquarters)
1005 Gravenstein Highway North
Sebastopol, CA 95472 USA
1-707-827-7000 or 1-800-998-9938
Fax: 1-707-829-0104
http://www.oreilly.com
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$45 USD, $66 CAN, £32 Net UK, €
Pages: 816
ISBN: 1596005431
Book Site:
http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/webdbapps2/
Errata: http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/webdbapps2/errata/
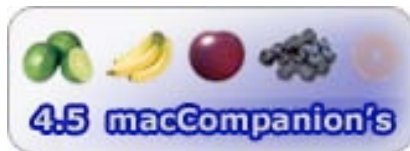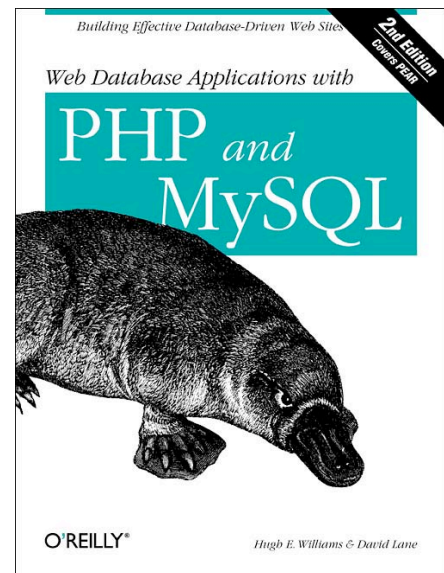**Prerequisites:** HTML, Website management, JavaScript
Intermediate – Advanced

Strengths: It's an O'Reilly book!

Weaknesses: Has a few errata that have been posted.

Web Database Applications with PHP and MySQL (WDAPM) by Hugh E. Williams and David Lane is a textbook cookbook for creating dynamic web pages using PHP and the MySQL database. It is full of theory and examples and those examples are also posted on their own website shown above.

WDAPM is based on PHP 5 and MySQL 4.1 using Apache on Unix®, Windows®, and Mac® OS X™ systems. If you want to create a dynamic Ecommerce site and you know HTML, JavaScript and have some knowledge of website management, than this book may not appear so daunting. For those who want to begin with PHP and MySQL, you will want to look at other books first because this is not a book for beginners.

Source Code covers user authentication, password management, cracker protection, shopping cart, credit cards payments, merchandise browsing and low price selections.

WDAPM is a college textbook-like coding cookbook using a wine-based site as a working scenario. Validate payment processes, use tried-and-true templates, correct error-handling and learn to use PEAR (the repository of PHP extensions). Learn how to update information even as the database is being accessed by others.

"The PHP chapters describe the components of the language and its syntax, variables, conditions, loops, arrays, functions, types, and more. The SQL and mySQL chapters cover database basics, tables, queries, and functions. All this material is presented systemically and thoroughly." This is an introduction to object-oriented programming.

Become expert in using Open Source technologies that bring Ecommerce to any website by using this book as a resource.

Security Sage's Guide to Hardening the Network Infrastructure Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Authors: Steven Andrés, Brian Kenyon, Jody Marc Cohn, Nate Johnson, Justin Dolly, Eric Pace Birkholz

Syngress Publishing, Inc.
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1–707–827–7000 or 1–800–998–9938
Fax: 1–707–829–0104
http://www.oreilly.com

System Administrators, Network Security Consultants, Information Technology professionals
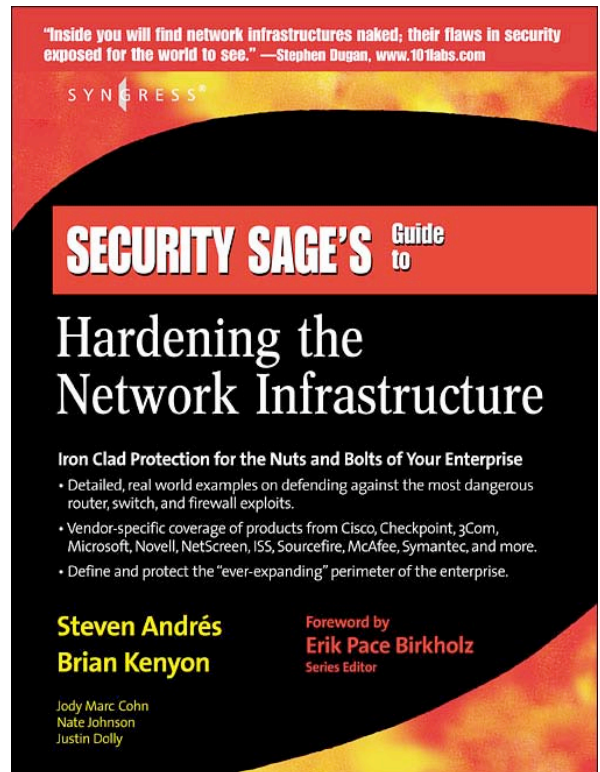
Strengths: OSI–centric experience–based network design.

Weaknesses: Needs it's own website. And that needs an errata page. Some posted links aren't correct.

This is the first of a series, titled Security Sage's Guide to Hardening the Network Infrastructure (SSGHNI), by a team of knowledgeable experts. It covers the first 4 layers of the OSI Model in a conversational manner. I'm looking forward to future releases of the series.

This book teaches how to use current technologies to protect networks and avoid using products that are poorly implemented.

SSGHNI is a keeper. It follows the guidelines we have established for good books and also follows some pretty well–designed Syngress formats as well. Each of the 11 chapters ends with a Checklist, Summary, Solutions Fast Track, and to me most valuable of all, since this book doesn't have a dedicated website yet, Links to Sites and Mailing Lists, and finishing with Frequently Asked Questions. I strongly suspect they will get a dedicated site soon, but http://www.securitysage.com is already taken.

I really enjoyed the chapter on Network Switching as well as the ones on Network Design, since I've worn the Infrastructure design hat for many years and this got me up–to–speed on a lot of areas I normally don't visit enough. If you want where the rubber meets the road in secure network design, this is a great place to start. Just like it being easy to keep a clean building clean, beginning a network from an engineering design approach keeps the infrastructure clean and is only as secure as the undocumented open port in a switch or hub somewhere. Good begets good and bad begets chaos and a difficult life for System Administrators

everywhere. Having the knowledge this book provides helps work from a position of strength, especially when you need to be able to justify the $100K switch vs the $20 hub.

Many network designs usually show a cloud of part of the network the design engineer is foggy about. This book lifts that fog and can help fill in the missing pieces. It provides tutorials on core electronics such as switches and routers, Access Control Lists, Intrusion Detection Systems and Virtual Private Networks.

The Notes from the Underground, Tools and Tips sidebars are also nice-to-knows that add flesh to the infrastructure skeleton.

There are solutions for "poor-boy" open-source networks for those of us who don't have unlimited IT budgets, as well as mentions of those bigger "mono-culture" best-of-breed systems.

This book isn't so much a "do" book as it is a "show me what is available" book written in a conversational manner. Dig deeper by going to the links and the mail lists. And it doesn't hurt to have a sense of humor. The authors show they can have fun while doing their jobs. If you want command syntax, don't look here. Remember this book is a compilation of various author's experiences so diagramming and graphics do not all follow the same formats.

Is there redundancy? Yes, but it doesn't hurt to repeat some things if it takes a while to sink in. If .com doesn't work on some links, try .com.

That said, I have bookmarked a lot of pages in SSGHNI and it goes on my Secure Network Consulting shelf as a welcome addition to the Serious Security Library™. Why not add it to yours?

Snort 2.1 Intrusion Detection, 2nd Edition Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Authors: Jay Beale, (Andrew R Baker, Brian Caswell, Mike Poor –
Snort Development Team) Raven Alder, Jacob Babbin, Adam
Doxtater, James C Foster, Toby Kohlenberg, Michael Rash

Syngress Publishing, Inc.
Released: May, 2004
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http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/1931836043/index.html
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1005 Gravenstein Highway North
Sebastopol, CA 95472 USA
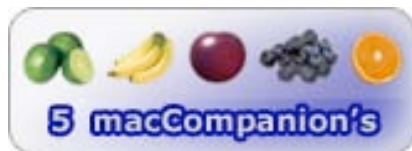1–707–827–7000 or 1–800–998–9938
Fax: 1–707–829–0104
http://www.oreilly.com

Requirements: BSD environment and desire to play with Terminal.

See also: http://www.securemac.com/macosxsnort.php
http://www.snort.org/
Beginner–Advanced – System administrators

Strengths: In–depth information on Intrusion Detection.

Weaknesses: No direct Mac–based product on CD.

Snort 2.1 is a book dedicated to the Snort™ Intrusion Detection program. If you "do" Unix, than this book will help you learn Snort and will provide the background necessary to understand all the other barnyard–talk–like humor surrounding Snort. There is a DVD in the back of the book, but it isn't exactly Mac OS X–friendly – so I added the link off Securemac.com for the older Snort distribution for Mac OS X. You will want to get very familiar with Terminal to use this program since there is no GUI–based version available for the Macintosh platform.

This book walks through installation, configuration and troubleshooting scenarios as well as way to "break" it using other tools also discussed such as Stick and Snot. Also discussed are Rootkits – which thankfully so far don't exist for the Macintosh environment – unless they are very well hidden and haven't surfaced yet.

I like the way Syngress® has their Serious Security Library™ series format laid out. Each chapter ends with a Summary, a Solutions Fast Track section and finishes with Frequently Asked Questions. If you want to skip the body and try your luck at testing your knowledge, go to the end of the chapters first, then back to the text. Each chapter in this book also is repleat with "Oink!" entries that in other books would be considered the "pay attention" notes.
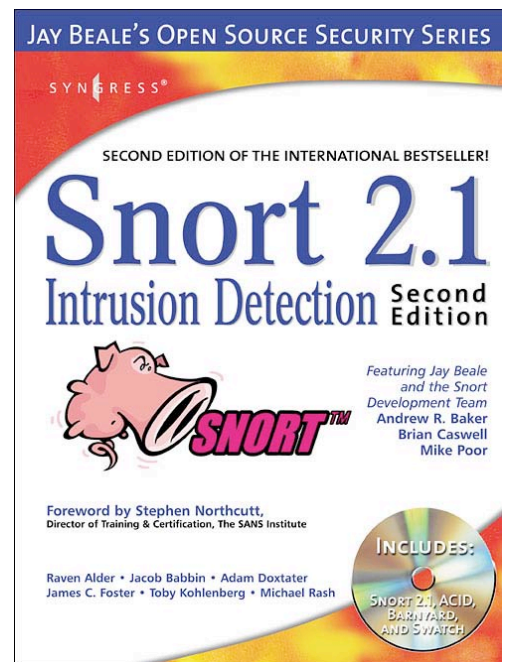
The guys that created Snort wrote the book and it is easy to read as they teach us how to use Snort as either a packet sniffer, protocol analyzer, logger, or network intrusion detection system. They also show how to use it for searching or matching and how to respond to real-time alerts.

Snort 2.1 is the most recent published hard-copy documentation regarding Snort, but if you go to the website for Snort, you will see that the Snort Development Team is not just sitting on its laurels. Snort 2.2.x is out.

I would have expected a few Errata entries by now and have been discussed by other reviewers in other publications.

The discussion on the new detection engine and preprocessors is first rate. Did you know there are over 2,500 rules used now?
The strongest part of the book discusses Barnyard (an asynchronous event-processing and dispatching tool). Barnyard is most affective in high-traffic environments.

A pre-requisite for reading this book would be the Snort manual itself.

What would I like to see in the 3rd Edition? More Mac-related setup, etc. not discussed in this edition – except as FreeBSD. And perhaps more discussion on writing rules.

This is a "think" book, more than a tutorial on how to take advantage of Snort in protecting networks. Snort 2.1 provides a good foundation of one more tool to keep Internet bad-nasties at bay.

The Spam Letters Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Authors: Jonathan Land
http://www.incomplete.net/
http://www.thespamletters.com
No Starch Press
http://www.nostarch.com/
Released: July 2004
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Pages: 232
ISBN: 1593270321
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Sebastopol   (Corporate Headquarters)
1005 Gravenstein Highway North
Sebastopol, CA 95472 USA
1-707-827-7000 or 1-800-998-9938
Fax: 1-707-829-0104
http://www.oreilly.com

Strengths: Pokes fun responding to SPAMmers

Weaknesses: Caution – R-rated language in some spots in later chapters.

Maybe it's cathartic in a way, but Jonathan Land has created The Spam Letters as a way to poke fun at SPAMmers. He actually got a few responses and a forward written by one of them. Check out his websites above for the latest.

Personally, I had to bleep out a lot of words as I read through the book. What's with the 4-letter-word trend I'm seeing lately? This is bad for literature as a whole and for this book in particular.

Are you into Vertical Bowling? How about dialog with the Nigerian Fraudniks? Confused about cockfighting and growing certain parts of your body out of proportion? Want to see his views on politics?

Jonathan Land has created a virtual reality response team to "fight back" against 400 SPAMs a day.

If you like a warped sense of humor, you've come to the right place. This is ones man's attempt at responding to the stuff that makes using the Internet less than enjoyable.

Am I going to keep the book? No. I'm giving it to a person who is taking SPAMmers to court. He could use a laugh or two. Jus t don't take this book too seriously.

Jonathan does add a few websites on the last two pages under "Do not try this at Home".

Since I get lots more SPAM at work ever since the CAN-SPAM act let the dogs out and legitimized Internet profiteering, I'm not amused. I bet there will be a sequel.

Stealing the Network: How to Own a Continent Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Authors: 131ah, Russ Rogers, Jay Beale, Joe Grand, Fyodor, FX, Paul Craig, Timothy, Mullen (Thor), Tom Parker, Ryan Russell *Technical Editor,* Kevin D. Mitnick *Technical Reviewer*

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1-707-827-7000 or 1-800-998-9938
Fax: 1-707-829-0104
http://www.oreilly.com
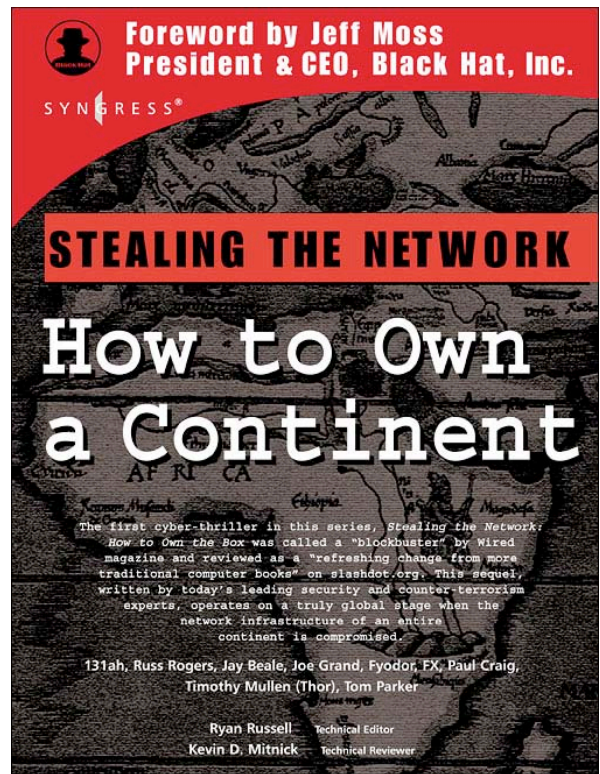
Strengths: Great scenarios on network attack situations. Fiction – of course.

Weaknesses: Totally unnecessary R-rated language takes the "fun" out of the book.

I hope the authors of Stealing the Network: How to Own a Continent create a sequel. The ending was rather open-ended as the anti-hero tries to leave undetected to a life of leisure after destroying the financial backbone of an African nation, with his path littered with the bodies of those who dipped into the darkside and paid the ultimate price for participating with him as Black Hats.

This is a compilation of various scenarios loosely tied together in lethal cyber-terrorism attacks based on a money-motive. This reads like a scary B-movie, but the tech-talk is excellent. Too bad part of the book gets all potty-mouthed – just like in the Stealing the Net: How to own the Box book. To me that is a major turn-off and is why I didn't give the book a macC 5 rating. The line for visual abuse has to be drawn somewhere and I hate reading guttertalk.

The book starts out with the anti-hero Bob Knuth plans his protective hermit-like tempest-protected environment – including thermite triggers in case he gets caught.

Next, another person – Charlos – shows how to get into another person's computer and keep tabs using a keylogger. Then Saul – a young school kid gets his Linux-team to help extend a wireless network around a hospital and is given the mission to change the records of an individuals blood-type remotely.

What really got my attention was how "Flir" "owned" the Virginia Tech G5 Cluster assuming the identity of one of the professors to do some high-powered password cracking so he could harvest Social Security Numbers

and exploits self-signed certs by those who want to get around Verisign-type E-Commerce security certifications.

Next, The Don shows how easy it is to compromise the "trusted" phone system internationally. Sendai shows how to electronically play the money markets by getting the information that raises or lowers stocks ahead of time via rootkits and another type of keystroke logger. Then h3X does the recent web-access auto-owning thing and quickly leans how to compromise SAP databases with port scanning. Dex gathers demographic information and sells it off and then shows how to launder money – lots of it quickly – over the Internet. Mathew learns how to take down a bank network through ATM machine access but doesn't get to enjoy the fruits of his labors because he got too many other folks involved in his side-business. And Bob Knuth cleans up the loose ends.

Each episode reads like that short-lived TV program – Hackers. A few give up the ghost from getting caught double-crossing, and the watchers are watched as projects get completed.

Is it feasible? It probably has already happened…

Stealing the Network: How to Own the Box **Reviewed by Robert Pritchett**

Authors: Ryan Russell, Tim Mullen (Thor), FX, Dan "Effugas" Kaminsky, Joe Grand, Ken Pfeil, Ido Dubrawsky, Mark Burnett, Paul Craig

Syngress Publishing, Inc.
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781–681–5151
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1–707–827–7000 or 1–800–998–9938
Fax: 1–707–829–0104
http://www.oreilly.com
For anyone interested in getting into the minds of crackers.

4.5 macCompanion's
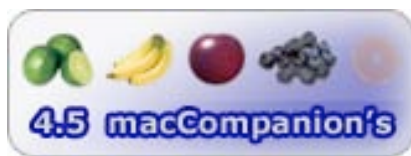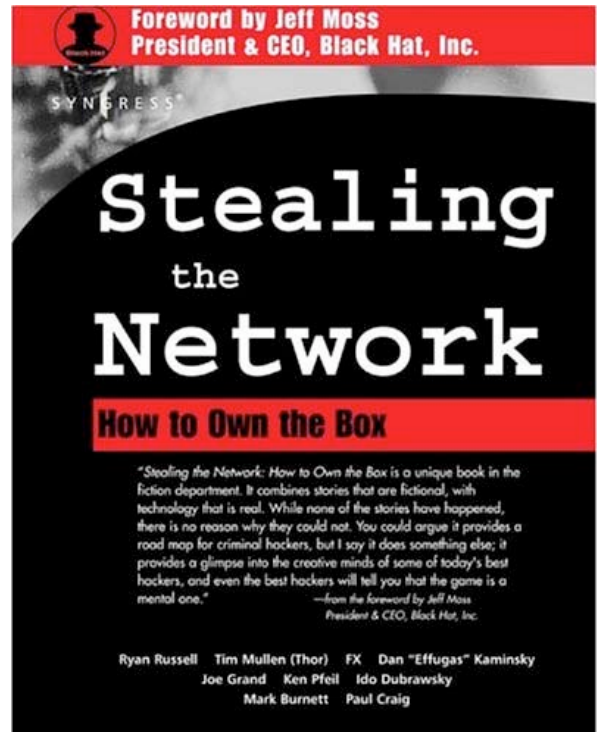
Strengths: Infotainment approach to learning how crackers get under the skin of computer systems – and how to stop them.

Weaknesses: The first story graphics show difficult-to-read text. Caution – R-rated language in some spots in later chapters.

The various authors of Stealing the Network How to Own the box created a riveting book on how crackers think, and what motivates them to "own" a system and then take what doesn't belong to them.

Each of the 11 stories digs deeply into the mindset of a cracker on how he or she gets into a system. Each approach is different and a few of the chapters end with real-world references to techniques used. And there also is the "discovery method" process in many of the chapters on first, finding the "owners" and second, stopping them from doing further damage.

I didn't put the book down and I heavily bookmarked sections. One chapter has screenshots that were poorly printed and difficult to read. Only one was potty-mouthed to the extent I didn't want to even finish the story – but I did anyway. Another also used some 4-letter school-yard words. So those are two reasons why the book would have otherwise rated a 5.

Hide and Sneak takes revenge on a company that stiffed a customer who then gives out their credit card database information.

The Worm Turns wiggles through how Worms work and how they can be blocked, but the analyst booboos with his counterattack. The Military should have read this one before they sent out their anti-worm package a few months ago. Same MO?

Just Another Day at the Office turns a mild-mannered employee into an industrial spy for a weapon in development.

H3X's Adventures in Networkland shows how to enter into a campus network through network printers.

The Thief None Saw shows how a SysAdmin supplements his income by entering movie company sites to grab their products to sell off in Asia.

Flying the Friendly Skies discusses airport wireless network lack of security.

dis-card makes one want to become anonymous real quick as two guys romp through E-Commerce sites and picks up credit card lists to sell.

Social (In) Security present social engineering feats for a disgruntled ex-employee.

BableNet bounces us around in a honeypot.

The Art of Tracking chases down a Whitehat gone bad.

Not to detract any from any of the stories, but perhaps the best part of the book is the Appendix by Ryan Russell on The 10 Immutable Laws of Security and mitigation of each of the scenarios in the book. However, the way they are written almost leaves a defeatist-attitude feeling. No wonder there are many companies in the world that make a lucrative living policing computers, networks and systems. See http://www.microsoft.com/technet/archive/community/columns/security/essays/10imlaws.mspx . Ryan Russell takes these laws deeper.

So what did I learn? It is possible to get into a network and camp in Printer RAM to do things on a network almost without detection. Crackers spend most of their time in preparation to do actual cracking. There is a fine line, and perhaps no line, between White Hats and Black Hats. It is probably not a good thing to have a credit card. Or ports open that aren't part of a regular network. And if someone comes calling saying they are there to audit the system, better check with management first, okay? But do get your system audited by an independent reputable source if your information can be considered to be important.

To further your education, why not also check out http://www.blackhat.com? Many, if not all of the authors have given presentation there.

Hardware

Bravo II Disc Publisher Reviewed by Shane French

Primera Technology, Inc.
Two Carlson Parkway North
Plymouth, Minnesota 55447-4446
U.S.A.
763-475-6676
800-797-2772
Fax: (763) 475-6677
http://www.primera.com/
Released: February 9, 2004
The price through the corporate website is $2,195 USD for the CD-R version (reviewed here) and $2,695 USD to include DVD burning. However Ecost.com lists the Bravo II CD-R at $1589 USD and the DVD version for $1913 USD.
Kiosk Mode Kit - $50 USD
http://216.158.111.137/news_detail_oid_108637.html
Product Video: http://www.primera.com/bravo_videos.html
Requirements: Apple® Macintosh®, 700 MHz PowerPC, G4
Mac OS X v10.2 or later, 256 MB RAM, USB 2.0 port.
Or**Microsoft® Windows®,** Pentium III® based processor at 700 MHz or higher, 512MB RAM minimum, USB 2.0 port or
open PCI slot for optional USB 2.0 adapter.

Strengths: Incredible final printed results, up to 4800 DPI. Quick 52X burning speed. 25 Discs at once, or 50 in 'kiosk mode' (dispensed out center of the machine).
Burns mini CD's and business card shaped formats (with optional media kit).

Weaknesses: Mediocre Mac® software, clunky robotic arm movements when CD is moved into burner and/or printer. Models are available for PC and Macintosh, but cannot be used cross-platform.

The Bravo II gives you the ability to burn and print high-quality art directly on the CD's with the flexibility and quantity that you need. There's a CD, CD/DVD, and Print-Only Version of the Bravo II. The Print only version, The Bravo II AutoPrinter, automatically feeds discs into and out of the printer and is a great companion to the tower-style duplicator you may already own. We tested out the Bravo II CD Publisher and I was honestly stunned by the quality and speed of the burned/printed results. The Bravo II prints up to 4800 DPI, but even at 1200 DPI the results were more than acceptable.

The included software Discus was simple to use, but the interface was quintessential Window's 3.1, nothing close to the slick design we're accustomed to on the Macintosh. I did some test prints using the art included in Magic Mouse Production's Discus™ with great results. [Editor: Reviewed by Ted Bade at
http://www.maccompanion.com/archives/may2004/software.html#2] However, when it came for me to put

the Bravo II to the test, I chose Photoshop™ to lay out my artwork. In what seemed to be perfect timing, I received a phone call from a client asking if I could design a label and create 20 copies for a new piece of software that he wanted to show off at trade show in only three days…

Normally, I would've been duplicating CD's one at a time and then printing labels and applying them individually. Easily disrupting a large part of my day for mediocre results. After designing my label in Photoshop, I exported the artwork to my desktop as a TIFF file. Then I opened up the included Charismac Engineering's Discribe™ software for CD duplication. It was a breeze to add the pertinent data to the disc, select the desired artwork, DPI and number of copies to create. I hit the write button and off the robotic arm went using AccuDisc™ technology.

At times it seemed confused about it's task, but only for a second or two. I was wondering if the Bravo II could multitask, print and burn simultaneously. After the first disc was finished burning, the robotic arm grabbed it and put it in the printing tray. Then grabbed a second disc while the first one was printing and began the burning process, answering my question with an emphatic *Yes*! It took only 44 minutes to burn and print 20 discs, each with 50MB of data on them and with 1200 DPI artwork. My client and I were extremely impressed with the final results, as they looked professionally produced.

So…the Bravo II performed extremely well. The next question is; how does the price break down per disc? After doing a little research we found the special ink-jet printable discs as little as 31 cents, 100 pack for $31 at http://www.caloptic.com/. The ink will cost you $42 for each of the Black and CMY cartridges directly from Primera. However, http://www.provantage.com/ sells the Primera CMY for $29 and the Black for $33. Some claim that you can print 150 discs before the ink runs out. However, a Primera sales rep told us it was 130 discs at 50% ink coverage. The math turns out to be about 79 cents per disc, if you purchase the discs and ink from the discounted vendors. Not bad, throw in a jewel case for another 45 cents. For a small run, even as much as 500 CD's, it's clearly cheaper and more convenient to use the Bravo II than to outsource the project.

macCompanion Buying Advice
The Bravo II simply gets the job done with exceptional results. Its high-speed burning and quick printing make it a joy to produce one-offs to several hundred duplicates. If you're looking to produce thousands of copies, go to a professional CD manufacturing company, but if you're looking for professional quality on a small scale, than the Bravo II is an outstanding choice.

PhoneValet™ Message Center Version 2.0d – Telecommunications Hub Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Parliant Corporation
6 Tangmere Court
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada
K2E 7H6
866-VoiceDial (866-864-2334)
http://www.parliant.com/
Product Link: http://www.parliant.com/phonevalet/?l=1
Released: June 22, 2004
$200 USD, $100 USD Upgrade
Requirements: Powered USB port. Mac OS X 10.1.5 or higher, USB 1.1 or later, Standard (analog) phone line with touch-tone service or Vonage® system. Monitor or display supporting 800x600 or higher resolution (1024x768 recommended). 1.7 MB hard drive space, installed. Maybe Caller ID. A phoneset. QuickTime 6.5 or later.
Comes with: Parliant USB Telephone Adapter, 4-wire phone cable, a telephone Y adapter, USB A-B cable, 33-page PhoneValet User Guide and a PhoneValet Message Center software CD.

Strengths: Provides more PBX capabilities for SOHOs using Macs.

Weaknesses: None found.

If you look at our review of PhoneValet™ we did last October at http://www.maccompanion.com/archives/october2003/hardware.html#2 you will see that there were a few things we saw as weaknesses. We have since moved over to Vonage® (see the other review on Vonage® in this issue). Guess what? The Phone Valet Message Center (PVMC) works with Vonage too!

Some of the weaknesses we pointed to have been addressed with the PhoneValet Message Center and includes a few we didn't think about: Call Recording, Fax Integration, Remote Control and Voice Mail.

Once set up, Speakable items can be used to tell the Mac to make a call after that contact information has been added to the OpenBase™ SQL database (http://www.openbase.com) included with PVMC. Even though the Mac can be programmed to make calls, a phoneset is still needed to communicate with the person being called. Maybe a SIP phoneset like X-PRO™ can be included in the next Rev. (It is there in Vonage for a monthly fee.)

If you don't have a phoneset that has a display, but you want Caller ID, that information now appears on the computer screen.

Perhaps you don't have an answering machine. This is what I asked for and Parliant delivered. There can be up

to 11 different Voicemail boxes with different greetings. Use either Apple's or Parlaint's voices.

Do you need to keep a record of incoming and outgoing calls and are not using Vonage? Call logging, recording and remote access are available. Voicemail recordings can also be sent off to Email. "PVMC supports 3GPP, AAC and WAV file formats for audio recordings and messages. The 3GPP file format offers excellent quality and very small size (76 KB/minute). That means you could store over 191 days of 3GPP call recordings on a 20GB hard disk!" And since it can record in AAC, Voicemail recordings can be saved to iPods®. Yeah, really!

 As seen here, the Parliant USB Telephone Adapter II has only one phone jack. For additional lines, more adapters would need to be purchased. It looks exactly like the older unit except that it is sorta-kinda gray, instead of bluish. Both boxes are see-through so you can sorta see the electronics inside.

PVMC compatible with the fax features built into Mac OS 10.3 "Panther", and can direct fax calls to the Mac's modem via Apple's fax software. A Demo version of the Page Sender fax software (http://www.smileonmymac.com/) is included on the CD.

If you have a contact list, it can be imported into PVMC. Apple's Address Book can also be utilized in Mac OS X 10.3.4 directly for phone use. Tested systems so far are: Microsoft Entourage v.X, Palm Desktop 2.6 and 4.1, Big Island YoYo phonebook. A recent announcement is that it also plays nice with Now Contact!™

This should be a 5-minute maximum to install, but because I apparently had some critical components missing in my Mac® OS X™ Panther 10.3.4, I had to reinstall the OS from scratch. This was discovered after back-and-forth Emails to Parliant's excellent Tech Support (great job Chris!) and getting a copy of their TechSupportReport.prl to them (click on the PVMC shortcut while holding down the Option key to generate a report). I learned how to use Apple's Console and read system logs to try and discover where I was getting hung up. Starting fresh was the final solution. I can only assume that because I've been dinking around with various security packages, something blew away some of Mac OS X so PVMC wouldn't play nice with the USB Phone Adapter. The Apple System Profile could see the unit, but not communicate completely with it.

Persistence and replacing the Operating System made it possible so I could successfully send off the report. IT had to be something simple but what Tech Support did was give me a Version 2.0d instead of the Version 2.0a that came with the CD.

Parliant's website has a long list of FAQs to peruse. It discusses handling calling card and long-distance numbers and PIN codes, tapping into contact manager databases and Apple's Address Book, using AppleScript – or not (accessing Remote Control features), using dialing rules, utilizing X-10™ controls, iChat™ and iTunes™ integration, and other topics.

Other places on their site discuss scripting and they point to how some of it is already built-in so you just can click a preference and away you go!

Like the Vonage features, PVMC can notify by way of Email and send attachments of voice recordings. Unlike Vonage, there are a host of AppleScripting possibilities available, because PVMC is a native Mac OS X Cocoa-based application.

One of the strengths I see in the product is that it fully utilizes the Apple text-to-speech function so Remote access can be run by voice commands. When calls come in, the computer will speak to you and tell you who is online so you can either pass them on to voicemail or pick up.

PMVC is a fully-featured Call Management system and is apply named the Message Center for a reason. It logs details of calls including time-stamps as well as recordings. Call-backs can be a simple click. Once all the contact info is loaded in OpenBase, this can become the virtual interactive phonebook. Dialing can also be done by voice from within any application using the Apple Services menu or directly from within Apple's Address Book (Mac OS X 10.3 or later).

If you don't take advantage of the Fax functionality in Vonage, take advantage of the fax functionality in PVMC. It interoperates with Apple's internal fax system or use either an external fax machine or other faxing software applications.

Now you have an excuse to leave the Mac running 24x7 and never miss another call again – ever!

ShuttlePro™ V.2 – Multimedia Controller Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Contour Design, Inc.
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Windham, NH 03087 USA
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 (+45) 32 46 11 20
Fax: (+45) 32 46 11 25
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Released: July 15, 2003
$110 USD
Downloads:
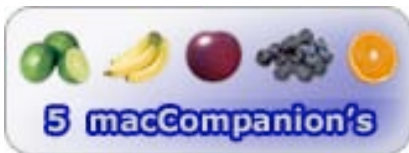http://www.contourdesign.com/shuttlepro/shuttle_downloads.htm
Requirements: G3 and later, Mac OS 8.6 or later, 10 MB hard drive space and a USB port. 1.5 MB hard drive space.
For WinTel boxen, Win98 or later, 10 MB hard drive space and a USB port.
Comes with: Installation CD, pre-printed and blank labels, QuickStart Instructions poster.

Strengths: Cross-platform.

Weaknesses: May interfere with other USB devices.

I gave my old silver-looking ShuttlePro™ away to a very grateful professional musician who says he uses it every day. Then I began wondering if Contour Design had made any new devices? Sure enough, they released the ShuttlePro™ V.2 last year, and I missed the debut! Besides an updated 48-page User Guide, what else is new? Well, they added 2 more buttons (now 15), changed the color to black, updated the 360-degree "jog wheel" and added more applications to their pre-configured application list such as Garageband™ and discreet Combustion™ 3. Oh, and now there is a much longer USB cable.

* Top row of four (4) buttons, numbered 1 through 4, left to right

* Second row of five (5) buttons, numbered 5 through 9, left to right

Left side button, numbered 14

Right side button, numbered 15

Joq Wheel

Shuttle Ring or Shuttle Knob (outer, black, spring-loaded ring)

Third row of two (2) buttons (below the Jog and Shuttle Knob), numbered 10 and 11, left to right

Fourth row of two (2) buttons (just above the palm rest), numbered 12 and 13, left to right

Palm Rest

* The Top row of four (4) buttons and the second row of five (5) buttons contain clear removable key caps for custom labeling.

The guide shows the picture seen below, for the control panel, but the Contour ShuttlePro control panel shows both the older ShuttlePro and the newer ShuttlePro V.2. I prefer this window instead.

Application Setting Menu

Device Selection

User Action Menu

Computer Response Menu

Keystroke Field

Comment Field

So what can you do with it? Think of it as a short-cut hardware macro device that improves control of audio and video applications, many of which work with Mac® OS X™ and the others with WinTel systems. These are pre-configured, but you can customize functionality for just about anything.

Here's a short pre-configuration list – some applications you may readily recognize. (All are trademarks of their respective developers):

Animation/3D	Audio	Compositing	Video
NewTek Lightwave 3D®	SONY ACID®	Adobe® After Effects®	Media 100® 844/X
Alias Maya®	Adobe Audition™ (Cool Edit Pro)	Boris FX	in-sync Blade
Softimage® XSi®	Steinberg CuBase	Boris Grafitti	B&H DPS Velocity
	MOTU Digital Performer	Boris RED	Canopus® DVStorm
	Apple® GarageBand™	discreet® Combustion® 3	Edition
	Apple iTunes®	Pinnacle Systems® Commotion DV	Apple® Final Cut Express®
	Emagic Logic Audio	Pinnacle Systems® Commotion Pro	Apple® Final Cut Pro®
	MusicMatch Jukebox	Macromedia® Director®	Media 100® iFinish
	Steinberg Nuendo	in-sync Speed Razor	Apple® iMovie®
	DigiDesign Protools		Media 100® Media 100i
	SONAR		Media Composer
	SONY Sound Forge®		Media Studio Pro
	Steinberg Wavelab		Adobe® Premiere®
			Pinnacle Systems® Studio 8
			SONY Vegas® Video
			SONY Video Factory
			Ulead® VideoStudio
			Avid Xpress DV

For those of a more adventuresome spirit, each button is also independently configurable according to this table:

	Button	Jog Direction	Shuttle Position	Shuttle Transition
Do Nothing	X	X	X	X
Same as Lower Value	**NA**	**NA**	X	**NA**
Switch Settings	X	X	X	X
Type Keystroke	X	X	X	X
Press Modifier Keys	X	X	X	X
Open File or Folder	X	X	X	X
Scroll Up	X	X	X	X
Scroll Down	X	X	X	X
Scroll Left	X	X	X	X
Scroll Right	X	X	X	X
Mouse Click	X	X	X	X
Double Click	X	X	X	X
Triple Click	X	X	X	X
Click Lock	X	X	X	X
Right Click	X	X	X	X
Middle Click	X	X	X	X
Volume Up	X	X	X	X
Volume Down	X	X	X	X
Mute Volume	X	X	X	X
Brightness Up	X	X	X	X
Brightness Down	X	X	X	X
Eject	X	X	X	X
Run Macro	X (*)	X (*)	X (*)	X (*)

(*) Only available for ShuttlePRO v2

KeyComposer, released in January by Contour Design as a single-button multi-key combo macro function, also is included with ShuttlePro V.2 and is available for download from the website.

There is now a Universal driver that not only works with the ShuttlePro V.2, but also with the Shuttle Express™. Some key actions have also been included such as Volume Up/Down, Mute, Brightness Up/Down and Eject. And for those who use Mac® OS X™ 10.3.3, there is Fast User Switching support.

The jog wheel rotates 360-degrees fro frame-by-frame control while the shuttle-ring handles such things as reverse or fast-forward. Nine of the buttons have removable caps so we can either use pre-printed labels that have symbols on them or ones that have wording like "Toggle Edit", "Overwrite", "Timecode", "Transport", "Switch Setting" etc. that can go under the clear keycaps.

What I like about the ShuttlePro V.2 is that I can either use my right hand or my left with it. If you want to reduce time and fatigue while working with applications that are mouse and keyboard-intensive, get one of these devices.

UniRiser™ - Bringing the old iMac® to new heights Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

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International House
Center Boulevard 5
2300 Copenhagen S
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 (+45) 32 46 11 20
Fax: (+45) 32 46 11 25
nordic@contourdesign.com
Released: 1999
$25USD
Dimensions: 3 5/8"Hx16 3/16"Wx10 3/8"D.
Requirements: iMac, pre–arm style (first and 2nd generation).

Strengths: Makes old iMacs feel like new again.

Weaknesses: Just narrow enough that the original keyboard won't slide under (okay, yeah, sideways). Does not fit the eMac®.

See the device underneath the iMac® in the picture above? It is called the UniRiser™ from ContourDesign and was released all the way back in 1999. I was asked if I really wanted to review this and yes, I really wanted to do so. Why?

Well let me tell you why. My iMac is just low enough that it could use a couple of phonebooks to raise it up to my level. It is that or I can lower my seat down and then I have problems with the keyboard. That was why the later iMac was welcomed with open arms, because it was more ergonomically appealing. Lots of folks with weak backs appreciated the newer design. However, lots of us still use the older iMacs on a daily basis and we could resort to either using a couple of reams of paper or one or two phonebooks to get the "right height". Instead ContourDesign created the frosted translucent, elegant 4–legged UniRiser to do the job instead.

What do you get for $25 USD? The perception is that the iMac screen now fills like it is bigger, because it is higher off the tabletop. Then there is the shelf–space. This is where the cool concept meets reality. The unit could have been made just a little larger. I feel like I'm dealing with something developed in metric trying to fit something made in inches. I can almost use it for including my Vonage Motorola device, but the space is just

a bit too tight for the shelf. I can almost place my Maxtor OneTouch™ in there, but again the space constraints just miss the mark. Can I put my USB hub and PhoneValet™ devices there? Easily. So the shelf is almost usable for some things but not for others.

Then the space below the shelf looks ideal for slipping in the original keyboard, but once again it is just a wee bit too narrow for it to fit. Okay, maybe it was in the box since 1999 and it got wet and was preshrunk. No? Nice idea, but it could have been a great one, if the engineers had thought through their design a little bit better by making the UniRiser just a little bit bigger, say 5" tall instead of 4" and the base wide enough the keyboard could have fit under the stand when not in use. Oh well, at least I have the screen up where I can look right at it instead of feeling like I'm perched on the edge of my seat, like Peanut's™ Snoopy acting like a vulture on the end of the roof of his doghouse.

What is neat about the UniRiser is that it does have wells for the iMac feet that fit perfectly. It fits on the corner of my desk on the built-in raised monitor wood triangle shelf (again, I have room for at least 2 more inches on the side before the UniRiser would have been too big to fit).

The original iMac "kickstand" tucks back under nicely and the UniRiser politely accepts it so it is not high-centered. And no, you won't want to untuck it, even if it does straddle the front snuggly. For a two-piece plastic device it is incredibly stable. The shelf makes it so.

Does it fit the eMac®? No, not at all.

So if you want to add 4 more inches to your older iMac (not 4 " to parts of your body) and make it appear to be a new machine all over again, why not get one of these units? It could help reduce desk clutter and really does as promised – brings the original iMacs up to new heights.

Shareware

SHAREWARE Checklist Software for You and Yours A Comparative Software Review by Harry {doc} Babad Edited by Julie M. Willingham

The software was tested on a 1 GHz dual processor PowerPC G4 Macintosh® running Mac OS X™ 10.2.8. Only items that would run in Mac OS X 10.2.3 or later (Jaguar or Panther) were tested. I've noted whether a shareware package would run in Classic Mode, but did not test the items in that mode.

Introduction

Since I have projects with to-do items that cross my professional life, and my life as a volunteer, as well as household to-dos and things Macintosh, I find myself making promises and losing the scraps of paper on which they're written. I also, at times, take notes and would like to attach them to the to-do items. So finding checklist software was a priority item when switching to Mac OS X. I've used my calendar software (not iCal, but the free PandoCalendar™ http://www.pandacorner.com/ both to track appointments and to save my promises. PandoCalendar does everything I now need for maintaining my appointments and reminding me of birthdays, anniversaries, meetings both routine and recurring, and holidays. It does not however, allow me to organize my checklist (to-do's) into subcategories, nor was it meant to do so.

But as my demands on the software became more demanding, or perhaps I just got greedy for more features, I started searching for alternative full-featured replacements. I selected eight packages from the MacUpdate site for evaluation. This shareware review details my evaluations. The review focuses on providing you with an overview of the software's features, in part taken from sanitized versions the developer's notes. (I removed all the PR hype and stuck to the products' features and functionality.) After I briefly tested the products, running them through their paces, I added my feedback to their reviews.

A priori, there are three general formats used by checklist software developers.
- Integrated single lists using hieratic files and folders [Check Off].
- Individual storage by a specific subject creating multiple lists. [ToDo X]
- Individual storage by Information Type [Handy List]

The products that I reviewed below cover the entire gamut of the formats and features. Read the list across:

Primary Formats/Features Used by Checklist Software Developers			
Access Location	Menu Bar	Dock	Desktop Alias
List Hierarchy [Available sublevels]	Flat-single	Simple Outline Subheadings	Nested Folders
Primary List Subject [Focus]	Separate individual lists	Integrated multiple lists	Nested Folder(s) Outline Metaphor
Desired Features	Spelling Checker	Hyperlinks	Provides Export Functions

I have not attempted to pick out the *best* software from among the nine products I worked with for this review. I have my biases toward those features that meet my individual needs, and I delight in sharing them with you. But picking a product that you will find easy to use and, more importantly, will use, is up to you. Download these products and give them a trial run. Each of the products I tested is available as a demo. Their features are fully functional, but the demos limit either the number of items you can add to a list or the number of separate lists you can create. Worse still, some products keep bugging you with pop-up windows asking you to support shareware by buying the product. So, as my British friends often note, "Carry on!"

Review Criteria—Sort of!
Because it is a professional thing to do, I created a mental checklist for this review, much of which I blithely ignored as being either trivial or obvious. Only those items that I've italicized ended up being relevant, since most of these programs were indeed based on an outline metaphor and easy to reorganize.

I used the following features list (criteria) for memory-jogging purposes only. Neither time nor my bias toward specific software features would allow me to quantify my judgments by numerically scoring these interesting and useful products. Nevertheless, in a more formal review, all but one product would have merited **3.5 to 4.5 macCs**.

(Read between the lines and you will find out what I liked about a product and thereby what things I require in a checklist product—but your needs are not mine!)

Features and More Features
• *Easily accessible either in the Menu Bar or as a pop-up menu by using a hotkey*
• *Ability to subdivide lists into subject groupings and if needed sub-groupings (e.g., has features comparable to a simple outline organization)*
• Ability to capture a paragraph, if needed, of explanatory information
• Runs on Mac OS X Jaguar or later
• *Ability to easily change item locations using the straightforward drag-and-drop*
• The ability to easily alphabetize entries within a category (think IE favorites)—a nice-to-have feature that was absent from most of the products, requiring me to do more drag-and-dropping than I found comfortable
• *A simple user interface that minimizes the need for multiple mouse click to create and then work with your lists*
• *The ability to print my list either in part or as a whole, directly from the software, preferably after organizing the list(s) order. Better yet, software that can also format my list prior to printing it would be of great help.*
• Easily located list document file for backup purposes. Where are my checklist(s) files stored? Most of the programs hid the checklist database somewhere in the user's library folder, a feature that made them harder to back up individually. The usual location appears to be the preference file in your user library directory (e.g., folder).
• The ability to convert URLs and eMAIL addresses automatically to hyperlinks, avoiding the need to cut and paste them into my Internet applications
• *My checklist(s) must be exportable as a .txt or .rtf files, for incorporation into eMAIL, calendars, or other documents, preferably in .rtf.*
• Selected list sections should also be exportable as a text file, for incorporation into eMAIL or other documents, preferably in RTF.
• If possible, the shareware should be based on a database engine rather than text based engine— a pure bias on this reviewer's part.
• Most of the tested checklist alternatives did not have an uninstall features. All could be removed from my hard disk by dragging the application (quit it first) to the trash and then using Mac OS X's Find feature to locate the various preference and lists files so they too could be deleted.

The software I tested is listed alphabetically — read on!

2Remember™

2Remember™ 1.0.3 — Keep track of your appointments with style
By Andrea Rincon Ray
http://www.andreaegreta.com/software/
$13 USD
Requirements: Mac OS X 10.2 or later.

Having lots of things to do and not much time, Andrea mentions that she just needed something to keep track of her day... "Actually, I was a bit disappointed, since at the time I surfed, I couldn't find anything that would be fast to use, and not waste some precious screen space. Something that would pop up only when needed. Since I'm a developer, I wrote it myself. It's not perfect, but it's the one I like most..."

2Remember allows you to list and retrieve quickly your to-do's into seven 'predefined' categories. 2Remember has the ability to activate web, email, and hyperlinks to allow users to surf or email directly from its List Manager. With it you can compile to-do list for home and office, create phone call lists, appointments, travel, shopping lists and "everything else." Avoid screen clutter with 2Remember's exclusive feature: it docks with a tab at the screen edge and opens when you run the mouse over it over. Coming soon: full seamless iCal integration. The items that are preconfigured include:
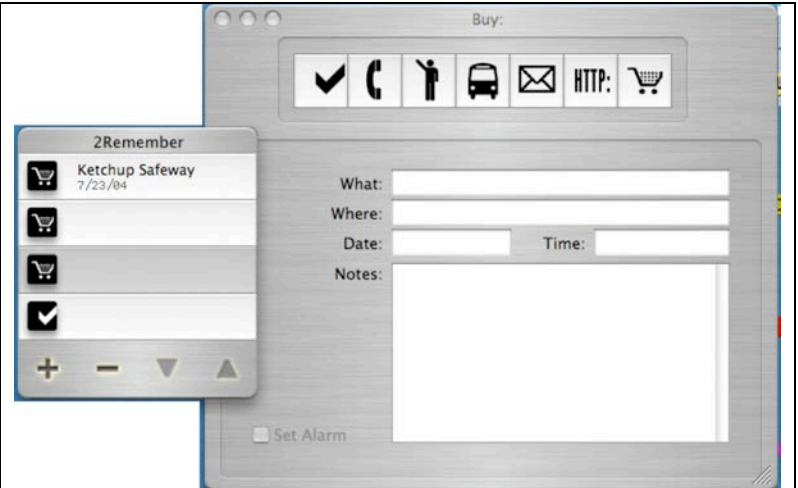
An interesting concept that goes beyond those features usually found in checklist software.

Of any of the nine products tested for this review, this software has the richest choice of available field types:

List Type Name	Note Fields
Phone call list,	PHONE: phone to, phone number, date, time, and notes on details
Send an email	EMAIL: the name of the person being mailed, their phone, when (date and time to send the message) and message detail reminders, the later in note form
Meeting reminders	MEET: person being met, their email address, where, date, time, and a note for details
Appointments and errand reminders	GO TO: where, when (date and time), and the notes on the details
Checkout a website	WEBSITE: URL, when (date and time), and the ubiquitous note. I found I did not use the when fields in my tests, since surfing is a matter of time available.
Create a shopping list	BUY: what, where, when (date and time), and notes for details (in tech talk these are the specs). Good for highlighting sale ad items as well as necessities.
An odds and ends list	ODDS and Ends: to do, when (date and time), and a note on the details

Each task, in the form of a note (index) card contains an item defining the specific 2Remember list category (e.g., to do,) the date (due), time due, and the ubiquitous notes for details. Notes provide the choice of setting a reminder alarm, an intrusive feature I never use, but I'm retired and have paid my dues.

I was a bit annoyed by two items: Although I entered my registration number, I could not get the registration window to go away after entering my serial number. Additionally, it would have been helpful if, when building a shopping list, the list type would not continuously revert back to odds and ends (the first list type category), forcing me to manually to re-pick BUY.

If it was possible to print my lists, I could not determine how—the limited help file did not solver my problem.

Interface
2Remember installs as a side bar that can be placed anywhere at the sides of your screen, reminiscent of the control strip in OS 9.x and Classic. It uses a categorized note card metaphor reminiscent of Apple's long discarded HyperCard™. To uninstall the application, drag it to the trash, but also delete its preferences files from your user preferences folder, a fact omitted from its Readme file.
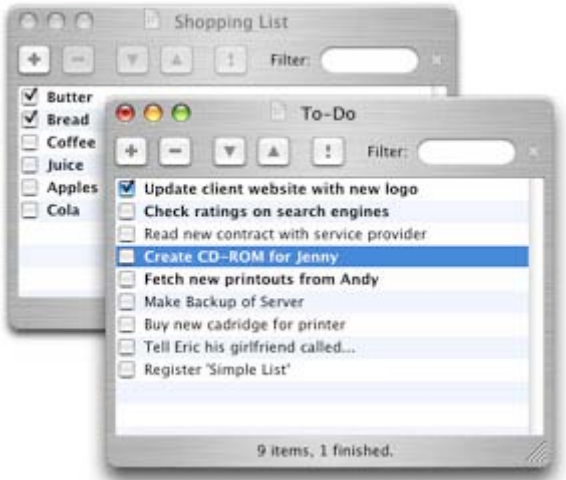
Bottom Line
Overall, this software did not appeal to me for reasons stated above, but don't let that stop you from testing it out.

ARTIS Simple List

ARTIS Simple List 1.2.1 — A to-do list manager
ARTIS Software
http://www.artissoftware.com/simplelist/index.html
Support: wolfgang@artisoftware.com or support@artissoftware.com
$10 USD
Requirements: Mac OS X 10.1 or later.

ARTIS Simple List is an easy but powerful list manager. It is the most straightforward product I reviewed. The most common use for this software is for keeping track of your myriad to-do lists and tasks. The software allows you to create individual lists for each project or activity in your life. It makes available up to two lines of text for each list item.

Simple List is an easy-to-use yet powerful list manager. It is well designed to organize your tasks and ideas, manage your shopping lists, wish lists, work to-do's—the choice is limited only by your imagination. Because Simple List supports multiple lists, you may manage different lists for both business and private tasks simultaneously.

Simple List has easy to use features that ease you into becoming a devout checklist user. It's better than putting a string around your finger, or collecting those scraps of paper that get lost when you blink and look away.

The interface allows you to easily change list order, either manually or by pressing the icon symbols on the main product window.

Its Features

The software uses a multiple list metaphor in which an unlimited number of checklist items can be added. As an application, it can be accessed in the dock, or from wherever you install it—I recommend installing it in your applications folder; it's the Panther way!

- Create multiple documents to contain all your different lists
- Use keyboard shortcuts for comfortable keyboard navigation
- Drag & drop to quickly rearrange individual items
- To sort items in your list more completely, you can use the menu bar buttons to
    - Move Priority Items to Top
    - Move Finished Items to Bottom
    - Sort (Both Move Commands)
- Auto-opening allows you to automatically open your everyday lists
- Includes many customization options
- Trial use of Simple List for lists with not more than 12 items
- A clear and detailed help function answers any leftover questions you may have by just starting to use the program. In effect, the help feature is the manual for using the software.
- Listed items can be made to stand out by changing their priority. Items with higher priority are displayed in bold.
- Every item has a checkbox in front to show the status (finished or unfinished).
- Instant filtering (the author's name for searching for particular items in long lists) while you type to help you quickly find specific items.

Interface
The product creates individual lists for each of your focus areas, all easily accessible as "recent items" from its menu. But, alas, has neither a spelling checker nor a notes feature. However, if two lines for text input serve to define your to-do description, you will not miss the notes feature. More seriously, I was unable to find any way to export my lists to either .txt or .rtf format to paste needed items into my calendar or into other documents. I can, of course, print to PDF and grab the needed text in Adobe Acrobat™, but that doesn't help those of you who have access only to Acrobat Reader™. Copying each list item and pasting to a new document does not appeal to me.

Last Words…
This is a good piece of software that will serve many users well … those who can get along with its present limitations.

A reviewer'[s gripe: I resent having to buy a piece of software that I want to test and review for macC. I was unable to get a timely response from the publisher, whom I asked for permission to review their product and, as is the norm, provide me with a serial number.
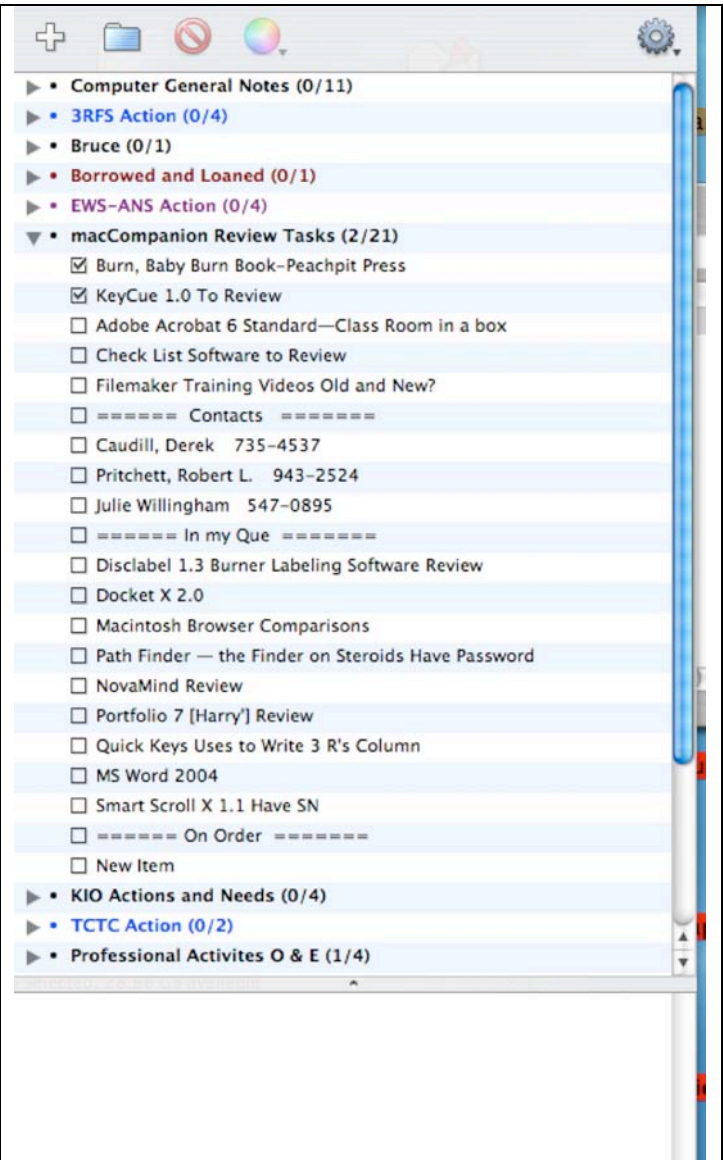
✠ ♋ ♌ ♍ ✠ ♏ ♋ ♌ ✠ ♉ ♋ ♐ ✠

Check Off™

Check Off 2.4.2 and 3.0b1	
By Ricci Adams http://sourceforge.net/projects/checkoff/ License: Freeware **Requirements:** Mac OS X 10.3 or later. Earlier versions (2.4.1) ran under Jaguar.	

In the November 2003 issue of MacCompanion, I reported on Check Off (v2.3.1) by Ricci Adams http://www.ricciadams.com/programs/checkoff/ which has served me well this last year. I updated to version 2.4.1 and, a few days ago, to version 2.4.2. The latter is the last shareware version Ricci is going to release. The 2.4.1/2.4.2 update added flexibility to checklist viewing and allowed for the easier addition of detailed

text notes that were attached to the checklist item description. Both the checklist and the attached notes could be exported, rather then cut and pasted, into a text document for use in other applications, a feature I use often.

A new freeware version 3.0b1 will be released in final form shortly. When I attempted to test it, I was not able to import my lists created in 2.4.1, despite converting them into the 3.x format using Ricci's "list converter" software. The freeware 3.0b1 version of Check Off is released under the GNU Public License.

Check Off is a straightforward and easy to use to-do list whose icon sits in your menu bar. Simply click the check mark and your personal to-do list will drop down. It uses an outline metaphor that allows both nested folder and checklist items. The user is able to apply colored labels both folder of an individual item level, a feature that I turned off because it was difficult to read the text through some of the label colors. For those of you who have not previously tried the shareware version, download the open-source version. It's free, so try it out. You can always change back to the shareware version if the beta version does not satisfy you.

I had some problems with version 3.0b1, but Ricci responded promptly to my email message seeking help. He suggested that I revert to the newly released and still very stable version 2.4.2, which I promptly did; well, it took a few minutes. It worked and my checklist is back. (I now export the items from my list to have a backup just in case; but that's just belt and suspenders doc_Babad.)

I do wish that Ricci would add live hyperlinks to the software, facilitating both email and Internet accessibility. But of greater need to my weary eyes is the ability to change font sizes in the checklists to allow for easier reading.

Docket™ 1.1

Docket 1.1
Surprise Software
http://www.surprisesoftware.com/
$15 USD
Requirements: Mac OS 9.0 or later, Carbon Lib including Panther; or even a Wintel System.

Docket quickly and easily enables you to create a variety of useful lists. In addition to the standard to-do lists, you can also create lists for shopping, personal goals, task delegation, and any other lists that you need! Docket is here to help you be more organized and therefore more productive!

Docket takes the place of your paper lists and saves you time. Use it as a day planner, personal organizer, or to-do list. Creating a to-do list or task list is easy with this program; just start typing and your list jumps to life. After you act on an item, just click the checkmark next to it. This program makes creating a list easy!

The heart of Docket is the list editor that allows you to quickly create list items, but it doesn't stop there. Docket remembers when you added an item to the list, and when you last clicked on the completed box. You can review your history and find out what you've been doing with your, err… time, and whether you kept up with planned and promised actions. (Not I; no guilt trips for me.)

> A Parable… A former boss, offered when I complained about the unreadable pile of mail [paper] I was receiving, said he's manage my mail if I first pulled out the technical materials associated with current projects. When, two month later, I feed back that what ever he was doing worked perfectly — I no long needed to spend hour reading piles of junk mail. He opened his closet door and there was all my mail in several large piles… The lesson, if it's important enough some one will call you to remind you about a missed commitment. I found this lesson more to my liking then the time management instructors who taught me to deal with and disposition each piece of mail when I first skimmed it. Phooey! The lesson from my tail is use checklists, but don't overdo it — you can fill all available time making lists, leaving no time to act on them.

Paraphrased from it's developer, using Docket, you easily add memos and assign labels to your checklist items to allow you to easily to sort them or to store more detailed information about an item. This extra feature is a benefit to the user, since the main window of Docket stays simple and easy to read while your memos and labels are kept hidden until you need them. Your list can even be printed in two formats. It's developer states "Docket is the perfect answer to getting rid of hard to maintain paper lists. Getting organized is easy with a simple easy to use Docket solution."
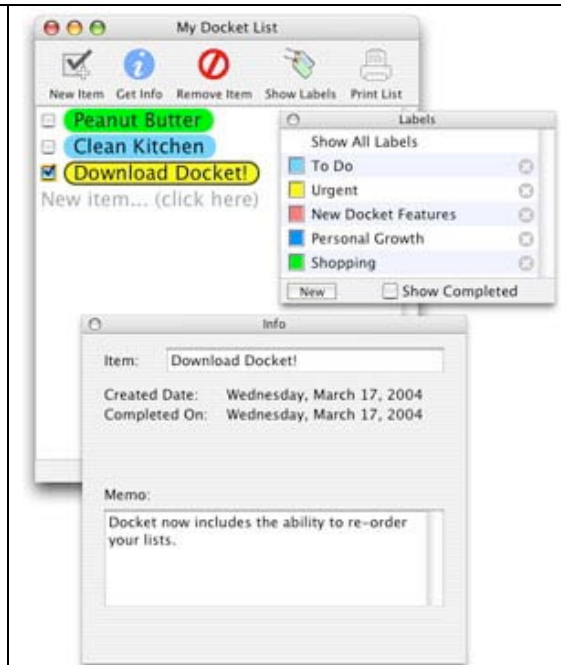
A very simple, easy to use interface that you can instantly access to update.

It is very easy to enter items right into the list. Just start typing and you can create a list faster than using a standard word processing tool or drawing tool. You'll enjoy the super ease of entry that Docket offers.

Features
It is easy to customize your list with labels as well as to organize your list in any order. Printing your lists for off-computer use is easy right from the main software window. There are lots more, so read on.

- Docket is always placed right where you left it so you can update your lists anytime!
- Easy item entry – just start typing and your list creates itself, saving you time and headaches.
- Each item has a checkbox next to it so you can mark off completed items.
- List items can have a memo attached to store more information about them without cluttering the main window.
- Assign a label to items so you can easily organize them. (You can easily add new labels to the predefined Personal To-Dos and Shopping.)
- Name your printed list(s) and use their attached memo(s) for more information.
- You set the conditions under which items no longer show on your lists. This keeps your main window uncluttered and easy to read.
- Multiple viewing options-find only uncompleted items or, alternatively, search for items or a project to find all related task specific labels. This makes it easy to see related items at a glance.
- Two printing options-full page or folded page. Also, choose what label is included, and even title and date your printed list.

Interface
The software is an application whose alias you can place, for easy access, in your dock or on your desktop. I used categories that have served me well to create my Docket labels. These included: General Computer Notes, Borrowed and Loaded, Professional Societies Actions, MacC Review Tasks Plus, Nuclear Waste Consulting, Music Festival and Concerts Notes, and Interesting Foods Plus.

The software is easy to use, because it's a single tier list. That has a minor disadvantage, since you can't create a sub-tier structure (e.g., nested list folders.) However, working with the docket labels and memo functions provides a workaround for most users. All functions are available from the main software window, thus obviating the need for a preferences pane.

In closing…
Although I will not now replace my current checklist software with Docket, it is an excellent product that I recommend the reader try out. My checklists require the use of at least two levels of detail, weakening the software's appeal. For example, my nuclear waste consulting list category contains a folder for each client. One level deeper, I normally create tiered folders associated with contacts and contracts, and specific contract task associated to-dos.

A major update to Docket, version 2.0, is in the works, and I'm looking forward to trying it out.
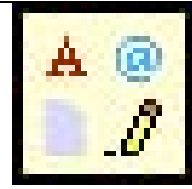
HandyList™ 2.0

<table>
<tr><td>

HandyList 2.0
Expersis Software, LLC
http://www.expersis.com/
Technical Support: support@expersis.com
License: Freeware
Requirements: Any Power Macintosh, Mac OS X 10.2 or later.
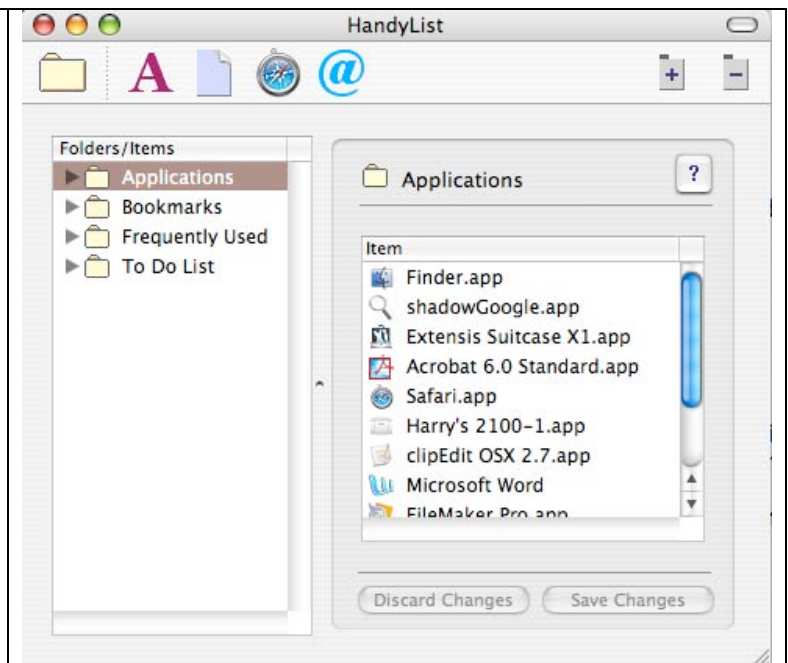
</td><td>

</td></tr>
</table>

HandyList is a simple utility that allows you to store and organize lists of items. It exemplifies the current generation of menu bar activated list utilities.

Items can be of the following types:

- Text – used for storing anything text (notes, phone numbers, to–do lists, etc.)
- Creates and captures paths to files or folders on your hard disk
- Creates hyperlinks to Web links (URLs) in your list.
- Easily captures lists of email addresses either from your Apple address book or by cutting and pasting from your email application. It's an easy way to capture your most frequently used contacts into list form.
- Listed items can be organized hierarchically into folders.

You usually access HandyList is through its menu icon that it installs in the menu bar on the right. Items from the list can be added to this menu for quick access, regardless of which application is active at the time. For example, favorite web links, frequently used files and folders, and text notes can all appear in the HandyList menu accessible main window for quick access.

<table>
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Selected individual items can be added to your selected folder (list) as you work or search for your relevant to–do's. The software allows creation, on the fly, of multiple levels of sub–tiered folders for easy organization of your more complicated tasks' lists. The initial set of "folder/items" includes application, bookmarks, frequently used, and to do list. But adding more folders is a click away, allowing me to replicate my standard checklist categories.

</td><td>

A good, easy to use package that features a menu icon for ease access.

</td></tr>
</table>

Bottom Line...
This is a software package that has an interface that is both intuitive and easy to use. It has an extra feature associated with it that adds power to its checklist functions that many of you will find useful.

As an aside, until I tested this software, it never occurred to me to add applications or bookmarks or email to my checklists. I do not need these additional organizational features, but welcome the ability to type URLs or email addresses, as is possible in Microsoft Word™, and to have them become active hyperlinks.

As a rationale for choosing a narrower set of features in my to-do list software—I use Unsanity's *FruitMenu*™, which, in Mac OS X, allows me to add applications and folders under the Apple menu. I also use my Eudora™ email program almost hourly and have a very large contact list, as well as maintaining a dozen or so mailing lists, so this HandyList feature isn't a necessary part of my need for extensive check lists. As far as collecting URLs, Safari's Favorites serve me well.

I would welcome any solid program that generally allows hyperlinks in the body of an individual checklist item. That would allow a simple double-click to take me to my browser or my email program.

Try it—it's free; and if it suits your to-do list needs, make it a keeper.

iTasks™ 1.4

iTasks 1.4 Distributed by Box & Locks; developed by Jeremy Baine http://www.boxandlocks.com/ $10.00 USD **Requirements:** Mac OS X 10.2 or later. Note: This product was tested only in demo mode.	

When life's getting too hectic and you've just got too much to remember, use checklist software. With iTask, according to its developer, you can organize your to-do lists for both the office and your home; organize anything from your filing to remembering to take out the laundry.

iTasks, a compact desktop application from Box & Locks, helps you manage and organize your life better—a piece of philosophy I can't espouse. You can replace all those Post-It!™ and to-do notes with this on-screen scheduler.

According to Jeremy Baine, you can organize and categorize your current and future tasks and prioritize their individual importance, so that your reminders evolve with your ever-changing workload.

Features and Shortcomings
Overall, this product represents a good approach to configuring a checklist software product. Although it contains a number of features that are missing from its simpler cousins, I found its implementation awkward to use and incomplete. In the absence of help files, it was harder to work with than the developer's blurb led me to expect.

- Built-in ability to access multiple list categories from its main window.
- Uses a data entry window for inputting to both list category and list files
- Prioritizing an item changes its location in the list
- It is easy to add a due date from the data entry window
- Allows the easy establishment of priorities, from highest to lowest as well as labeling them as done.
- In list item entry mode, the user has the ability to add notes to the list item name. However, I could not figure out how to display or print the list with their accompanying notes.
- iTasks provides no help files, which limits the user's ability to master this software. This is unfortunate, since its interface is, at times, counterintuitive.
- The data entry window, unfortunately, can't be moved, and it annoyingly overlies the iTasks view of its listed items.

- You can not alphabetize either the list categories or the lists themselves
- The absence of drop and drag features prevents rearranging the items you enter.
- Despite a preference setting to the contrary, marking an item as "done" deleted it from the list.
- A bug in the software does not allow one to remove the unneeded categories provided with the application. To do so I needed to access the category entry window.
- The export feature does not appear to work in the normal manner to allow creation of text or RTF files. (In the absence of help files, I have not figured out its purpose.)
- The software is limited to printing only the contents of the selected category but does not include that category's name.
- The printed list shows check boxes. I wish the list windows did, so that "done" items would not be deleted.
- The software contains an attachments feature, but I couldn't figure out what it attached since it did not open any dialog box when selected.

Bottom Line
iTasks is an easy to use but unfinished product that I can't yet recommend to our readers.

I was unable to reach Box & Locks to get their permission to review this product. Not only were there no email links to the publisher on the webpage, but also when I bought the product from Kagi™i, I only received a registration code after this review was completed. Email to sales@boxandlocks.com (found only in the product .dmg file) went unanswered until yesterday, with Jeremy Baine offering apologies for the disrupted communications?
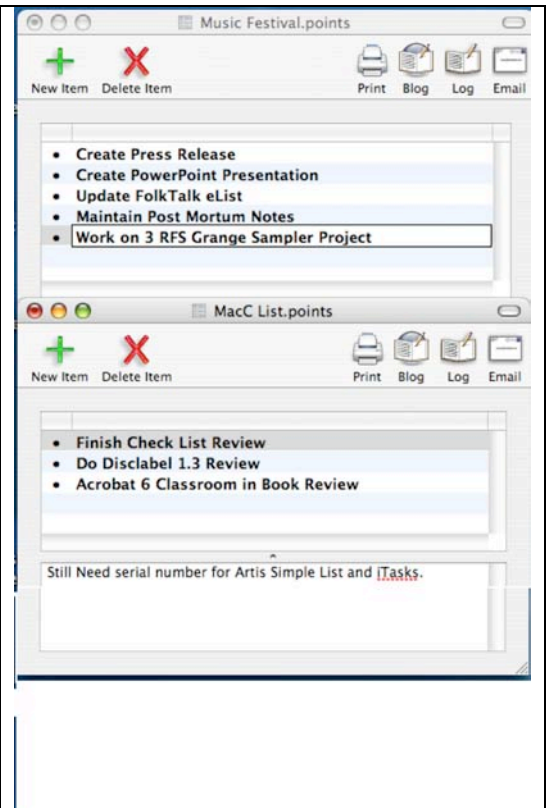
Points™ 1.1

Points 1.1 – Create lists of information. Deallus Software http://deallus.com/points.shtml $10 USD **Requirements:** Mac OS X 10.2 or later	

Points software was developed to make it easy to track and report status items. It's a focused application dedicated to keeping simple lists, and then easily allowing you to do a wide variety of things with that list. Support is included for emailing the list, logging it to a file, posting it to a blog, and, most recently enabled, custom scripted actions. With version 1.1, you can invoke a script that you write to process the results of your list.

"Points was created when a friend complained to me that he was buried under a profusion of sticky notes and notepad sheets. He was making lists on anything and everything to keep track of items for his status reports, questions he had yet to ask, even his "action items" from meetings that he was supposed to do. After asking him what he did with all those notes, I started working on Points."

Points is a stand-alone application whose alias you can add to your dock or put on your desktop. Unlike other to-do list products, it does not use a nested folder metaphor to keep track of your topics. Instead, it creates separate files for each list grouping you create, documents that are stored in your User > Documents folder. It can print your list directly from the main list screen, but offers only WYSIWYG printing. That means using your printer's print options if you want output formatted, for example, with two pages on a landscape oriented page. The software apparently uses Apple's spellchecker, and checking your notes for spelling errors is fast and easy. In the absence of help files and FAQs, I could not figure out what function the "log" feature served. Since I don't "blog", I was also not able to test that feature.


Creating multiply focused list is easy

Points does not yet have the ability to create active hyperlinks in a check listed item or accompanying memo. Active hyperlinking is a feature of other software, such as MS Word. It is a capability that I've become increasingly fond of as I use checklist software. Unfortunately, none of the products reviewed implement it in a manner that is as accessible as I would like. (There was a shareware product available for OS 8.5 that allowed creation of hyperlinks in any document, but, alas, I can't remember its name.)

I also make routine use of some checklist software's ability to export list contents to .rtf. The closest I got in Points 1.1 to obtaining useful exportable editable text was to print my list to PDF and then to save it as either .rtf or .doc format—a longish way to go. Alternatively, I could post the selected list to an email message and copy that list into the document (in another application) where it was needed.

Bottom Line
The document-oriented list(s) approach used in Points works well and it has an easy to use interface. Some of you might find it a good tool for developing project or task oriented lists. For my needs, I'll pass on this alternative because of its limited export features – but don't let that stop you from trying it.
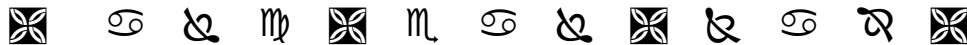
Slacker ToDo Lists™ 2.1.6

|	
Slacker ToDo Lists 2.1.6 Mindlube Software Developed by Alex Rice alex@mindlube.com http://www.mindlube.com/products/slacker/index.html support@mindlube.com $25 USD **Requirements:** Mac OS X 10.2 or later	

Get organized, make outlines, write notes, keep appointments, categorize, keep URL and file links, and get reminders with this productivity application for Mac OS X.

Slacker is a simple yet powerful. This native Cocoa OS X app is easy to use and has features such as repeating to-do items, sorting, drag-n-drop, alerts, freshness dating, multiple documents interface, system service, Stickies integration, undo, Aqua interface, calendar view, notes view, and more. No more Slacking off! Slacker can be used as a notebook, maintaining rich text format and accessible hyperlinks. It can be displayed as a calendar, or in list view as an outline. It is very flexible in the manner in which you can organize your lists.

Features

After a false start in which I mixed list category types in my original to-do list, I realized that I could easily create and access a group of lists focused on my principal categories. This corresponds to using nested folder in other products to represent each major focus of my lists. By using the software's drag-and-drop features, I quickly converted my single list to multiple lists associated with nuclear waste consulting, 3-Rivers Folklife Society, and macCompanion. By so doing, it was easy to subdivide the new lists into separate major categories, based on the organization I created for Check Off, my initial checklist software. By using outline type features, you can create subcategories of listed items using drag-and-drop.
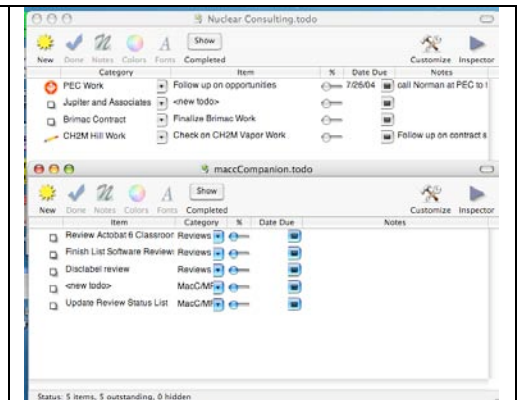
The right way to focus on critical task lists

- Outline View—create nested/hierarchical to-do lists.
- Save your work—the traditional save command-S works to update your lists
- Calendar—offers 2 different calendar views to track due dates for each individual list, and easy input of the due dates for items in your list.
- Use Custom Icons—view and prioritize your lists by icons to meet your graphic interface predilections.
- Date Dues & Reminders—get optional alerts about to-do items.
- Colors—use labels to customize the look of your to-do items.
- Notes—attach rich text format [.rtf] notes to to-do items. Maintains active links to URLs, email addresses, and hyperlinked files!
- Fonts—customize the look of to-do items.
- Printing—have your analog to-do list as well.
- Slacker Minder—runs in the background and looks for reminders and overdue items.
- Drag & Drop—rearrange your lists by dragging and dropping.
- Multiple Documents—create as many to-do lists as you need.
- System Service—create to-do items from other apps.
- Export—not locked into a proprietary format. Export to XML property list (Apple plist), plain text, rich text, or tab delimited text.
- Undo—most operations are undoable.
- Quality detailed online help is available via the Slacker help function.

- Check spelling while you type.

Thoughts and afterthoughts
The absence of hyperlinks is something the developer should add. Otherwise, with a bit of practice, I was able to quickly test the software's features that interested me.

I was unable to figure out how to print both the list and their accompanying notes. Alas, Slacker's *help* did not help. However, prompt feedback from its developer, Alex Rice, solved my part of my problem. I was looking for something more complex than just printing [*Command-P*] the list – but that was all it took. Other products have an export function that allows you to choose the output format. The printed output was unformatted but all of the details, including priorities and item due date for the list itself, were there!

When I attempted to apply the export features to capture all the list's categories, the associated complete items list, and their accompanying notes, I failed. Only the list of items was exported.

A minor gripe: I was unable to get the product to use bold type to highlight my categories while using regular style type for individual items. Since as I show in the screen shot both items and categories are displayed in columnar view they are easy to view. Like the column in *List View* in Mac OS X, column order can be changed to suit your needs—such changes are just a drag away.

Alas, time did not permit me to explore all the features of this software. It has more features than many of the other items I tested, and users with a need for a variety of list documents to cover their business, hobbies, and volunteer and personal needs would find Slacker ToDo List suits them.

✹ ♋ ♌ ♍ ✹ ♏ ♋ ♌ ✹ ♌ ♋ ♌ ✹
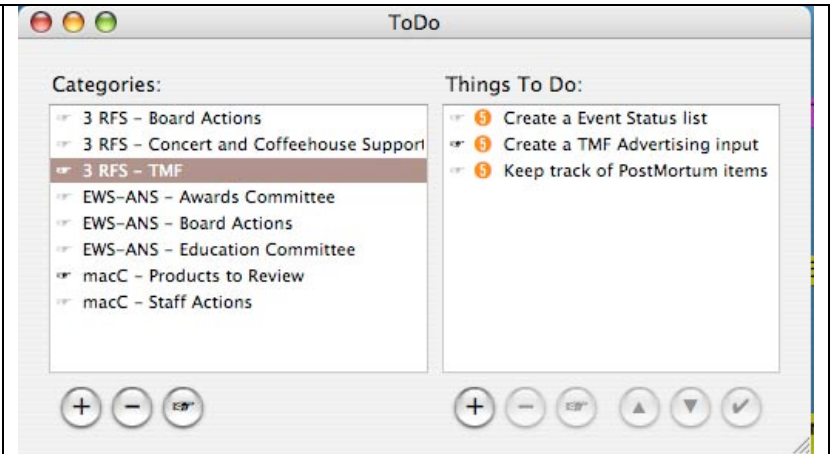
ToDo™ X 1.5

ToDo X 1.5
Omicron Software Systems, Inc.
Developer: Kelvin Delbarre
http://www.nomicro.com/Products/ToDo/
$15 USD
Requirements: Mac OS X 10.1 or later

ToDo X is a native Cocoa to-do list application. Its user interface is deliberately, almost ruthlessly, simplified, yet it provides plenty of power under the hood. It allows users to maintain multiple, prioritized lists of to-do items, each with unlimited attached notes. You can link items to multiple lists and use drag & drop to copy, link, or move items between lists. You also can search, display, or print the union of selected lists, a feature I did not test. Users of the Mac OS 9.x or classic Mac OS desk accessory *ToDo!* (by Andrew Welch of Ambrosia Software) can import their to-do lists into ToDo X.

For folks who update to Mac OS X, ToDo X can import to-do items from iCal and other Mac or Windows applications that generate industry-standard ".ics" data files. Users of the classic Mac OS desk accessory ToDo! will be happy to hear that ToDo X can import from that venerable utility as well.

Features

ToDo X does not make use of a to-do list icon in the menu bar, but rather the application can be added to and accessed from your dock. Although the software is not capable of creating nested folders, it has an easy to use, complete interface. However, I was unable to rearrange the categories, which were listed in strict alphabetical order. I got around that limitation by using a naming scheme that allowed grouping to related items. (See the screen shot.) Another alternative, which works better for me, is to create multiple list documents to more narrowly focus on my individual work projects and home tasks.	
	I got off on the wrong approach to achieving multiple levels of lists, but it was easy to fix by creating multiple list (not shown)

In addition, I could not assign individual priorities to specific list items within a category, a much-needed feature since not all sub-tier list items are of equal priority. I also could not find a workaround for this lack, which is unfortunate. This was troublesome to me, but then I tend to be time-limited and schedule-driven. I also miss the lack of hyperlinks (alas, too rarely featured in other products), but that is a newly acquired need. Or is it a merely a new fixation?

Complete with a spelling checker and labels associated with the item priorities, this product is more versatile and complete than others tested in this review.

- Simple to-do lists with a clean, lightweight interface.
- Color-coded priorities with unlimited attached notes.
- To-do items can be linked to multiple lists (categories) with drag-and-drop.
- Drag-and-drop to copy, link, or move items among lists.
- Display, search, or print items from selected lists.
- Import data from iCal or the classic *ToDo!* desk accessory.
- Great FAQs and a well-organized and clear help feature.
- ToDo X currently saves your to-do list in its preferences file, *com.nomicro.ToDo.plist*, which is stored in your home directory's Library > Preferences folder. Despite the program's stability, the author recommends regular backups, advice we all should heed.

An interesting posted testimonial from the MacUpdate ToDo X page:
"Love this software! I've been using it for several months now, and I use it for far more than just daily to do's (although I rely heavily on it for the updating lists daily). But in addition, I have master lists set up for daily to do's, weekly to do's, tracking things like exercise goals, business projects, writing projects, household projects, home-school projects and events, errands, New Years goals, passwords and Christmas and shopping lists. And that's just a sample. This software is easily worth ten times the tiny price the developer charges for it. If you lead a busy life like I do, this software will help get you organized. It's the only software I've ever rated five stars across the board and if I could rate it ten stars (or more) I would."

ToDo X, final thoughts
A well designed, easy to use, and feature-rich piece of software that many will find ideal for their listing needs.

✠ ♋ ♌ ♍ ✠ ♏ ♋ ♌ ✠ ♋ ♋ ♌ ✠
✠

Overall Test Conclusions

Checklists come and checklists go – none of this software is ever slow.

Menu click or on dock it find – your lists you know you'll always find.

With features varied to suit your needs – metaphors vary widely indeed.

Take a test run without any fear – the software's price is never dear.

Seriously, in a more formal review all but one of these products would rate at least **3.5 macCs**. Some, mostly because they better fit my arbitrary and self-centered criteria, would rate **4.5 macCs**. None are perfect, but any of the well-developed products could serve to collect your to-do's, thereby making it easy to nag yourself about those you've neglected.

P. S.
My totally biased favorites: Check Off 2.4.2, which I plan to continue using until a new version 3 is released in final form; I may continue to work with ToDo X 1.5, and Docket 1.1 and if exporting to .rtf becomes available I'd try Points 1.x again. I'm still intrigued by Slacker ToDo Lists™ 2.1.6 but for now, I'll pass on it.

I hope you notice that in picking these software products, I've selected those that can best accommodate my complex needs. I'm also partial to those products that by workaround can achieve the equivalence of a nested folder tiered lists paradigm. Maybe I just selected those that most caught my eye when testing. (What did you really do, doc? Like everything else about software alternatives, I tossed the dice!)

iTube! 1.2 – Shareware Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Developer: Christopher J Stadler
East Bay Technologies, Inc.
POB 12623
Pleasanton, CA 94588
(925) 251-9612
contact@eastbaytech.com
http://www.eastbaytech.com/
Released: July 14, 2004
Requirements: Mac OS X. Safari. RealPlayer or Windows Media Player, Broadband, 268K Installed.
Forum: http://forum.hotplugins.com/cgi-bin/showforum.cgi?fbid=1201

Strengths: No hardware required. Weekly updates to list. Cross-platform.

**Weaknesses:** QuickTime in the Fall. No real Cable TV channels. Windows port.

Interested in viewing international TV channels online? iTube! By Christopher Stadle does a pretty good job of providing that. Just don't expect to view USA national or cable-based stations – yet.

 The port is rather simplistic at 268K, but what it does, it does well, except for a few "Gotchas" I noticed while using it under Mac® OS X™ 10.3.3. that it wants to stay on the desktop. When pushing it over to the Dock, it runs through its buffer, then stops.

There aren't many control buttons – which is a good thing. They are Play, Stop, Add to Favorites and Show/Hide Station Menu. The "tutorial" is under the Help menu.

Don't expect to see much with the Demo version. Only 10 "channels" are available. Pay the shareware fee and see over 1600 channels worldwide If you look for the iTube list in the Windows side of the Eastbaytech.com website. There are a lot missing, so send them your favorites and they will add them. Obviously there is duplication of TV channels with http://www.beelinetv.com/, but the value-add is the search function. For example, we don't get BYU TV over our cable TV system where I live, but sure enough, once I did a search, it was found. I added it to my iTunes! favorites list.
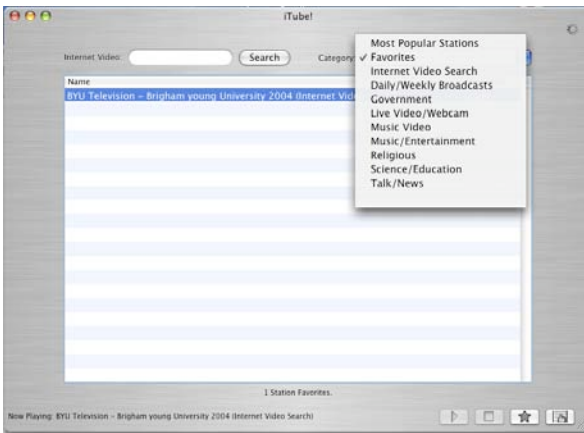
QuickTime player as an option will be available in the Fall, but for now both RealPlayer and Windows Media Player are used.

There is access to over 2 million videos but those are mostly really MP3 video clips, with quite a few in the "Adult" category. Adult content can be turned off. That leaves Live Video Channels such as BYU Television, the Internet Video Search, Daily/Weekly Broadcasts, Government, Live Video/Webcam, Music Video, Music/Entertainment, Religious, Science/Education, and Talk/News categories.

East Bay Technologies claims they are the largest resource for viewing Internet Television. This occurs through their video server and does not use a browser for access but rather their own "screen" as seen above. Oddly enough it does require Safari to run.

There is no "status" feedback to let you know if it is in the middle of making contact other than the words at the bottom left corner that shows "Now playing…"

Interested in "seeing" the world online and practicing your language listening skills? There are plenty of non-English-speaking channels to choose from.

This works fairly well over Cable TV cabling. IT tends to "hang" after pushing the screen off into the Dock and trying to bring it back so it is ":live" . I had to restart the application to get what I was viewing back.

This is a great start for online video for the Mac™. Why not go take a peek for yourself?

Software

BBEdit 7.1.4 – Mystery solver and Bridge Builder Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Developer: Rich Siegel
http://developer.apple.com/business/macmarket/barebones.html
Bare Bones, Inc.
PO Box 1048
Bedford, MA 01730
781-687-0700
Fax: 781-687-0711
sales@barebones.com
http://www.barebones.com
Product link:
http://www.barebones.com/products/bbedit/index.shtml
Screenshots:
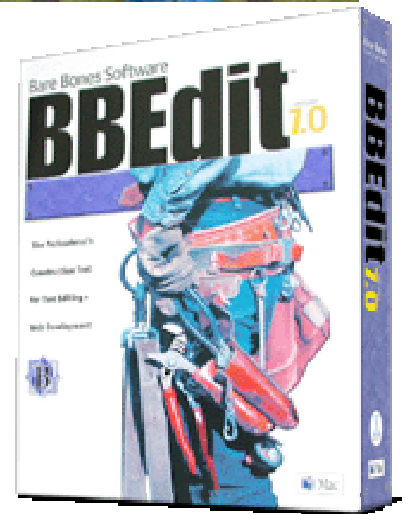http://www.barebones.com/products/bbedit/screenshots.shtml
Released: April 14, 2004
$150 USD, upgrades $50 USD
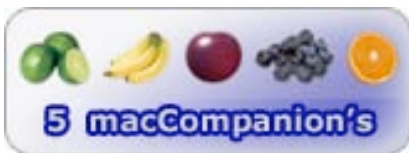**Requirements:** Requires Mac OS 9.1 or later with CarbonLib 1.5 or later, Mac OS X 10.2 or later. 23.3 MB Hard drive space.
Tutorial: http://www.barebones.com/support/bbedit/index.shtml
.

BBEdit Talk list:
http://www.barebones.com/support/lists/bbedit_talk.shtml

Strengths: Feature-rich Mac OS X Native app. Supports Mac OS X WebKit SDK.

Weaknesses: None found.

Are you interested in seeing behind the Mac® curtain? Want to use a time–tested (10 years) software developing and web–authoring tool? BBEdit by Rich Siegel may be what you've been looking for.

If you know Hex, there is a Hex dump tool. If you are comfortable using Cocoa developer tools form Apple, than you will feel comfortable with BBEdit.

Are you into Unicode? So is BBEdit.

Rich Siegel was kind enough to spend an hour over the Internet showing me the features. It is now a tutorial that can be downloaded from his website.

Whether you are maintaining a website, writing code or script, searching logs or extracting other data, BBEdit makes it easy.
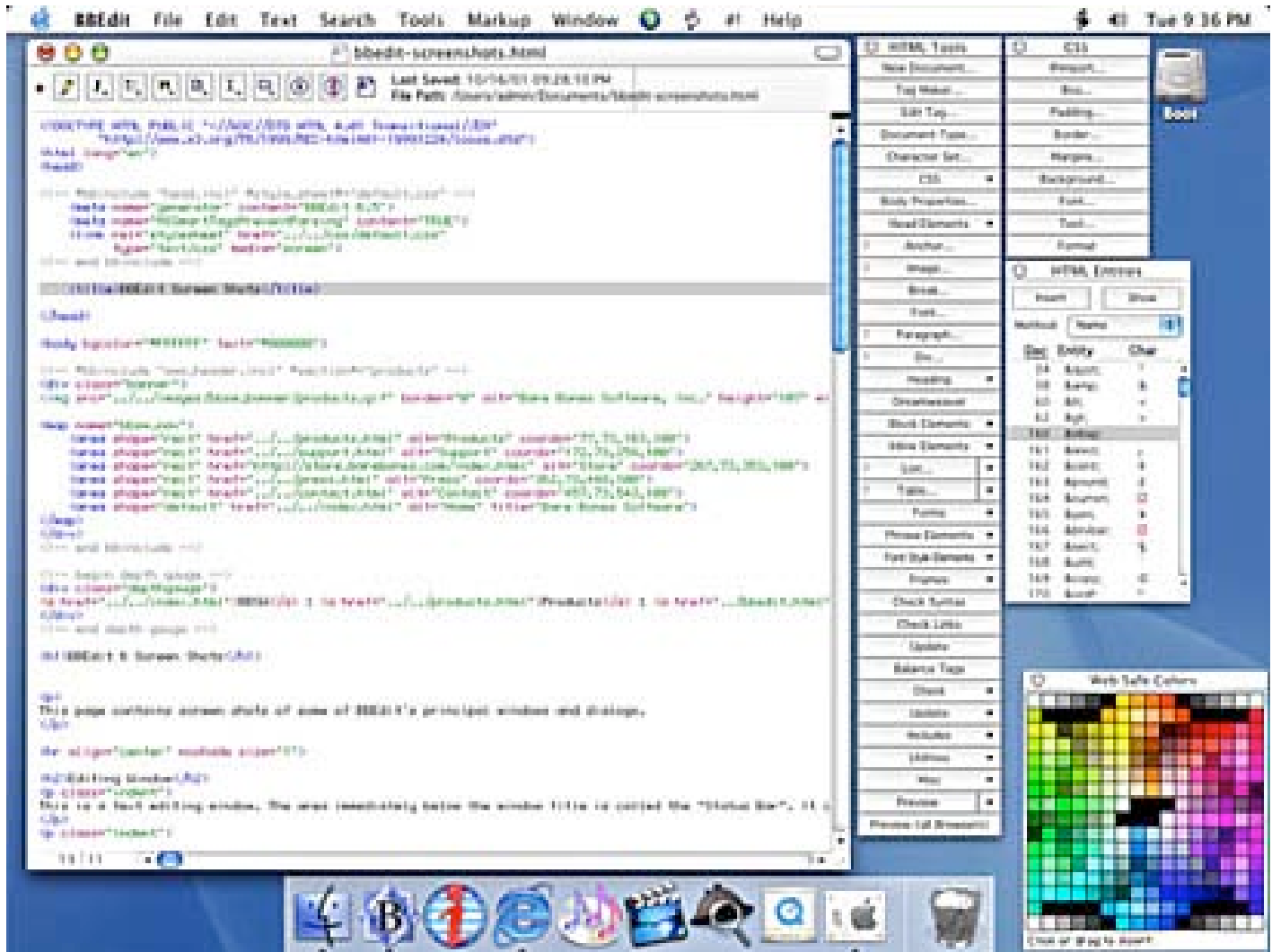
BBEdit easily handles DOS, Unix and Mac Files in either Mac® OS 9™ or Mac® OS X™. It can be accessed from the Terminal Mode in Mac OS X. It can open and save Unicode files as well as QuickTime® files that can be as large as RAM allows. It is totally scriptable. It works with both Secure FTP and Rendezvous and integrates with FTP clients for persistent remote view of site directories. It even has a spell–checker. Would you like to create keyboard shortcuts? You can, not just for commands, but also scripting and filtering.

Do you like HTML? Than you will enjoy XHTMLing and WMLing with BBEdit as well. It is standards-based and can clean up GoLive™ and PageMill™. The Safari™ browser is required however because BBEdit is not a web browser. "It will not load different pages in place (nor will it maintain a forward/back history) and it will not spawn new windows."

What else does it integrate with? JavaScript, Perl, PHP4, CSS (cascading style sheets, Cumulus® Media Management System and Macromedia Dreamweaver™, MacPerl and Mac OS X native Perl, Python and unix shell scripts, CVS (Concurrent Versions System), Metrowerks CodeWarrior IDE under Mac OS 9 and X, Absoft Fortran IDE under Mac OS X, THINK Toolbox Assistant and MPW 411 reference, VOODOO Version Control System and Projector support (via SourceServer). It also uses automatic guessing for 20 languages, including C/C++, HTML, JavaScript, Java, Perl, Rez, Pascal.

Did you know there were four development environments hiding in Mac OS X ? Carbon,Cocoa, Java and Unix. BBEdit interoperates with them in C++. It's a cleaner-upper. It does for text what Photoshop® does for images.

A feature in RagTime 5 is rectangular text selection:

http://www.maccompanion.com/archives/november2003/software.html#5. BBEdit now does that too.

All the programmers I associate with that use Macintosh® portables have BBEdit on their systems. Why? Mac OS X "forces" good design. BBEdit does a few things not possible yet in Project Builder.

If you don't have it and are doing programming on the Mac, you are missing a tool that helps do the job smarter and not harder.

KeyCue™ 1.0 Reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad Edited by Julie M. Willingham

ergonis ...software that just works.

Developer: Guenther Blaschek
ergonis software, gmbh
Softwarepark Hagenberg
4232 Hagenberg, Austria
Tel.: +43 7236/3343-300
Fax: +43 7236/3343-399
E-Mail: office@ergonis.com
http://www.macility.com/products/keycue/
Technical Support: keycue-support@macility.com
$15 USD Singe user. $25 2-pack. Larger quantities are also discounted.
File Size: 662 K
Requirements: Mac OS X, version 10.3 ("Panther") or newer.
Audience: All user levels

The software was tested on a 1 GHz dual processor PowerPC G4 Macintosh with 2 MB DDR SDRAM running under OS X 10.3.4.

4.5 macCompanion's

Strengths: KeyCue is an easy to install and use utility designed to find and remember applications menu shortcuts: "Just hold down the Command key for a while – KeyCue comes to help and shows a table of all currently available menu shortcuts. When you have found the desired menu command shortcut in the KeyCue table, just type it and continue working as usual. The KeyCue window will disappear automatically."

Weaknesses: KeyCue only finds *real* keyboard shortcuts that are listed in menus. This is clearly not KeyCue's fault; those shortcuts don't report themselves to the OS, as its developer explained. For other shortcuts, hidden from the Mac OS, unfortunately, this means that KeyCue can't remind the user about shortcuts that aren't associated with a menu command or those that an application hides internally (e.g., MS Office™).

Software Overview

KeyCue helps you find, remember, and learn menu shortcuts. KeyCue can automatically train you to use menu shortcuts and makes you a power user of your favorite apps on the fly. Just hold down the Command key and KeyCue will show you a table of all menu shortcuts within your current application.

Introduction

I am rich in resources to help me find keyboard shortcuts. They vary from Panther's Mac Help, *Using The Keyboard To Perform Actions*, to many other Mac Help information sheets, to searching the many books I own for shortcuts, both for my operating system and for well-favored applications such as MS Word™ and Filemaker Pro™.

So why should take the time to get and review KeyCue? I own the books referenced at the end of this review, and they're on a bookshelf only a few steps away from my computer. I need these books because many applications I use, including the Macintosh Finder, have 40 or more menu shortcuts, many of which I use so rarely that I have not memorized them—Hey, I'm a senior, you know, and we're entitled to our moments. KeyCue, according to its publisher, is a utility designed to offer fast access to the shortcuts you and I haven't memorized.

You know the story: Software designers create menu shortcuts that are supposed to provide quick access to

frequently used menu and submenu commands. They work well if *you* remember their keyboard and modifier combinations. (Modifiers keys include, among others, Command, Shift, Option, and Control.) Modifier keys are used either individually or in combinations while you simultaneously depress a letter or symbol key to tell the application what you want it to do. (Some are downright tortuous, such as zapping the PRAM by depressing the *option-command-P-R* keys on startup.) Anyone want to fess up what percent of your favorite application shortcuts you remember, say for MS Word?

According to its developer, KeyCue helps you use your Mac OS X applications more effectively by displaying a concise table of all currently available menu shortcuts. You no longer need to memorize and remember key combinations; just press the command key and KeyCue shows you what you want to know. Even so, over time, you will automatically remember frequently used shortcuts and start working more efficiently. Isn't education wonderful?
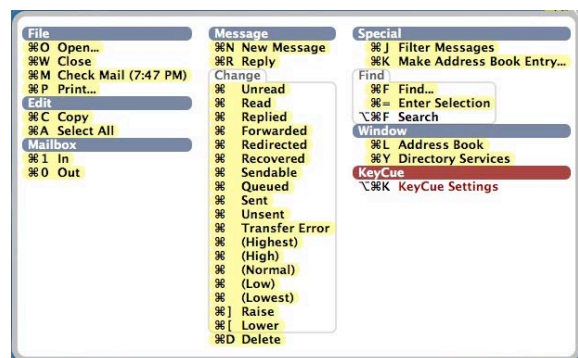
Working With KeyCue 1.0
Using KeyCue couldn't be any easier. Double-click on the application to launch it, or have your computer automatically open KeyCue on startup. KeyCue adds itself to you startup items without even asking. There's a preference to disable it, but it defaults to "Load at startup." For more information on startup items, check Mac Help.

When the software is booted, just press and hold down Command. After a couple seconds (the delay is configurable), the KeyCue menu pops into the foreground, showing all the active app's shortcuts. When you see the desired shortcut in the table, "just type it and continue working as usual. The KeyCue window will disappear automatically."
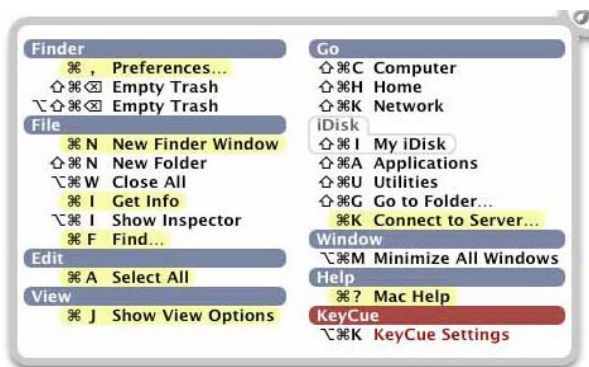
KeyCue Finder™ Menu Shortcuts   Eudora Menu Shortcuts

To configure KeyCue, you can either double-click it in the Finder when it's already running, or use its shortcut menu to access its preferences.

Main KeyCue Features
KeyCue works by reading through the menu items of the front-most application, finds those that have keyboard shortcuts, and displays a window listing them when you hold down the Command key.

- Get an instant overview of all menu shortcuts in any installed application.
- Simple to use: just press the command key to see the menu shortcuts table associated with your active application.
- The software can teach you the most frequently used menu shortcuts on the fly, and, as a result, increases your productivity.
- Menu shortcuts are grouped by menus.
- In the preferences, you can opt to include menu and first-level submenu headings in the shortcut listing. (Obviously, there are more shortcuts at the submenu level, but you knew that, didn't you?)

- Instant access to the KeyCue settings (preferences) window by means of an extra keyboard shortcut.

- There are several options for adapting the behavior and appearance of KeyCue to your computing style. Configuration options include the delay time before appearing, what keyboard or mouse actions make the shortcuts palette vanish, how to group or rearrange an application's shortcuts, and whether or not to include the Finder's Services in the Finder menu's shortcut list.
- KeyCue causes NO interference with your normal menu and keyboard usage.

Inherent KeyCue Limitations

As I have previously noted in this review, KeyCue will recognize and find only the shortcuts in an application's menu bar. As I worked with the software, I ran into a number of peculiarities about which I wrote Guenther Blaschek, its developer. To my delight, he replied within a day, providing the information in this section.

MS Word KeyCue Problem—I have drastically customized many of my MS word keyboard shortcuts. This includes removing the shortcut from one Word function (assigned by Microsoft) and assigning it to another activity or shortcut. KeyCue can't find these changes.

Guenther—Unfortunately not. MS Word lets users assign all sorts of commands and other items (such as styles). However, MS Word apparently stores these shortcuts only in internal data structures and considers them only whenever the user presses the customized key combinations. Even if you define a shortcut for a menu command, MS Word does not display that shortcut in the menu. For the user, this means that he/she needs to remember the custom shortcuts, and KeyCue cannot come to help here, because it cannot "see" the shortcuts in the menus. (HB: This is also true when customizing MS Excel™.)

KeyCue MS Word™ Menu Shortcuts
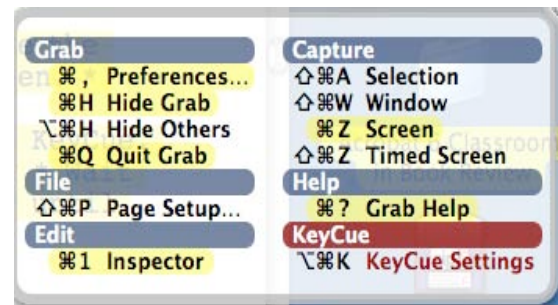
Apple's Grab Tool Menu Shortcuts

Releasing the Command Key or Moving my Mouse—When I hold down the command key as required, I cannot release the command key to either take a screen shot of the window or to invoke the preferences window from within the KeyCue shortcuts screen. Indeed, if I move my mouse or release the command key, the window instantly closes, despite using the correct preference settings.

Guenther—The KeyCue shortcut table disappears automatically when you release all modifier keys, even if you have the "Typing" and "Mouse movement" options turned off. If taking a snapshot involves releasing the modifier key, the shortcut window will disappear before you get a chance to take a snapshot.

You can use Apple's *Grab*™ application in Applications/Utilities to take a snapshot. The procedure is described in the KeyCue Read Me file. (Oops, I [HB] missed it when reading the Readme file.)

PATHWAY: Launch Grab > Select "Timed Screen" from the Capture menu. > Move the "Timed Screen Grab" window into a corner of the screen. > Click "Start Timer". > Switch to the application in which you want to use KeyCue. > Press the command key to display the KeyCue table. > Wait until Grab beeps; continue pressing the command key until the "Timed Screen Grab" window disappears. >Save the snapshot as a TIFF file. Since Grab always takes a full-screen snapshot, you will then have to use an image editor to copy/paste the relevant section.

(HB: Wow, it worked! I used the captured screen shots to illustrate this review.)

One other annoyance, to me at least, is that the menu pops up only in the center of the screen. I'd rather tell it to pop up on the right hand side of my large screen next to the document I'm working on.

An Afterthought That Might Interest You
"A serious shortcoming of the both the Macintosh and Windows menu paradigm is that it requires you to open each menu one at a time to hunt for a shortcut or menu item. The result is that you never get a conspectus of an application's shortcuts, so you probably never bother to memorize most of them because, having found the menu item you want, you then just choose it with the mouse." (Reference: Matt Neuburg's review in TidBITS #732/07-Jun-2004.) KeyCue, in part, overcomes these limitations, but there are many shortcuts hidden in an application that are never attached to a menu or submenu item. That's why Babad reads books, the best of which have appendices and tables listing menu items and shortcuts

Those I have and use include:

- *Mac OS X and Office X Keyboard Shortcuts* by Guy Hart-Davis and Roger Stewart; published by McGraw-Hill Osborne Media.
  http://www.maccompanion.com/archives/may2004/books.html#4
- *The Macintosh Bible, 9th Edition* by Cliff Colby, Cheryl England, et al.; published by Peachpit Press. http://www.maccompanion.com/archives/july2004/books.html#9
- *Robin Williams Mac OS X Book, Panther Edition* by Robin Williams and John Tollett; published by Peachpit Press (found in this issue of *macCompanion*).
- *FileMaker Pro 6 for Windows and Macintosh: Visual Quick Start Guide*, by Nolan Hester; published by Peachpit Press.
  http://www.maccompanion.com/archives/october2003/books.html#3

(These books have been previously reviewed for *macCompanion*.)

Conclusions
I'd chosen to review KeyCue primarily for its unique function. KeyCue, I've noted, is a way to see **every** existing keyboard shortcut for the currently active application. Yes, keyboard shortcuts are documented by their very existence, but are buried in an application's menus and sub-menus. KeyCue makes it easy to see all shortcuts on a single palette.

Although KeyCue isn't the kind of application that I'd use regularly (I spend so much time in a few key apps that the shortcuts are second nature by now or have been replace by customized toolbars), but I do recommend purchasing it for those occasions when you'd rather "KeyCue" then play menu window shade hide-and-seek games.

Using KeyCue for a week, I found that it quickly helped me remember some previously un-memorized shortcuts for the menu items I use less often. It also gave me a fast option to access the shortcuts I don't memorize and use less often, thus avoiding hunting through illogically laid out menus.

The Logo Creator Reviewed by Derek Meier

MacXware
920 South 107th Ave.
Suite 275
Omaha, NE 68114-4789
(402) 554-1400
Fax: (402) 391-2413
sales@macxware.com
http://www.macxware.com/
Download: http://www.macxware.com/downloads.asp
$40
Requirements: G3 or better, OS 10.1 or later
256MB RAM, 120 MB Hard Disk Space
Recommended: G4 or better, OS 10.2 or later
512 MB RAM.

Strengths: Very user friendly. Low learning curve. Creates very nice looking logos quickly. Worth every penny.

Weaknesses: I could find none.

Introduction

Logo Creator is a software package by MacXware. LogoCreator allows you to easily create professional looking logos at a nonprofessional price. It comes with a small manual with some short step-by-step instructions. Nice to have, but if you are like me, you can learn more by playing with the software.

I have been looking for a piece of software like this when I was mainly using Windows® as my primary operating system. Needless to say, I did not find one or I did not look hard enough. After switching my wife to an iBook® from a PC, I noticed LogoCreator but did not look into until now.

Use

Installation was simple and trouble-free with the included installer. My initial use of the software was a bit rocky. It did crash quite a few times while attempting to create a logo. Although this can be attributed to me not loading the latest and greatest version 3.5.1 which has a fix for the crash for Panther™ users.

The Logo Creator has three windows: The first window is the element setter which allows you to add images or text. You can select the image you want from the five libraries; corporate edition 1-3, orb and swooshes. As for the text, basically you type your text into a little window and select add to add your text. The second window is the main Logo Creator window, which will contain all text & object attributes when either is selected in the third window, which is the Canvas. The Canvas is where your logo will be built.

Logo's can be created in just a few minutes with the 75 customizable templates. With the customizable template logos changing the text and the coloring you prefer and instantly you have your logo. It's all really

simple.

Editing the text is done by simply selecting the text, typing the text and clicking set text. You can also change the font, color, blur, emboss outline and rotate your text. Also there are ways you can do some really neat effects by using layering. Speaking of text, you can also select the tagline or slogan in the template and either change it to your liking, or if you can't think of a catchy tagline, you can use the bundled tagline/slogan generator. These are actual taglines from real companies and it does suggest you change it to suit your needs to avoid being sued.
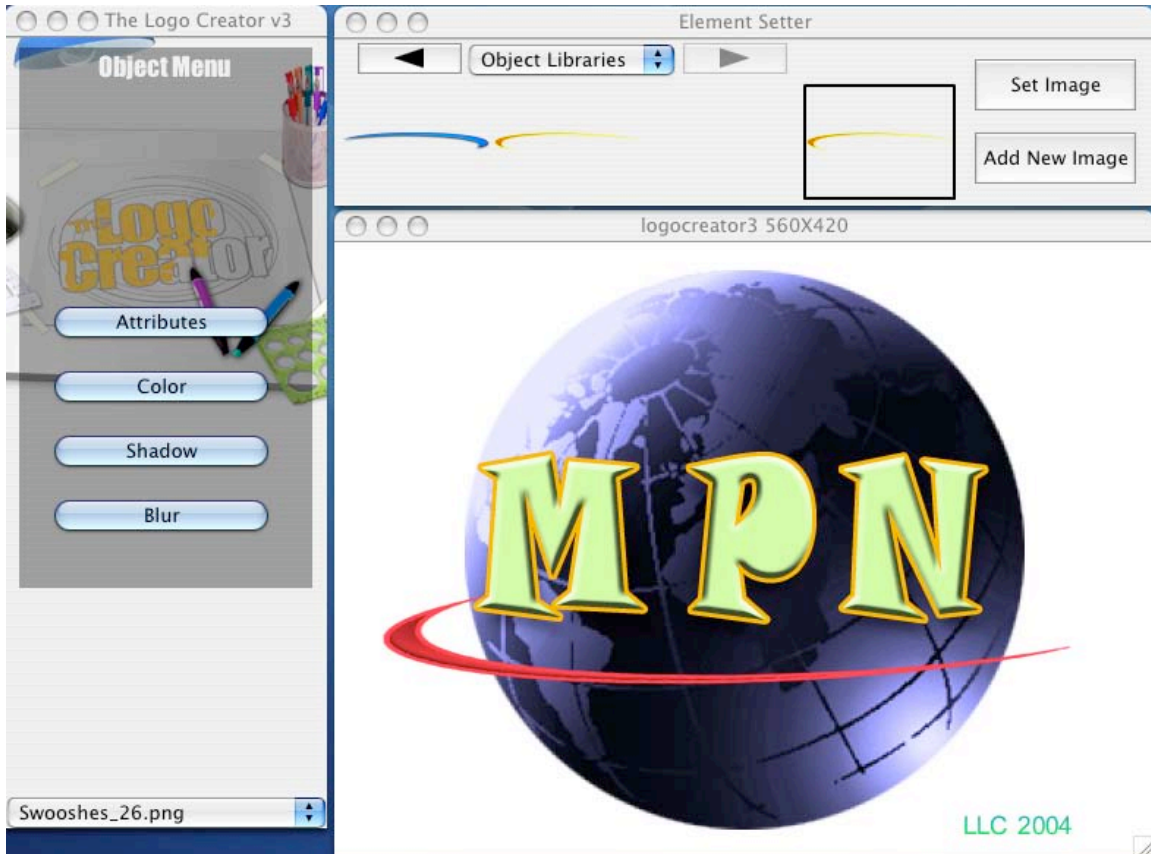
The other items you can edit are what are called objects. Ovals, circles or other designs constitute objects. You can manipulate the objects in a few ways; you can change their attributes, which are basically changing the size, angle and opacity. You can also change the colors and do shadowing as well as blur. Additionally, you can also import your own image so you don't have to be limited to what is included with the software.

Instead of using templates I preferred venturing out on my own, which I would recommend to everyone who has the software. Starting out with a blank slate everything you can use is available through the Modify menu. It is very straightforward and takes a bit more time than using the templates, but not much. Everything is accessed from the modify menu.

Finished Product
When you are finished with your logo you can print or export it to a file. When printing to a printer, you can choose from the following; print to business cards, to letterhead and just to paper. When you export, there are several formats you can you choose from; JPG, GIF, PDF and PNG, among others. You can also set the image export resolution.

Final Thoughts
The logo creator is a fine product. Very easy to use and it's great for non-artistic types. Great for anyone who wants to create a logo for a web site or business card with little effort, experience or time. Although I believe if you have the talent and want to spend the money on Adobe Photoshop it might suit you a lot better than The Logo Creator. For the price, The Logo Creator is an excellent value and it is a very fun product to use. I believe it will see a lot of use.

MacBurn 3.51 Reviewed by Derek Meier

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Omaha, NE 68114-4789
(402) 554-1400
Fax: (402) 391-2413
sales@macxware.com
http://www.macxware.com/
Download: http://www.macxware.com/downloads.asp
$40 USD
Requirements: Mac OS X 10.2.6 or higher (including 10.3). CD burner or
DVD burner compatible with Mac OS X
Disc Image (ISO & DMG) creation only available under OS 10.3 or later.
700 MB of free hard drive space to burn roughly 80 minutes of Audio to CD.
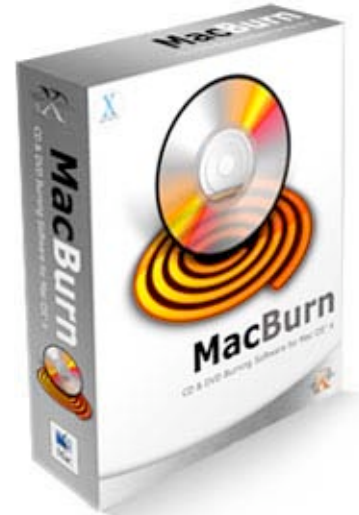
Strengths: Easy to use interface. Can read media on Mac/PC. Clean.

Weaknesses: Overpriced. Underfeatured. No DVD video features. No VCD
creation capability.

Introduction
MacBurn is CD & DVD burning software for MAC® OS X™. MacBurn comes with it's own installer for a simple trouble free install. It comes with nice retail packaging and a short manual that goes through all the steps for burning CD's and DVD's.

Use
Using MacBurn is extremely simple. The interface is very basic and is organized logically. You have the ability to select the CD or DVD burner in a drop-down menu if you have more than one. You also have way to label your disc and it has a nice indicator for space used and total space on the disc.

The program does seem to me more like just an interface where Mac OS X is doing more of the actual work with Macburn sending the commands through it's interface.

A nice feature is being able to burn a PC/Mac hybrid. Testing this option, I took a CD to my Windows® box and it seemed to work fine. I could open the files with no problems. The only thing I noticed is that you cannot do multi-session with the PC/Mac hybrid nor can you do multi-session in PC-only mode.

You can also create burn lists. Burn lists allow you to create a list of folders or files that you want to burn more than one time. This would come in handy if you have your files in the same folder or want to backup certain files daily without having to reselect each file or folder.
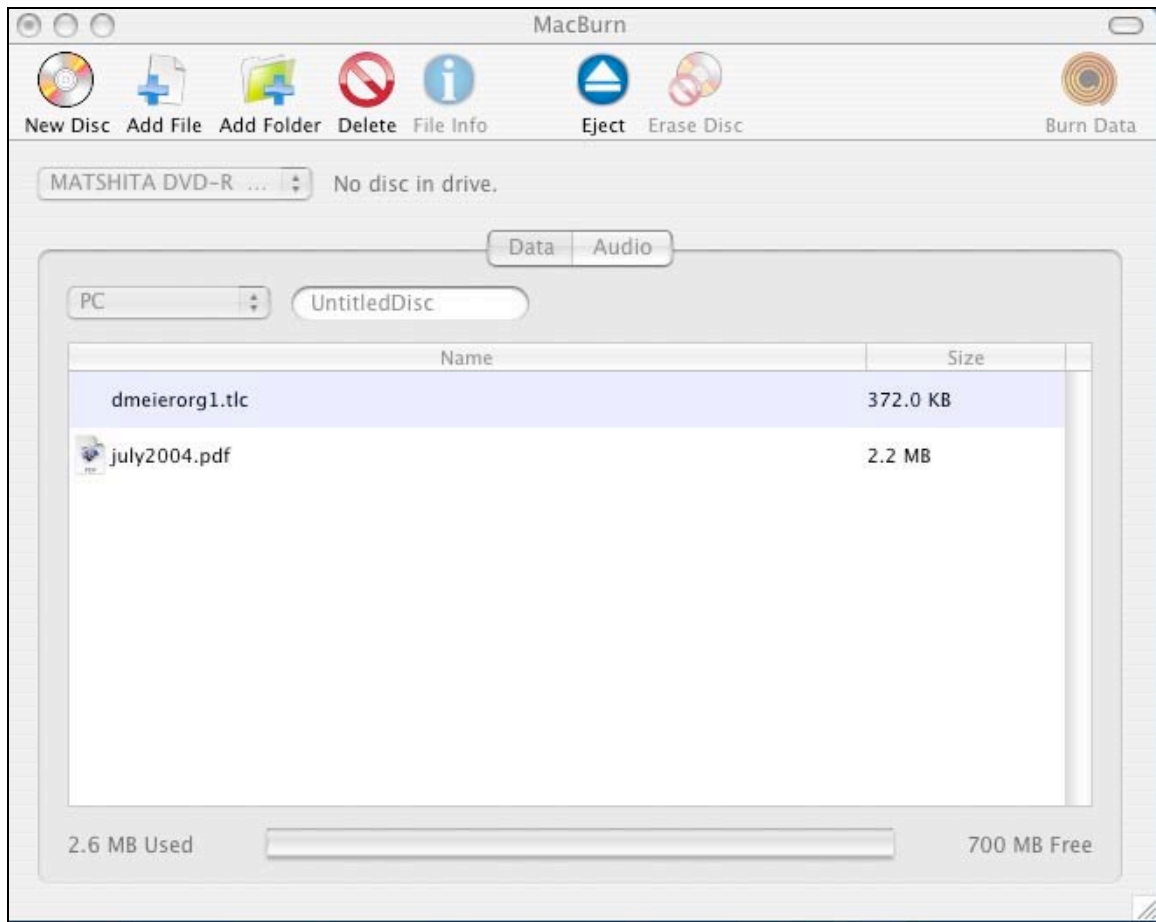
Conclusion

MacBurn provides some nice basic features. It works as advertised and handled all my CD's and DVD's I threw at it. A nice improvement though, would be the inclusion of VCD, SVCD and Video DVD burning. Having an overburn feature would be nice as well. I believe most people would be better suited paying a little more for another product like NTI's Dragonburn™ to get some more features. MacBurn lacks in the feature department. And it is a bit overpriced for what it offers. If pricing were $20 less, I think it would be a good deal.

MacPac Reviewed by Derek Meier

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Fax: (402) 391-2413
sales@macxware.com
http://www.macxware.com
Download: http://www.macxware.com/downloads.asp
$40 USD
Requirements: G3 or better, OS 10.1 or later
256MB RAM, 120 MB Hard Disk Space
Recommended: G4 or better, OS 10.2 or later
512 MB RAM.

Strengths: Some handy applications. Easy to use. Enhances OS X interface.

Weaknesses: Have to install each app separately. Some of the included applications really not useful. Spendy for the useful apps.

Introduction
Macpac is a "collection of useful applications for OS X". MacPac contains five small applications; MacCabinet, Appswitch, Fontmanager, Radicalphoto and RadicalSqueeze. Installation of these applications was simple, although you have install each application individually. Each one had an installer except for MacCabinet which had instructions to drag it to the applications folder. I would have preferred a unified installer so I did not have to go through each application installer.
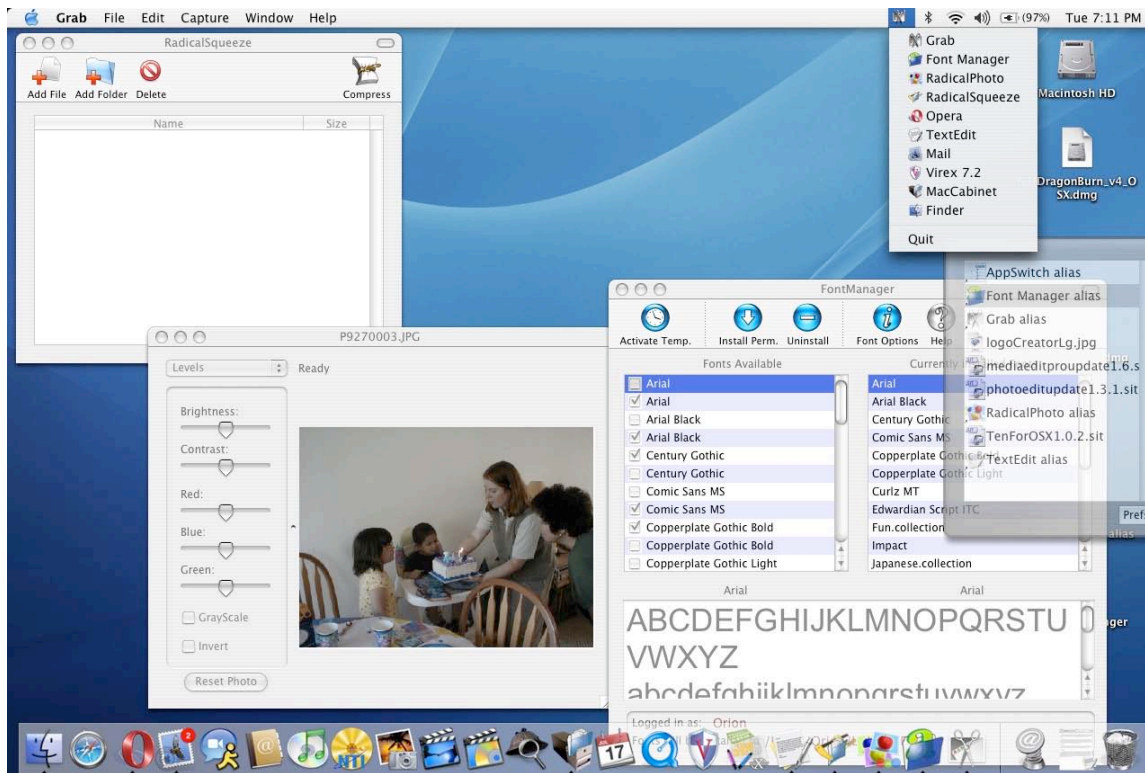
MacCabinet

MacCabinet is a handy little app that helps you keep the clutter off of the desktop. It's a great little program for me as I like a clean desktop and I like quick access to the stuff I would normally have to keep on the desktop. Basically you can setup a hotkey or have your mouse move to an edge on the desktop and a file cabinet appears. It's as easy as dragging an icon you want off the desktop to the edge of the desktop and dropping it in the cabinet. It also allows you to set where you want the cabinet to appear and how it is triggered. MacCabinet also comes with themes and you can select whether you want it to slide onto the desktop or fade to the desktop. My favorite included theme was the industrial but it really didn't fit in with the desktop scheme. One thing I saw that I thought would be nice is to be able to use a hotkey as well as the mouse trigger, but every time you check one then go to the other, the previous one gets unchecked. Other than that it's a keeper.

Appswitch

Appswitch allows you to switch between running applications,after setting the preferences like the icon size and whether or not to show the running applications icons. You have a new button on the menu bar. Clicking on the menu bar you have a list of current running applications with their respective icons. I prefer using this utility than using the dock to switch between open applications. A small, simple app that really shines in the ease of switch applications.

Fontmanager

Needless to say this was probably my least favorite application. Although the ability to activate the font temporarily is a nice way to test the font before installing is a very nice feature. Being able to install permanently and remove easily the application does its job. The application is well laid out and easy to use. Although this application is one I would rarely use.

Radicalphoto

Radical photo adds a few more visual effects than iPhoto™. All the effects are controlled by buttons and sliders. One feature that is nice is if you make adjustments using the different sliders and you if really don't like the end result you can reset the photo to its original incarnation. One of the effects I found particularly neat is the edge detect which makes an outline of all the edges in the picture. While I think playing with some of the effects like edge detect and motion blur can be fun for awhile, I believe Radicalphoto doesn't really do anything worthwhile that iPhoto can't do.

RadicalSqeeze

RadicalSqeeze compress files in zip or tar with the option to gzip after taring. While zipping a 372k logo creator file, it compressed the file to 88k and tarred it to the same size. It has a very simple interface which contains add file, add folder, delete and compress. Not as full featured as Stuffit™ by Allume Systems and you can zip files using gzip natively in Mac® OS X™.

Conclusion
Of all the applications, I preferred MacCabinet the most. It was something I could continue to use and make using the Mac® more productive. Appswitch comes as a close second in usefulness. Radicalphoto, yes its fun to play with, but its usefulness is still in question. RadicalSqueeze is a nice application, fast and easy it gets the job done, although simple password protection or encryption would be a nice feature. Now Fontmanager is something I may find useful once or twice. It would be at least a useful application I can use with the built-in font book and be happy. Although someone else into using lots of fonts may find it a gem. Something in common with all the applications though is they are very easy to use. A bit overpriced for what you get. If you could purchase MacCabinet and Appswitch separately for less would perhaps be a better deal.

Mailsmith® 2.1.1 – Feel-good secure Email app Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Bare Bones, Inc.
PO Box 1048
Bedford, MA 01730
781-687-0700
Fax: 781-687-0711
sales@barebones.com
Released: December 29, 2003
Product link:
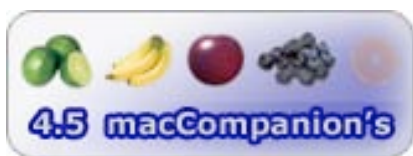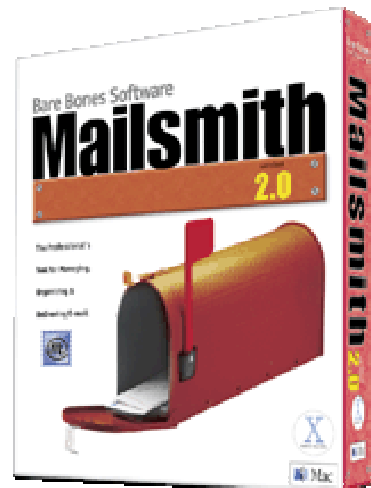http://www.barebones.com/products/mailsmith/index.shtml
$80 USD, Upgrade $50 USD
Requirements: Mac OS X 10.2 or later required.
Email Protocols: Mailsmith supports the POP3 and SMTP (including SMTP AUTH) protocols. 19.5 MB hard drive space installed.

Mailsmith Talk list:
http://www.barebones.com/support/lists/mailsmith_talk.shtml

Strengths: Interoperates with SpamSieve seamlessly. And SpamSieve comes with it. Secure. Scriptable. Uses BBEdit core programming. It is text-only.

Weaknesses: Still does not support IMAP (promised). No HTML (or security reasons, but has a workaround with browsers.

How do you use Email? And is it worth buying a separate package such as Mailsmith if Mail.app is being used? How should Email be handled? Should it have lots of bells and whistles that soak up bandwidth and leave workstations vulnerable to attack? Do you like "intuitive"?

"It doesn't suck." Since I've never used it before, I have not experienced what others have in the past. Looking at the list of release note archives, apparently there were a lot of issues that have been overcome over the years. Mailsmith 2.1.1 jumps higher and runs faster than past versions. It supports Apple's Address Book. It also plays nice with Pretty Good Privacy (PGP version 8.0 or later) and has built-in access to PGP encryption/decryption.

Mailsmith uses Perl Compatible Regular Expressions (PCRE) http://www.pcre.org/ grep-pattern matching for quick search functionality. "The term "grep" is actually an abbreviation of a command line from the Unix line editor—which is called, with typical Unix terseness, ed. The command "g/regular expression/p" would search a •le for all lines containing the given regular expression and display them."

It has a built-in POP Monitor, for managing mail on a POP server without downloading first. It is scriptable. Startup. Shutdown. Modify the menu items.

Is it limited by the number of Emails that can be placed in an mBox? I don't know yet, but other Email apps have mbox limitations. It apparently can handle the load. Porting those mboxes over to Mailsmith is a breeze. I had no problems whatsoever.

Setting accounts for different Email servers leaves the menu in the last setup position for each one so extra key-clicks aren't necessary when going through each account to accomplish the same task. It transferred my accounts in Mail.app without a hitch.

Text file signature blocks can be associated individually with each Email account or randomized. I don't know if randomizing signatures is such a good idea, but the capability is there. I would want the same signature for business Email activities myself. I've seen other correspondence on Forums where clever bylines are added at random as signature substitutes, but those are okay for iChat sessions, not business. My Email signature blocks did not transfer. They had to be copy/pasted manually.

Mailsmith has Stationery and Glossary support for templating and distributing boilerplate text.

It interoperates with SpamSieve to categorize or eliminate SPAM outright using filtering. It whitelists Emails. Some use it for just the easy SPAM filtering alone. It also sends SPAM submittals directly to SpamCop, if you are registered with the free reporting option. The 215-page PDF Mailsmith User manual has a whole chapter devoted just to handling SPAM with SpamSieve. We reviewed SpamSieve back in March:

http://www.maccompanion.com/archives/march2004/software.html#3.

If you are comfortable using BBEdit, than this Email app is a natural and obvious choice. If you are actively using Mail.app, and security is an issue, you can always turn off HTML functionality in Mail.app as well and buy SpamSieve for the anti-Spam Applescript plug-ins to mimic what Mailsmith can accomplish. However, if you want the search function after archiving hundreds of thousands of Emails, Mailsmith may just be the ticket for finding that obscure Email you know is in there somewhere. If encryption and decryption seem to be a herculean task, with Mail.app, than by all means, use MailSmith for use with PGP.

If you can't live without IPOP, you will just have to wait a little longer and that is why I gave it a 4.5 rating.

Try Mailsmith for 30 days. Maybe you too will want to fork over some good money to use this app.

Super Get Info 1.2 Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Bare Bones, Inc.
PO Box 1048
Bedford, MA 01730
781-687-0700
Fax: 781-687-0711
Released: December 3, 2003
sales@barebones.com
http://www.barebones.com
Product link: http://www.barebones.com/products/super/index.shtml
$20 USD
Requirements: Requires Mac OS 9.1 or later with CarbonLib 1.5 or later, Mac OS X 10.2 or later. 1.7 MB Hard drive space installed.
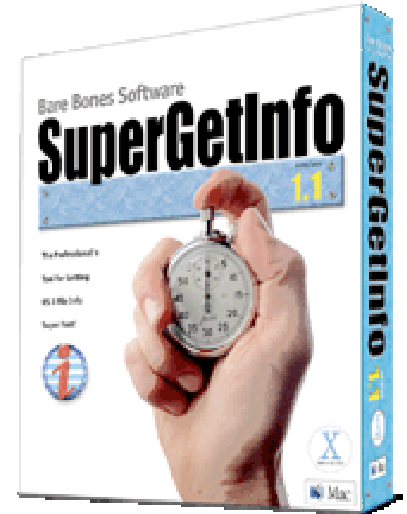
Strengths: Enhances Finder functionality in Mac OS X.

Weaknesses: Being preempted by Spotlight.

Can't wait for the Tiger Spotlight? Why not use SuperGetInfo instead? It is a Cocoa-based file and folder info utility that is an alternative to the Show Info command.

It provides preview support for audio tracks on CDs, vCards and file and URL clippings and Unicode text. It supports Finder comment viewing, editing and modifying, copy/paste of file and folder icons as well as add/remove permissions and locate a file by its file system catalog designation.

Rich Siegel warned me there would be some changes going on at the WWDC this year that would affect his company. I was looking more towards speakable items and not on Finder functionality.

TextWrangler™ 1.5 Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Bare Bones, Inc.
PO Box 1048
Bedford, MA 01730
781-687-0700
Fax: 781-687-0711
sales@barebones.com
http://www.barebones.com
Product link:
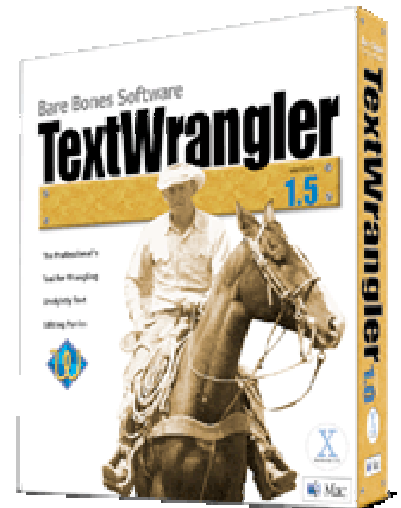http://www.barebones.com/products/textwrangler/index.shtml
Released: January 6, 2004
$50 USD
Requirements: Requires Mac OS 9.1 or later with CarbonLib 1.5 or later, Mac OS X 10.2 or later. 11.6 MB Hard drive space.
Screenshots:
http://www.barebones.com/products/textwrangler/screenshots.shtml

Strengths: It is a cut-down version of BBEdit that does C code. It does do scripting.

Weaknesses: It's not a word-processor.

Think of TextWrangler as being more than BBEdit Lite, but not quite as much as BBEdit, because the HTML part is missing and so is scripting and the Glossary function.

It's a Unix-based text-editing engine that handles Unicode, FTP and Rendezvous. It is not a word-processor so forget about doing stylized text. It is designed for those who want to go beyond Apple's Project Builder.

It does have the spell-checker and can open and save in DOS, Mac or Unix.

It does work with Project Builder, ANSI C, C++, Fortran, Java, Object Pascal, Objective-C, Perl, Python, Rez, Tcl, TeX, and Unix shell scripts and C++. It can find differences between two versions of a text file and merge them.

It has the multi-file searching and replacing, grep-style PCRE (Perl-Compatible Regular Expression) text pattern matching and Quartz text smoothing.

Think of it as a BBEdit starter kit.

macCompanion Media Kit

We are the Macintosh® Professional Network (MPN), Limited Liability Corporation (LLC). MPN, LLC continues to evolve, ever since its creation in 1996 as a way to reach out to those who use computers for a living in an effort to make their lives easier and their work both enjoyable and profitable.

Besides consulting efforts, we also provide monthly book, hardware and software reviews at *macCompanion*. We offer ways and means for folks to get comfortable using the Macintosh™ created by the Apple® Corporation in the multibillion-dollar computer industry. We know that bad software doesn't live long in the Mac™ environment. On the other hand, good computer equipment and software becomes great as the word spreads, and we are very good at helping to spread it. Our suggestions over the years have also helped improve many successful products in use today. Through kind and gentle efforts, we have been able to help many people move to better tools-of-the-trade so they can be more productive in their work.

Besides our website, we also create *macCompanion* as a freely available PDF-based monthly. It averages about 100 pages per month. July 2004 is the first-year anniversary of this labor of love. The *macCompanion* staff is an all-volunteer team of writers and reviewers from many parts of the globe, and they also have a great wealth of knowledge and experience in their backgrounds. That base of talent also continues to keep growing as the Macintosh Professional Network expands.

Statistical Analysis

We are very excited about our site statistics! The multilingual-capable *macCompanion* website surpassed 1 million hits a month, starting June 2004 and readership continues to increase rapidly through our "whisper campaign". Last October we switched over to our current host. They have provided us with excellent support and tools to help us do our job. They have the right tools to do theirs too. It is a great, robust relationship and we are very proud of them.

We continue to get greater visibility every day. Many of the various 35 computer operating systems (with many moving towards the Mac® OS X™ environment), 115 online search engines, 269 countries and domains and 319 online robots have discovered us – and continue to do so. So far, over 201 other websites have also linked to us. Many of our readers have made our site one of their favorites. While nearly 70% of our readership stops by for a quick visit via RSS feeds, over 23% spend between 1/2 to 1 hour at a time going through over 250 different pages on our site (mostly archives). Many of those who quickly drop by, come to get the monthly PDFed issue of *macCompanion*. Over 8GB of bandwidth was used in June 2004 alone for download purposes. Previous months have averaged around 6GB. Trend analysis indicates that will continue to increase.

Advertising with *macCompanion*

We have four advertising options you may choose from, and multiple months will receive a 20% discount for both website and PDF-based ads. All advertising must be paid in advance. We accept credit card payments via PayPal, checks, money orders by regular mail and cash in US currency by hand.

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We offer site ads for a fixed-budget price of only $100 per month on our site. Following the KISS principle, we accept banner ads in only one size at this time - 468x60 pixels (per the <u>Interactive Advertising Bureau</u> standards for a Full Banner Ad Interactive Marketing Unit.) The ad will be rotated through with other ads, and there is no limit to how many you want to include.

The billing cycle begins based on the first day the ad placed on the site and is renewable on a monthly basis. This can begin immediately or at any time.

(If you want us to create those online-ads for you, the cost is $100 per hour, with a minimum 2-hour base fee.)

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The published monthly version of *macCompanion* has a closing date of the 25th of each month for ads. Our target date for distribution begins the 5th of each month. Placement of the ads will be at our discretion, but we do listen to your suggestions.

Each ad will require a site link so our readers can click on the PDF ad and go to your site. Ads need to be submitted as PDFs with at least 300 DPI resolution.

(If you want us to create those ads for you, the cost is $100 per hour, with a minimum 2-hour base fee. You will then need to send us proofs, etc. in JPEG or GIF formats.)

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1/8th Page Vertical	$50 USD	2 1/4 x 3 1/2 in	2.25 x 3.5 in	5.7 x 8.9 cm
1/4th Page Vertical	$60 USD	3 1/2 x 4 3/4 in	3.5 x 4.75 in	8.9 x 12.1 cm
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1/3rd Page Horizontal	$70 USD	7 1/4 x 3 1/4 in	7.25 x 3.25 in	18.4 x 8.3 cm
1/3rd Page Vertical	$70 USD	2 1/4 x 9 7/8 in	2.25 x 9.875 in	5.7 x 25.1 cm
2/3rd Page Horizontal	$150 USD	7 1/4 x 6 1/4 in	7.25 x 6.25 in	18.4 x 15.9 cm
2/3rd Page Vertical	$150 USD	4 3/4 x 9 7/8 in	4.75 x 9.875 in	12.1 x 25.1 cm
Full Page	$250 USD	7 1/4 x 9 7/8 in	7.25 x 9.875 in	18.4 x 25.1 cm

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And we also accept donations by those who feel our services are value-added.

If you are as excited about our *macCompanion* readership as we are, please download the contractual terms and conditions documentation that are online in PDF format, or we can send them to you as an attachment. We'd enjoy having an ongoing working relationship with you too.

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Email works best.

Well that's it for this issue. Please come back again next month!