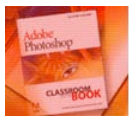


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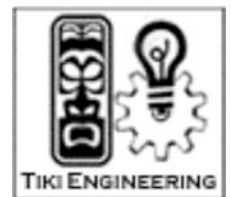


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IT BOOKS AND CERTIFICATION SOFTWARE



Come inside!

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And our special thanks to those who have allowed us to review their products! All names and manufacturer-mentions are trademarks are theirs and not ours. If we skipped a trademark, please forgive us.

Letter From the CEO

Scary Thoughts and Hope for the Future

October is the month the USA celebrates Halloween, a day of remembrance and hope for a resurrection of the dead. We are living on this big blue marble amidst floods, tornados, earthquakes, volcanic activity, war and political changes as well as company upheavals and family challenges. We live in uncertainty, not knowing from day to day whether we will see tomorrow being better than we saw yesterday, let alone waking up alive tomorrow. Scary stuff, eh?

Now add to that another scary thought: The Internet is being inundated in cyberwarefare. WinTel machines act like online straw-house mobile-home-park storm-magnets that collect their own electronic hurricanes, tornados and floods. Lots of folks have been tricked into using those machines and the tripartite agreement between Trojans, Virii and Worm (**TVW**) developers and SPAM distributor wolves huff-and-puff their way hell-bent on destroying Ecommerce and the Internet.

Phishers of men are another topic, but we can't do much about that except warn you to not get hooked.

Apple® never was the Phoenix rising from the ashes of the computer industry, but it very nearly was killed off by mismanagement. "What doesn't kill us makes us stronger" and Apple Corporation has rebuilt its house out of solid brick. With Mac® OS X™ and the release of new innovative technology. It could very well be the savior of the computer environment. It is rapidly gaining mindshare through the iPod® and the iMac® G5. After 3 years, there still are no known TVWs that attack Mac OS X with over 10 million systems using it. There are 80 million Apple computer users around the world. WinTel victims are incredulous that such well-protected computers systems exist. They cannot believe Mac OS X has not been affected. They are so used to systems that crash all the time that finding out about a system that works as well as Apple's is a godsend. The only other system that hasn't seen any TVWs is the IBM AS/400®, yet not too many folks can afford those systems. They can however afford iMac G5s and Xserves®.

When the XSAN RAID systems are made public, expect a great flushing sound amongst Internet Service Providers and Enterprises as they move to Macs. The migration has already begun. They are tired of living in fear in their straw-based mobile-home-like WinTel systems they maintain and blown around by every Microsoft wind of doctrine that Fear, Uncertainty and Doubt can provide.

Stop being tricked into believing that the vulnerable, cheap straw-house WinTel systems are going to keep the Internet wolves at bay. Treat yourselves to moving into the brick houses that Apple has built to withstand the Internet winds and woes. Go ahead, pig-out on Apple treats this Halloween!

By the way, we here at *macCompanion* are now an Apple Store affiliate and we can sell iPods, iMac G5s, Xserves and all the other Apple goodies from our website at <http://www.maccompanion.com>. Happy Halloween!

Letter From the Editor

Greener pastures

Derek Caudill has moved on to greener pastures. You can contact him as a Mac Consultant with his new business at *Derek's MacSulting*, 509-735-4537 and ccindy@gte.net here in the Greater Columbia Basin Region of the Northwest. He has done a magnificent job with morphing the *macCompanion* website. We wish him the best.

macCompanion has been ever-improving itself into being a safe-haven for WinTel refugees as we cater to their curiosity, your needs and our aspirations. We help ween folks off the WinTel milk and help them grow up to eating Apple meat. We want them to feel comfortable migrating to a platform that offers a better computing experience than the competition.

The October issue is a little late getting out the door with the loss of Derek Caudill. We also have holding off so we could get things like the politically motivated USA-based book review of *The Mezonnic Agenda; Hacking the Presidency* posted before the November elections take place. Natural disasters, "Acts of God" and other extenuating circumstances have also slowed us down some as we accept the challenges of getting on-topic and timely columns and reviews ready for publication.

We hope you too will come to greener pastures here at *macCompanion* as you gaze and graze upon book, game, hardware share a and software reviews we share with you this month.

Due to evaluating a maintenance package just before this issue was about to be published and it basically crashing my system (yes, we can gubber-up our Macs! lesson learned – Panther doesn't need optimization), I now have the privilege of enjoying Mac OS X 10.3.5. Needless to say, we experiment and test so you don't have to. Look forward to ~~that~~ review next month.

We welcome you with open arms to our safe-haven and shelter from the Internet storms!

Views from the Ivory Tower

iMac G5s, iPods, Apple shares and Microsoft Music

By Ted Bade

What a month it has been for Apple! A new iMac® with a G5 chip, and a very different look, their stock reaching a 52-week high, and Microsoft entering the digital music market.

The newest version of the iMac has stirred up the computer community. While not everyone may think it is the coolest computer since HAL, it is a phenomenal piece of hardware. Still, it is Apple's consumer computer, so don't expect expansion or all the high end features of a new PowerMac. But it is one nice machine.

As I was thinking about how to describe the new iMac in words, I realized something interesting, which I will share in a moment. However, first the description; think of a PowerBook®. When you open one, the screen sits perpendicular to the section that has the keyboard and contains the drives, motherboard, and so forth. Now consider closing the PowerBook backwards, so that the back of the screen touches the back of the keyboard section. Flip it around so you can see the screen and you have the basic form of a new iMac. (writer's note, don't try doing this to your PowerBook or iBook®, it will damage it).

That is pretty much how the new iMac looks, except the keyboard and track-pad are not on the back of the computer. You get an external Bluetooth keyboard and mouse. It looks really cool and sits on a stand, which is designed so you can place the keyboard under the screen for easy storage.

So what was I intrigued by? The iMac is a G5 laptop folded backwards. For months people have been audibly wishing they had a G5 laptop. Now if Apple can figure out a way to fold it correctly (like a PowerBook), put in a laptop keyboard and track-pad, and figure out a battery that is powerful enough to run it for several hours, we could all stop complaining. ;-)

I can dream my dream of a PowerBook G5 on the near horizon, can I not?

If you haven't heard all the details about the new iMac G5, or just want to check out what Apple has to say about it, visit: [<http://www.apple.com/imac/>]. You can get all the details, movies, commercials, and even buy one there. If you can handle video, check out the iMac introduction video. <http://www.apple.com/imac/video/>. It is both informative and fun.

Apple posted links to a number of articles rating the new iMac as a great machine (but then, what else would they post?). In an article written for the Personal Technology section of the Wall Street Journal, Walt Mossberg titles his article: "Apple's Latest iMac Is Elegant, Powerful, Surprisingly Affordable " <http://ptech.wsj.com/ptech.html> . Time magazine rated the iMac G5 as the gadget of the week. <http://www.time.com/time/gadget/20040922/>, and PC magazine gave the iMac G5 a five star rating <http://www.pcmag.com/article2/0,1759,1648796,00.asp>. One gets the idea that people like this new machine.

But all isn't well. While it is innovative and cool looking, there are some things it lacks. First of all, one cannot position the iMac G5 as easily as the G4 iMac. The G4 version was an easy one to share with a friend, by shifting the screen sideways or up and down. The iMac G5 simply tilts up and down, no side-to-side motion. Now one might say that few computers have the range of motion of the iMac G4 and

that the iMac G5 has the motion of a standard LCD display, but people with an iMac G4 probably won't be happy to lose that terrific range of motion their current machine offers. The iMac G5 also lacks Gigabit Ethernet. But remember, it is a consumer machine. It does have many of the features that make my PowerMac G5 what it is, even the serial ATA drive. In my opinion, the biggest problem we have with our current G4 iMac is how slow it loads things. I expect that the G5 version won't have this problem.

Apple also saw its stock rise sharply. The stock rose to set a new 52-week high in September. Generally this means that investors feel that the company is doing something right and that the stock is therefore a good investment. But then, I have always thought a Macintosh was a good investment.

Tired of viruses? Buy a Mac! - I have seen a couple of articles in computer (but not specifically Mac) related magazines pointing toward this feeling. People are tiring messing with viruses on a daily basis. Since virtually no viruses exist for the Macintosh and very few for Linux, some pundits are hinting that people and perhaps even businesses might want to turn away from Windows and toward one of these options.

In an article posed on the USA Today web site, Kevin Maney included some interesting comments. http://www.usatoday.com/money/industries/technology/maney/2004-09-21-maney_x.htm. The title of the article is: "Mac or PC? Windows' security issues help some users choose". It is definitely worth reading.

In the article Mr. Maney writes about email replies he received after publishing an article describing his dealings with a virus on one of his XP computers. Apparently he got two types of email messages, commiseration from Windows owners and messages from what he calls "Mac zealots", pointing out that he should get a Mac and avoid the problems altogether. While it is a good idea to point out that owning a Macintosh is a solution to this problem, we shouldn't be "sore winners". Nobody likes to hear that, and it won't make converts, just people who are fed up with the Mac community and Windows equipment! However, quietly point out these things often enough and people will eventually realize what you are saying!

The article goes on to discuss some of the emails sent to him, both from Windows users and from people converted from Windows to Mac. The message is that many people are tired of dealing with Windows' security issues. The article is balanced and really allows the reader to decide for himself (except for his comment at the start of the article, written probably because he was tired of hearing, "Get a Mac!").

I am a realist. I know that if the Macintosh were as popular as Windows, there would be viruses for it as well. But I can say that I believe that there would not be nearly as many. This is because it is inherently more difficult to write a virus that could get onto a Mac and because Apple (for the moment at least), seems to be responding very quickly when a security leak is discovered. Even if tens of millions of people started going Mac, I think it might be months, possibly years for viruses to start affecting the Mac community and I doubt the problem would ever be as bad as it is for Windows users. In the mean time, we can enjoy our virus free environment. We can hope that these facts make some people and companies lean toward the Macintosh.

Anti-Mac people often are swift to point out that there are few Mac viruses because there are so few Macs. However an article in the October edition of Popular Science magazine is about viruses starting to appear on Cell phones and PDAs. This article points out two interesting things, one is that, even though a virus can be written to affect only a limited part of the total devices out there, they are still being written. It also pointed out that the PDAs that have been affected are those that use the modified

version of Windows. Heck, for those all your need is a modified version of some virus!

The point is that even though these viruses affect a small number of people, they are still being written. Which puts some holes in the theory that viruses aren't written for the Mac because it would affect only a small percentage of the computer user population.

Oops - 800 planes and no one to control them - Recently Southern California's air traffic control had a little problem. After upgrading their computers to include Windows based servers, they discovered something weird in the way these servers integrated into the air traffic control system. These servers could reach data overload after some time passed if something wasn't done before then. Apparently they are programmed to shutdown after a little over 49 days to prevent this data overload. Can you say work-around?.

To prevent this automatic shutdown from happening, an operator is supposed to restart the servers every 30 days, so they never get to this point. The human forgot to do the restart and the Windows servers just shutdown, stranding around 800 planes.

According to the article posted on the Tech World site <http://www.techworld.com/opsys/news/index.cfm?NewsID=2275>, the Window servers replace older UNIX ones. I imagine that these older machines didn't need to be shutdown every 30 days!

So who do we blame, the human(s) who didn't perform the work around, the company who engineered the integration of Windows servers into the system, or the Windows servers themselves? I am sure the person or people responsible for not performing the work around are in deep trouble, since they are easy targets. The real culprit is the person or people who developed a system for something this important that requires such a work around.

While I doubt it, I hope that the powers to be in southern California Air Traffic Control, learned from this. I am sure a great salesperson presented a spectacular PowerPoint presentation showing all the new and wonderful things the system could do, and it probably can do them, but it still crashed and 800 planes were stranded. In my opinion, neither the Military, any government, nor any form of public service should depend upon these types of products. And once this type of problem is uncovered, the system should be immediately replaced; not to mention a full refund for the system. We should not be installing work-arounds. Time and time again we hear of computer crashes that cripple. I think it is time for a change.

iPods® selling Macs® - The commercial for the new iMac ends with words something like, "from the people who brought you the iPod." Some people have said the new iMac looks like a large iPod. Is this a good thing? The iPod has become very popular. Lots and lots of people have them. They are especially popular with college students, who will probably buy a new computer to take to college with them. Why not get a computer to match your iPod?

An article on the Columbia University's newspaper web site (the Columbia Spectator), spoke about how students are moving toward the Mac. <http://www.columbiaspectator.com/vnews/display.v/ART/2004/09/22/4151217a51d97>. The article points out that students are finding that using a Mac is easy, like using the iPod. Also, don't forget that Apple provided \$200 discount if a student purchased a Mac and an iPod together. It's logical, if you need a computer for school, and want an iPod, you can buy a competitively priced Mac and get an iPod for \$79. Wow!

While this is good news, Apple's market share still hovers below 4%. Oh well, at least some people

are going to have computers that work well and that they'll enjoy.

Microsoft Music - Microsoft launched their music website and one of the things they are promoting is the fact their music will play on any MP3 player, unlike the ITMS, which requires an iPod. But I don't think this is necessarily a bad thing for Apple. There are many iPod owners out there who are content to continue using the iTunes Music Store and the iPod is still the coolest device around, so people still want to buy them.

However, Microsoft did create a nice site to buy music on. In an AP article http://biz.yahoo.com/ap/040902/microsoft_music_1.html, they say it is elegant and looks a lot like the ITMS on the surface. I can say one thing about Microsoft, when they do something, they tend to put a lot of work into it and it tends to look nice. Will they attract market dominance with digital music sales? I hope not, but they have jumped in late and taken over before, so I imagine it is possible. However, Apple is doing a very good job as well and has been doing it successfully for a while now. So perhaps Apple will lose Music market share to Microsoft, but I don't think it will be drastic.

Competition is a good thing, even for Apple! However, the purpose of the ITMS is not to make money for Apple. Consider, they make 4-cents per song sold. Do the math. If they sell 100-million songs, they only get 4 million dollars. How much of this goes into maintaining and promoting the store? The real purpose of the ITMS is to sell iPods. And it is doing very well with that. While Microsoft promotes that their music works on many different players, where will they find their profit from their store? Will a few million a year continue to justify the cost of running the Microsoft Music Store or will Bill eventually get tired of it? But then again, perhaps it isn't about profit, but about market dominance. MS Internet Explorer didn't bring in revenue directly, but MS was able to sell a lot of web products because of it.

We will have to keep an eye on this store and see how the market-share shifts over the next few months.

By the way, the HP branded version of the iPod was released in September as well. HP is making it very easy for people who buy their computers to get one. Which means Apple sells even more iPods and even more people have an excuse to use the iTMS.

That's about it for this month. I hope you enjoy our magazine and continue to visit our site. As always, I love to hear from our readers, so feel free to contact me if you have any thoughts or interesting stories. Until next month, keep on using that Mac!

Rants, Raves and Revelations

A Tidbit from doc_Babad _ Rescuing Document Names

How often have, with a slip of the cursor, destroyed the name of a document you were about to change. The title was mostly gone and no, command-Z, the traditional recovery means almost, despite hits to the contrary, almost never works.

But recovering the original name is an easy thing. Type a period at the beginning of what is left of the document name. The Mac OS will not allow document names starting with a period. Voilà, your original document name is back. If you are using extensions as part of naming documents, tap the delete key starting at the period. This method has never failed me, invaluable since I am prone to cursor twitches.

Feature

Intuos® 3 Platinum 6 x 8

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett



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Released: September 15, 2004

<http://www.wacom.com/companyinfo/email.cfm>

<http://www.wacom.com/index2.cfm>

Product: <http://www.wacom.com/productinfo/intuos.cfm>

\$200 USD for the 4x8, \$330 USD for the 6x8 and \$450 USD for the 9x12.

Testimonials: <http://www.wacom.com/pressinfo/spotlight.cfm>

Tablet-enhanced software:

<http://www.wacom.com/productinfo/tesoftware.cfm>



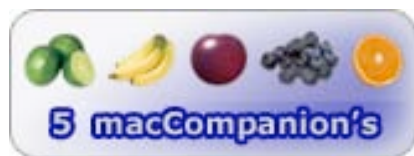
Requirements: Mac boxen: Mac OS X 2.6 or later; powered USB port, CD-ROM drive, and color monitor. WinTel boxen: PC running Windows 98, 2000, Me, or XP. Powered and working USB port, CD-ROM drive, and color monitor.

Comes with Intuos3 Grip Pen, 3D 5-button Mouse, Adobe® Photoshop® Elements 2.0, Painter™ Classic by Corel®, Color Efex Pro 2.0® by nic multimedia®, and Wacom Brushes 1.0. Also included is Corel™ Painter™ Essentials 2 and 8-foot USB cord.

Reviewed with Mac® OS X™ 10.3.5.

Photoshop tips:

<http://www.wacom.com/tips/index.cfm?category=Photoshop>



Strengths: Great cross-platform sketching input tool.

Weaknesses: None found yet.

Right after we finished reviewing and publishing our review of the Intuos™2 Tablet

<http://www.maccompanion.com/archives/september2004/hardware.html#2>, we were offered the opportunity to review the Intuos™3, and based on past performance of the Intuos2, we jumped at the chance to try out the Intuos3. What a difference one year makes at Wacom! The Intuos3 has all the best features of the Intuos2, but there is more. It is beveled on the palm-edge and has 2 sets of touchpads for folks who are either right or left-handed or ambidextrous, if either the 6x8 or the 9x12 models

are used. The LED is blue-lighted this time and the 8.2-foot USB cable can be positioned either to go towards the back of a tabletop or off to the left because of two thoughtfully located recesses in the lower side of the tablet. It is like they heard from designers who said, "I wish" and Wacom said, "your wish is my command".

The tablet sips a sweet 1.4 Watts of power through the USB cable. Obviously it needs to go into a powered USB hub instead of a passive USB port.

The User's Manual is a well-thought-out 88-page, PDFed guide that includes a glossary and a troubleshooting guide for both WinTel and Mac-based platforms.

What I've enjoyed so far is that it works marvelously well with Mac OS X Inkwell handwriting function <http://www.apple.com/macosx/features/inkwell/>.

Now take a close look at the new control buttons in the upper left and/or right of the tablet.

Now we don't need to bounce back and forth between tablet and keyboard for certain key commands depending on which drawing software we are using. (See the tablet software reviews from last month. One doesn't require keyboard commands or menus.)

The software that comes with the Intuos3 is Adobe® Photoshop® Elements 2.0 (Intuos2 4x5 and 6x8 models only), Painter™ Classic by Corel®, Color Efex Pro 2.0® by nic multimedia®, and Wacom Brushes 1.0.

It would be nice if Alias® SketchBook™ Pro was included but we can't have everything now can we?

<http://www.maccompanion.com/archives/september2004/software.html#8>. And Photoshop Elements 3.0 was just released too.

The ergonomic patented Penabled™ and programmable DuoSwitch™ capable Intuos3 Grip Pen comes with a number of nibs (5 replacements with 3 of the regular style, one pressed felt that feels like a charcoal pencil and the other as an additional spring-loaded stroke nib) that go in the spring-loaded tip. The other end has an electronic spring-loaded eraser. There are also two other pen-types that are optional accessories. One is the Intuos3 Airbrush that uses a top-mounted finger-wheel to control ink flow, a pressure-sensitive tip and eraser, and a programmable top button. The other is the Intuos3 Inking Pen that really writes and draws with ink. (It does not have an eraser or a DuoSwitch.)



The Intuos3 Tablet sports the 3D 5-button patented Penabled™ mouse. The 5th button is the scroll-wheel, with buttons 3 and 4 on either side of the wireless puck.



If you want to keep the regular mouse happy, the 3D 5-button mouse needs to be off the tablet. The same goes for the pen. That is why the pens have a base-station or “inkwell” of their own.

Both devices are not battery-hampered, so they won’t get flaky over time as batteries die. I used to have a wireless keyboard and mouse that require batteries and because of the way I used them, they ate batteries. Think of this as an other excellent move by Wacom to reduce the operating budget outflow by coming up with this great innovation. They are FCC approved, but they can cause interference with other wireless devices and TV reception. Actually, the Intuos3 tablet contains the active components and the solution, if it indeed does cause problems, is to disconnect it from the USB port. There is no on-off switch.

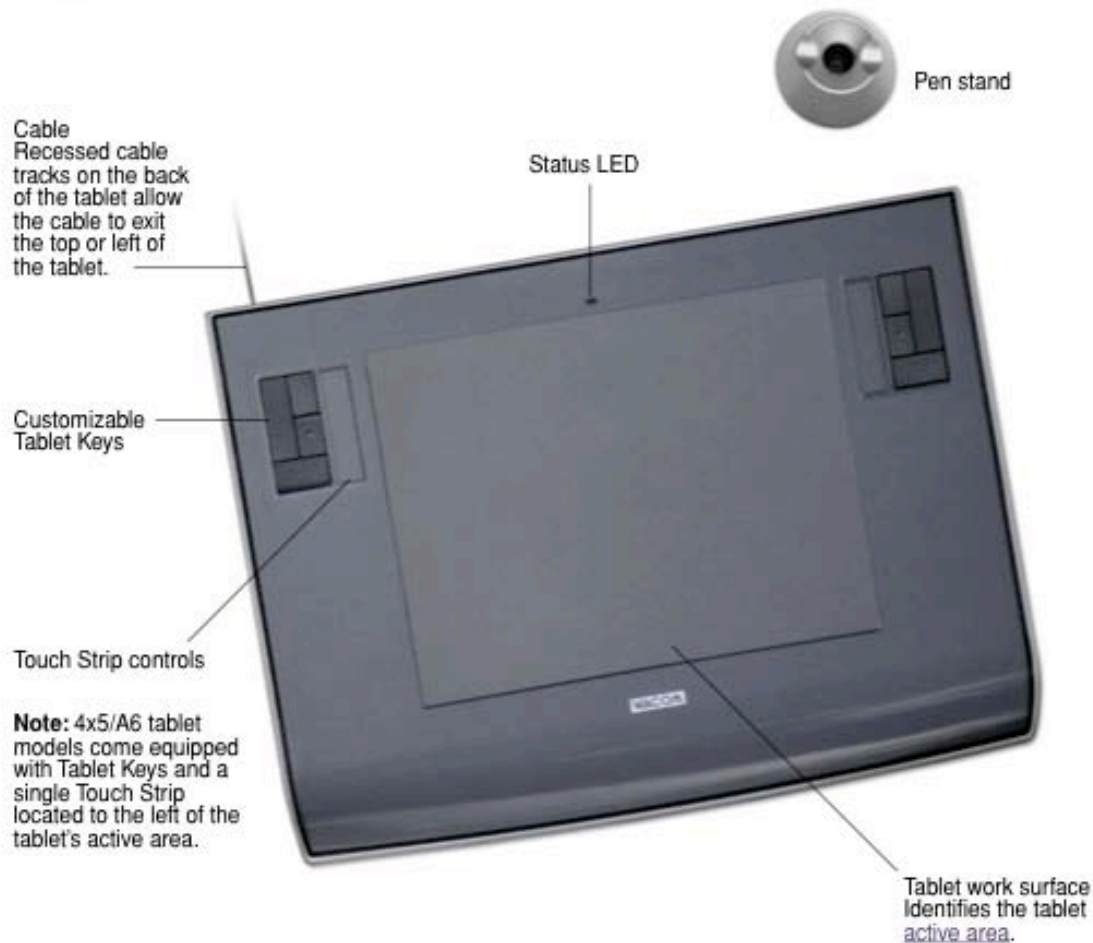
It took me a while to get the handwriting down, because I write like a doctor (meaning that I never took calligraphy courses), so I’m digital-dexterity-challenged. But I could get used to this really quickly. Even with my poor handwriting capability, Mac OS X Inkwell understood my scribbling and converted it into text. I wouldn’t recommend it as the only way to add text though. If I had a choice, I’d go voice input. I didn’t see a mic port anywhere on the tablet, however.

Instead, I found that the pen and tablet understand each other. The tablet is pressure-sensitive. And that sensitivity can either be dynamically dulled or sharpened using the driver tools thoughtfully provide by Wacom. Not only is the Intuos3 tablet pen-sensitive, it is also more resolute in its sensitivity to the tune of 5,080 lines per inch with 1,024 levels of tip and eraser pressure sensitivity for control (who writes that small?).

For Mac environments, the customizable drivers are System Preference paned for Mac OS X instead of being application-based.

Now let’s get a better look at the tablet.

Intuos3 tablet features



The customizable Tablet keys are labeled as “ExpressKeys” and are chordable (multi-key functional) so they can be used for mouse clicks, modifier keys, and keyboard shortcuts and the default Control or Command, Shift, Alt, Spacebar or whatever.

The finger-sensitive Touch Strip is for folks who miss their portable touchpad or haven't figured out how to use the scroll-wheel on the mouse. Just kidding! I see it being useful for quick scrolling, and zooming with the pens. You just might forget there even is a scroll-wheel on the mouse.

I've included a link to a few Photoshop tips that Wacom has provided, but that is just one of many software tools that work with the Intuos3 tablet. The drivers have been made to function with at least 1,000 of them. The only thing that beats the Intuos3 tablet might be the Cintiq LCD writable LCD display, but that isn't nearly as comfortable as snuggling up to this tablet with up to 8 feet of cord between you and the computer.

The business side of the Intuos3 is glass-slick (acrylic) and smooth for easily keeping clean. Truly, this is one slick graphics tablet for smooth-flowing productivity! Get the Intuos2 if you need a larger size, but if not, get this one instead. The Wacom Intuos3 has the look and feel of professionalism.

Books

Adobe Acrobat 6.0 Standard Classroom in a Book

A Book Review by Harry {doc} Babad

Edited by Julie M. Willingham

Authors: Adobe Creative Team

Adobe Press

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

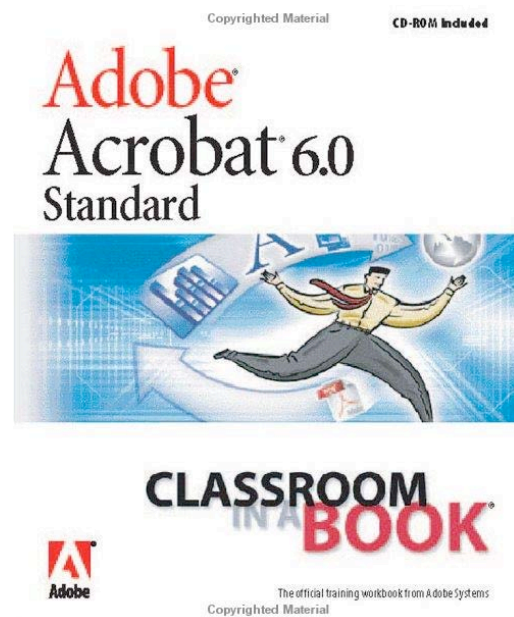
Released: August 15, 2003

\$45 USD, \$CAN, £Net UK €

Pages: 438

ISBN: 0321246144

Experience Needed/Audience— All experience levels, whether using a Macintosh with Mac OS X or a PC operating under the Windows OS.



Strengths: Easy to use, either as a comprehensive learning tool or to tune up your understanding of Adobe Acrobat 6.0 Standard's (Acrobat 6.0) specific capabilities.

Weaknesses: None, really! But it took time, as I had expected, to study Acrobat 6.0's capabilities so I could integrate them into my 'Acrobat-ing' skills.

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Review Limitations— I didn't have enough time to explore and practice all of the interesting Acrobat 6.0 features, so omitted those that were not of primary interest. They will need to wait until my needs get more sophisticated.

Book Overview: Adobe Acrobat 6.0 Standard Classroom in a Book is a straightforward, painless, and comprehensive way to master Adobe Acrobat 6.0 Standard, the latest upgrade to Adobe's Acrobat software family. The combined book and CD set makes learning Acrobat 6.0 as simple as reading the book and working the lessons, which show readers how to use Acrobat 6.0 in real-life, project-based everyday tasks. The accompanying CD provides the resource files to allow readers to complete the lessons, and this forms a vital part of the book's resources. The book combines focused learning materials and practical lessons developed by Adobe instructional designers.

Introduction

After struggling with the limitations of the free Acrobat Reader, I finally broke down and purchased Acrobat 5 Standard, and now the version 6 upgrade. I've had lots of fun learning the software by trial and error—mostly error.

I have two primary, routine uses for Acrobat: cleaning up downloaded web pages and converting finished documents created in MS Word into PDF files. The latter is easy, since either MS Word or Acrobat (I haven't figured out which) installs Acrobat Distiller, which sits in my toolbar and makes the file conversion from Word just one click away.

Since I download web pages (Print to PDF) for reference, I collect all of the unneeded sidebar material that fills such pages. So, I spend time doing simple crops of the resulting graphics files, which decreases their size and gets rid of extraneous material. (Of course, this also shrinks the files' sizes... an additional benefit.) But using the simple cropping tool [Menu > Document > Pages > Crop] doesn't solve all of my page simplification redesign problems. It just allows me to remove unwanted edge material in a manner similar to using a paper cutter to crop an image. Although I was aware of an alternative crop tool [Tools> Advanced Editing > Crop Tool], I was unable to learn how to use it effectively prior to reading this book.

So it became time to do things right—well almost right—and this review of *Adobe Acrobat 6.0 Standard Classroom in a Book* with its accompanying tutorial CD paved my way toward a better understanding of Acrobat's features. I soon discovered that the publisher's claim of the book's usefulness was correct. The book is a thorough, self-paced guide to Acrobat 6, and is ideal for beginning users who want to master the key features of this newest Adobe program. It also serves as an excellent tool to move beginning users ahead in their proficiency in using the feature-rich software. Read the book. Practice the 16 lessons. You will smoothly, but not instantly, learn how to use Acrobat to create and edit electronic documents, streamline document review, and protect sensitive documents. After all, practice does make perfect—that's what homework (the tutorials) is about.

Adobe Press PR notes that "you will get up to speed quickly with step-by-step, project-based lessons as each chapter contains a project that builds upon the your growing knowledge of Acrobat." Review questions found at the end of each chapter wrap it up and help readers learn the chapter's subject matter.

Well, even when doing only selected lessons, those I needed to enhance my skills for projects in hand, it wasn't quick, but my journey was smooth and confusion-free. The lessons associated with the book's chapters take 30 to 90 minutes to complete. Learning the details of how to modify PDF files took me over two hours, a bit longer than Adobe's projected 90 minutes, but they were techniques I will use almost every day.

Both the detailed and focused lessons themselves, as well as the accompanying narratives and illustrations in the book, support ease of learning. I found the resource materials on the CD, around

which the lessons focused, helpful and easy to use, but worlds apart from my usual focus for working with PDF files and Acrobat 6.

The Book Itself

The contents of *Adobe Acrobat 6.0 Standard Classroom in a Book* cover all the aspects of the software—features that any but the most advanced Acrobat Standard user should want like to what to learn to work with. Although I had no interest in studying all the lessons, I did skim the materials and found them to be as focused and complete as the chapters I studied in detail...lessons and all.

The book's chapters and associated lessons include:

| | |
|--|--|
| Getting Started | <i>Putting Documents Online</i> – Lesson 9 |
| Introducing Acrobat Standard – Lesson 1 | <i>Optimizing Online Document Design</i> – Lesson 10 |
| Getting to Know the Work Area – Lesson 2 | <i>Adding Signatures and Security</i> – Lesson 11 |
| Converting Microsoft Office Files [Separate <u>Lessons</u> for Windows and Macintosh OS] – Lesson 3w and 3m | Filling Out Forms – Lesson 12 |
| Converting Files to Adobe PDF – Lesson 4 | Preparing Presentations – Lesson 13 |
| Customizing Adobe PDF Output Quality – Lesson 5 | Working with Pictures and Images – Lesson 14 |
| Creating Adobe PFD from Web Pages – Lesson 6 | <i>Working with eBooks</i> – Lesson 15 |
| Modifying PFD Files – Lesson 7 | <i>Making Documents Accessible and Flexible – Lesson 16.</i> |
| <i>Using Acrobat Standard in a Document Review Cycle – Lesson 8</i> | The Index |
| The lessons I quickly skimmed are italicized. I'll study them some day soon, when I need the knowledge they contain. | |

I was particularly impressed with the contents of Lesson 4, *Converting Files to Adobe PDF*. Its contents include: *About creating Acrobat PDF files, Creating an Acrobat PDF file from a TIFF file, Adding a note, Emailing an Adobe PDF file, Converting and combining different types of files, Searching a PDF file, Using the print command to create Adobe PDF files, Exploring on your own (Windows), Review questions and Answers.*

A listing of the subcontents of Lesson 7, *Modifying PDF Files*, will give you an example of its level of detail and the comprehensive nature of its treatment. The chapter sections include: *Opening and examining the work, Editing pages, Editing text, Adding a bookmark, Adding sound, Copying text and images from a PDF file, Converting a PDF page to an image format file, and the ubiquitous A few questions and their answers.*

For those of you who upgraded from Acrobat 5, this newly revised book contains new lessons and updated projects. You can follow the book from start to finish or, as I did, do only the lessons that interest you. Although its index is only six pages long, it was easy to find the materials I sought.

A Minor Irritation – I am still trying to find out how to get an Adobe PDF file to open at 40% [zoom] in a manner that leaves no more that a half-inch of grey space around the image. No matter what I've

tried, the document opens up in a manner that fills my 22" screen, forcing me to drag it to the right to force it to minimize the grey area and allow me access to the documents hidden underneath it. (No, I'm not interested in using Mac OS X Panther's Expose feature. It doesn't do what I want.)

In Closing

If you are looking for the best way to learn how to use Adobe Acrobat, then this book is for you. This classroom in a book guides you step-by-step, screen-by-screen, through all of the essentials needed to effectively use this compelling piece of software. It is well illustrated, and the narratives are easy to follow and understand. A large number of supporting files are included on the companion CD, all grist for learning the book's lessons. The authors use these files to give the reader practical experience using Acrobat.

If you own Acrobat 6.0 Standard and want to learn to use it effectively, this book should become an integral part of your library. Buy this book. It is money well spent. I give it 4.5 macC's.

The Official Blender 2.3 Guide: Free 3D Creation Suite for Modeling, Animation, and Rendering

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Authors: Ton Roosendaal, Stefano Selleri

<http://www.oreillynet.com/cs/catalog/view/au/1346>

<http://www.oreillynet.com/cs/catalog/view/au/1347>

<http://www.blender3d.org/>

No Starch Press

555 De Haro St., Suite 250

San Francisco, CA 94107

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Fax: 415-863-9950

info@nostarch.com

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

Distributor - O'Reilly Books

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Sebastopol, CA 95472 USA

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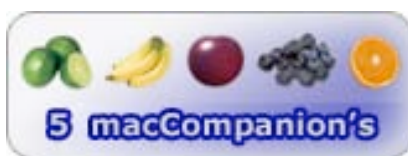
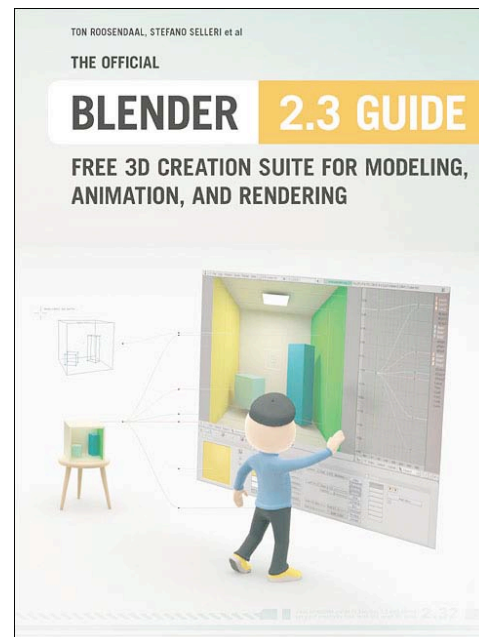
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\$50 USD, \$70 CDN, £35 Net UK, €44

Published: June 2004

Pages: 784 with CD for all platforms.

ISBN: 1593270410



Strengths: Cross-platform “free” 3D animation application guide with CD.

Weaknesses: None found – except the book is about 2 versions behind now.

The Official Blender 2.3 Guide: Free 3D Creation Suite for Modeling, Animation, and Rendering by Ton Roosendaal and Stefano Selleri has been translated to English and is a phoenix rising from the ashes as a success story of an application that was dropped from commercial distribution [First by a Dutch firm, NeoGeo, then Not a Number (NaN)] and switched to Open Source distribution as a 3D model creation program that rivals those that cost hundreds and even thousands more. The website shows the latest version of the software is now up to 2.34

http://www.blender3d.org/cms/Blender_2_34.319.0.html and the last chapter (29) in the book dedicates itself to version 2.32, revealing to us such things as rendering, displacement mapping, Yafray (<http://www.yafray.org> another photorealistic rendering system) interoperability and more features and fixes.

If you are even remotely interested in 3D modeling (some have said 3D is dead and obviously, they are so dead wrong!) this book will open up your mind regarding real-time interactive cross-platform 3D rendering. The book includes the history behind Blender and notes that there are over 250,000 users around the world that actively use it to do mesh modeling, rendering, and special effects to create

beautiful brilliant examples such as those shown in the gallery at the blender3d.org site and a few pages of inspiringly beautiful 4-color sheets in the book.

Get busy learning about object mode, mesh modeling, curves and surfaces, materials and textures, lighting, creation environments, animation, rendering and radiosity. The book simplifies the process and is invaluable to getting comfortable with all the options available. If nothing else, the book is a good foundation to learning the current status of 3D modeling and animation; the information is transferable to other applications. *Carrara 4* has similar instruction and tutorials – but for a higher price.

There are 7 Appendices on hotkeys, video card support, a changelog, the Blender documentation project, joining those who code, and a complete list of the GNU licensing that is used as well as a very good glossary and index. This book has been done by the originators and dreamers that not only thought, but have brought forth a program that perhaps would have otherwise languished in oblivion but is now available to all who want to play with and even make money at doing 3D.

Blender is maintained by the Blender Foundation under GNU GPL licensing. This makes the product both open source and free. All you have to do is buy the book to learn how to make it sign and dance and see how well it competes with the top-of-the-line professional 3D applications.

Go to the website, check out the gallery and judge for yourself if this application and book doesn't merit some serious consideration for "Creatives". I personally think it should be in everyone's library that depends on doing 3D for a living.

Cyber Adversary Characterization: Auditing the Hacker Mind

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Authors: Tom Parker, Eric Shaw, Ed Stroz, Mathew G Devost, Marcus H Sachs

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Syngress Publishing, Inc.

Released: July 2004

800 Hingham St.

Rockland, MA 02370

781-681-5151

\$50 USD, \$70 CAN, £ Net UK, €

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

Pages: 358

ISBN: 1931836116

Book Site:

http://www.syngress.com/catalog/sg_main.cfm?pid=2960

<http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/1931836116/index.html>

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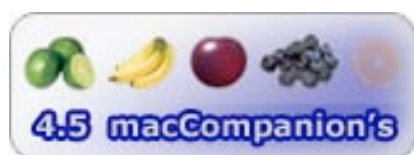
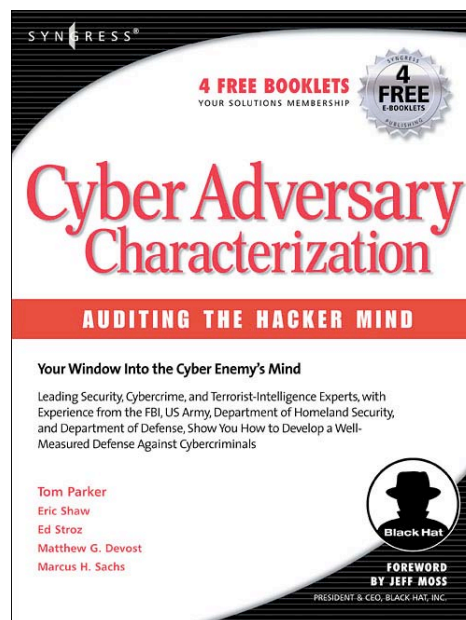
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For security consultants and auditors who want to know more about their cyber-enemy's mind.



Strengths: Digs into the whys and wherefores, mindsets and mentalities of the criminal cyber-mind.

Weaknesses: One page of the "f-word" when not necessary. Font formats were distracting. The book appears, well, um, rushed.

Cyber Adversary Characterization: Auditing the Hacker Mind is a book created by a 5-member team of computer consultants, criminal psychologists and computer forensics experts with lots of peace-keeping credentials to keep one busy for a while just reading their mini-bios. The book is based on the premise that to defeat your enemies you need to know their motivation to break the law. It isn't always for financial gain.

I take umbrage in the fact that they use the word "hacker" instead of "cracker" all the way through the book and even the Preface by Richard Thieme (Islands in the ClickStream) doesn't make the distinction either – and he knows better. Instead, they quickly get into hardened criminal mentalities of those who are true vandals, thieves and miscreants who use extortion, industrial espionage, identity theft,

blackmail, terror, government-level spying, grand larceny and the other kinds of stuff that would get a person killed or put behind bars for a very long time once caught, captured and neutralized. The Internet and computer technology is the new wild frontier and these guys are the sheriffs.

The book provides insight into the criminal minds of cyber criminals beginning with Kevin Mitnick. Then it delves into cyber terrorism and how narrow-mindedness can make us vulnerable.

Next the book attempts to create a symbolism of sorts (Theoretical Characterization Metrics) using letters of each category or type as a kind of shorthand to establish and characterize models that then can be put on a blackboard for tracking purposes to identify real threat critical paths from outside and/or inside in threat analyses. Frankly, that lost me as they attempted to use statistical analysis techniques and conditional probabilities to create notation with perhaps incorrect symbols. I expect there will be some errata posted later because there are some misspellings and inaccurate probability analysis assumptions. Attempting to sound sophisticated and somewhat scientific fell on my deaf ears. They attempt to mathematically approach the criminal mind and I think it needs more work in quantification. That's just my opinion. I personally have tried to "keep clean" and not delve into the devious and much of it was way beyond my mental state of mind.

Then a discussion on terrorism and nation-states comes into play, before they talk about how tools like "WarmTouch" can be utilized for psychological identification purposes for perhaps a cyber-stalker and help with risk mitigation. The author's created, or are creating the software, so the book comes across as a thickly veiled marketing tool.

Some case studies are presented for that oh-so-clear 20-20 hindsight once time and techniques have taken their toll and the electronic dust has finally settled.

What is presented is a glimpse into the dark side and perhaps ways in which technological assets can be used to staunch the flow of cyber-crime or at least reduce the risk of becoming a cyber-victim. Know thy cyber-adversaries. Maybe even identify their skill level once you've been able to find them on the prowl using attack data.

The book ends with a borrowed chapter from one of the "How to own..." series of books reviewed earlier in *macCompanion* on "Return on Investment" by Fyodor. The most valuable thing I took from the book was the Notional Threat Matrix that graphs adversaries to capabilities from unstructured hackers to nation states and direct compromise to physical threat.

The number of pages I've marked determines the quality of a book to me. This one is one where I marked a few in the later chapters on Targeting Nations Critical Infrastructure and Characterizing Extremes. For a quick read, each of the first 11 chapters ends with a summary and references and the book does contain a glossary.

It will be interesting to see just how well this book stands the test of time. Meanwhile, if you have a hankering to hunker down and crawl around in the cyber-mud for a while, this might be a good place to start. Just remember, the Foreword is by Jeff Moss, President of Blackhat, Inc.
<http://www.blackhat.com>

Digging Deeper

http://www.theregister.co.uk/2004/03/28/auditing_the_mind/

Degunking Your Mac

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Author: Joli Ballew

<http://www.oreillynet.com/cs/catalog/view/au/1338>

Paraglyph Press

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<http://www.paraglyphpress.com>

Released: June 2004

\$25 USD, \$37 CAN, £18 Net UK €21,49

Pages: 320

ISBN: 1932111948

Distributor

O'Reilly Books

Sebastopol (Corporate Headquarters)

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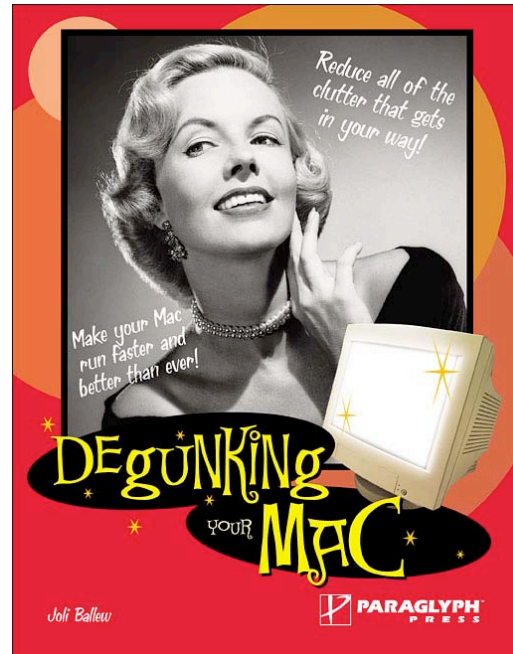
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For unorganized folks who want to streamline their computer systems.



Strengths: Common-sense approach to keeping the Mac system tidy.

Weaknesses: Wades into Mac-waters, but not too deeply.

Degunking Your Mac by Joli Ballew continues the Degunking Series from Paraglyph Press with treatment for steam-cleaning Macintosh systems and deals with both hardware and software issues.

When I cleaned buildings for a living as a custodian while a student on campus, I learned it is easier to keep a clean house clean than it is to clean up a dirty one.

This book attempts, with a flair for humor to do the same thing for the Macintosh environment.

Right off the bat, the first 4 pages jump right into The Degunking 12-Step Program, 10 and 30 minute, 1 and 3-hour, 1/2-day and Spare Moment Degunking along with 20 other useful Degunking tasks. Most all entail removing, deleting or trashing unneeded flotsam and jetsam that accumulates over time. Think of this book as being a tool for Spring Cleaning, but doing it more than once a year.

Granted a lot of it provides methods for superficial manual cleaning, but it does have occasional items from the GunkBuster's Notebook that adds some depth, instead of sweeping issues under the cyber-

rug. There are even lists of Freeware, Shareware and Commercial Software for automating much of the cleanup process.

The 16 fun-filled chapters cover getting rid of files that shouldn't be there and programs you don't need, organizing files and folders, cleaning up the Dock, Finder and Menu Bars and font files, preventing SPAM and cleaning up Email, optimizing Mac OS 9 for those that still insist on using that antiquated OS, optimizing the hard drive, keeping up-to-date on software releases and getting physical with the hardware. The remaining chapters present maintenance and troubleshooting tools, how to improve security and backing up.

WinTel systems experience similar problems and that is why Joli Ballew wrote a book on Degunking Windows too. Both systems suffer from a case of the slows over time. Joli Ballew has compiled ways and means to resolve those issues without having to reformat drives. Sometimes that solves a myriad host of issues, but try all these other steps first, just in case drastic measures aren't necessary. Starting from scratch is the equivalent of burning a house down with all the material possessions still inside. That kind of deep-cleaning should be a last-ditch effort in the battle of keeping organized. You know the old saying; Garbage in, Garbage out.

Some suggestions are perhaps a little off-base, but the main idea still remains the same; a clean system runs better.

So if maintaining a Mac tends to be a bit mind-boggling, get this book and learn how to keep it squeaky-clean.

The End of Software: Transforming Your Business for the On Demand Future

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Author: Dr. Timothy Chou

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<http://www.sampublishing.com/title/0672326981>

\$25 USD, \$32 CND, £18 Net UK

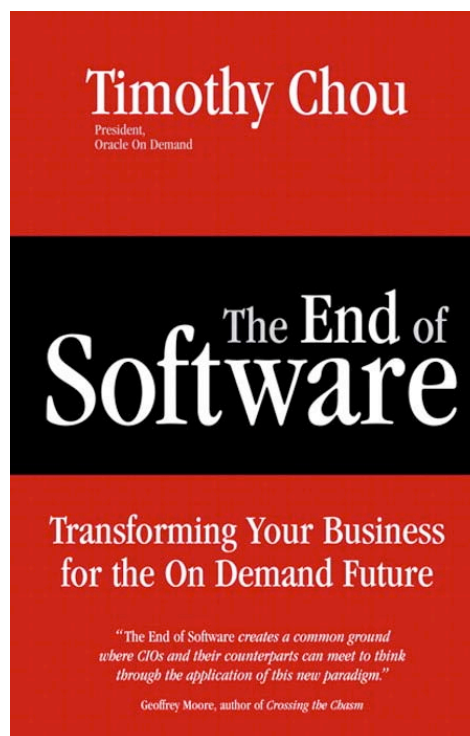
Published: September 16, 2004

Pages: 224

ISBN: 0672326981

Oracle On Demand:

<http://www.oracle.com/ondemand/index.html>



Strengths: Provides an educated, CIO-level approach to software development rethink.

Weaknesses: Needs a reference section.

The End of Software: Transforming Your Business for the On Demand Future by Dr Timothy Chou is an ad-piece for Oracle On Demand. The title is a misnomer. Get past it. The book isn't about the end of software, as much as it is a paradigm shift-think into changing the development, maintenance and distribution of software applications looking at the nuances involved in the on-demand model.

Instead of leasing the software outright, on-demand is where software is essentially "rented" from a vendor's server location somewhere on the Internet on a subscription basis. CD distribution and annual or semi-annual software upgrades or releases become a thing of the past. Weekend all-nighters for software upgrades become a thing of the past as well and provide a level of freedom for IT Managers and SysAdmins. Say goodbye to patches, assuming the clients can get to the servers - and perhaps that is the main reason why this model isn't as robust as it could be. Consider the current Internet snafus and gotchas that are occurring in the WinTel environment. Not a pretty picture. Now if those same vendors would put their eggs in the Apple basket, this might paint a different picture. Think Xserves with XSAN on fiber-distributed networks.

Enter Oracle On Demand, EDS, IBM's Global Services that eventually end up replacing the IT departments in the larger enterprise arena where outsourced service becomes support. If you think IT groups are going to accept this in small business, think again.

Personally, I question some of the total numbers of costs involved in studies presented from the last few years. I think they are inflated. That said, I love the promise of the concept and the approach to the total cost of utility-based software.

Dr Timothy Chou has been able to gather some success stories based on where he sits as President of Oracle On Demand. He points to WebEx, RightNow, Salesforce.com, NetSuite and Open Harbor as success stories and how they all sell value instead of software and avoid the oversell and under deliver mode prevalent in the software development industry today. These companies have soared towards excellence by selling services instead of pushing upgrades.

I like the citation on the reliability of the vaunted Telephone System in the USA and what the real uptime has been since 1993 regarding dial-tone reliability. And I enjoyed his remarks regarding Bohrbugs (repeatable bug failure) and Heisenbugs (intermittents usually squashed by shutdowns and restarts) http://srel.ee.duke.edu/sw_ft/node4.html.

I also learned a little about the Customization, Extension, Localization and Integration (CEMLI) model used by Oracle in their pursuit of streamlining the implementation process and the 5 steps to problem management (determination, diagnosis, bypass and recovery, resolution and tracking and control).

With escalating software development and maintenance costs, the on-demand approach is being looked upon as the silver bullet to reduce the \$1-trillion-per-year cost of software maintenance in the industry. Think of it as the way to build better, more reliable, lower-cost software.

Enterprise Service Bus

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Author: David A Chappell

<http://www.oreillynet.com/cs/catalog/view/au/207>

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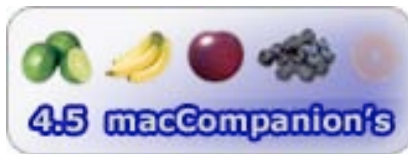
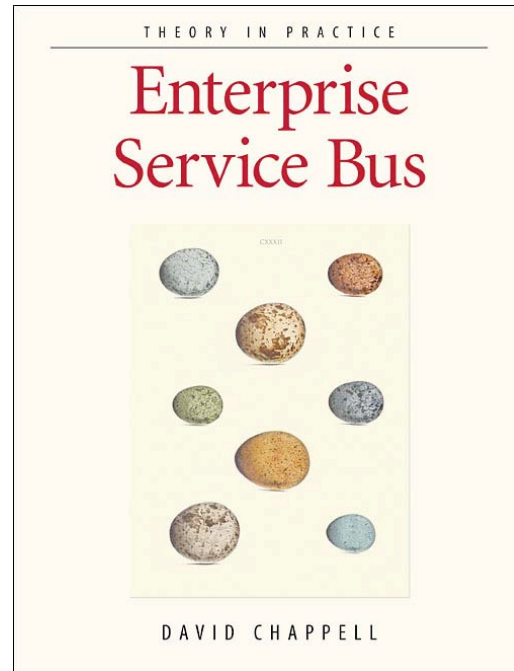
Released: June 2004

\$40 USD, \$ CAN, £28.50 Net UK

Pages: 274

ISBN: 0596006756

For system architects and integrators in large IT environments.



Strengths: Brings out ESP concepts into the open.

Weaknesses: No glossary of terms. Could use links to ESB vendors.

Enterprise Service Bus (ESB) by David A Chappell comes across as a Doctoral thesis-like approach to integrating computer-based business processes in an enterprise-like environment. It is chock-full of TLAs (Three-Letter Acronyms) that are initially defined, but a glossary would have been nice because I had to keep going back to remember what they all meant!

From my point of view, the book attempts to use both sides of the brain by adding flow-chart-like entries reminiscent of 1980's style charts, graphs and diagrams (lots of diagrams!) that show the middleman glue that brings technology-drivers to the fore. I see it as a high-level overview that tries really hard to take the highly paid (6-figure) mystery out of enterprise-wide web-based event-driven services and integration architectures offered by ESB magicians.

Of most value to me were the discussions of XML and a "Reasonable maturity of standards" graph showing when other technologies have led up to this economy of integration since 1990. It tends to be heavy on Java technologies. What saved me are the summaries at the end of each of the 12 chapters.

At the end of the book is a Visio™-like 5-page fan-fold tear-out ESB Icon Directory Quick Reference obviously intended for infrastructure engineers and architects.

I dog-eared a lot of pages in this book because I used to do infrastructure design for a living. The really short bibliography demonstrates the maturity level of this idea. The references in the same appendix on XML, web service specifications and Java are longer and more telling.

This is the first book of a new Enterprise Series by O'Reilly designed to fill a need for those who have the luxury of working for very large organizations that can afford to pay full-time integration architects and IT developers to improve their corporate-computer environments.

Essential ActionScript 2.0

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Author: Colin Mook

<http://mook.org>

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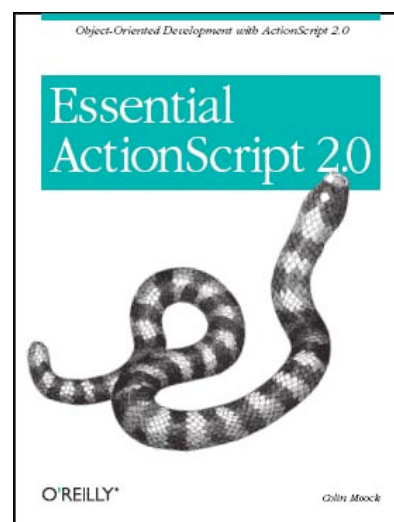
Released: June 2004

\$40 USD, \$58 CAN, £28.50Net UK €99.95 (double-check that last one)

Pages: 528

ISBN: 0596006527

For anyone interested in Object-Oriented Programming.



Strengths: The latest on ActionScripting.

Weaknesses: Could use more references.

Essential ActionScript 2.0 by Colin Mook covers the latest updates on Macromedia's Flash™ programming language. If you don't do Flash, go read something else. If you do, then stick around.

Very few programmers have said "no" to OOP (Object-Oriented Programming), but many have made mistakes and said, "oops", I'm sure. If you want an education in OOP-based techniques, you came to the right place. This book is packed with ways and means to adding movies, animations and other multimedia applications to the web. Once that is presented, move on to how it is implemented in ActionScript 2.0 to create extensible, scalable web-based cross-platform applications.

This is a "how-to" book full of examples, design patterns and some humor.

Think of this book as a companion-piece to his other book, *ActionScript, The Definitive Guide* with this one covering core language structure for version 2.0.

There are 3 sections covering language, development and patterns and the Appendices have a Language Quick Reference and differences between ActionScript 2.0 and ECMAScript <http://www.mozilla.org/js/language/es4>. If you are using Flash MX 2004 Pro, you will want this book if you want to dig deeper into classes, subclasses, coding practices and libraries, packages and patterns.

iMovie4 and iDVD4 for OSX: Visual QuickStart Guide

Reviewed by Dr. Eric Flescher

Author: Jeff Carlson

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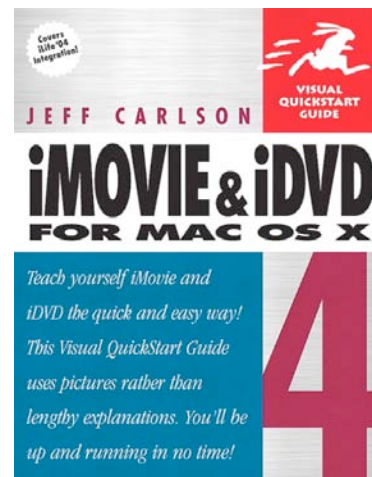
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\$20 USD, \$29 CND, £15 Net UK, €17,19

Published: April 30, 2004

Pages: 288

ISBN: 0321246632



Strengths: This is a comprehensive book that communicates the knowledge of integrating iMovie4 and iDVD and is a superb value for the price. It has great pictures of equipment and setups, screen shots of what to do when working with different parts of iMovie4 and/or iDVD4. Integration with iMovie4 and iDVD4 for making DVD is greatly enhanced with this combo, but it might take a little bit of work to find out all that is needed to be done. The SHARING dialogs box is very convenient now for all-purpose tools. Quality mode is not always better than Performance mode, which is confusing at first. There are other reasons for using either of the two modes. Read the book carefully before you burn your DVD.

Weaknesses: This book assumed that your images are ready to start with. The use of a photo-editor as GraphicConverter, Photoshop or Photoshop Elements can help with the graphics, conversion, editing, sizing and more, but are not covered in this book, should you need that. The SHARING dialog box is located under the FILE menu. (This is not a weakness, but this should be looked at first to find out the possibilities that you search for in the toolbar.)

Not so long ago, DVD was said to be the new coming technological marvel for multimedia and video. Better sound, surpassed resolution and definition and versatility on a compact CD like medium compared to a videocassette. I wasn't quite sure what other advantages but knowing that I had worked with laserdiscs the past years, I knew there was always something coming in the future. As DVDs became more popular in stores, I could see that DVDs were gaining in popularity for a variety of reasons but I still was not sure.

I resisted working with DVDs for several reasons. I did not have a DVD player. My Mac could not burn DVDs and different terminology as "-R", "+R" and "MPEG-4" seemed confounding to say the least. I was confused about the processes and the needs for producing one's own DVD. While I new I could use iMovie4 for video and was successful I did not know how to take video and multimedia to the next level.

This all changes when I purchased a flat-panel iMac with 800-mgzs speed, and a DVD burner. Finally I understood the advantage of the great storage capacity of a DVD- a disc that could show from 1-2 hours worth of quality video produced with MPEG4 format.

Purchasing the iDVD4 and iMovie4 software was another decision I decided upon. The advantages of integrating iMovie4 (which I already was acquainted with) with iDVD4 (which needs to be purchased with the set) seemed to be a natural progression as the tools and integrated features could help with the whole process. The book I found, *iMovie4 & iDVD4 for Mac OS X*, was a great help with piecing together all the integrated knowledge, tips and ideas needed to create my first DVD.

Integrating the package helps if you know what projects to begin with. My main objective was to create a stylized DVD of all my eclipse videotaped adventures using my movie created video and slide shows (astronomical endeavors in 1972, 1973, 1979, 1998, 1999, 2001), utilizing my iMac flat-panel computer and Superdrive DVD burner. I wanted the flexibility that a DVD afforded my multimedia astronomical video: one to two hours of video as well special scenes outlined in chapter-like format so that the user could, if desired, view any of the bundles of scenes. The click of an icon, instead of having to literally go through a whole video and/or have to rewind the video to see the footage desired.

My system allowed for the system requirements for iDVD4 creation: Mac OS X 10.2.6 or greater; a PowerPC G3 or G4 running with at least 300 MHz; using FireWire (if not your cannot import footage from a camcorder but iMovie will work). A digital camcorder is not a necessity but analog Hi-8mm video can be used with a conversion hardware system, like Dazzle. Also the more hard drive space you have the better (preferably external HD) but at least 10 gig. Naturally, as the book of the name implies, iMovie4 and iDVD4 are needed and these latest version help integrate the two pieces of software even further than previous versions.

Storage for your multimedia files needs to be considered as well. Videos (.mov files, Quicktime and other files) in a place other than your main computer hard drive is recommended in book. It is better, if you have one, to place these files but with an external hard drive if you have one. The rationale for that is DVD burning is hardware intensive. The more resources you place in a location, other than your main hard drive, the better your computer and software can make the DVD. This is especially true for systems that are at the low end of the specifications or have a lower MHz speed.

The booklet has four parts covering 271 pages in 22 chapters and two appendices. The author has simplified some of the look and feel of the multimedia learning process through the use of screen shot illustrations of the software, what happens when you try some of the in-depth instructions. Tips of additional insightful information are sprinkled in the text fields and give a better insight into questions and answers, what can be done considering certain situations, when certain directions with your ideas and instructions can be changed or modified to meet certain conditions and many more. The author literally involves you in your guessing process but conveying information that might be on your mind as you read the information and begin your iMovie4 and iDVD4 adventures. Pictures of certain conditions, illustrations of the whole iMovie4 and iDVD4 area with arrowed pointers to show where the tools are found, as well as closer-up parts of the tools give a very nice and in-depth visual understanding of the learning process.

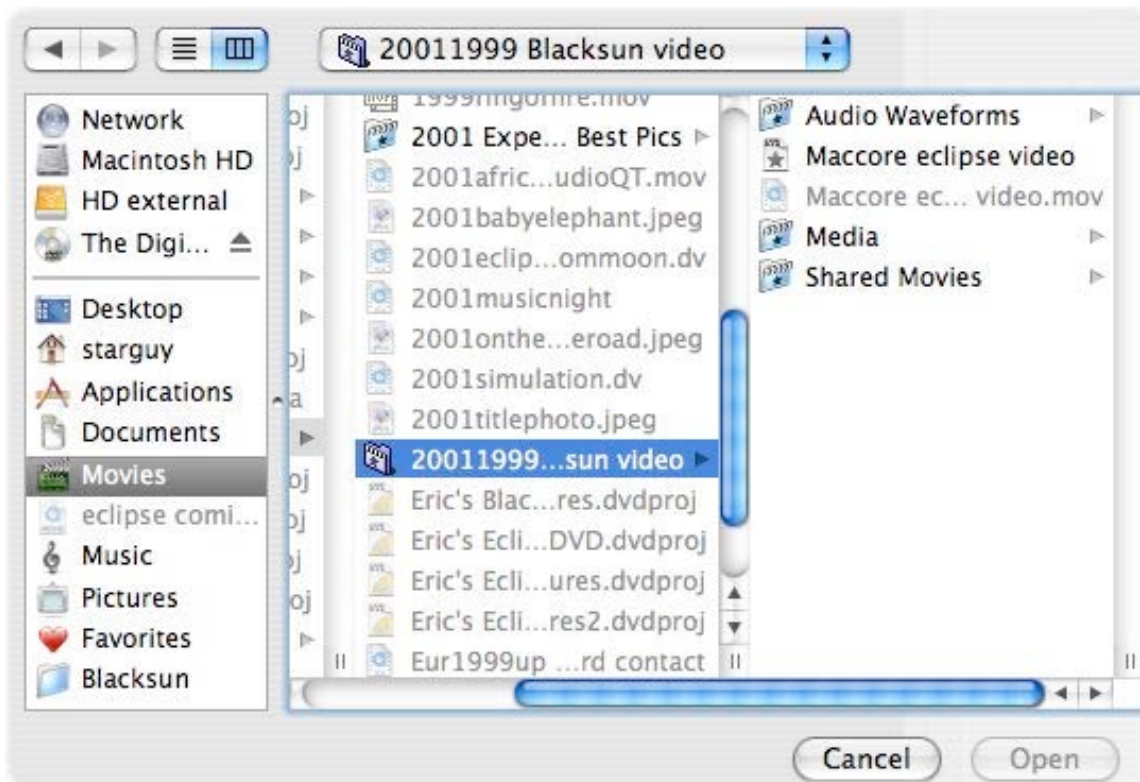
If you are a novice to the whole process of using iMovie4 and iDVD4 software, the beginning is where you should start. Intermediate users might want to use this section of chapters to help fill in needed information and learning about any missing parts of the hierarchy of information. If you are an advanced iMovie user, your attention should be focused on the use of the "chapters" for segmenting parts of the video (see in later part of this article). To many without DVD experience or who possess

some experience, the iDVD4 section should be read carefully, especially the parts involving the integrating with iMovie4 that will help the iDVD4 tools later on.

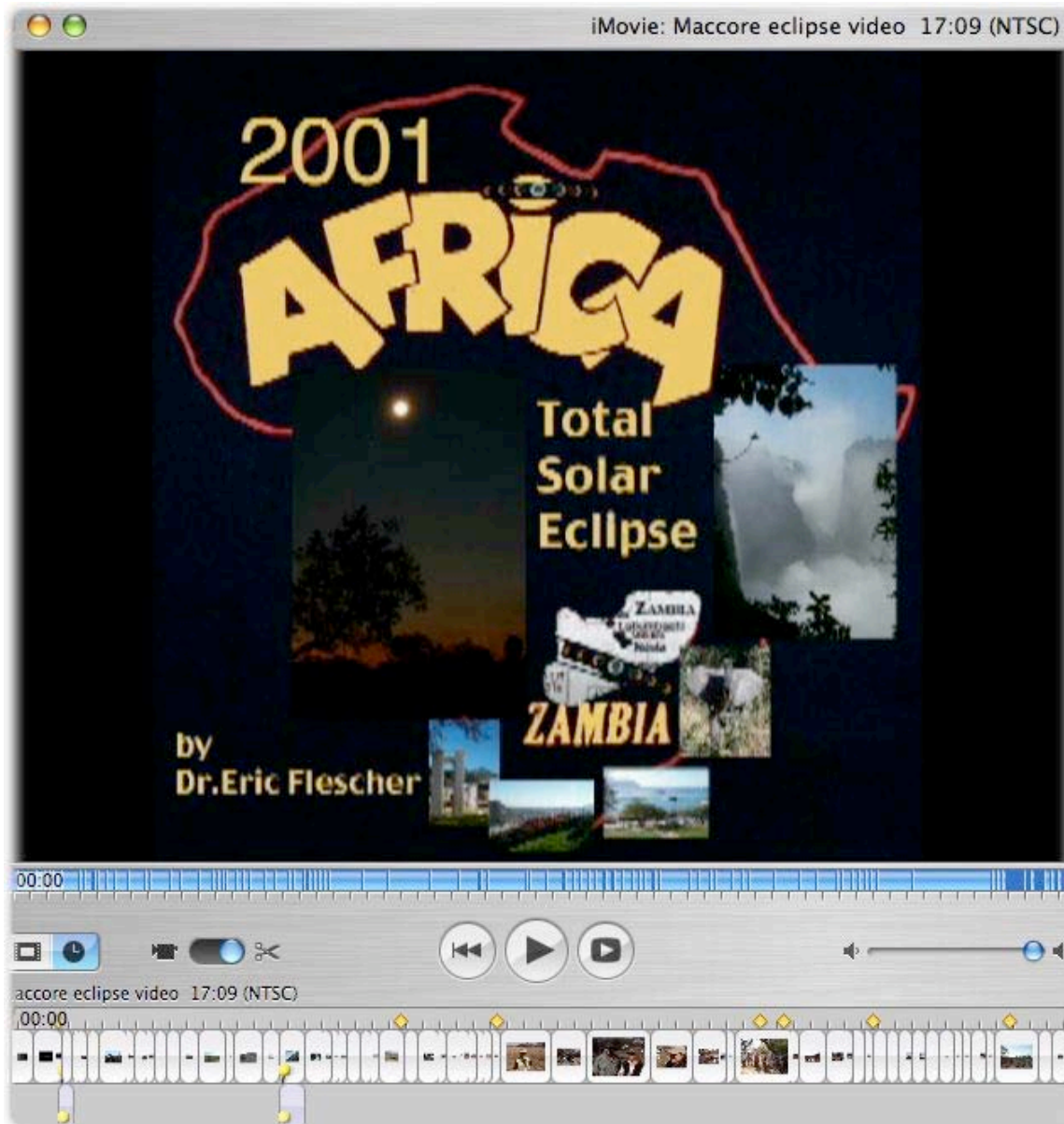
The book's Part 1 covers five chapters with basic information. These areas are the use of digital camcorders, compositing and coverage, the camera in motion, lighting and capturing audio. Five stages are needed to work with your video movie making: pre-production, being able to capture footage, importing footage into iMovie4 and editing your footage into iMovie along with exporting the video. With iDVD4, there are a number of theme (stylized graphic overlays), customizing one or more themes and adding the content, and finally burning and creating your DVD.

Part 2 covers Editing. This begins with Chapter 6, which includes the iMovie overview. Importing footage (chapter 7) and editing video (chapter 8) are a very important part of the process. The book rightly points out that only good DVDs that will work on your machine. The Apple and the verbatim brands were my choice. DVD-R mode is a necessity with the Superdrive (don't use DVD+R as these DVD will not work in the Superdrive and even if you get them to work they most likely will not work on your DVD players or other DVD players with your computers). Also make sure they will play at 4x speed which is recommended. (Check the outside of the DVD box for specifications before purchasing is once again recommended.)

I found that in a sense, I had to start over to make the video more flexible for the upcoming scenes for making my DVD special. Normally when difference scenes located at different points want to be viewed, as I have done in years past, "editing and importing sections" to video was the mode and I placed these in video short-movie sections on the hard drive, for use later. iMovie 4 now has a means to include special chapter indicators called "chapter markers," makes this chore a much more flexible one. This is even more importance when interfacing with the iDVD4 software so to make the best of iDVD 4 I really has to go over my videos before I want to do a better and more efficient job with iDVD 4. It sounded like it would make sense but I had to try it first.



I had to become accustomed with using whole parts of the video. It was a whole different mentality shift. The most important part was to position the playhead (where the iMovie4 would start showing the video) of the timeline wherever I wanted another mini-movie to start. Each time, I found a location that I wanted to use as a specific scene or series of video shorts, I added a CHAPTER MARKER at the precise location in the video where I wanted that video to start. This was accomplished by clicking on the iDVD4 pane chapter marker. A window opened up on the right side where the name of that chapter could be named. These names for each chapter would show up in a horizontal listing.



Each chapter marker would also show up in the iMovie's left side window as a yellow icon in the timeline. These would show up as a folder later (signifying by a marker as a folder or a picture) on the theme area. The magic for using iDVD4 in this way, is that the software notices these iMovie4 chapter markers in the process and makes the later processing of DVD production, much easier by including this chapter markers on the DVD. This version iDVD4 does all the work for you (iDVD3 cannot). However there was a little confusion in this process, which I needed to decipher myself first.

The files are called PROJECTS. These act as multimedia tools that interface the chapter markers and all the other files that produce the videos in the DVD. What was neat and at the same time confusing, is that there are several files placed in your Movie folder. Within this folder, (that has your iMovie4) , there are the Movie video icons (called .mV files), the QuickTime icon files (if you use them), the PROJECT files (which are produced when you created called chapters makers. These work with the videos, sound, the chapter markers and how these are worked into your DVD production.

To import a specific Movie, a .mov file needed to be located in that folder. I found that clicking upon the PROJECT files does not make it work. Apparently what goes on (but is not explaining appropriately), is that the PROJECT file connects with the iMovie4 file and other media. The Projects helps create your versions of the parts of the iDVD4, along with the other files and more.

I was able to import several Chapter PROJECTS within folders and using the Chapter Markers. You can view the whole process before you have to burn the DVD and that is important to correct, edit and modify your productions. What was nice is that when you do import a Chapter laden Movie video, two icons are created in your area. You can watch the video all the way through or you can see folders or icons of the parts of your video that were sectioned off using the Chapter markers that provide the smaller videos. Clicking on any of the video chapters, at any time, will show only that particular video section so you can pick and choose at random or choose what you want instead of going through the whole video. Another mystery solved and at the same time, showed me a how the DVD can be a great advantage for viewing your created DVDs, commercial DVDs, video slide shows and much more.

Still pictures are given an overview (chapter 9). Creating video slide shows is fun and easy and this book captures the way to do this. Adding audio is also mentioned. This book assumed that your images are ready to start with. The use of a photoeditor as Graphicconverter, Photoshop or Photoshop Elements can help with the graphics, conversion, editing, sizing and more are no covered in this book should you need that.

Chapter 10 includes the editing audio. While I have used several audio packages, I was interested in utilizing sound at various locations of slide shows and videos. I liked the way this chapter outlined the various types of audio files and the how I could pieces together the files using iMovie and QuickTime and learning how to extract audio from video files.

To add more pleasure to your videos, the transitions section (chapter 11), titles (chapter 12) and effects (chapter 13) requires an extended look. One of the advantages of the various facets of the software allows extending your multimedia stylizing adventures. Although I had known about these features, the book, the additional resources, remarks and helps helped develop a better appreciation for giving your DVD and better "look and feel."

Part 3 Sharing works with more integration and production. Chapter 14 includes working with moving back to tape while QuickTime (chapter 15) also can help. Email, web and Bluetooth (chapter 16) help extend sharing additional sharing options. However it is chapter 17 that begins the introduction to the DVD process.

Part 4 iDVD4 has 5 sections. Chapter 18 gives a good overview of the iDVD4. Chapter 19 introduced to iDVD4 themes while the chapter 21 takes this one step further by learning how to customize your production in several ways.

Learning about these entire chapter markers and newfound knowledge I set about creating my DVD. An advantage for using the DVD systems is that various scenes, slide shows or videos can be "nested " in different sections on the DVD. You can either divide your video into different segments and save

each segment separately or you can place chapters within the video by switching to what is called the iDVD4 pane (window) and placing chapters at the appropriate place on the video.

The PROJECTS are the multimedia parts of the files that integrate all your effort. What is nice is that you can keep on adding on more multimedia files, editing, revising them more easily compared to video creation. As you add more to your project, you can click on the MAP (which shows near the right part of the DVD icons) which can show the movement and placement of the different folders and videos. Getting out of the MAP area requires another click of the map icon. Clicking on the different parts of the icons on the map will take you to those areas.



CUSTOMIZE icon button at the bottom of the iDVD4 options allows even further versatility. I needed to click upon the CUSTOMIZE icon (left) and a window pops out to the left showing on the top THEME-SETTINGS-MEDIA-STATUS. Clicking the THEME displayed several themes. I also found in the book that other free and commercial theme packs could be loaded into this area. Obtaining them through downloading, I could view a variety of theme options. I selected a blue theme with line like folders for the cover. Once clicked on these links, you would then see the folders and themes with the other files, chapter, movies and more.

One or more themes (graphics overlays and sometimes-sound etc) can be placed over the incoming screen, to make it look nicer. Depending upon the theme type, they show as regular folders or colored bars or other items. Clicking on the theme makes the theme appear on the right screen. You can

change these to see which theme will work better in one of your folders/segments for your movies and slide show.

For example, I selected the global map theme. It is a rotating light brown motif or the rotating earth with the continents and I thought it would work well with showing videos and slide shows from different parts of the world. However this moving globe map comes with amazingly loud and obnoxious continuous global oriented music. I wanted the map graphic but not the annoying music. First I did not know how to stop the sound from blaring. And if I turned off this music would it turn off other sounds within the folder? Well I finally found that I needed to hit the CUSTOMIZE icon (left on the bottom iDVD 4 menu). A window popped out to the left, showing on the top THEME-SETTINGS-MEDIA-STATUS. This I found to be a multipurpose area to help me with this sound problem and more.

Clicking on the THEME PANE, clicking on the SETTINGS-MEDIA-STATUS right screen, made the screen switch to way to change the SETTINGS. Within this menu, there were several options that could be modified (duration, transition, text, and button). By clicking on the AUDIO (below transition) changed the speaker icon to a plain speaker instead of speaker with audio waves. No more sound- case solved for this matter. I also found that I could have some themes in action mode or stop the theme when I wanted to show a certain graphic area on the theme (for example, waiting until the African continent rotated around for placement).

Then I needed to find a method to move the folders and icons on the themes. Normally they "stuck" in place and could not be moved. But I wanted to place these folders on the continents. By looking at the SETTINGS at the bottom of the top THEME-SETTINGS-MEDIA-STATUS pane, I could see there was button area. By clicking the radio button to FREE POSITION instead of the SNAP TO GRID, I could move the icons around on to my heart's content. In this pane area, I could also change the centering of text/font (I like to use



Apple's Charcoal regular font) and modified the color of the text. Another option was to check to include drop shadow, which was nice added touch. So there are quite a few options I learned about but I found there were more.

I also found that I wanted to make the folders smaller, so that these could fit with the screen better. To the left of this other Button area (actually I found this a misnomer, as this area can be used for sizing icons, graphics and more not buttons), I found that by sliding the SIZE slider to the left made, those icons were made smaller. I was able to use the GLOBAL theme as a moving theme as well as a static page theme.

In the THEME-SETTINGS-MEDIA-STATUS area within the CUSTOMIZE area clicking on the MEDIA icon brought up the AUDIO-PHOTOS-MOVIE palette/pane. Three media preferences were possible: AUDIO (music songs you have imported); PHOTOS (pictures placed in your iPhoto area); MOVIE (video or QuickTime

movies found in the MOVIE section of your personal folder in your named area on your library site.

Normally images can be imported and used images easier if all photos are sequenced in photo. However, I did not have everything in my Photo area and needed to gather more. This led me to investigation: where were the original photos that I had imported into photo? I knew that the pictures that show in photo are actually "alias" of the original photos. I finally found the originals are nested in under the LIBRARY in the FINDER. Others I needed to access from my websites or other folders.

Another idea I thought would be nice was to replace an image instead the folder icon. This area would still remain as a portal to click upon and have other multimedia segments inside but instead would show a picture or some cases a moving video. Under the FILE to the left of the iDVD4 icon on the toolbar, I found what I was looking for. Clicking on IMPORT then IMAGE put the image on the folder. Placing a video segment would have a movie or audio file going if the theme was moving or if the theme was just a graphic would just show the first image of the video.

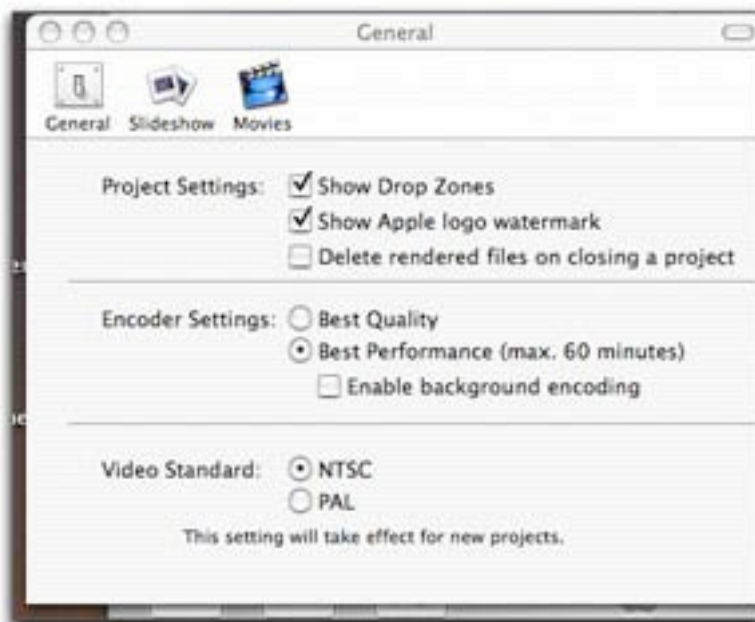
Archiving, encoding and burning (chapter 22) helps finish the whole process of burning your DVD. Here I found some important information, which may make a difference for your DVD creations.

You can burn your DVDs as either PERFORMANCE based or QUALITY based. I made a mistake of not reading this section actually before I actually mastered a DVD. As this is where it gets confusing. Quality mode is not always better!!!! The Performance mode is better if you are doing a lot of video with your DVD. The downside you can only use maximum one hour of video, slide shows and more. The advantage is that you can use your machine to do other applications and operations at the same time while the burning is going so that your machine is not idle to do other things.

The Appendix deals with troubleshooting and has a wealth of interesting information to follow and use. Read these items carefully. The B Appendix includes resources (websites, information and more) and the index

Overall the book itself is very comprehensive and broad in scope, well written and easy to understand. Even though iMovie and integration with iDVD4 was supposed to be easy, it wasn't. While both applications have a lot of flexibility to be quite frank, one can get confused with the applications and trying to integrate the various unique parts of the applications. Apple does a great job with trying to make their applications easy to use and powerful. Movie, which I have used previously to produce several videos for publication, is still a great application and powerful enough for many. But now with the enhancements of iDVD4 and integration with iMovie4, creating a DVD is a great step forward for multimedia enjoyment really gives you a lot of power and creativity at your fingertips.

This is a multipurpose area to work with Email, Homepage, Videocamera, iDVD4, QuickTime 6 and Bluetooth. Takes a little bit of time to go through all that you can do and how you can create what you



want with your DVD through the use of the Chapter markers, themes, special effects and more. But the book shows how you are able to go through most of these learning processes in a easy to use fashion so really, learning just takes time. I wish there were more information about the proper techniques to properly importing all types of files on to the DVD and more information about troubleshooting when things don't work. There are windows that say which file work and don't work but then there is little clue what might be wrong. If you don't know how to use iPhoto 4, you need to understand it to use the book and the sections with DVD to fully comprehend and use all that is features in the book and both pieces of software.

This book is a superb value for the price. I recommend this book for the novice; intermediate and even advanced DVD makers who wish to integrate iMovie4 with iDVD 4 and create DVDs. Now that my trials and tribulations with the process are now behind me, I can develop DVD projects for the future. Once you have the methods in hand, you can begin to make DVDs from the past, present and future by using your old, present or new videos. It just takes time, effort and resources. Try iMovie 4 & iDVD4 for Mac OS X to initiate, enhance or fine-tune your DVD burring creations with your Macintosh. These area creativity tools for all users and the book highlights how to learn and use these tools. The author has done his job well by writing this comprehensive, visually based book. Now you can start your own DVD production and this book is a fine place to start.

IT Ethics Handbook: Right and Wrong for IT Professionals

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Author: Stephen Northcutt

Syngress Publishing, Inc.

800 Hingham St.

Rockland, MA 02370

781-681-5151

Released: June 2004

\$50 USD, \$70 CAN, £ Net UK, €44

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

Pages: 648

ISBN: 1931836140

Book Site:

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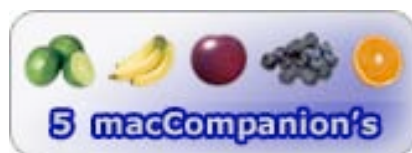
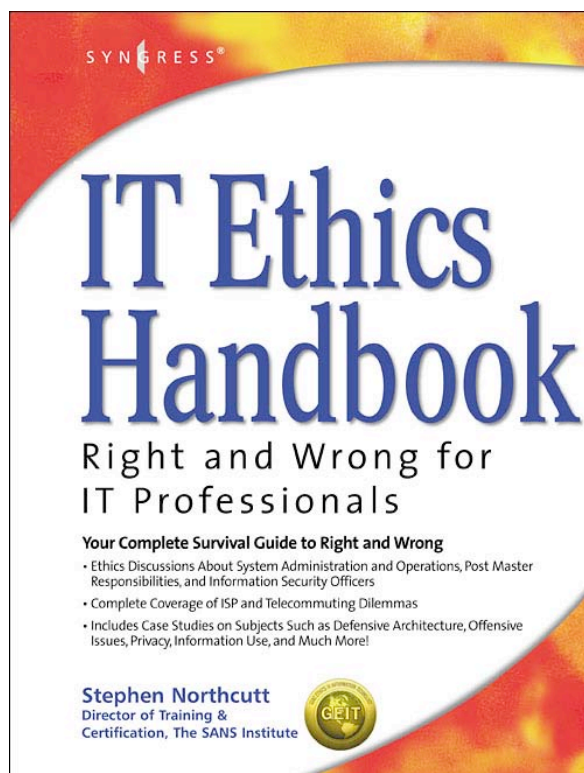
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For IT Professionals or those who want to be.



Strengths: Shows empirical evidence on doing the right things for the right reasons.

Weaknesses: None found.

IT Ethics Handbook: Right and Wrong for IT Professionals by Stephen Northcutt is a wealth of information on how to handle sticky situations and pretty much lays down solutions to just about every single hot-button activity that mankind has devised in the Information Age in an environment that needs an anchor in differentiating between the black and white of right and wrong.

Great things can occur from small things, meaning what one does here may affect the livelihood of someone over there in the global economy.

What Stephen Northcutt has done is compile lots of scenarios, itemized and categorized them into 21 chapters. Almost all of the episodes have a conservative or liberal approach to the problem and then a summary. Sprinkled through the book are anecdotes as either morally-correct soapbox items or sobering @#&!?! items of real-life hurtful experiences as lessons-learned.

This book is a professional approach and a bastion of freedom for those who are put in harm's way electronically and have to stand up to both inside and outside influences that would try men's souls to

the utmost in attempts to put us in compromising or embarrassing positions as IT Professionals. If someone tempts you, read about both causes and consequences here and maybe point it out to them, so you don't repeat bad history needlessly.

So what did I learn along the way through this thick book? Non-Disclosure Agreements and what they really stand for, hacktortionists, consequences of skipping design phases, ISP security practices regarding port-blocking, product defect notification, maintaining posted material and a host of other things most of us probably never concern ourselves about. Each one could keep us up and awake for very long periods of time as our collective consciences twinge with guilt for either sins committed or omitted. No sinful rock is left unturned.

The book ends with Dr Ramon C Barquin's 10 Commandments of Computer Ethics and located at <http://www.cpsr.org/program/ethics/cei.html> and a Code of Conduct published by the SANS Institute at <http://www.sans.org/resources/ethics.php>.

What is your level of hurt before you stop doing wrongful things and go down a road of repentance, restitution and redemption? This book will show you both truth and consequences and perhaps if you have any virtue left in your soul, may assist you in helping others from making mistakes that go way beyond providing little electronic bits and bytes mingling amongst humanity.

Java 1.5 Tiger: A Developer's Notebook

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Author: Brett McLaughlin, David Flanagan

<http://www.oreillynet.com/cs/catalog/view/au/152>

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<http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/javaadn/index.html>

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Released: June 2004

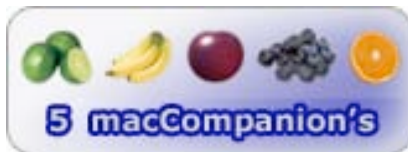
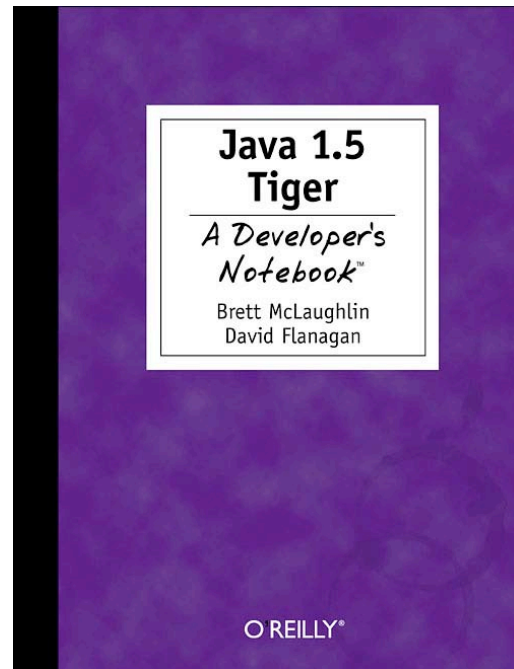
\$30 USD, \$44 CAN, £21Net UK €34,70

Pages: 200

ISBN: 0596007388

Examples: <http://examples.oreilly.com/javaadn/>

For Java developers or Java knowledge wannabees.



Strengths: Like looking over a Developer's shoulder.

Weaknesses: None found.

Java 1.5 Tiger – A Developer's Notebook by both Brett McLaughlin and David Flanagan is the first of hopefully many Developer's Notebooks, a new series by O'Reilly. When I first opened it I was struck by the layout; Graph paper, coffee stains, writing in the margins (specially adapted font by O'Reilly) wrapped around excellent information.

This book begins with questions and answers to what Java 1.5 is and what it may become. This is the other "Tiger", not to be confused with Apple's up-and-coming Operating System software.

Think of this Developer's Notebook as a lab book and reads like a conversational journal on the road to discovery.

I included the on-line examples of code above, but the book is replete with examples opinions and recommendations and cross-referencing.

What do you need to know before jumping into this book? It would help immensely if you had some inkling of what Java is and what it does and perhaps familiarity with libraries and APIs. Don't worry too much about level of knowledge. After chapter one, we are essentially up to speed and comfortably ready for learning about type conversations, annotations, boxing, concurrency, enumeration, looping and varargs.

This book allows us to look over the shoulders of masters and learn from them in a lab environment. I'm looking forward to more of this kind of book.

Learning PHP 5

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Author: David Sklar

<http://www.oreillynet.com/cs/catalog/view/au/985>

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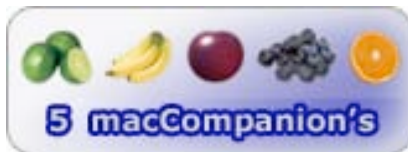
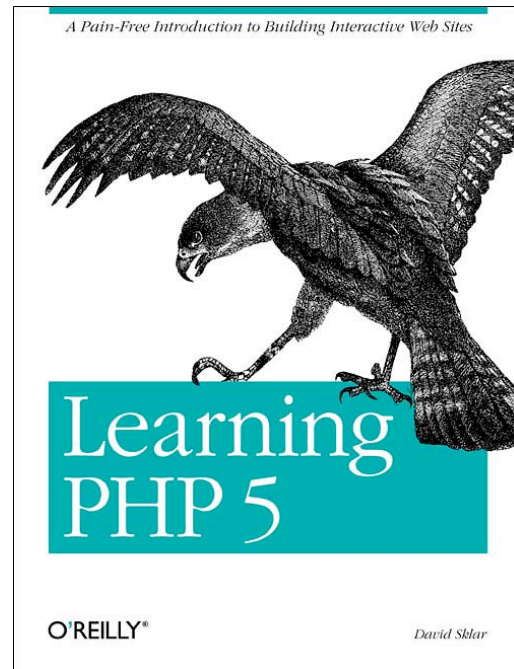
Released: June 2004

\$30 USD, \$44 CAN, £21 Net UK €27

Pages: 368

ISBN: 0596005601

For PHP 5 Beginners



Strengths: It follows the tried-and-true O'Reilly format.

Weaknesses: None found.

Learning PHP 5 by David Sklar is intended for non-PHP-savy folks who would like to be. Interested in making a website dynamic instead of static? This book introduces how to make a site handle database interfaces, object-oriented programming capabilities, HTML, XML and other web services.

There is some references to earlier versions of PHP, but the focus is to get up to speed knowing the basics of the PHP processes and how they interoperate with a web site.

Reading this book and going through the exercises (it is a textbook after all) and hands-on activities will help one master PHP for doing professional websites.

What's to learn you might ask? How about web serving and browsing, understanding how data is contrived with MySQL, using variables, logic and looping, arrays functions and web forms, parsing and generating XML (which is why I got the book), and how to debug PHP code to make it work successfully.

After all that, David Sklar also adds a whole chapter on other things that can be done with PHP such as graphics, PDFs, Shockwave and Flash, dealing with browser-specific code, mail-serving, updating files in forms, dealing with SQLite, encryption, interoperating with Java and Perl and some references for digging deeper. The Appendices discuss the PHP Interpreter, and regular expression basics as well as showing all the answers to the questions in the book (yes!).

David Sklar is a master-teacher and knows his stuff. If you have not taken the time to get into PHP, this book could very well be what you have been waiting for.

The Mezonnic Agenda: Hacking the Presidency

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Authors: Dr. Herbert H. Thompson, Spyros Nomikos

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<http://www.mezonicagenda.com>

Syngress Publishing, Inc.

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Rockland, MA 02370

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Fax: 781-681-3585

<http://www.syngress.com>

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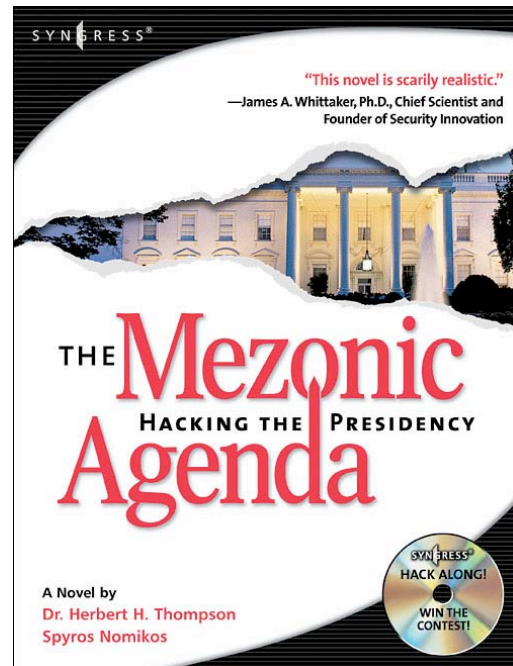
Released: September 2004

\$35 USD, \$51 CAN, £35 Net UK €30

Pages: 368 with CD

ISBN: 1931836833

Designed for cybersleuth wannabees.



Strengths: Puts a face on steganography, cryptography, reverse engineering and voting equipment history through a gripping novel approach.

Weaknesses: R-rated. Hey, knock off the 4-letter cuss-words already!

The Mezonnic Agenda: Hacking the Presidency by Dr Herbert H. Thompson and Spyros Nomikos is another soul-grIPPING novel by Syngress Publishing that is hard to put down once reading begins. The book has 2 parts, the first being the story-line where Dr. Chad Davis gets involved in an E-voting proposal before Congress and discovers a chip manufacturer in Macau that has been using mind-manipulation techniques through their video chip system to convince people to vote for a Senator to become president of the USA. Sound familiar? His life and family become endangered and he steps through various scenarios on educating us on what is done electronically to compromise software and systems through the efforts of a secret society intent on revenge for 9/11.

The 2nd part provides a compilation of Appendices that dig into the History of Voting and various voting systems, both mechanical and electronic, Reverse Engineering, Cryptography, Buffer Overflows, Steganography and an invitation to participate in a contest to participate in an interactive game (thus the reason for the CD) to work through decryption techniques to manipulate a mock election and get yourself elected as the new President of the USA.

My only issue with the book is that it is like a few other Syngress Publishing books in that it has some raw language that really detracts from the effectiveness of the book. I'd prefer to not see those kinds of words in print and as a result I have down-rated the book .5 due to that fact. Otherwise it would have gotten a full 5 points! The other point is the CD has zipped files that won't unzip in a Mac OS X environment, so the CD is essentially of no use at this point without some extra hacking above and beyond that expertise needed in a WinTel environment. BBEedit may be required or some other Mac-based tools to crack this CD.

This book is extremely topical, since the US elections are in November. The contest ends in 2005, however. Don't let that stop you from trying to get yourself elected. While the book writes about electronic voting in the state of Washington, Oregon already has been using electronic voting for absentee ballots and there are other states attempting to do similar experiments.

This book discusses some checks and balances to keep that process from becoming too compromised. Like most scenarios, this may already be too late. At least now, we know what to look for and possibly even how to counteract ingress by crackers into the E-voting systems.

Looking forward to Black Hat USA 2005 in Vegas!

SpamAssassin

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Author: Alan Schwartz

<http://www.oreillynet.com/cs/catalog/view/au/483>

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

Booksite:

<http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/spamassassin/>

<http://www.oreilly.com>

Released: July 2004

\$25 USD, \$37 CAN, £17.50 Net UK €22

Pages: 256

ISBN: 0596007078

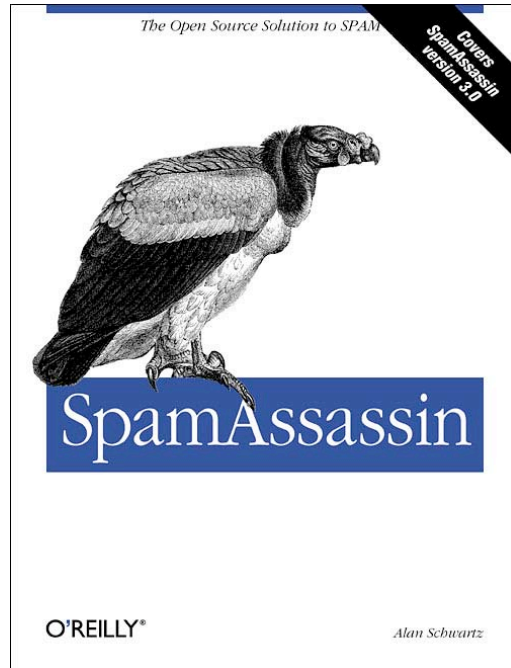
Requirements: Unix, Perl and a knowledge of how to use both.

Perl: <http://www.cpan.org>

SpamAssassin: <http://spamassassin.apache.org/>

Update on SA 3.0:

<http://www.onlamp.com/pub/a/onlamp/2004/09/09/spamassassin.html>



Strengths: Discusses a little about version 3.0 as well as earlier versions.

Weaknesses: Spends a lot of time on Bayesian filtering and Blacklist techniques that have recently been bypassed by SPAMmers.

SpamAssassin (SA) by Alan Schwartz appropriately has a vulture on the cover of the book, since SPAM finds vulnerabilities in Email systems worldwide and those who push SPAM are essentially vultures. They are ruining the online experience for millions and it may be the downfall of Email in business as we know it, since they pretty much have "peed in the pool" and continue unabated in spite of legal efforts by such as can be found at <http://www.internetnews.com/xSP/article.php/3412891>. SpamAssassin makes a noble attempt to be the chlorinated filter to clean up the mess in the Email pool.

It is one of many ways to help or at least mitigate the SPAM issue, and this book does a pretty good job explaining in 9 chapters how to use SA. The first 4 chapters deal with basics, rules and how SA learns. The next 5 cover Mail Transport Agents (MTAs) such as sendmail, Postfix, qmail, Exim and how they interoperate with SA and how SA is used as a proxy. At the time this book was published, version 3.0 was still in beta and is barely touched upon. See the *Update on SA 3.0* link above for a follow-up to the book.

SA requires Perl and is written for the Unix environment, both of which are happily "native" to Mac OS X.

So why a book on a package that is Email filtering open-source freeware? Because the online documentation so far has been sorely lacking and Alan Schwartz is filling in a need with this book.

There is some criticism regarding blacklisting information found in header fields as well as with 3.0, the URI in the Email payload (body of text) and ineffective use of Bayesian filtering, but things could be a lot worse without this SA finger in the anti-SPAM dike. Yes, SPAMmers are bypassing filters and the Mad Magazine Spy vs Spy mentality continues in the Internet Cold War for mindshare and your money. There is some space in the book dedicated to Whitelisting, Blacklisting and Bayeseian filtering techniques. Get techy. Get geeky. Get coding.

The book has value if you 1) use Unix, 2) use one of the Email programs listed, 3) want to get behind the curtain and put SA into production-mode.

The Appendix has a short list of resources to dig deeper. It needs to be longer. The O'Reilly booksite also needs to keep more current on the trends.

I suggest looking at the *Update to SA 3.0* listed above to get into version 3.0 and learn even more about such spam-filtering methods like HashCash and Sender Policy Framework (SPF). Expect another printing as long as SPAM exists.

Upgrading to PHP 5

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Author: Adam Trachtenberg

<http://www.oreillynet.com/cs/catalog/view/au/986>

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Fax: 1-707-829-0104

<http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/upgradephp5/index.html>

<http://www.oreilly.com>

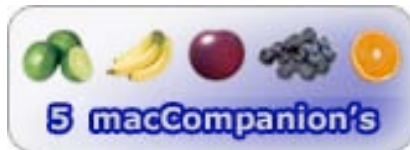
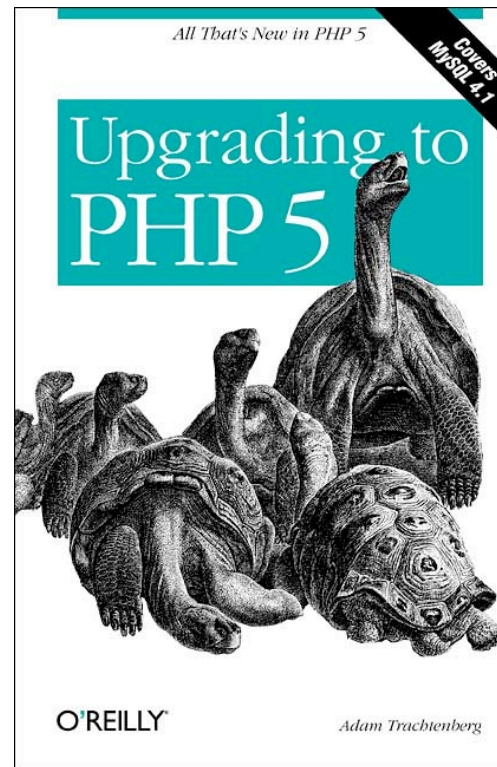
Released: July 2004

\$30 USD, \$44 CAN, £21 Net UK €27

Pages: 304

ISBN: 0596006365

For PHP 5 Intermediate to Advanced. Knowledge of PHP 4 required.



Strengths: It follows the tried-and-true O'Reilly format.

Weaknesses: None found.

Upgrading to PHP 5 by Adam Trachtenberg is an obvious choice after reading *Learning PHP 5*. This book includes a history and comparisons to PHP 4 for those who have cut their eyeteeth on earlier versions of PHP.

Oh, maybe you should go get a copy of PHP 5 at <http://www.php.net> first. Now are you ready?

Now you can run both versions side-by-side and let this book guide you through the improvements and new features as you do your own comparison. The claim is that there are around 15 million domains using PHP 4 today. Time for an upgrade!

As mentioned in the *Learning PHP 5* book, there are Object-Oriented Programming features, MySQL and SQLite, improved support for SimpleXML, XML, DOM, XSLT, SAX, SOAP, Tidy and Reflection functionality and language expeditors such as iterators and streams.

There are lots of code samples to ease the transition between PHP 4 and PHP 5 presented in the book spread between 10 chapters covering history, OOP, MySQL, SQLite, XML, Iterators and SPL (also mentioned on the PHP website), error handling and debugging, streaming, wrappers and filters, and

other extensions (SOAP, Tidy, Reflection), and putting PHP through the ropes. Following those are 3 Appendices discussing XML, features and changes and running PHP5 alongside PHP4.

Once you've been introduced to learning PHP 5 in the other book reviewed this month in *macCompanion*, go ahead and get this one to "take it to the next level".

Games

The Emperor's Mahjong 1.0.14 – A Shanghai Solitaire Game

Reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad

Edited by Julie M. Willingham



Developer: JAMDAT Mobile Canada

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

Publisher: MacPlay

support@Macplay.com

<http://www.macplay.com>

Product: <http://www.macplay.com/games/mahjong.php/>

Released: October 31, 2003

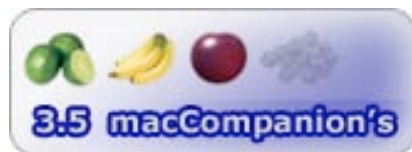
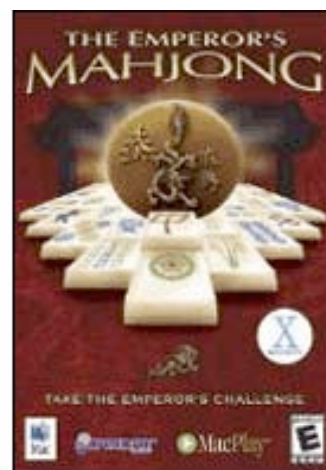
\$20 USD for physical product. No free trial version is available for download.

Requirements: PowerPC G3 - G5; Mac OS 8.6, 9.x or Mac OS X; 64MB RAM with 50MB free hard disk space; Video: 800x600 supporting millions of colors.

Network Feature: No.

Nonobjective Gripe: A limited PC version of this game is available for free download.

Test System: The software was tested on a 1 GHz dual-processor PowerPC G4 Macintosh with 2 MB DDR SDRAM running under OS X 10.3.5.



Strengths: A challenging arcade, run-against-the-clock version of this classic game. For those who like the challenge of ever more difficult games, this would be a great addition to your collection.

Weaknesses: The lack of some features that I'm used to in other mahjong games and my general dislike of clocked game play spoiled my enjoyment of this otherwise fine product.

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Introduction

On those rare occasions when the mood strikes, I play board and word games. I am hooked on chess, checkers (both standard and Chinese, on occasion), backgammon, and mahjong solitaire genre games. I was first introduced to the genre by playing Aspyr Media's *Mah Jong Parlour* (released in 1995) and ActiVision's *Shanghai Great Moments* (1996), but both are incompatible with Classic or Mac OS X systems. Having owned and played *Mahjong Solitaire 2.25b* [Bonehead Projects] and *Aki Mahjong Solitaire* [Ambrosia Software, Inc.], I was curious what this package would offer that would pique my late-night play—it's time to get unwound—interests.

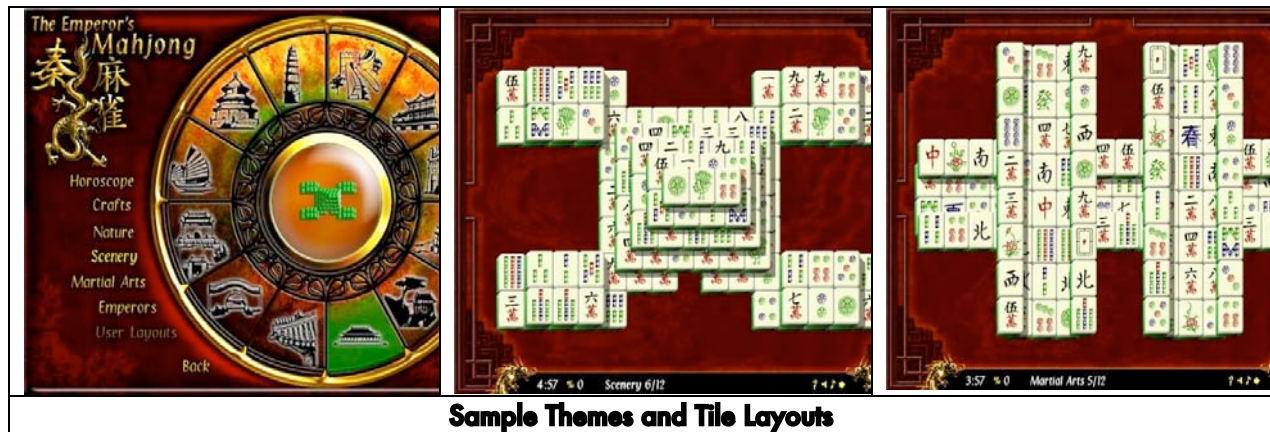
The Emperor's Mahjong works hard to feature an authentic traditional atmosphere with rich colors and ambient music that the publisher claims will literally transport you to ancient China. Its developer tells you to have fun, but be wise!

Game features include

- 72 different layouts grouped in six different themes: Horoscope, Natural Elements, Crafts, Scenery, Martial Arts, and—ultimately— Emperors; each theme contains 12 layouts chosen from a zodiac style play icon.
- Three levels of difficulty (Normal, Easy, Very Easy).
- Background music in three Chinese flavors.
- In the individual play mode, buttons allow you to access: "Next Move Hints", "Undoes" and "Tile Reshuffles".
- A user profile tool that keeps track of your successes and awards, including the words of wisdom you have accumulated.
- You can create and save your own layouts in the Layout Editor. But with 72 layouts available, why bother?

Perhaps the most unique feature of The Emperor's Mahjong is the Emperor's Challenge. This game variant, in which you play against the clock, consists of six levels of play with 12 game patterns each. Each pattern has a time limit associated with it. The play requires that you remove a set number (invisible to you) of tiles to complete the challenge before game time ends. Every challenge you clear, in a particular theme-level-tile layout variant, unlocks a Scroll of Wisdom much like the words attributed to Confucius, or perhaps the more literary of fortune cookies. Unlock all 12 game patterns in a given theme level and you receive a gem. Unlock the five gems and you unlock the final 12 most difficult patterns. Your quest is to become the Supreme Emperor. For those who enjoy playing against a clock, this is the version to play. You can't, however, play in challenge mode until you have played and won five games.





For traditional solitaire players, The Emperor's Mahjong also includes a Shanghai version without a time limit that uses the same patterns found in the Emperor's Challenge. That game play is very similar to the 1986 Activision game of Shanghai that started the solitaire craze. It includes a two-player version where players alternate removing tiles and when they are all removed, the player who took the least amount of time wins. This game variant works with teenage children and grandchildren, but is not as effective with those who are younger, because racing a clock destroys their concentration on the tiles.

[Note: To make our younger family members feel more comfortable, years ago I created a method of playing a single-player solitaire version with my family. When the first player removes a matched set of tiles, they pass the play (mouse) to another family member. Should any player remove a complete matched four-tile piece set during their move, they get a free turn. (See the review postscript.) The player who removes the last two tiles wins.]

Installation—To install The Emperor's Mahjong, simply decompress the downloaded file using a program like StuffIt Expander (installed by default on all Mac OS X systems). Drag the application icon to your *Applications* folder, and double-click it to launch the program. That's it! Pick your game mode and enjoy.

To play—Select New Game > then the level of difficulty [normal, easy, and easiest], and finally click one of the zodiac tabs to select one of the game themes, and then the individual game from the zodiac style window display.

Shanghai Single-Player Mode—Practice your skills in the one player game mode, or, if you hate clocks, just play this game variant. Simply choose your favorite layout and play without a time limit.

Shanghai Two-Player Mode—Test your skills against an opponent of your choice in a turn-based game mode. The starting player is selected randomly when the turn begins, and the timer runs until the player removes a pair of tiles. Then it's the opponent's turn. When the level is completed (no tiles left or no possible moves left), the player with the lowest timer score wins.

All in all the game was stable to my testing, causing no crashes. I enjoyed the time it took to play through more than three baker's dozens of tile arrangements, all in one and two player mode. I played with the Emperor's Challenge, but did not get hooked on the game play since I got no joy about winning a game after removing only a partial set of tiles before clocking out.

Things that need improving

In many positive ways, this game caught my attention, and, despite my occasional struggle with the

interface, playing was enjoyable. The Emperor's Mahjong should be especially appealing to competitive gamers due to its challenge of progressively difficult game play with a 'prize' awaiting the victorious. However, a number of flaws, none of which were showstoppers, marred my play when compared to the other mahjong solitaire games I enjoy. I list these below:

- I found the interface a bit difficult to get used to. The absence of the traditional menu to use for game navigation was irritating and added significantly to my learning curve. An option to allow menu use would be welcome.
- The lack of a detailed help function or a stand-alone manual to help a first time user navigate through the game alternatives was frustrating. Getting up to speed with the game interface required more trial-and-error than I usually need to play most Shanghai games.
- As in other mahjong solitaire games, changing the level of difficulty defines how "randomly" the tiles for any pattern are laid out. In the simplest game play, more of the easy to match tile pairs are displayed. Without prior experience by playing the same tile pattern at each difficulty level, how an increase in difficulty works remains a mystery to a player, who might rightfully expect that some tile patterns would be easier to play than others.
- There is no obvious Save command should you want to stop an unfinished game. Instead, you counter intuitively Quit the game you are in. You can reload that partially completed game and continue to play—something that is not obvious from information provided by the developer.
- The music on the CD is awful. You have only three options for background music while playing the game. Each sound clip is about a 90 second loop, which repeats and repeats and repeats. The first time I played the music it was innocuous but not distracting. By the time the loops repeated themselves several times, it became pure torture—Chinese water torture. I recommend you turn off the music even before completing your first few patterns. Surely there is music with an oriental theme that could provide a more interesting background sound.
- Mahjong solitaire is a tile game with only three available tile sets. I would have preferred more than three choices. I especially found the black tiles excruciating to work with against the red play board background, leaving me with only one tile set alternative.
- I miss not being able to shuttle between a full screen and partial screen version that would allow me access to the dock and iTunes. (Although not oriental in nature, the Bach Brandenburg Concertos would make great background music for this game.)
- The game provides two game play sound effects, one sound when a tile is selected and one for picking a tile that can't be removed, although to my impaired hearing these sounded the same. A "whooshing" sound for when you correctly remove two tiles is not available, an effect my children and grandchildren loved when playing Shanghai.
- The game window doesn't tell you, in any configuration, how many tiles you have removed or how many tiles remain—this a well established tradition in other mahjong solitaire games. This omission is important in The Emperor's Mahjong, because your goal in challenge mode is to remove a certain number of tiles before the time runs out. Since each layout uses a different number of tiles, knowing the percentage doesn't tell you how close you are to achieving your program selected time-driven goal.

Conclusions

Although I am a mahjong solitaire addict, I could not, for the reasons provided above, completely warm up to The Emperor's Mahjong. As previously noted, I focused on one-and two-person play, wending my way through many but not all of the 72 game layouts. It was fun to have a justification for playing for hours at a time—of course, only for the purposes of this review! If you, unlike me, are competitive, and don't mind the limitations I've described in the previous section, buy the game. Since I am not a competitive gamer in nature and shun "against the clock games" from my perspective as a Shanghai addict, The Emperor's Mahjong is only due 3.5 macCs.

Review Post Script

All, almost, about mahjong, for those who've never played the game—

Mahjong, a two thousand-year old game, was once reserved only for Chinese royalty. Commoners caught playing the game could face decapitation. Luckily for us, the ban was lifted around 500 A.D. The game was introduced to the United States by Joseph Babcock in the 1920's and centered about ornately carved and traditionally decorated ivory tiles. Four players traditionally play the actual physical board game. In pre-computer times, and even now, players used 144 exquisitely decorated ivory tiles. The game piece seven tile categories are Character, Ball, Bamboo, Dragon, Wind, Season, and Flower. The first three categories are numbered from 1-9 decorated with a glyph—four tiles for each number. There are an additional four tile groups associated with Dragon, Wind, Season, and Flower. The last two groups, Season and Flower, have four individually distinct tiles in each family. Such mahjong sets are becoming collector's items. In its day, mahjong was as popular as bridge is now.

Since then, many forms of mahjong have emerged with *solitaire* versions being the most common for computer-based play. To make tile matching interesting, each developer provides a variety of complex patterns as game alternatives. As I've illustrated above, the tiles for each layout variant are arranged in a pattern, stacked atop each other four or five layers high, and usually offset from one another. Your game objective is to select matching tiles that are not physically constrained by other tiles, eventually removing all the tiles on the board. This sounds a lot easier than it is. But that's why the game is so addicting. Even when I at time replay a game, allowed by many solitaire versions, the game plays out differently.

Hardware

BTMOUSEJR

Reviewed by Derek Meier



Macally U.S.A
15861 Tapia Street
Irwindale, CA 91706
626-338-8787
Fax:402-391-2413

sales@macally.com

<http://www.macally.com>

Product: http://www.macally.com/new/new_btmini.html
\$50 USD

Requirements: Any desktop or portable computer with a built-in Bluetooth module or an external USB Bluetooth adapter (not included), Mac OS 10.2.8, 10.3.x or later, Win98SE or later.



Strengths: Fits nicely in hand, responsive. Matches Powerbook and Powermac color, small and lightweight.

Weaknesses: No On/Off button.

When I first bought my wife her first Mac, I purchased a Bluetooth® wireless Apple keyboard and mouse to go with it. They both are quite nice, but a bit on the expensive side. The keyboard I would not change, but the mouse having one button and no scroll wheel did seem a bit awkward, being used to having both included.

Macally's BTMOUSEJR has some exceptional qualities and advantages over Apple's Bluetooth mouse. And it is about \$20 cheaper than it as well. It is also matches the color of the Powerbook®.

The installation of the BTMOUSEJR was simple and straightforward. It comes with some nice clear instructions in the box and unlike a lot of products, batteries are included. There is a connect button on the bottom. After pressing it, you can proceed with the pairing using the built-in Bluetooth setup assistant. Pairing was easy and trouble free.

The mouse is very responsive and fits nicely in the hand. It was not too small and not too big. For everyday applications use the mouse is great. I wanted to see how responsive the mouse really was and started playing the Battlefield 1942 demo. It performed quite well, but I just don't think there is a substitute for a wired optical mouse for gaming. The mouse goes to sleep after awhile, which is ideal for battery saving. One feature I would have liked to see is an on/off button for the mouse which some of the other bluetooth mice include. But you can turn it off by turning off Bluetooth on your Mac.

All in all I was extremely impressed with the BTMOUSEJR. With exception of not having an on/off button, I could find no reason not to recommend this very nice mouse. And at a price at least \$20 cheaper than the Apple bluetooth mouse you can't go wrong.

DVD/CD Disc Repair Plus™

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett



Alera Technologies, LLC

21722 Lassen Street

Chatsworth, CA 91311

866-252-5372

818-678-6900

Fax: 818-475-5200

<http://www.aleratec.com>

Product:

<http://www.buyaleratec.com/dvdireplpa24.html>

Released: May 25, 2004

\$40 USD

Refill kits at \$13 USD each:

DVD/CD Disc Repair Plus Buffer Kit Refill for 30 super repair cycles.

<http://www.buyaleratec.com/dvdireplbuki.html>

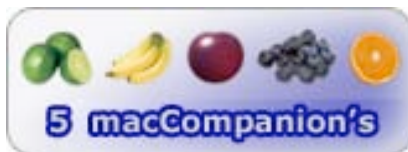
DVD/CD Disc Repair Plus Repair Kit Refill for 50 repair cycles.

<http://www.buyaleratec.com/dvdireplreki.html>

Plus Cleaning Kit Refill for 150 cleaning cycles.

<http://www.buyaleratec.com/dvdireplcki.html>

Requirements: scratched or damaged CDs or DVDs.



Strengths: Rescues DVD/CD media from destruction. 99% recovery rate.

Weaknesses: Consumables swapping in and out.

DVD/CD Disc Repair Plus™ by Alera Technologies is an electronic device that's saves DVDs and CDs from an ignominious demise by being a relatively low-cost device for removing scratches from that kind of media.

How does this device work for cleaning and repairing DVDs and CDs? Add 3 drops of cleaning solutions and press the repair button. Some assembly required, because the kit has a bunch of parts for doing different jobs.

What does the DVD/CD Disc Repair Plus kit contain? Besides the patented motorized unit, the kit also comes with repair & cleaning kits, an AC adapter, 2 more repair and 2 more buffer wheels, a buffering tool and anti-static cleaning cloth. The materials that initially come with the kit are good for 30 deep-scratch cycles, 50 minor scratch cycles and 150 cleaning cycles. Recovery rates are claimed at 99% success.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |
| <p align="center">30-cycle Deep Repair Kit</p> | <p align="center">50-cycle Repair Kit</p> | <p align="center">150-cycle Cleaning Kit</p> |

The 30-cycle Deep Repair Kit contains Buffing Heads for 30 typical super repair cycles. The 50-cycle Repair Kit includes a 10ml. tube of Repair Solution, one brush, and two cleaning units for 50 typical repair cycles. The 150-cycle Cleaning Kit contains one 30ml. bottle of cleaning solution, one brush and two cleaning units good for 150 typical cleaning cycles.

I don't think the DVD/CD Disc Repair kit will save "coasters" however, or media that has split open or discs that have had the label removed and stripped the coating from the upper surface. It is designed to handle scratched under-surfaces and can even recover those that have deep scratches.

We have a CD changer that tends to eat CDs and if they don't sit properly, they will get badly damaged. This unit saves those CDs from utter destruction.

iPod 2100mAh Replacement Battery

Reviewed by Eddie Hargreaves



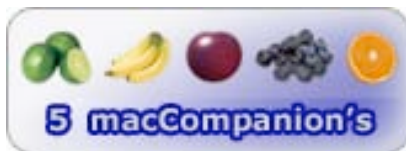
Other World Computing

sales@macsales.com

<http://www.macsales.com/ipodbattery>

\$40 USD

Requirements: 1st or 2nd Generation iPod.



Strengths: Lasts 70 percent longer than original battery; scratch-free installation tools provided.

Weaknesses: Prying open iPod can be difficult.

Battery life has been the number one issue facing iPod owners. Although the 1st and 2nd generation models are rated for 10 hours, their batteries are rechargeable, thus subject to loss over time. After a few years, the length of time an iPod can continuously play may not last an entire workday or even a plane flight.

The new iPod replacement battery from Newer Technology and Other World Computing gives owners of 1st and 2nd generation iPods a new lease on life. The 2100mAh battery uses the same Li-Polymer technology used by Apple, but provides 70 percent more capacity.

It's difficult to test exactly how long the battery lasts, because it runs longer than I can. I started playing my fully-charged 2G iPod at 8:30 a.m. and it still had three bars lit up at 6 p.m. At 2 a.m. it still had a bar showing. By the next morning it had stopped playing. Is that long enough for you?

Needless to say, this battery lasts a long time. Not only will it last much longer than the original battery that shipped with your iPod, it will last longer than the batteries currently shipping with the 4th generation iPods.

The battery comes with two non-scratching, installation tools necessary to open your iPod in order to replace its battery. Although the included instructions make it seem simple and note "Once the bottom shell is free, it will easily come off of the iPod," I found the process difficult and frustrating. It was my first attempt at opening an iPod, so someone with greater experience may disagree.

Nevertheless, the process was a success and no software installation or configuration is necessary for the replacement battery to be recognized.

Obviously, fully charging the battery will take longer than it did previously. But the inconvenience of long charge times is far outweighed by the former inconvenience of the iPod falling silent in the middle of an audiobook during a long trip.

Any owner of a 1st or 2nd generation iPod considering purchasing a newer model simply due to the age of their battery should consider spending \$40 at Other World Computing.

Lava USB Deluxe Kit: Illuminated USB Data Cable With Multiple Adapter Ends

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett



TikiMac, LLC
901 E. 10th Ave.
Denver, CO. 80218
303.830.0124

Fax: 309.413.1584

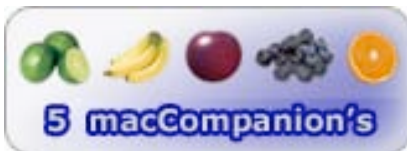
sales@tikimac.com

<http://kahuna.tikimac.com/>

Released: August 23, 2004

\$19 USD

Comes with: One 6-foot USB Lava cable, A male to A female and 4 adapters; A male to A male, A male to B male, A male to Mini-B (4-pin) male, A male to Mini-B (5-pin) male and a kukilau net bag.



Strengths: Cool light LEDs in the USB connectors.

Weaknesses: Need more cables in the kits!

The Lava USB Deluxe Kit by TikiMac is a package that contains a USB A male to A female cable with LED lights inside the connectors at either end. And one must ask, "Why"? Okay, how about wanting to know which cable is connected from the USB hub to a device without having to trace it in the dark? Justification enough? Okay, how about because it is just rad to have a lighted USB cable that puts out a nice neon-like glow? The one that came in my kit has the blue LED set (one light per end). There is a choice between red, white or blue.

The Lava USB Deluxe Kit comes with the male-to-female A-type USB lighted cable and 4 adapters that are not lighted. Those are left-to-right; A male to Mini-B (4-pin) male, A male to Mini-B (5-pin) male, A male to B male, A to A male. Each one has a see-through clear plastic coating covering an aluminum foil interior. All are engineered by TikiMac, LLC.



I'm guessing the kukilau black-nylon fishnet bag (style of shallow-water fishing) is also TikiMac-made.



The USB cable works with either USB standard and the cable shield is silver-braided to reduce any EMI/RFI (Electro-Magnetic or Radio-Frequency Interference).

I can only assume that the Tiki mask in the product picture above is perhaps connected to a Blue-tooth device. I connected mine between my powered USB hub and my Parliant device and attached with the A-to-B adapter. The bright blue glow really adds to eliminating the shadows where these devices are connected to my iMac system. The adapters do not have any LEDs in them.

The other cables aren't that expensive, and once one has been purchased and installed, you will want more. Or maybe you will want the ones that have tri-state LEDs in them that rotate through the 3 colors? They will go well with the lighted mousepad, also from TikiMac.

If you want to "trick out" your workstation area, why not make light of the situation and get some of these devices? All I can say is the kit really should come with all 3 colored cables or perhaps the tri-state cables just for the fun of it. Just a light-hearted suggestion that would make my heart glow.

SWISSMEMORY®

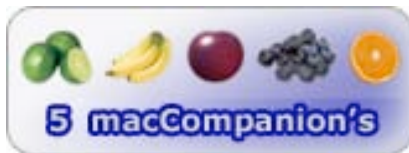
Reviewed by Robert Pritchett



Victorinox
Schmiedgasse 57
CH-6438 Ibach
Switzerland
++41(0)41 81 81 211
Fax: ++41 (0) 41 81 81 511
info@vitorinox.ch
<http://www.victorinox.com/>
Product: <http://www.swissbit.com>
2-year warranty.

Released: March 16, 2004
\$ 82 USD - 64 MB, \$100 USD - 128MB
Requirements: one available 1.1/2.0 USB port.
Provided by ThinkGeek, Inc.
10801 Main Street
Suite 700
Fairfax, VA 22030
888-433-5788
orders@thinkgeek.com
<http://www.thinkgeek.com>

Comes with: One 4-foot USB extension cable.



Strengths: Small petite rugged package. Works on all platforms. Contains password-protector SureLOCK.exe file for WinTel systems.

Weaknesses: Does not support non-USB-friendly OSes like Win95 and Win NT. (Okay, not a weakness.)



Do you remember the MacGiver-gadget-like <http://rdanderson.com/macgyver/macgyver.htm> Swiss Army knives? Victorinox (Swissbit) has created the SWISSMEMORY Knife for use with computers. I expected to actually see something larger than what came in the package, so I was rather amazed when I saw this miniature Swiss Army Knife not much larger than an adult thumb.

This one has a few tools, like the stainless-steel penknife, spring-loaded scissors, fingernail file with flat-blade screwdriver combo and some new items, like the replaceable blue-ink ball-point pen, a red LED flashlight with 2-year lifetime lithium ion battery (push the Swiss Cross to turn on) and why we are interested in this one, a Swissbit USB flashdrive. The one I have (thoughtfully provided by ThinkGeek.com) is 64MB in size based on non-volatile NAND-flash memory that can retain data for up to 10 years.

The SWISSMEMORY device has a little green activity light LED that leaves no question as to when it is being read from or written to. It sips between 900 microAmps and 2 milliAmps of power in standby mode and 120 milliAmps to 140 milliAmps at full speed. It can also be used as a boot-up device for USB-supported BIOS (USB-ZIP, USB-FDD and USB-HDD).



The Swissbit USB flashdrive unit is removable, and Victorinox was kind enough to also include a nearly 4-foot USB extension cable. However, I used the Swissbit USB flashdrive with my TikiMac™ cable. Sweet!

Dinky fanfold instructions come in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish.

So how big is the SWISMEMORY really? 60MM (L) x 17MM(widest W) x 18MM (H). If you have any inkling or desire to be a MacGyver, you might as well carry one of these along with you. Who knows? It might just be instrumental in pulling you out of a life-threatening situation too.

Software

Audio Hijack Pro 2.0

Reviewed by Eddie Hargreaves



Rogue Amoeba Software

29 Scottsdale Ct.

Cranbury, NJ 08512

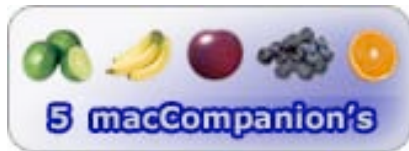
info@rogueamoeba.com

<http://www.rogueamoeba.com>

\$32; USD; \$10 USD upgrade for

registered users of version 1.x

Requirements: Mac OS X 10.2.7 or higher.



Strengths: Records to AAC; Silence Monitor;
Recording Bin; ID3 Tagging.

Weaknesses: Stutters and skips in application's audio will
reproduce in recorded files.

Rogue Amoeba Software is a relative newcomer to the Mac software scene, having released their first product - Audio Hijack - in 2002. With the release of Audio Hijack Pro 2.0, the company reveals that it not only knows what Mac users want, but knows how to give it to them.

The utility allows you to record any audio that you play through your Mac, a feature I often hear people request. Whether you're looking to record audio tracks from commercial DVDs (which cannot be imported via iTunes), QuickTime streaming events, BBC News via RealPlayer, vinyl records and cassette tapes pumped in through the line-in port or speech from a microphone, you'll be able to accomplish it easily with Audio Hijack Pro. And its timed recordings function allows you to record streaming audio events that occur when you're not around the computer to set things up manually.

But the basic usefulness of the program has been amped up with version 2.0. There is a new user interface that is exceptionally easy to understand, yet includes a wide variety of options, including the ability to add ID3 tags ahead of recording.

The program now gives you the option to record directly to AAC or Apple Lossless (ALAC) formats, skipping need to convert large WAV or AIFF files. It also lets you use the bookmarkable qualities of those formats. This is excellent for long files that you may listen to occasionally, since iTunes and iPod will remember where you left off no matter if you switch to other tracks.

The Silence Monitor watches for silence and can take action when it occurs, either splitting the recording into multiple tracks or removing it altogether. This is also useful when trying to record from another program that requires you to switch to it and hit play. The Silence Monitor will automatically detect the absence of sound once you've started the audio in the other program and begin recording. This results in recordings that do not require trimming at the beginning or end, due to mis-timed button presses.

And the Quick Record function allows you to quickly set up a recording with fast access to the most important features, including the ability to start recording the foremost application with a single key command.

Also new is the incredibly useful Recording Bin, which lets you preview the tracks you've recorded, reveal their location in the finder, send them to iTunes, burn them to CD, apply an AppleScript and more.

I must note that if the sound from the application you're recording stutters or skips in any way, that will be reproduced in the recorded file. This is not really a weakness of Audio Hijack Pro, but the weakness of your hardware. So don't do any heavy lifting with your processor while you're trying to make a recording.

For users of Audio Hijack Pro 1.0, the more than 35 major new features for only \$10 makes this upgrade a no-brainer. Some users may find Audio Hijack Pro's many features overwhelming, especially the DSP Effects and advanced controls. For them, I would recommend its little brother, Audio Hijack, for \$16.

But Audio Hijack Pro's \$32 price tag belies both its usefulness and its craftsmanship. If a utility got any more killer than this, it'd get locked up.

- + Application Presets (copied from Audio Hijack?)
- Skips in application audio=skips in Audio Hijack Pro track

Data Backup

Reviewed by Eddie Hargreaves

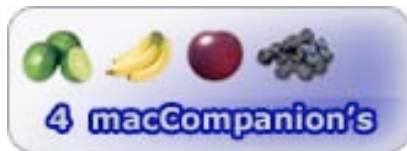


Prosoft Engineering, Inc.
4725 1st St., Suite 270
Pleasanton, CA 94566
(925) 426-6100

<http://www.prosofteng.com>

\$59 USD

Requirements: G3 or G4 processor, 128MB of RAM, Mac OS X 10.x.



Strengths: Numerous Predefined Quick Backup types; Folder Synchronization; Automated Schedules; Customizable; Detailed Manual.

Weaknesses: Cannot create compressed disk image for use with Apple's Disk Utility; Hidden files/processes may bother some users.

Backing up your data is one of the most important chores every computer user should do. Prior to OS X, Macintosh users had it pretty easy because they could drag and drop nearly anything from volume to another. But OS X is a whole different story – what with permissions, invisible directories and symbolic links – and a dedicated backup utility is practically a necessity.

There are many different backup strategies, and Prosoft's Data Backup tries to conquer most of them:

Clone makes an exact copy, which will result in a bootable drive if the source is bootable.

Simple Copy copies all of the selected data to the backup destination, including some hidden files that allow the program to only copy changed files on subsequent backups.

Versioned is similar to Simple Copy but stores old and deleted versions of the backed-up files inside a hidden area accessible by Data Backup.

Full Backup makes a complete copy of all of the files and folders in the source drives/folders and dates the folder accordingly.

Incremental is similar to Full but adds hidden files so that subsequent backups copy changed files to additional folders

Synchronize merges the contents of two drives or folders and places the complete set of data into both locations.

With the size of hard drives and the number of files in a default system installation continually increasing, using a Clone or Full Backup process is time-consuming. So Data Backup's ability to use a backup strategy that only includes changed files is welcome.

The only cost of that approach is that a daemon named Executor will constantly run. Thankfully, any performance hit from this daemon was impossible to notice. But those who keep an iron fist on background processes may find it grating.



If you backup multiple computers to a single drive, Data Backup does not make life easy for you. Most of its backup types will delete any files or folders on the backup drive that do not belong to the current backup source. And it cannot create a compressed disk image, which would be handy now that Panther's Disk Utility can "restore" a hard drive from a disk image.

Data Backup is part of Prosoft's Data Safety Suite, which also contains Data Recycler and Data Rescue. Although Data Backup's user interface is a somewhat-confusing mix of brushed metal, aqua and pinstripes, it is better than Recycler and Rescue.

The capability of the program to backup to ATA, SCSI, FireWire, USB or networked drives is impressive. The latter makes the Synchronize setting particularly useful, since those who use a laptop can sync a specific folder with their desktop machine without booting into FireWire Target Disk Mode. Some programs that only perform folder synchronization cost nearly as much as this one, which does much more.

Data Backup is far superior to Apple's Backup utility (which requires a .Mac account) and provides much more functionality than Mike Bombich's popular Carbon Copy Cloner shareware application. And at under \$60, it compares extremely favorably to Dantz' Retrospect, which has been mentioned far too often on the home page of MacFixit.com in the last couple of years.

iClip

Reviewed by Derek Meier



Inventive Inc.

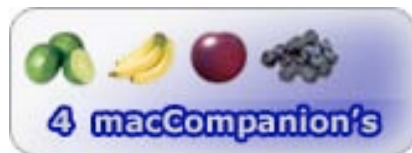
info@inventive.us

<http://www.inventive.us/>

Download: <http://www.inventive.us/iClip>

\$20 USD download version or \$30 USD for CD

Requirements: OS X 10.2 or later.



Strengths: Easy to use, organizable clippings, nice preview popup. Nice price.

Weaknesses: Some popular file formats it only creates aliases'.

I am probably the most unorganized person you will ever meet. I can't ever find anything. I do keep my computer in neat order though. No stray files are found on my computer and all are nicely organized within folders. I love trying new programs that can help me manage files or make it so my time on the Mac is more productive. That's where iClip comes in. iClip is a multiple clipboard/scrapbook application for Mac OS X.

iClip was shipped in a nice DVD case. I wish more software would come in these simple cases instead of some bulky cardboard box. It is also available via download for a lower price, of course. Installation was as simple as putting the CD in and dragging it to the Applications folder.

Using iClip is very easy. You can drag & drop or copy & paste text, pictures, URLs, sounds, movies and more into iClip. For example while browsing the web you see an image to you want to keep for later viewing saving it is as easy as dragging the image to an empty iClip bin. You can also highlight text click the clipping in button and it will pull the item into your selected bin. And when you want to export the item you can click the clipping out button and the information will be passed to the current open application.

There is also an action button that allows you to do various actions like create, edit and delete text clippings, converting formatted text to plain text, store, open and show file aliases in the finder as well as open Internet address clippings. The name of the clipping can be edited in the action button as well. Clippings can be organized into groups called clipping sets. I had created a clipping set for my macCompanion reviews. This helped keep everything in a central location and made everything easy to find when submitting my reviews.

The latest version also has a feature where if you do a mouseover on one of your clipping bins it will pop up a preview of the contents. iClip can be reduced to the size of an icon so not to take up precious screen real estate and you can still drag items on top of the icon to store. iClips transparency level can also be set in the preferences allowing you to view objects behind iClip since it sits in the foreground in front of applications. I think for a feature like though I would have preferred a hotkey to make it transparent on demand.

The only real complaint I have about iClip is that you can't insert some file types into the bin it just creates alias's. Documents like RichText files, Word docs and Appleworks docs when dragged into a bin an alias is created. When dragging a PDF to a bin, it turns it the first page into a picture clipping leaving the other pages out.

Other than that iClip is a great program. Why be limited to one clipboard when you can have as many as you want? It's definitely a must-have tool especially at the low price.



MediaEdit Pro 1.6

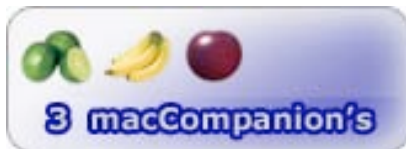
Reviewed by Derek Meier



MacXware
920 South 107th Ave.
Suite 275
Omaha, NE 681114-4789
(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 9.1 or later, QuickTime 4.0 or later;
Carbon Lib 1.5 or later; 40 MB RAM; 20 MB available system
memory; Mac OS 10.x or later; QuickTime 5.0 or later; 40 MB
RAM; 20 MB available system memory.

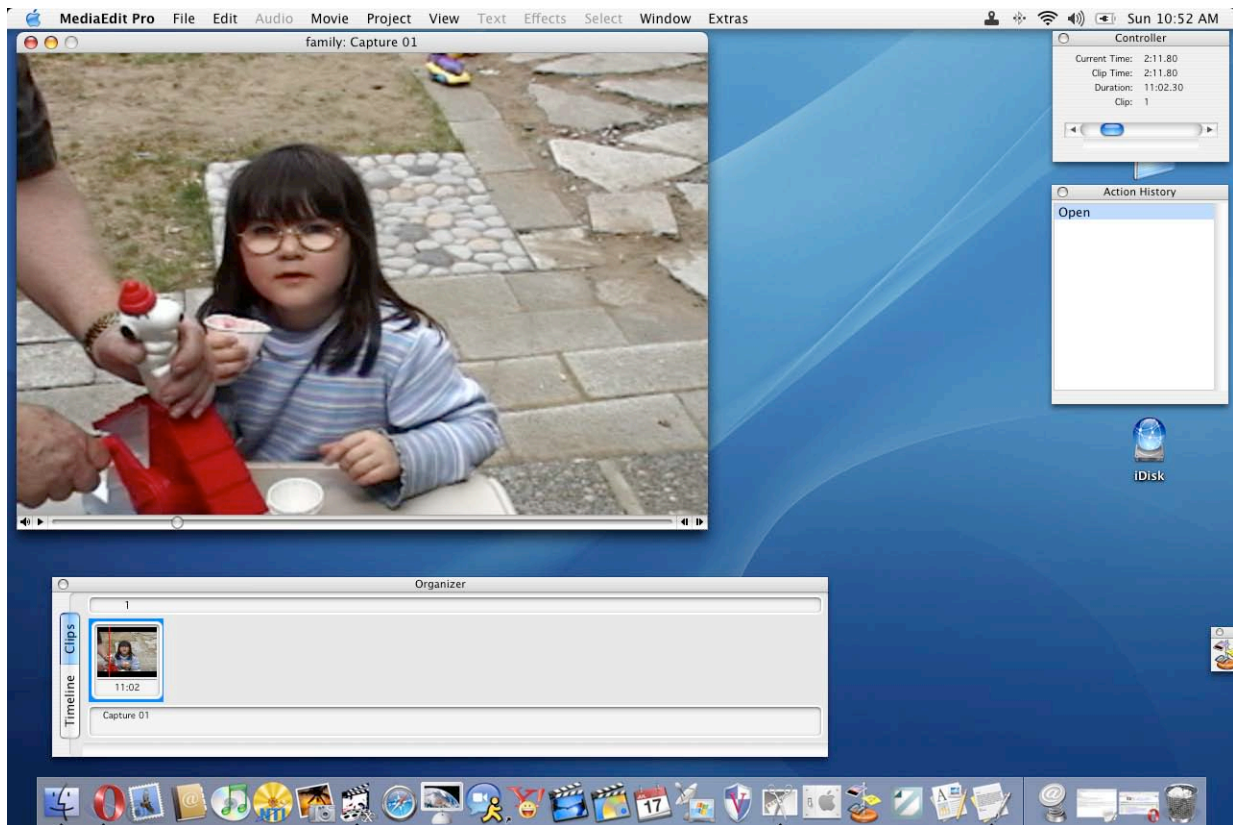


Strengths: You can draw directly onto your video clips, low priced, Some neat effects and editing tools.

Weaknesses: Not very easy to use or intuitive as iMovie.

My current hobby lately has been making family movies. I purchased a JVC camcorder with FireWire. iMovie has come in really handy for this simple easy to use. Being free I wondered how good some of the video editing software available. Maybe iMovie lacked some features I could really use. Well trying out MediaEdit I found out.

MediaEdit Pro 1.6 is an enhanced movie, audio & image editing software for Mac OS X and OS 9.1. The installation was simple and straightforward with a separate installer included for OS 9.1.



Using MediaEdit I found the program very unintuitive and hard to use. The manual is very detailed but hard to follow. Unlike iMovie where you can jump in and easily figure out how to get started and if you run in to problems has a great online help function whereas Media Edit contains none.

Basically the application has four main areas the Movie Viewer, Clip Organizer, Controller and the Action History. Whereas iMovie has just one main interface and everything is accessible from there. The Clip Organizer has two tabs timeline and clips. You can reorder clips by simple drag and drop. Double clicking on them launches the Movie Editor. Here the interface looks more like PhotoEdit that was reviewed last issue. This is probably one of the coolest features of MediaEdit Pro. You can draw directly on to your movie clips using the tools that were included in PhotoEdit. You can also add audio tracks, titles and transitions in the Movie Editor. The included Media Browser that was included in PhotoEdit is also a nice plus. It basically works as a photo and video file manager.

The Controller shows the project information like the position and the duration. You can use the controller to navigate throughout the project and the clips. The Action History displays show a history of everything that has been to the project since it was first opened. By clicking on an older action you undo all the actions below it. If you click on the last change it will the redo all of the items you had previously undone.

Hand editing titles and credits is simple in MediaEdit by allowing you to draw directly on the clip. iMovie can do this easier and has more options such as some of the effects you can do with titles such as rolling or bouncing. These options you could probably do yourself in MediaEdit but they would have to be done manually and would be time consuming.

MediaEdit Pro has a few features not available in iMovie that some people could use but I just can't see a typical user utilizing them. iMovie allows you to quickly create movies where as most things you do in MediaEdit take more time. Now that is not to say that MediaEdit does not have its place. Its

ability to "draw" on individual video clips is quite a nice feature. I can see this feature might be useful for a handful of users that would take the time to utilize it. If it were more focused on ease of use along with powerful editing I could see it taking on iMovie and maybe other products.

MultiAd® Creator Professional Version 7

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

MultiAd

One company. Many solutions.

MultiAd, Inc
1720 W. Detweiller Dr.
Peoria, IL 61615
309-692-1530

Fax: 309-693-1648

bdickerson@multiad.com

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

Released for Mac OS X: May 12, 2004 (first created in 1989)
\$300 USD. An instruction manual comes separately and costs extra.

Upgrade Comparison:

http://www.creatorsoftware.com/products/creator_professional/product/why_upgrade/

Competitive Comparison:

http://www.creatorsoftware.com/products/creator_professional/product/competitive_advantage/

Requirements: Mac boxen; G3 300 MHz with 256 MB RAM or later and Colorsync 3.0; Mac OS 9 or OS X Recommended: 10.3 or later, G4 with 512 MB RAM. **Minimum:** Mac OS X 10.3 or later, CD-ROM; latest version of AppleScript. Wintel boxen; Windows® 98 or Millennium Edition with Pentium® II 300 MHz; 128 MB RAM; Windows® 2000 or Windows® XP with Pentium® II 300 MHz; 128 MB RAM; Adobe Acrobat. CMDI requires Internet access, which may require payment of a separate fee to a service provider.

Creator Media Database Interface (CMDI) is not supported on OS 9.

MultiAdBuilder: <http://www.adbuilder.com/>

Extensions: http://www.thepowerxchange.com/category_16.html

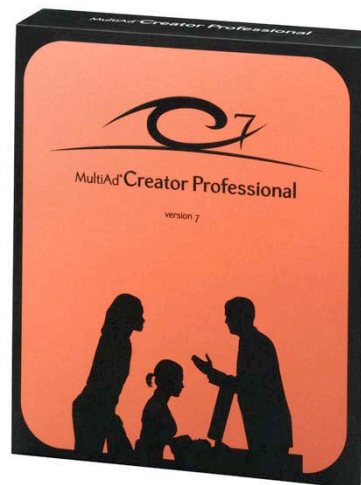
Integrators: <http://www.creatorsoftware.com/partners/integrators/>

Scripts: <http://www.esqlabs.com/creatorscripts/>

Tutorials:

http://www.creatorsoftware.com/support/learning_center/tutorials/

There are Desktop and server versions.



Strengths: Desktop Publishing is a cross-platform system for design and production of promotional materials.

Weaknesses: CMDI not available for Mac OS 9 (and why are you still using that OS anyway?) All documentation online refers to Creator 6 and not Creator 7 and needs to be updated.

MultiAd® Creator Professional Version 7 by MultiAd, Inc. is a next-gen desktop publishing system originally distributed to the newspaper industry back in 1989. It is now available for Mac OS X for anyone involved in doing ad-copy.

What does MultiAd Creator Professional do? It quickly brings together page-layouts with drawing, illustration and image manipulation without having to go "outside" the program. Compare it to other systems by looking at the posted links above and the 2 Feature tables here (the first highlights features found in Creator Desktop and the 2nd highlights features for Creator Professional). It interoperates with other production management systems including site-specific work-flow applications. It also imports and exports to PDF and word-processing environments. Elements can be added in up to 256 layers. It also transparently supports OpenType (a cross-platform font file format developed jointly by Adobe and Microsoft for Mac OS 10.2 and later). It also plays exceptionally well with AppleScript (see <http://www.MacScripser.net> and search on MultiAd Creator). Each keystroke is recordable, so productivity will improve with use.

| Feature | Creator Desktop | QuarkXPress [™] 6.0 | Adobe [®] InDesign [®] CS |
|--------------------------------|-----------------|------------------------------|---|
| Specifications Palette | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| Containment Tool | ■ | | |
| Multiple Color Gradients | ■ | | ■ |
| Universal PostScript Printing* | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| Starburst Tool | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| Make Matrix | ■ | ■ | |
| Export PDF** | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| Custom Ad Sizes*** | ■ | | |
| Open Type Support | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| Scriptable | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| Tables | ■ | ■ | ■ |

| Feature | Creator Professional | QuarkXPress [™] 6.0 | Adobe [®] InDesign [®] CS |
|-------------------------------|----------------------|------------------------------|---|
| Files Palette | ■ | | |
| Copyfit | ■ | | |
| Styles Palette | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| Export/Open XML | ■ | | ■ |
| Export/Place PDF [*] | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| Place Native Creator | ■ | | |
| Magic Wand Tool | ■ | | |
| CMDI | ■ | | |
| Layers | ■ | ■ | ■ |

*Export as a selection, spread, whole multiple-page document or a range of pages.

For a full feature comparison between Quark and InDesign, go to: www.creatorsoftware.com.

MultiAd Creator also uses *MultiAd Builder* located at <http://www.adbuilder.com/> using the Creator Media Database Interface (CMDI) that for some reason doesn't work with Mac OS 9 (and you haven't migrated to Mac OS X because...?).

Registrants can search, retrieve and place images from AdBuilder.com. "A palette will display a list of images found, which users can drag onto the document window for download and placement, or to the Files Palette for future use in the document."

There is a Creator Migration Tool, but it isn't necessary for the Mac in bringing forward older files created in earlier versions of Creator, but is required for WinTel environments.

If you want training, MultiAd provides training courses on how to use the software: http://www.creatorsoftware.com/support/learning_center/training/. (Needing a WinTel box to use the online training is rather telling.) The Mac version I received also did not have the User Guide PDF included (even though the other documentation said it is included, so it must be a CD distribution glitch). Rather, I had to go to the Help function after installing the package and step down through the extensive MultiAd Creator Help - which is basically the same as the User Guide anyway. And tutorials can be downloaded to get the gist of how to use the program.

If you do ad-copy, ignore the fact that documentation hasn't been updated yet, but get the latest

version of Creator 7 from MultiAd anyway. (In my life as a Technical Writer, I am walking in those same moccasins, so I am not going to penalize them for documentation being back a version. I just hope they work faster than I do in getting it out to the public.)

NisusWrite Express version 2.0

Reviewed by Ted Bade



Nisus Software
P.O.Box 1300
Solana Beach, CA 92075
U.S.A.

800-890-3030

Fax: 858-481-6154

info@nisus.com

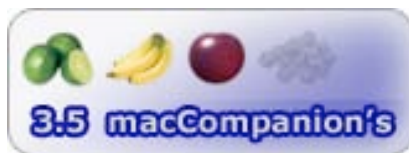
<http://www.nisus.com/>

Product: <http://www.nisus.com/Express/>
online \$60 USD, CD \$70 USD, Upgrade from Nisus Write
V6: Online \$45 USD; CD \$55 USD. Upgrade for
NisusWriter Express owners is free of charge.

Download: http://www.nisus.com/free/Login_nwex.php

Requirements: Mac OS X 10.2 or later; G3 or better.

Experience needed: Minimum to use the program,
intermediate to use all the writing functions.



Strengths: Several features added, including tables, styles, and auto correct. A great alternative to the MS word processor.

Weaknesses: Still lacks some features of Nisus Writer for MacOS Classic. I experienced a couple of bugs working on this review. Lffy conversion of Word documents.

The people at Nisus have released the next version of NisusWriter Express, their Mac OS X word processing program. They have added a number of useful features, including tables, user defined styles, and a highlighter tool, to name a few. All this means that one of the best alternative word processors just became better.

Lets start off with the really good news, if you were one of the people who actually purchased the first version of NisusWriter Express (NWE), there is no cost for the upgrade to version two. Admittedly, this is because many people, including the people at Nisus felt that the first version of NWE lacked a bit in the features area. I also feel that this might be a way for Nisus Corp. to say, "Thank You" to those people who actually supported the first version.

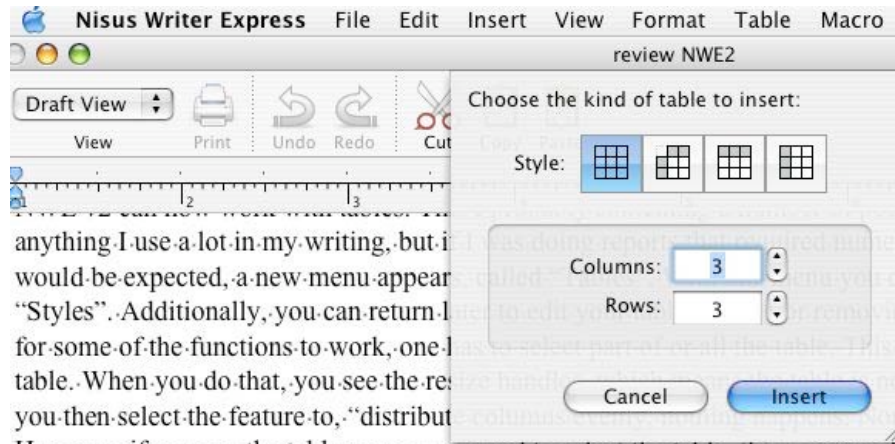
Although version 1.x might have lacked features, it was and still is a terrific word processing program. If you want my honest opinion on this first version, you are welcome to read my original review of NWE and the follow-up review of Nisus Thesaurus that was released a short time after NWE. It too was a free offering from Nisus. Everything I said about the earlier version still holds true; the ease of use, the clean interface, side tool drawer, and the ability to work with macros and scripts.

The list of things added to version 2 is extensive. Their website pointed out about 30 additions and improvements. Some of the ones I found most interesting were: Built-in Tables, User-defined styles, Footnotes and endnotes, Highlighter, Save as PDF, Templates, Autocomplete, Column Balancing, and

improved support for reading and writing Word and RTF documents, to name a few.

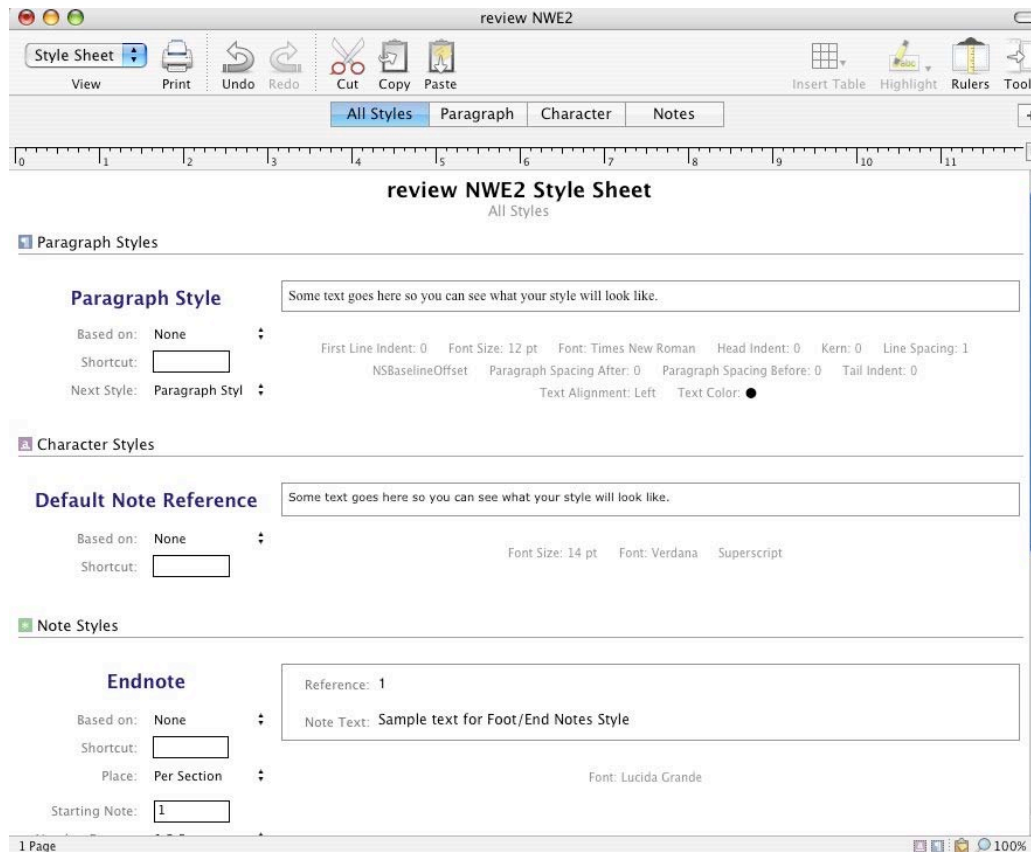
NWE v2 can now work with tables. This is probably something many people missed the most. It is not anything I use a lot in my writing, but if I were doing reports that required numerical data, it would definitely be! As would be expected, a new menu appears, called "Tables". With this menu

you can create a table of many sizes and "Styles". Additionally, you can return later to edit your table, adding or removing elements.



It seemed odd to me that for some of the functions to work, one has to select the table in a specific way. This is more than just clicking on the table. When you do that, you see the resize handles, which means the table is now selected, as a graphic item, but if you then select the feature that should affect the table, nothing happens. Nor was the command I tried grayed out. However, if you use the table menu command to select the table (which appears to do the same thing as clicking on the table image), then these commands work. I was also surprised that drag selecting the table from outside the table border consistently caused an alert box telling me that an "Internal error occurred". Drag selecting from within the table outline caused no problems.

In addition to the new table menu item, there is a table palette and a side tool group that give one easy access to all your table controls. You can spice up your table with different border styles, cell heading, cell padding, and text alignment in the cell. This version also gives one the ability to apply a style to your tables.



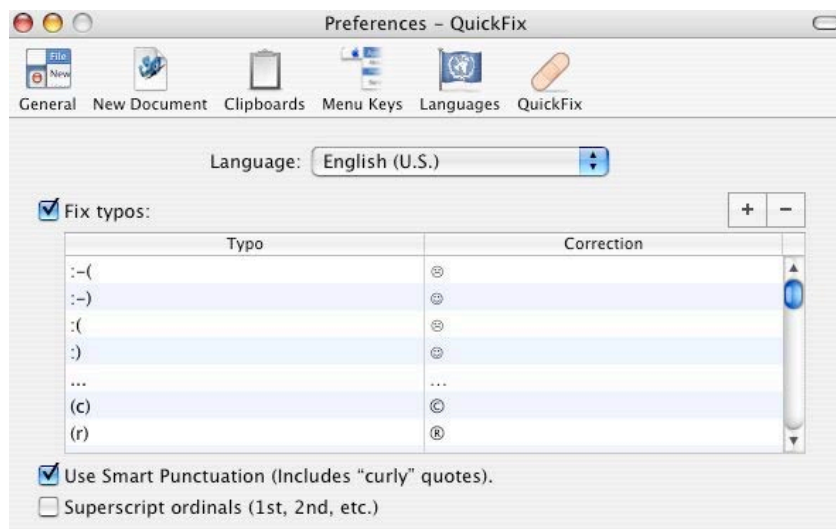
Styles is a useful feature. Essentially it allows one to create styles, but more importantly, re-use a style set up you create. This can be a real time saver if you regularly produce a document that requires a specific formatting layout.

The highlighter feature allows the user to select a group of text, then **highlight** it. This tool could be used to **stress important parts of a document** or to attract attention to a certain area of a document. I am sure editors would find it useful to **direct a writers** attention to areas they want improved or changed! If you hadn't noticed, you can choose a variety of colors to highlight your text with! Interesting tool.

NWE let's you save a document as a PDF. You might point out that any document one prints in Mac OS X can be saved as a PDF, from the print dialog. The main advantage of the NWE function is that there is a menu item "Save as PDF..." that performs this function.

NWE version 2 brings back another feature of classic Nisus Writer, the template. If you often create a document that contains certain bits of text, there is no need to re-type everything each time you start a new document. Just create a document containing the common items, than save it as a template. When you need to create the next document, open the template file and all the usual stuff it there. The advantage of a template file format is that, when you open it, it acts as a new file, which means when you save it, you have to name it. One could do a manual template, by saving a document containing the same information (which I have done), but it is too easy to accidentally save the new document, forgetting to do a "save as", and ruining your template (which I have also done!) I really missed this feature and am glad to have it back. I was also please to discover that templates I had made with NisusWriter v6.x opened with no problem in NWE, and could be saved to live another life!

The auto-complete feature (which is called "QuickFix" in NWE's preferences), is another nice feature. It can be used to automatically correct commonly mistypes words or to replace a series of symbols with a special character. For instance, if your fingers like to type "hte", but your really meant to type "the", this feature magically converts the wrong spelling to the right one. Of course, this misspelling would be caught with the spell checker. But this is a computer, so let it automatically do the



work for you. Besides correcting mistakes, it can replace certain letter combinations with an appropriate symbol. For instance, typing (c) produces the © symbol, or (R) produces an ®. For some reason I wasn't able to get the symbol combination :-)) to change to a smiley face icon. When I did this, I consistently got a blank space. As would be expected, you can edit the quick fixes and add you own.

While one of the features is improved support for reading and writing to other word processing formats, I was still not impressed with this feature. My wife created a shopping list for a local grocery store, nicely formatted, in three columns using some boxes, some special characters, and with a header. I imported it with NWE 2, and a lot of things went wrong. Obviously none of the graphic boxes (Containing the column headings) transferred, as I don't think NWE has graphics abilities, but it could have simply left space where the boxes had been. What I was surprised at was that it captured the heading on only one of two pages and the column layout was completely mangled. as were the "webding" font characters used as check boxes. I guess they need to work on this...

While this document might have been a harsh test, I was not impressed with NWE 2's ability to import just basic letters I created in Word from Office for MacOS X. While the letter body came thought okay, it consistently dumped the document header, which in the case of my letters, was my name and address. With older word documents, I also discovered a number of "weird characters" at the beginning of the converted document. I guess they need a little work on this. This, I believe, would be a big issue for many companies that need to interact with Word documents on a regular basis.

Over all, NWE v2 adds a number of good features, although a little work still needs to be done to get everything working correctly. I honestly feel that NisusWriter Express is a terrific alternative to MS Word. It is a lot less bulky, a lot more Mac-like and provides most if not all of the features the average user will need as well as many more advanced features a more demanding user might need. If you are looking for an alternative word processor, definitely check this one out.

Stuffit Deluxe 9.0

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett



Allume Systems, Inc
245 Westridge Drive
Watsonville, CA 95076
1-831-761-6200

Fax: 1+ (831) 761-6206

<http://www.allume.com>

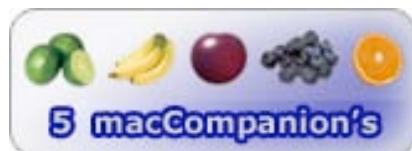
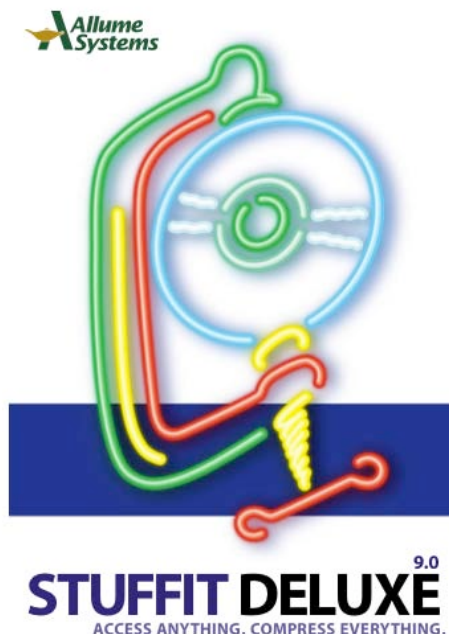
Released: September 20, 2004

Product: <http://www.stuffit.com>

\$80 USD, Upgrade, \$30 USD

Requirements: Mac OS X 10.3 or later; 40MB hard drive space.

For anyone interested in transferring files while saving bandwidth.



Strengths: Adds functionality to strong, well-thought out applications.

Weaknesses: None found. Okay, it can't create certain proprietary formats.

Anybody who has used the Macintosh® for any length of time has grown accustomed to .sit files because of the free Stuffit program that has been around as long as the predecessor to Allume Systems, whose name I always got confused with Aladdin's lamp and never seemed to ever spelled quite correctly. Well, apparently Peter Tempel and his team who are proudly and prominently mentioned at the head of each document (15-page QuickStart Guide and 63-page Users Guide) that comes with the application, are really excited about this version 9 release – and justly so.

What makes Stuffit Deluxe deluxe? Archive Assistant and Search, MagicMenu, StuffitExpress PE, some 3rd-party plug-ins for Adobe® Illustrator™, Adobe® Photoshop™, Photoshop™ Elements and MS Word™ X. No longer are there separate DropSegment, DropTar, DropZip applications. They have been merged into DropStuff 9 that includes CD and DVD drag&drop burning.

There are other applications that are old standbys like Stuffit Expander, but there are new ones like Archive Assistant™ that seems to handle all media types, and like all of Allume Systems, revels in using Mac OS X technology to strut its stuff. It can handle incremental filtered auto-archiving for any system it is connected to, local or network (pay attention SysAdmins!). Archiving can be monitored and

recorded using the Mac OS X Console or someone can be automatically notified via Email when the process has been completed.

StuffIt Expander™ reverses the process, but also can open encoded files.

DropStuff™ combines multiple files and can encrypt them (512-bit RC4 encryption), as I've grown accustomed to the ease in which it does its job. I can now switch between stuffing StuffIt (.sit), StuffIt X (.sitx), Zip (.zip), Lha (.lzh) and Tape Archive (.tar), file formats. With StuffIt X, I can archive into the TeraByte range at any time (that will be the day!).

StuffIt Deluxe can also expand, but not create Arj (.arj), Arc (.arc), CAB (.CAB), Compact Pro (.cpt), Private File (.pf), Rar (.rar), StuffIt 3.x archives (.sit) and StuffIt 1.5.1 archives (.sit), compress Bzip (.bzip), Gzip (.gzip) and Unix Compress (.Z), encode AppleSingle (.as), BinHex (.hqx), MacBinary (.bin) and UUEncode (.uu) and expand, but not create MIME/Base 64 (.mm, .mme, b64) and yEncode (.yenc).

Archived files can be saved to FTP servers or .Mac iDisks. And files can be auto-expanded or auto-compressed using the Archive-via-Rename function.

If physical media can't handle all the compressed files, StuffIt Deluxe has the smarts to know when to divide the files up for multiple-disc storage and recover corrupted data and preserves forks even when the files are intended for non-Mac environments.

It does all this magic with improved threaded compression and decompression engines and it also can take advantage of dual-processor technology for even faster throughput.

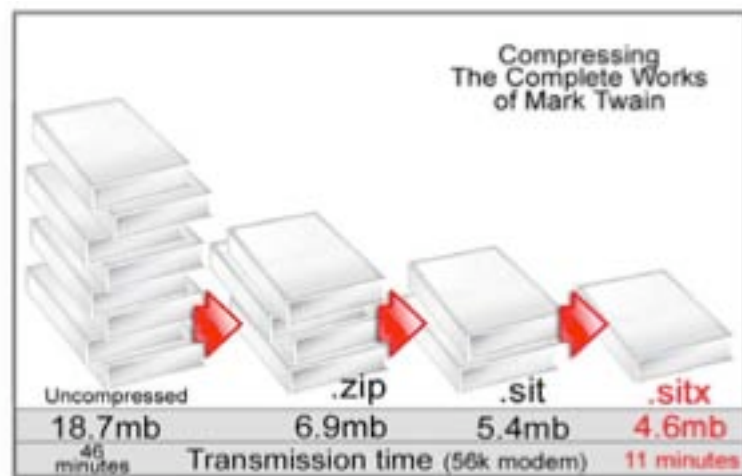
A MagicMenu is included for tool-picking and it interoperates with the Finder so it can do its thing in the background.

StuffIt Express™ uses a scripting tool that automates file compression and transfers and distribute drop boxes.

And for the true geeks, there is always the command line to stuff and unstuff.

The part I enjoy most is that stuffing and unstuffing occurs within the same folder when I drag a file over the StuffIt application. It really is magical. It is smart. It puts stuff back where it found it.

Are there any downsides? Well, compression of Zip or earlier .sit files is limited to 2 GB. Is that a problem? Oh, go StuffIt! There. I've said it. So now go and do likewise.



Path Finder 3.2.1

Reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad

Edited by Julie M. Willingham

Developed by Steve Gehrman

Cocoatech —a Los Angeles-based Macintosh software company.

feedback@cocoatech.com

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

Demo Version: A 21-day downloadable demo is available.

\$35 USD Single user, Upgrade Price is \$9 USD.

File Size: 6.4 MB

Requirements: Mac OS X, version 10.3 or later. (A version that can be used with Mac OS 9.x is also available.)

Multilingual: Available in French, Finnish, German, and Italian.

Audience: All Panther OS X skill levels.

Test System: The software was tested on a 1 GHz dual processor PowerPC G4 Macintosh with 2 MB DDR SDRAM running under OS X 10.3.5.



Strengths: As is often noted by Panther users, the OS X Finder is a work of art, balancing power with ease of use. But if you're an advanced or demanding user, you may be willing to sacrifice some of the Finder's simplicity for more power. Cocoatech's Path Finder is an OS X Finder replacement or 'enhancement' that practically gives your fingertips new finder powers in a file browser style metaphor.

Weaknesses: The software is sufficiently feature-rich that I was unable to explore the options I was less likely to use.

Software Overview: Path Finder is a stand-alone application that combines file browsing (like Apple's Finder) with a host of useful capabilities. It is a full feature file manager with a lot of extras. It can reside happily next to Finder in Panther, or it can replace it completely. Path Finder provides an alternative way of looking into your file system and organizing and managing your files and folders.

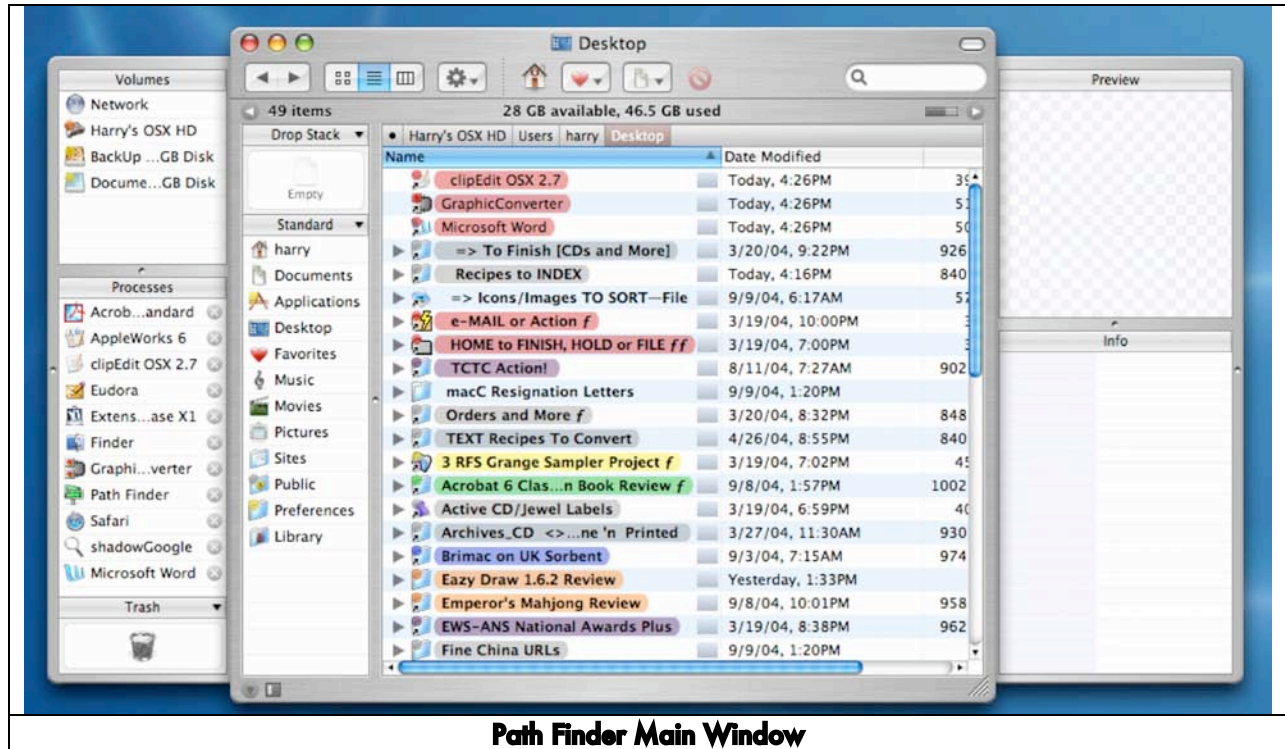
Introduction

Now, I wasn't looking for a Finder replacement when I downloaded this software on a whim. But when I read that this stand-alone application combines enhanced file browsing with a host of useful utilities, my curiosity was piqued. I became intrigued by the idea that someone could perhaps out-Finder the Macintosh Finder and after a few days of working with the product, I was hooked.

Path Finder is a file manager, but it contains a lot of extras. It can reside comfortably next to Apple's Finder, or you use in place of the Apple Finder—just pick your preference. Apple's Finder, indeed, runs smoothly alongside Path Finder - but the latter provides an enhanced way of looking at the details of your file system and the way you access and manage your files and folders.

In many ways, Path Finder is similar, as it should be, to the Mac OS X Finder, and has a well-designed user interface. For those who need help getting comfortable with the software, the 3.2.1 version comes complete with an excellent help file, including many quick start hints. I did not find that a lack of a stand-alone manual created any difficulties for me when learning the program. I found the specific help files called Path Finder Menu-by-Menu and the explanations of the feature-rich Preference Pane especially useful in avoiding my often too usual trial-and-error approach to testing a new product.

Path Finder's features are too numerous to list individually, but I'll list a few later in this review. Tim Danaher of MacUser UK (June 2003) stated, "Let's just say it is the Finder for grown-ups." Should the product meet your needs, make it a startup item. [Go to: Preferences > Accounts > Startup Items] It will then become available for use when you boot up your computer.



Working With the product

Installation – To install Path Finder, simply decompress the downloaded file using a program like Stuffit Expander (installed by default on all Mac OS X systems). Drag the Path Finder application icon to your *Applications* folder, and double-click it to launch the program. That's it!

Should you want to uninstall the software, you can do so easily by trashing the application file and searching your hard disk for both *PathFinder* and *Path Finder* and trashing those files. But I really wish that Steve Gehrman had included, in the ReadMe file that accompanies the software, a list of what was installed and where.

In addition to moving, copying, and viewing your files, you can also use Path Finder to access frequently used folders and files and do a fast file search. Path Finder, as discussed below, has the ability to carry out many of its functions from within the application, functions that under Apple's Finder required moving to a separate set of stand-alone applications. For more information, read on. The software's features were intuitive and easy to access and use, as were its integrated disk burning, disk image creation, and integrated screen capture functions.

Path Finder's other significant software features include some that I didn't test because I would not ordinarily use them:

- Simple File Sharing and Networking
- Action Menu button to access contextual menus from the menu bar.
- Document menu button allows fast access to folders inside of your *Documents* folder from the

menu bar.

- A *Process* and *Volumes* drawer allows you to view currently running applications and mounted volumes in a convenient file browser drawer.
- You can generate information-filled reports detailing all kinds of esoteric information about your files, directories, fonts, and system.
- Label your files and folders by setting colors to visually organize your files. The colorization feature applies color to the *icon* (a mode I prefer), not to the icon's "title", as is now done by Apple's Finder.
- Securely delete files for maximum security, as can be done from Finder's *File* menu.
- Open any file with many other any compatible application, either from the applications menu or from within a file listing. This is a feature you can only access from the Finder's *File Menu* > *Get Info* window.
- Connect to computers on your network in a manner comparable to Apple's Finder's *Go Menu* feature.
- View invisible files and inside file packages directly from Path Finder.
- Navigate through file paths quickly, using *Path Navigator*, allowing you to "jump up" folder levels in your hard drive quickly without remembering seldom-used finder keyboard shortcuts.

Path Finder also contains a collection of commonly used utilities and applications. This makes it quick and easy to view and edit your files - no more waiting for these applications to launch!

- Burn files, folders, and disk images to a CD or DVD quickly and easily from right inside of Path Finder. Since I use Roxio's *Toast* as my burner software of preference, I saw no need to check out this feature, so I do not know whether the software accesses iTunes or has a built-in burner.
- View and print from PDF files without having to launch Preview or Acrobat Reader.
- Access Mac OS X's Terminal command line from inside of a Path Finder drawer or window. Me access the terminal? No, never!
- Path Finder's text editor supports opening and saving Microsoft Word documents, as well as plain and rich text files.
- There is no need to launch a separate application for quick screen shots and captures. Path Finder 3.2.1 supports screen shots of selections, objects, and your full working environment (as does Apple's Finder, to a lesser degree.)
- A built-in image viewer and image editor feature allows you to convert, resize, and rotate your images from within Path Finder
- You can create disk images and compress files from within Path Finder 3.2.1. You can also decompress and compress files available in a multitude of formats from within Path Finder.

That's a heck of a lot of built-in, great features that "out-finder" the Apple Finder, and most of them were intuitive and easy to use. Pick your tool from Path Finder's *Command Menu* and away you go.

I whole-heartedly agree with John Siracusa, who noted in an *Ars Technica* Review of Mac OS X, that he does "find it puzzling that a single third-party developer can create a browser-style file manager with a feature list that puts the Panther Finder to shame. Say what you will about the wisdom of including so many features in a single application, Cocomatech's Path Finder unquestionably tops Apple's offering when it comes to sheer functionality."

Conclusions

Andrew Tokudo's (undated) MacAddict review, which I here paraphrase, supports my review conclusions. "If you think that the OS X Finder's icon, List, and Column views are sufficient, you haven't tried Path Finder. This application gives you a souped-up version of the Macintosh Panther's operating system. This includes Finder views that are easier to look at. The software also provides snazzy features

such as document previews in any view, resizable icons, viewing of invisible files, and putting the trash can back on the desktop. In addition, you can perform most of the commands right from the menu bar. For power navigation and file management, we'd take Path Finder over OS X Finder any day."

After playing with Path Finder for about a week, I also can't help but wonder why Apple didn't integrate its great features into their operating system. But you can do so by spending a mere \$35. I like Path Finder; it marvelously and smoothly augments the Apple Finder. Although I am somewhat set in my ways, this is a piece of software that I'll keep on my already full 80 GB hard disk. Indeed, it will be fun to experiment with the features of the software that I chose not to test. I encourage all *macCompanion* readers to download and try it. Those of you who are software developers—start developing small plug-ins for it...help expand its already rich capabilities. I find Path Finder not only innovative, but a joy to use. But despite my giving this outstanding piece of software **4.5 macCs**, I am not quite ready to make it a startup item or to, *de facto*, replace my finder. Try it out; download the demo. I'm sure you'll like Path Finder as much as I do.

Training

Carrara Studio 3 Training

Reviewed by Robert Pritchett



Author: Doug Sahlin
Virtual Training Company, Inc
46 South Loudoun Street
Winchester, VA 22601
Sales: 1-888-TRAIN CD (1-888-872 4623)
540-545 8060
540-545 8071
Movies: 148; Total Time: 10 hours
\$100 USD
vtcusa@vtc.com
<http://www.vtc.com/>
<http://www.vtc.com/products/carrara3.htm>

ISBN: 1932072675

Requirements: Mac OS X 10.1 or later; 128 MB RAM; 24-bit Color Display; Monitor set at 1024 by 768; 3D graphics accelerator card recommended; CD-ROM Drive; 300 MB free hard drive space; QuickTime, Speakers, a mouse and a desire to learn how to use Carrara Studio 3. Also runs in the WinTel environment. Oh, and a copy of Carrara Studio.



Strengths: Smooth transitions between nicely structured content and examples presented by a master instructor.

Weaknesses: Requires CD in player and VTC Player on the desktop to run.

Carrara Studio 3 Training CD authored by Doug Sahlin for Eovia, is one of the best training packages produced by the Virtual Training Company.

Now Eovia <http://www.eovia.com/home.jsp> has released *Carrara Studio 4*, but this training video covers most of the bases already.

Carrara Studio is one of the best cross-platform 3D authoring systems on the planet and it just keeps getting better. It offers a 3D graphics environment that features tools for modeling, animation, rendering, and special effects.

Doug Sahlin teaches fundamentals for creating 3D scenes, modeling objects, and animations using keyframes, physics, and bones using 148 lessons and 10 hours to do so. I reviewed the Carrara Studio 2 training video in our October issue of 2003 and this one is better. I think it is because the VTC Player has been improved and so has the audio on the CD. I'm looking forward to the Carrara Studio 4 training CD to learn what Doug Sahlin discovers as he goes over this rich, deep and easy-to-use 3D application.

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.

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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.

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| 1/8th Page Horizontal | \$50 USD | 3 1/2 x 2 1/4 in | 3.5 x 2.25 in | 8.9 x 5.7 cm |
| 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 |
| 1/2 Page Horizontal | \$100 USD | 7 1/4 x 4 3/4 in | 7.25 x 4.75 in | 18.4 x 12.1 cm |
| 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 |
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Well that's it for this issue. Please come back again next month!