macCompanion

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Letter From the CEO by Robert Pritchett

Being Thankful

This is the thankful season. Canada had their Thanksgiving last month and we get to celebrate one here in the USA this month. In the spirit of Thanksgiving I am going to present you with the following information:

The promise of computing technologies making both industry and personal living better through improved productivity and quality of life is rapidly becoming a shallow one. There is a worldwide need for an improved individual "computing experience" to avoid, or at least overcome, this deplorable state of affairs.

Too many users all too frequently experience a psychological condition known as "computer rage"[1], where those who use "monoculture computers"[2], suffer user-frustration to the point that they attack and destroy the computer tools they have been given, because of expensive, inadequate insecure operating systems and software that constantly needs to be patched. They are also using defective and ineffective, cheap, failing and constantly breaking computing hardware as business tools[3]. These systems are obsolete before they've been purchased, having been built with obsolescence in mind. Such low-end systems were intended for occasional home-use only and often fail when faced with mission-critical tasks. This is so bad; many people still believe that they are "computer illiterates" even after taking course of study to help them figure out how to use this once-promising technology to better their lives.

We have seen people being taken to counseling and others have lost their jobs because of their non-working relationship with their computers. That monoculture environment also fosters another kind of rage when people realize, after being billed through annual licensing strategies, that the software they use is leased (personal computers, server and site licensing) and not owned by them. They are threatened with the operating systems being forcefully shut down if they don't continue to pay for license renewals[4]. (In non-computing environments that would be considered extortion, right?[5])

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[1] See "The Economy Costly computer rage"
http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/business/the_economy/353563.stm.
[2] See "Monoculture vs. Heterogeny"
http://www.maccompanion.com/pmachinefree23/comments.php?id=596_0_1_0_C.
[3] See "Mac users have it good"
http://www.maccompanion.com/pmachinefree23/comments.php?id=1465_0_1_0_C.
[4] See "Letter from the CEO"
http://www.maccompanion.com/archives/august2003/ceoletter.html.
[5] See "Enumerating and Reducing the Threat of Transnational Cyber Extortion to Small and Medium Sized Businesses"
http://www.andrew.cmu.edu/user/gbednars/.

Adding insult, to injury, most of those who send or receive Email, also endure being spied upon through the very tools they assumed were designed to make life better. They suffer from ad software that not only slows their systems to a crawl, but also compromises their privacy and integrity and divulges any company or personal information to those who have placed such software on their systems without their knowledge. Recent well-publicized surveys show that around 80% of all computing systems have been compromised[6]. (Now do the math if Macs are "less than 3% of the marketshare".)

There is a whole industry devoted to providing lucrative services for on-site security surveys, system assessments and audits to show that firewalls are inadequate, that anti-virus, anti-SPAM and other system protections are not enough in stemming the flood of malware[7] coming across the Internet into their businesses and homes[8]. That in turn is used as leverage by the "dark side" for identity theft, blackmail or for destroying or bilking their businesses. This issue has become so bad that Email may no longer be used as a feasible communications medium in the near future.

There is a demonstrated, federally proven and monitored "controlled effort" to disrupt electronic commerce and ruin Internet communications. Controlling the bad-nasties is another matter. The modus operandi of malicious attacks and vandalism over the Internet is well known for exploiting vulnerabilities in existing computing systems. Right now, most of the computerized world is suffering from "cyber-warfare"[9] attacks by those who write and illegally distribute thousands of disruptive software packages known as trojans, worms and viruses. Millions, and yes, billions of dollars worth of resources have been, and continue to be, invested in attempts to keep the savage and many times brutal, on-line destruction at bay. When that fails to work, Computer Forensics specialists are put into play to pick up the pieces. They too are taking advantage of the victims who pay dearly for attempting to find out what happened to their destroyed businesses and lives.[10]

No doubt, if you have ever used a computer (other than a Mac) for any length of time, you too have probably faced these same issues at one time or another. The costs associated with protecting and maintaining computing systems and securing networks and training employees against such abuse, ranges upwards into the trillions of dollars per year. Many may feel that they have to return to using just pencil and paper to run their businesses. They seek less-expensive alternative solutions while holding onto the golden promise of E-Commerce technologies. There is a pressing need to remedy this intolerable computing situation that exists today.

We at MPN, LLC know how to provide both existing and evolving solutions to avoid these bleak and foreboding challenges noted above, and we know how to distribute those solutions around the world.

The initials "MPN" come from the Macintosh® Professional Network (the name of our company). Those of us who have worked with MPN, LLC for the last 2 years are in a position to help industry and

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[6] See "Infected Wintel boxen - only 80%?"
http://www.maccompanion.com/pmachinefree23/comments.php?id=1452_0_1_0_C.
[7] See "Malware"
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Malware.
[8] See "20 minutes for a WinTel box to become infected - Macs? - Zero infections!"
http://www.maccompanion.com/pmachinefree23/comments.php?id=877_0_1_0_C.
[9] See "Transnational Threats Resource Center"
http://www.csis.org/tnt/rc/cyber.html.
[10] See "How much did virii cost over the last 5 years?"
http://www.maccompanion.com/pmachinefree23/comments.php?id=1459_0_1_0_C.

individuals turn away from that bad and extremely costly computing experience, by offering enlightened assistance in helping the whole electronic world move to a computing environment that so far has been able to stem the tide from hardware, network and software attacks. We also work daily in non-Macintosh® environments and know first-hand the challenges that are associated with the current "main-stream" computing situations. The best solution we have discovered so far is to move quickly away from that inadequate non-Macintosh® computing environment, to a Mac-based environment that is working well and is saving millions of dollars worldwide by improving both business and computing quality of life every day.

We augment the safe, secure and ultimately inexpensive phenomena referred to as the "Macintosh Experience" (provided by the Apple Corporation) through training and education efforts. We demonstrate technologies that improve user efficiencies and skills while expediting and improving communications between people and cultures. We also share stories of people who use the Mac, and we promote and explore Mac-inspired technologies through our diligent reporting efforts. We gently proselytize things Macintosh, and separate the wheat from the chaff for struggling businesses and also to those trying to accomplish work within the comfort and safety of their own homes.

Our primary business focus is in globalizing and promoting the Macintosh Experience (we wish we had ownership of that phrase) and using that knowledge to also provide electronic information and networking communications around the world. Our audience is not just the current 80-million Apple-computer base (yes, there really are that many), helping them migrate upwards to the latest trusted and secure Apple technologies, but also to the billions of people worldwide who use outmoded DOS-based computing systems. We don't take away anything from their current computing knowledge and experience. We value-add to it by making their computing efforts more enjoyable, as well as secure and productive by avoiding the pitfalls and angst that comes from constant computer system glitches.

The primary objective of *macCompanion* is to provide information-rich on-line articles and other useful Macintosh products for the ever-growing Apple community by distributing our acclaimed quality reviews and hard-hitting commentaries and in using other website technologies associated with http://www.maccompanion.com.

Hardware, software, firmware, shareware, vaporware and unfortunately malware exist. We offer Aware-ware. Knowledge is powerful, and we have the knowledge to help others solve their computing challenges. Through our efforts and that of many others, we are seeing an increased grass-roots movement towards the Macintosh environment. Why? Because, based on its Unix core, it really is the most safe, secure, least-maintenance-intensive and productive computing environment in production today.

Do we have competition within the Macintosh environment for the services we offer? Yes, we do and we welcome it! We don't have all the answers, but we know where to get them. We offer a safe-haven with *macCompanion*. We empathize with those who are suffering from bad computing experiences and we know how to assist in their move to better situations. We act as a safe house for non-Mac refugees and can guide them to resources that meet their needs. And we approach this mission from a global perspective, not limited by political boundaries. We offer our services to those eagerly looking for solutions. We want them to know we exist as friendly guides.

The results of our efforts and that of the global Macintosh community is really reducing the effects of the cyber war currently ravaging and decimating those using non-Mac systems today[11]. We are

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[11] See "INSTITUTE FOR THE ADVANCED STUDY OF INFORMATION WARFARE" http://www.psycom.net/iwar.1.html.

healing the walking-wounded non-combatants in cyberspace by helping them get out of the cyber war-zone. We want the rest of the world to realize they have a real choice in platforms and performance. We can help them improve both their productivity and their bottom-line financials as businesses and greatly minimize their frustration in using computers.

Together, with your support, we can get the word out about the services we continue to offer and those we intend to provide in the near future. Sometimes the best way to avoid conflict is to go somewhere else. We can guide and direct those who want to get as far away as possible from the non-Mac computer-based war-zone being waged on the Internet.

The *macCompanion* website provides links to other resources that go into much more detail and helps open up people to the Macintosh computer to a whole worldwide community and way of life that is so much more than just the box. We want to help the world learn to use it so everyone can eventually gain a better quality of life.

We get excited when people tell us of their newfound experiences with the Macintosh platform. We hope you do too!

Yes, we do have a lot to be thankful for. Each and every one of you is special to us and we love being a small part of your life and you, being a part of ours. As we begin this holy-day season, may you find peace and contentment with those you love being with, and may we all be blessed with real peace.

Letter From the Editor by Robert Pritchett

What Makes the Macintosh System So Desirable?

- ✓ No person who ever used a Macintosh ever wanted to toss it out the window in frustration.
- ✓ When the machine is purchased, the Mac OS X operating system comes with it at no extra cost. (Version upgrades are a one-time fee.)
- ✓ Setup takes less than 5 minutes even to get connected to a network.[12]
- ✓ Most Mac-based software follows the same usage guidelines, so training costs are reduced.
- ✓ Spyware does exist for the Mac, but only if the individual machine can be compromised while in physical contact with the intruder and permission has been given by the owner for it to be installed.
- ✓ Adware does not exist specifically for the Mac. Pop-ups can be disabled in browsers without having to buy extra software.
- ✓ The Macintosh does not suffer from Worms, Trojans or Virii, and those who discover the platform wonder how they ever were able to work without it. Crackers have so far been unable to cause any real damage to the machines. Any security updates are distributed automatically as needed.[13]
- ✓ Practically all Macs act as "Stealth Machines" when tested online for open ports (by default they are closed and have to be opened as needed) and that has always been the case with systems running Mac OS X.[14]
- ✓ The Macs also play nice in heterogeneous (varying software and computer systems in the same network) environments.
- ✓ Networking setup and use is simple and does not require lots of System Administrators to maintain. When a new machine is plugged into a network it "sees" the other systems immediately.[15]
- ✓ The hardware does not have to be replaced as often as competing computer systems. The Mac OS X operating system so far has been hardware backward compatible.
- ✓ The system does not require a person to be a Computer Scientist to keep it running, but Computer Scientists use it because of all the Unix and development packaging and software that come with each and every machine.
- ✓ The latest platform releases are even designed to be self-servicing, if hardware components ever fail.[16]

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[12] See "Setup & Installation", http://www.apple.com.au/services/setupinstallation/.

[13] See "Spector v3.0 - Spyware for Mac OS X - "What you see is what they did" SuperSnooper Software"
http://www.maccompanion.com/archives/december2003/software.html#4.

[14] *See "Opener is a Closer – Supposedly Mac Malware"*
http://www.maccompanion.com/pmachinefree23/comments.php?id=1423_0_1_0_C.

[15] Run Shields Up! tests using http://www.grc.com/x/ne.dll?rh1dkyd2,
"Mac OS X is tougher to crack",
http://www.maccompanion.com/pmachinefree23/comments.php?id=1488_0_1_0_C.

[16] See http://www.apple.com/imac/design.html,
http://www.apple.com/support/imac/,
http://mactree.sannet.ne.jp/~kodawarisan/imacg5/imacg501.html,
http://www.maccompanion.com/pmachinefree23/comments.php?id=1474_0_1_0_C.

Views From the Ivory Tower by Ted Bade

I was about to write how humdrum the month of October was for the Macintosh® world, then everything started happening in the last week of the October! First I caught some news about a <<<Virus>>> for Mac® OS X™! Then Apple released two new iPod®s and a new version of iTunes®. We'll take a look at these items and a few other interesting tidbits.

Two new iPods

Part 1~ U2 Special Edition - Apple announced two new iPods at the end of October. First is the sleek Red and Black iPod that commemorates the rock band U2 http://www.apple.com/ipod/u2/. The new iPod was released as part of a partnership between Apple, U2 and Universal Music Group. Although the official statement is that the purpose of the partnership is to create new products for the digital age, all three groups stand to profit from this union, mainly through the great PR such a special edition iPod will create.

The U2 iPod is pretty cool looking and includes the autograph of U2 members on the chrome back (the front is black). Included in the purchase are a U2 poster and a $50 USD off coupon toward the purchase of the U2 digital library that will be released in November and cost around $150 USD. The library offers over 400 tracks of U2 music (did they really record that many songs?). The release of this new iPod will be followed by the release of U2's new album called "How to Dismantle an Atomic Bomb", also to be released in November.

If you are a fan of U2, this package will be a wonderful treat. This might even become a "collectable" iPod! What I wonder about is how they are going to fit that large wall poster into that small iPod box?

Part 2 ~ iPod Photo - I have been saying the iPod needed a large color display for quite a while. The New iPod Photo, while not meeting all my personal criteria, looks like it might be a pretty cool iPod nevertheless!

The iPod Photo replaces the iPod's previous monochromatic screen with a full color LCD display, offering 65,535 colors. The display is a smallish 2" diagonal screen. And if a 2" image isn't small enough, consider that the photo-browsing package on the iPod can display up to 25 thumbnails of images on this little 2" display! My eyes hurt just thinking about it ;-). However, Apple was smart enough to give this little monster the ability to output its video to TV using a composite video connection via the headphone jack and an S-video output via the iPod dock! Way cool!

Supported images include BMP, GIF, JPEG, PNG, PSD, TIFF, and SGI on a Mac and BMP, GIF, JPEG, PNG, and TIFF for Windows machines. Nothing was said about motion video, although I would be surprised if someone doesn't figure out a way to make this happen. Then, of course, there is the next version of the iPod Photo, sometime down the road!

The battery specs on this new iPod are nothing fantastic, but then battery technology has been really lagging the electronics industry. (As an aside, the October edition of Popular Science had a cover article concerning the problem with poor battery technology, it's definitely worth reading it

http://www.popsci.com/popsci/currentissue/0,21691,696549,00.html). You can expect about 15 hours of music only playback or about 5 hours if playing music and watching slideshows.

This iPod looks like a terrific machine. With one of these things, I can sneak my vacation slide shows into any party! Previously, I had to lug my PowerBook to parties, a dead give-away that Ted was going to bore everyone to tears! Hmm, guess I might start hearing a little of "what's he's got's in his pocket'es!" (Sorry JRR, I just had to do that, ;-).

The release date for the iPod Photo is 1 to 2 weeks, which is pretty soon. The iPod U2 won't be available for 3 weeks, but both will be in time for the December holidays! I have put an iPod Photo on my gift list, now I can only hope!

Is it a real Mac OS X virus or just a pipe dream? - ZD-Net Australia recently ran a news article concerning a possible Mac OS X virus. It is being dubbed the "opener" malware. According to the article http://www.zdnet.com.au/news/security/0,2000061744,39164062,00.htm, this is a "malicious script that spies on Apple Mac users" was discovered over the weekend. The malware, which has been dubbed 'Opener' by Mac user-groups, disables Mac OS X's built-in firewall, steals personal information and can destroy data."

I searched around a bit to determine if this was really a virus or just some misunderstanding. A reader on the MacinTouch web site posted his experience with this virus. However, this post was followed by a number of other postings questioning what really happened. If you are interested, take a look at the information on the MacinTouch site by visiting http://www.macintouch.com/opener.html.

One particular Blog site had an interesting take on this "virus". I don't know anything about this person or his experience, but his bottom line is that the only way the opener malware could affect a machine is if it had been given permission by the administrator. http://bloglines.com/preview?siteid=496228&itemid=142. That is a user of the Macintosh must type in the password and give the malware permission to affect his or her Macintosh.
Which reminds me of something I am saying to local Mac users all the time. It might be a bit annoying to have to remember and enter a password each time you modify you Mac OS X system or install software, but it does provide a very effective barrier to malicious programs. If your Mac is asking you for a password and you don't know why, just deny it until you know the reason. Don't give your password to software you don't know!

Is this a real Mac OS X virus? You guess is as good as mine. All we can do is wait and see what happens! [Editor – See the Blog entry "Opener is a closer" at http://www.maccompanion.com/pmachinefree23/comments.php?id=1423_0_1_0_C. No, it is the first recorded rootkit for Mac OS X.]

Apple still holds the digital music lion share - CNET news recently reported on market share in the digital music arena. Apple has managed to hold a 70% share from the period from December 2003 and July 2004. The article goes on to explain how an investment bank polled high schools across the country and found that 16% owned iPods, 25% wanted to get one and only about 8% planned on getting another type of MP3 player. Read the complete article by visiting http://news.com.com/Apple+whistles+a+happy+iTunes/2100-1041_3-5406671.html.
I hope this means good things for Apple and their music. Apple stock prices continue to soar; every few days it reaches a new 52-week high. It definitely means that Apple and the iPod have gained some

phenomenal brand awareness and are continuing to be considered cool. As always, I hope some of this filters down the Apple's real business, that of computers.

Apple Q4 financial report - While Apple might not be doing the best with sales of computers, sales of iPods have just skyrocketed! This has done a lot of good for Apples bottom line. Apple's Q4 financial statements were very good.

In the middle of October they announced a net profit of $106 million, or $.26 per diluted share, compared with a net profit of $44 million, or $.12 per diluted share, in the year-ago quarter. This put Apple well ahead of analyst estimates of $0.18 per share. Revenue was up 37% based on last year at this quarter, to $2.35 billion.

Apple said it shipped 836,000 Macs and 2,016,000 iPods during the quarter, representing a 6 percent increase in CPU units and a 500 percent increase in iPods over the year-ago quarter! Wow, notice the number of iPods sold exceeded 2 million! However, (sad _:-((face here) they didn't even sell a million Macs...

According to Steve Jobs, this was Apple's highest fourth quarter revenue is nine years. He also indicated that retail store revenue was up over 95%. For the year, Apple reported a net income of $276 million on revenue of $8.28 billion compared to net income of $69 million on revenue of $6.21 billion in 2003. Again this is a significant increase. No wonder their stock price keeps rising!

But I am still not satisfied. Has Apple become a glorified music player company rather then the manufacturer of the best computer operating system available to the consumer? I know I have complained about this before, but it still bugs me. Steve Jobs really put the pizzazz into the personal music player. Apple keeps creating interesting iMacs, but while their MP3 player was light years ahead of the competition, their computers are just ahead of the curve and perhaps loosing ground fast. IMHO, they should put much, much more effort on their real hardware item, the Macintosh.

Apple is best - According to an article in *PC Magazine* http://www.pcmag.com/article2/0,1759,1623864,00.asp, Apple received the best overall customer rating score.

In the article they stated that Apple "receives the best "overall rating" score in both: 8.8 in desktops, significantly better than the industry average of 7.8, and 9.0 for notebooks, also significantly better than the 8.0 average. " The article goes on to discuss some comments made by various people voting. Citing that the hardware was long term dependable and can be upgraded rather then replaced.

However, the writer of this article points out that part of the higher score could be due to: "the user community's long-standing and exceptional brand enthusiasm." But he does go one to say that scores this high have to have some merit.

We have all experienced how dependable our Macs are. They seem to last forever, and if you like you can usually upgrade them for quite a while. Then they make great hand-me-down machines, since they continue to just work. We have also heard many horror stories about PCs and how quickly they can just fall apart. In my opinion, Apple makes the best machines!

Rants, Raves and Revelations by Harry {doc} Babad

This month instead of a planned exposé on how Consumer's Reports [CR] treats the Macintosh and things Apple, I am reprinting most of Stephen W. Elliot's [Babel Company] fine article on backup strategies. I have eliminated, based on space considerations, a few parts of Steve's essay but it all can be yours on http://babelcompany.com/impression/primer.html/. Steve as you will find out later in this issue is the author of Impression, a fine backup program. As my readers are aware, I have a thing about backups as I forcefully expressed in the July issue of this ezine.

Oh you ask, what happened to the CR article? - It's proving harder to written then I expected so you'll either have to wait until next month or browse through your Public Library's collection of Consumer Reports starting with the September 2002 issue.

Advice Regarding Backups for Mac OS X by Steve Elliott
A Backup Primer reprinted with permission from Steve Elliott dated Nov 6, 2003

"Mac OS X. Wild animals, and a night-light. I find it interesting that Apple has chosen to code name the Mac OS X releases after various species of dangerous cats. While the big felines are alluringly sleek and powerful, if you play with one of these creatures for long enough you'll eventually suffer their bite. For instance, the 'teeth' present in the Panther release (or Mac OS X 10.3) are showing as reported data loss issues surface from FireWire 800 and File Vault bugs.

This essay has been constructed to serve as a 'nightlight' to help put some concerns to rest regarding the fear that dark problems can lurk unknowingly in our computers. Hopefully information taken from these writings will enable you to construct a fail-safe program for an event that will never be experienced. In the worst case, it will offer a practical guide to help you through a problem that can be planned for and potentially overcome with a minimal outlay of time and effort.

Having a good backup strategy comes from making well-informed choices, building a plan with multiple contingencies and then moving forward with a sense of real security. Your physical backups are important, though the design under which you craft them is even more so.

Start with a plan. Make determined choices and then proceed. Feel comforted with knowing that you have several options to recover your data in case of a failure. With these goals in mind, let's proceed.

Start With the Physical Layer - Media
The media that you choose for your backup will have significant impact on both the time it takes to perform a backup operation and on the security of your data. Listed are many of the types of media that are available for backing up OS X, along with benefits and drawbacks for choosing each.

Removable Storage Devices - These include Floppy disks, SuperDisks, Zip disks, Jaz disks and other such media categorized as 'removable media'. The primary benefits of using this media choice are low cost and convenience of use. There are a lot of Zip drives in circulation, and the media is quite inexpensive. Jaz drives offer better speed than Zip drives and larger storage capacities. And the proliferation of the 3.5" Floppy drive alone guarantees that you'll be able to find a computer that will be able to read a floppy disk for years to come. The drawbacks to using these types of media for backup operations are poor physical disk life and low data security. Dirty floppy disks have claimed more folks' data than I'd like to think about. The infamous Zip drive's 'click of death' has lost many people their drives and data as well. And Jaz disks aren't famous for their trouble-free operation.

These devices and their media are better suited for data transfer from to machine to machine instead of holding the sole copy of a precious file.

Recommendation: If you copy a file to one of these disks, please make sure you keep the primary version on a more reliable media source.

Hard Drives - Hard drives have become so economical in recent years that they are now a reasonable medium in terms of cost per MB/GB for performing backups. They are fast, self-contained and are not susceptible to the dust or dirt that plague all removable media. If speed is of the highest importance, hard drive-based backups present one of the best choices available. Drawbacks to using hard drive as medium for backups include the fact that drives do crash (heck, it's the reason we're backing up our data in the first place!), and the fact that they are a read-write, random access media. Though the latter condition results in the drive being speedy to access for backup and restore operations, it can be disastrous if a bad driver overwrites your file table, or if an important backup is dragged to the trash accidentally. [doc_Babad Sez – Wipe the partition onto which you backup (clone) your data using Apple's Disk Tools. Then turn the drive off until the next time you want to backup your entire hard disk.] The Panther/FireWire data loss debacle points straight to the heart of this problem. Using an easily writable media for one's sole backup copy is dangerous.

Recommendation: Use a hard-drive based backup with a file copy or synchronization backup strategy for the ease and speed of working with daily and hourly backup operations that might need frequent consultation and restoration. Do not trust your long-term backup storage to the platters on a Hard-Drive. [I agree, archived data belongs on CDs or DVDs – doc Babad.]

CD-R and DVD-R - CD and DVD-Based Media - These have become the floppy disks of the new millennium, though some important differences exist that are worth highlighting. Writable CD and DVD media are built as 'write at once' discs and are not rewrite-able (save CD-R/W and DVD-RW, addressed below). This builds stable discs that are used as 'snapshots' of data, perfect for distributing software. They also make good media for backups, as their contents are fixed after the write session and nothing other than physical damage to the disc can alter the data. Their cost per MB/GB is quite reasonable, and most computers Apple is currently shipping come with a writable optical drive of some kind (i.e. – a 'Combo' or 'SuperDrive'). The drawbacks to using writable optical media revolve around disc fragility and degradation of media over time. A scratched disc can result in an unreadable disc, and that factor necessitates careful storage and handling in order to trust data to these little plastic and foil packages. Also, writable CD and DVD discs slightly degrade with each read operation, making them less than ideal for truly long-term, archival quality storage. In addition, most peoples' data won't fit on a single disc, requiring smart backup software that can segment a large data set between discs. An operator will be required to switch discs, and thus a completely unattended backup using optical media isn't likely.

Recommendation: Use CD-R and DVD-R media for a safe and low cost backup solution. While some drawbacks exist (operator attention required to switch discs, careful handling of media), this is one of the best solutions to use for a reliable personal backup system. Keep at least one full backup of all important data on a set of CD or DVD discs. CD-R/W and DVD-RW - CD-R/W and DVD-RW are similar to the previously mentioned writable CD and DVD media, save the fact that they can also be erased. Under OS X this erasure must be performed all at once, not in a random-access manner as hard-drives and DVD-RAM are. This makes them more secure than hard drives (in terms of accidental erasure or accidental file table corruption). They degrade with use, so as one writes-erases-rewrites them over time, their long-term data storage stability drops. [Babad notes that there are more expensive archival quality CDs and DVDs available that will last at least 50 if not 100 years, but you will need to keep

your reader for that period, no matter what new technology is developed between now and the future.]

Recommendation: Use rewrite-able optical media in place of CD-R or DVD-R for daily incremental backups to save money and waste, and use CDR and DVD-R media for full backups for long-term stability.

DVD-RAM and Magneto-Optical – Magneto-optical (or MO) storage was once the darling of my backup dreams. The media is reasonably cheap, much more stable than CD-R or DVD-R, and mountable as a hard disk for random write-read-rewrite access. Sadly, MO never caught on with American consumers, and the cheaper CDR/W and DVD-R systems became the standard for large-format optical storage.

Recommendation: Use MO media for backups to create long-term, very stable and permanent archives of files that you've removed from active hard drives. If you are lucky enough to have a DVD-RAM or a MO drive, stock up on media and use it for your backup purposes, both full and incremental mode.

Hard Copy/Printouts - Don't laugh! Hard copies are a fine way to back up certain types of data. Copies of receipts from online purchases, photo prints of your digital snapshots and copies of your serial/registration numbers from electronically purchased software are all examples of things that can be backed up well by printed media.

Recommendation: If you have to retype the data to make use of it, printed media will stick you with a strenuous restore operation. Though for photos, receipts, correspondence, etc. – printed media is a fine option to use for backup purposes.

Consider the Type of Backup You are Running
Synchronizations With a Second Computer – A popular way to quickly duplicate data is to make a copy on a second computer. While this might seem like more than enough protection for your data, many times it is entirely inadequate and will result in data loss. Since the computer that is holding the trusted backed-up copy of your data is also a compute running an OS, things such as viruses, disk failures, accidental deletions and random 'wipeouts' of data (i.e. - iTunes 2 hard drive deletions that occurred in some cases) can all put your 'safe' data at risk. In fact, and this sounds silly - I once sold the computer that held the copy of my synchronized files, and then proceeded to suffer a failure of my primary system a few days later. Of course, I had to pay a drive recovery service to recover my data, as my 'safe' backups had been erased and sold with my other system. Yes, I know. We all make mistakes. That one cost me $1,500 US.

Synchronizations double your data, but they do not negate the chance of that data being overwritten or erased. They are duplications of your data and provide some security, though they are far from secure backups.

Recommendation: Only synchronize files because you need them in two locations for functional reasons, not to provide a sense of data security.

Traditional Backups to Media or Server - These backups are written to media (i.e. – hard disk, tape, CD, DVD, MO, etc.) instead of another computer. Occasionally, a network backup server will handle this type of traditional backup to tape or hard disk (see Network backup server under the Media section). These backups fall into three major classifications:
Full - The full backup is one done of all data that needs to be secured. Often, this is a personal directory under the /Users directory. Many times, backing up a whole system is a waste of resources, as one will be reinstalling their operating system and applications from the original media, and as such only the personal data needs to be preserved on a computer. Other times, all the data on a computer is targeted for backup. These are usually done for cloning purposes, as illustrated below.

Recommendation: Run full backups as frequently as is reasonable, usually once a month or once a week, depending on your computer usage habits.

Incremental - An incremental backup is based on a full or incremental backup that preceded it, and will only back up files with modification dates that occur after the last backup. This makes restore operations more cumbersome, though it makes backup operations much less time-intensive as fewer files are being backed up. Some software keeps a list of files backed up in previous sessions to use in case files with old modification dates are moved into target directories and then incrementally backed

Recommendation: Run incremental backups every day, or at least every time you turn on and significantly use your computer. They are fast to run, and the security of knowing that your day's work is protected will offer you substantial peace of mind.

Differential - Differential backups are consecutive incremental backups that are always based on the original full backup instead of being based on the directly previous incremental backup. As the week or month progresses, the backup operation takes longer and longer to run, though likely never as much time will be needed as the original full backup.
The advantage to this is that for restore operations, only the full and the most recent differential backup will be needed to restore any files. Under some situations, differential backups are less cumbersome than continuous incremental backups, especially if frequent data restores are necessary.

Recommendation: Run differential backups as if you often find yourself restoring small pieces of previous days work, and hate searching for the file in a host of incremental backups.

Drive Cloning - Drive cloning is a rather expensive way to maintain a backup of your data, but it's the easiest option from which to restore. The fact that two identically sized drives must be used for this operation turns many folks away from this scheme, mostly for the expense of maintaining a second drive that 'just sits there'. If a failure occurs, all one has to do is transplant (or plug) the second (or clone) drive into a system and voila, your data is restored! Though the Panther/FireWire 800 data loss bugs highlight a serious problem with this method, as the clone drive could suffer data loss and be rendered useless. The fact that this kind of backup is made to random-access and read/write corruptible media negates the security of this otherwise seemingly bulletproof method of backup. If recovery time is your biggest concern, maintaining a current disk clone will fit your interests. If you want true data security, remember to maintain a second set of backups, likely on CD, DVD or tape media.

Recommendation: Keep a cloned drive for convenience, especially if your primary {drive} is old and you feel it might be heading south. Do not rely on a cloned drive to offer data security.

Physical Security Considerations

It's important to make sure that your backup discs or tapes are stored safely. Nothing ruins a day faster than finding out your backed up data written to DVD-R was ruined sitting on the dash of someone's car, warped by the hot sun. Tapes are dust-sensitive, CDs can get scratched; plastic warps when left sitting over heat vents. While these seem like trivial things, it only takes one mistake to cost you your entire backup set. In the case of really important, long-term data, consider investing in an offsite, fireproof safe for the storage of archival backups. Fires and floods do happen, and keeping data safe is just as important as insuring a home or office against theft, fire or flood.

Drive Recovery - If everything fails and you're left with a non-functional drive and no backup copy of your data, don't despair. Drive recovery services can restore data from disks that we might consider forever gone. The big trick in this case is not to run any consumer data recovery software on the drive (i.e. - recovery software such as DiskWarrior, Norton Utilities, {TechTool Pro}, etc.). This can actually overwrite data on the drive and make a professional recovery service's job impossible. If you've just lost a drive and need its data badly, contact a reputable firm immediately and ask their advice.

I've used personally, and I highly recommend them if you need to recover the data on a corrupted or damaged drive.

> Note: Product and company names and logos in this review may be registered trademarks of their respective companies.

Rescuing Document Names - A Tidbit from doc_Babad

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 let of the document name. The Mac OS will not allow document names starting with a period. Voilá, 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.

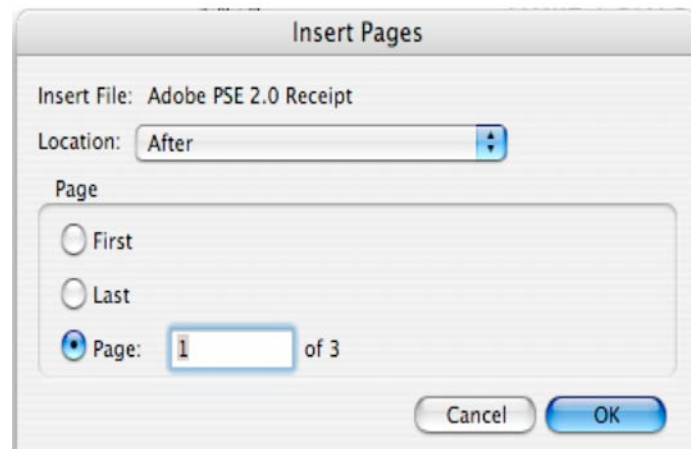### Acrobat Hints for Image Insertions into PDFs by Harry {doc} Babad and edited by Julie M. Willingham

The following hints are reprinted with permission from *Design Tools Monthly*. For a free issue of this excellent graphics-oriented ezine, visit their website at
http://www.design-tools.com/.

Three Hints for Acrobat Users
I have long longed for a way to add an image to an existing Acrobat document.

No, I don't want to merge two PDF documents. That's easy. First, open your initial PDF formatted document (the target of the merge). Then moving on via the Document menu item [Document > Pages > Insert], select the document to be merged into the target and make your merge location in the window that opens. Of course, save the result.

Insert Pages

Insert File: Adobe PSE 2.0 Receipt

Location: After

Page

First

Last

Page: 1   of 3

Cancel   OK

I had been searching for a way to insert a graphic plumb in the middle of an existing PDF page when I came across this excellent hint in the October *Mac Hints and Tips* – http://www.mac-hints-tips.com/ that had been originally submitted to *Design Tools Monthly*.

"Paste Images Into Existing PDFs
Acrobat 6 has a way to add an image to an existing PDF, but the steps are unbelievably convoluted. Here's how: Copy an image to the clipboard. Open a PDF document in Acrobat (Standard or Pro). Choose Tools > Advanced Commenting > Attach > Paste Clipboard Image. Move your cursor to the center of where you want your image to be and then click to paste. The toolbar then indicates that you have the Hand tool, but since your cursor is on top of the pasted image, it looks like an arrowhead. Click the cursor on the image to select it, and then drag it into position. You may also resize the image by dragging one of its resizing handles. — Donna Baker "

Not only did Jay Nelson, Editor & Publisher of *Design Tools Monthly*, give us permission to reprint the hint, he also passed on a related tip that will be published in the next issue of that fine ezine.

"The Other tip: Last month we ran a tip for copying an image into an existing PDF. Sharon Steuer reminds us that there's another approach:

> Place the image into a page layout document. Make a quick PDF of the document (you can simply use the 'Save as PDF' button in the Print dialog of Mac OS X. Open both this PDF and the target PDF in Acrobat. Using the *Object* selection tool select the object and copy, switch to your target PDF and paste. Click the cursor on the image to select it, and then drag it into position. You may also resize the image by dragging one of its resizing handles."

What a way to go. As our readers are aware, I'm not a graphics-oriented person, but even I found things of value in Jay Nelson's ezine, which is Macintosh-centric.

Guest Editorials

We are delighted and pleased to reprint two articles this month. One is by Phil Shapiro and the other is by Derrick Story:

What I Learned Taking Donated Computers to Kids Homes by Phil Shapiro

A few years ago, while working as an Instructional Technology Coordinator for the Arlington Public Schools in Arlington, Virginia, I was involved in a grant project, Computers in the Home, to distribute donated computers to elementary school students who didn't have a computer at home. Here are some of the things I learned.

I learned quickly that bringing a single donated computer to a household with 3 or more children provides more strife than solution. Whenever possible I would return to those families with a second donated computer. Here in the Washington DC area the supply of donated computers is fairly large – from individuals, law firms, think tanks and others.

Since the Arlington Public Schools requires students in 3rd-grade to learn to type with 10 fingers, my primary goal was to get a computer into their home with the same typing software used by the school system – Type to Learn, from Sunburst Communications. Since the school district has a district wide license for Type to Learn, Sunburst provides a very generous license fee for home use – $10 per license. A grant I obtained paid for the Type to Learn licenses.

 One family that I took a donated computer to in July 2000 had a student who was entering 3rd grade in September 2000. This student had particularly strong work habits. With only gentle encouragement from her grandmother, and me she progressed thru 8 of the 22 typing lessons before school started in September.

When I saw her a few weeks after school started, she was bubbling with excitement. "Mr. Shapiro, we started *Type to Learn* at school and I'm way ahead of the other students." My response to her was, "If you're way ahead, it's only because you progressed thru the typing levels so well on your own. I didn't expect you to get beyond lesson 3 or 4 in the one month you've been using this software, but you far surpassed my expectations." Today this student is in 7th grade and is flourishing at school. I marvel at her ease at the keyboard. I didn't type that well until well past college.

When I was visiting her family the other day I became stumped trying to do something on their computer. Seeing the solution to the problem, she gently guided me to what I needed to know to progress.

One important lesson I learned in this project is to seek as many ways as possible to create redundancy in home computer solutions. Since any part of a home computer system can fail, it's important – when feasible – to provide recipients with extra keyboards, mice and power cables. It makes sense to pass along power strips and mouse pads, too.

Having an extra monitor on hand can be very handy, too. It's not that monitors are all that expensive these days, it's just that it's inconvenient to go out and buy one – especially if your family doesn't own a car and doesn't have a credit card to order one from a mail-order company.

I sought redundancy in other ways. If a family had two computers and one printer, I made sure to install the printer driver on both computers. That way if one computer was not working for some reason, students could move the printer to the other computer and still print their homework. If a family had dial-up networking set up one computer, I showed the students why it was important to set up the same account on another computer so that their Internet access would not be interrupted if one of their computers went down.

When families who received donated computers asked me what my view on having the Internet at home was, I was proud that I did not hype the Internet as an educational panacea that every family should have. Can the Internet be very useful for learning? Yes. But so much significant learning can take place without the Internet, too.

One family who I came to know told me they were considering getting cable modem service for their 3rd grade child to use. They wanted to know whether I thought that would be helpful for her. I explained to this family that their decision might be an advisable one if several members of the family all wanted to use the Internet, but that I would not advise them getting it just for her. I explained that for the cost of the cable modem service, their money might be better spent on wisely purchased educational software. I wrote down a list of some web sites that offered excellent educational software at discounted prices. I also explained that educational software only has value of their child had motivation to use it, and that the best possible scenario is for an older sibling (or parent/guardian) to assist a younger child in getting the best use from educational software.

I ran into the situation a few times where older siblings were available and interested to help their younger sibling with the donated computer I delivered. In one family, a 10th grade older brother adored his 2nd grade younger brother. The admiration between these two siblings was mutual. When I brought a donated Macintosh for the younger student, I could tell right away how useful it would be for his older brother to show him some of the ropes. When the older brother told me he'd really love a Windows computer, I told him I'd look out to find him one. And I on a rainy fall evening I delivered a donated Windows computer to the older student. The computer was still wet from my carrying it from the car. I was in the process of explaining to 10th grader that it would be wise to wait until the next day so that the computer could dry off. Then I saw in his eyes that he desperately wanted to see his computer boot up in my presence. I looked at the rain on the computer – which wasn't all that much – and asked him to get me a rag to dry it off. I checked that there wasn't moisture near the power connector on that computer, and we fired it up.
It booted beautifully. I installed some freeware logic puzzles I designed and left the computer in his good hands.

When driving home that evening, I couldn't help but think about the economic value of the teaching that this older sibling was going to give to his younger brother. Suppose this older sibling spends 10 hours per month in quality one-on-one time with his brother. That's 120 hours per year of extra one-on-one tutoring this younger student is receiving. If this relationship continued for 4 years, that young student would have 500 extra hours of instruction. Mind-boggling when you think about. Could an economist ever place a value on the learning that happens in this situation? Would it be worth $10,000? $20,000?

What would be the value to the school and school district to have all of this learning happen? Students learn as much from each other as from their teachers. When you boost the boost the learning of any one student, you indirectly boost the learning opportunities of all the peers they communicate with.

In another situation, I took a computer to the home a third grade student living with her grandmother. Her uncle stopped by to visit when I was setting up her Power Mac 7300. Turns out her uncle is getting a degree in computer science at the local community college. I wasn't sure whether he could be a resource for this student, so I inquired politely about whether he might be able to help keep the donated computer up and running. Turns out he's a fan of Macs and uses them often at his college.

At a third family, the Windows computer I dropped off turned up at the right time. The single mother of 3 children was taking computer courses at the community college to improve her skills for the job she had at the county government building. While the computer was intended more for the benefit of her children, it did double duty for mom's learning, too. I ran into the mother a few weeks ago. They recently bought a new computer, using the older 17-inch monitor I had brought with their first computer. In the interim, the family had a couple years of computer learning before purchasing their first computer. They'll be able to get so much better use out of their first computer purchase.

I had one poignant experience delivering a laptop to one of the 5th grade students at the school. A trade association donated a very nice G3 PowerBook laptop to pass along to a needy student. I knew it would be a difficult decision for me to choose which student to give this to. So I asked the 5th grade teacher at this school (the school had a single 5th grade teacher) to tell me the name of a student who routinely did more homework than was assigned, and who also didn't have a computer at home. The teacher, Ms. Katz, immediately told me the name of Isela Melendez, from El Salvador.

So the next day I walked into class and publicly asked Ms. Katz to tell me the name of a student who routinely did more homework than was assigned. When Ms. Katz announced Isela Melendez's name, I walked over to her and said, "Isela, here's a laptop that will help you with your studies." The rest of the class looked on in awe.

It turns out Isela was able to put that laptop to immediate and excellent use. When I visited her apartment to give her a tour of the laptop, she politely explained to me that she already knew quite a lot about computers and didn't need a tour. "Where did you learn?" I asked inquisitively. "Friends showed me," she replied. "Will you be showing things to your other friends on this laptop?" I asked. "Yes, I will," she said. "That's the way it's supposed to work," I said approvingly.

Meanwhile, Isela's little sister, in kindergarten, was probably the one getting the greatest benefit from this laptop. Not only did the younger sister have access to a relatively new laptop, she had access to an older sister to show her the ropes. I didn't stick around to see it, but I fully expected that the little sister would be using this laptop to write her first words and sentences. With an older sister nearby as a mentor, she could boost her own learning substantially.

I should explain that not all the experiences in this project had happy endings. There were children I wanted to deliver computers to that I didn't get time to. At times there were children who called me with tech support needs that I wasn't able to supply. There were times I delivered a computer to a family and found out that the computer had been thrown out a few months later because it wasn't working. And it wasn't the family's fault that they threw out the computer. That's a rational choice when something is not working and you don't have money to repair it and the person who delivered it is not available to attend to it.

Knowing that families receiving computers wouldn't have much money to use buying software, I loaded up the donated computers with freeware and shareware educational programs I collected from the Internet. There was a sizable number of different learning games and programs for the students to explore. My hope was that these children would have some positive experiences with their first

computer, and that down the road sometime their families might be in a position to buy a newer computer (or receive a newer donated computer.)

To provide an unexpected surprise on the donated computers, I included a folder of children's stories I've written. I didn't tell the students about this folder, which was plainly in view on the hard drive. Once in a while a student would stop me in the hall of the elementary school and declare proudly, "I found and read your children's stories." "Really?" I would say with a mock incredulous look. "Which story did you like best and which story did you like least?" I would ask. The students were always shy about saying which story they liked least, but I needed to know that. How could I become a better writer unless I heard honest feedback from my critics?

Towards the end of this 2 year project a happy surprise occurred one day when I received an email from an elementary school student at a partner elementary school in a more affluent part of the county. "Could you use some extra educational software for your project?" the email simply said. "Yes, thanks," was my answer.

This enterprising student organized an educational software drive at his school and collected two large boxes of educational CD-ROMs for elementary school students. In many cases students had simply outgrown the CD-ROM, but it still had a lot of value to someone who had never used it before. These two boxes of CD-ROMs were so heavy I could barely carry them. There must have been more than $3000 worth of software in those boxes.

Distributing that treasure load of software was no easy matter. There was no easy way for me to get the software into the hands of the students who received donated computers in their homes. I couldn't hand it to them in their classes, because that would make those students who hadn't received a computer feel even more left out. I ended up delivering one of the boxes to a teacher I knew would put the software to excellent use in her classroom. And I delivered the other box to someone in the school community whose house was always open for young children in the community to visit. Any time I was visiting that house I could count a dozen or more children from the neighborhood in or around the house. Since I had delivered 3 donated computers to that house, it made sense to drop off the second large box of educational software in this "learning zone."

Did I feel bad that I wasn't able to distribute this donated educational software more broadly in the community? Yes. Was I able to do the next best thing under the circumstances? Yes.

Looking back on this project I have pride in some of the small victories achieved, yet realize that I bit off more than I could chew. A friend and I delivered 80 computers over a 2-year period. That's a lot of computes to keep running, even with a very minimum of tech support. If I had dropped off the computers offering no tech support, that wouldn't have been right. That would mean that I was delivering the computer more for my benefit than their benefit.

If someone wanted to embark on a similar project, I would advise them to first put in place some kind of volunteer tech training and tech support mechanism in the neighborhood(s) to be served. Call it the Neighborhood Computer Club, or whatever you like. Have monthly meetings where people show each other things and answer each other's computer questions.

When there is some volunteer tech support structure in place is the time that you can start delivering (or distributing) donated computes. People need to have some place to turn to when they need tech support. The weight of tech support cannot be borne on the shoulders of two persons.

I am very grateful to my friend Saul Amaya who contributed hundreds of hours to assisting me with this project. His native language Spanish and Windows proficiency was a perfect complement to my English and Mac expertise. We did some good. We learned a lot. We're resting up before our next undertaking.

"We can...and we've got to...do better than this." - Dr. Seuss
_____

Phil Shapiro works as a self-employed technology access activist and educator in the Washington DC-area. He is involved as a supporter of the Washington Apple Pi User Group (http://www.wap.org) and the Virginia Macintosh Users Group (http://www.vmug.org), DotMac.info (http://dotmac.info) and Macintosh Using Educators (http://www.macusingedators.com).

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We Treat People Right by Derrick Story

Dear Mac Reader,

In a week that featured the Boston Red Sox ending decades of frustration by winning the World Series, a blood red lunar eclipse hanging in the evening sky, and Steve Jobs making his first public appearance since cancer surgery, I was reminded of the real reason why I prefer the Mac community.

Those of you who attended our Mac OS X Conference will know where I'm going here. But I think everyone in the Mac community will catch on right away.

On Wednesday night, I was hanging out on the Mezzanine before Sean and Vikki's presentation on Real-Time Filmmaking. I saw Adam Goldstein's mom, Risa, keeping a hawk's eye on the front door. Her son, the Mac whiz kid, was out having dinner with David Pogue. I went over to help her pass the time, and we started up a conversation.

Risa told me that the conference had been an incredible experience for her. She had accompanied Adam so he could lead his first session at an O'Reilly event. But once they fell into the flow of energy, things took a turn beyond her expectations.

"I can't believe how kind everyone has been to Adam and me," she said. "I watch all of you support each other in ways I haven't seen for so long. I'm a professional in NYC and have to deal with people constantly walking over others as they climb up the ladder. This is amazing."

I told her that the people here understand that any one person's success equates the betterment of the platform, and by ripple effect, the entire community. Nobody preaches this. They just get it.

Risa smiled and had to take a couple of deep breaths. She then spotted her son emerging through the front door with David. I wished her safe travels home, she smiled, and left.

There's no other event that I can think of where people seek out conference staff to say goodbye before returning home, but that's what happened time and time again all day Thursday.
Any community whose luminaries–such as Andy Hertzfeld, David Pogue, Andy Ihnatko, Sal Soghoian, Dan Wood, Brent Simmons, James Duncan Davidson, Ted Landau, Scott Anguish, Aaron Hillegass, Tom Negrino, Dori Smith, and on and on – hang out, engage, and give of themselves long after their session or keynote has passed, is a community that's going to thrive.

In a way, this week wasn't as much about hardware and software as it was about the people who use these tools. Risa isn't the only one who feels that way. I know this for a fact.

Until next time,

-Derrick
http://www.oreillynet.com/pub/au/54

Books

SAMS Teach Yourself Adobe Creative Suite All In One Reviewed by Dr. Eric Flescher

Author: Mordy Golding
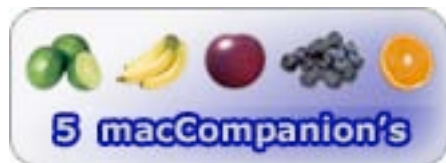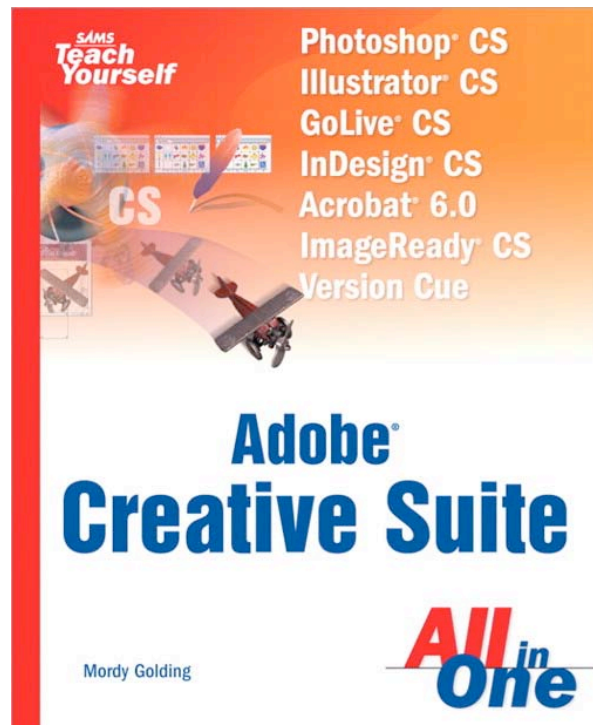SAMS Publishing
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Strengths: All the applications in the CS suite are well defined and explained and elaborated upon. Broad in-depth readable text concerning the seven applications are found. Use of visual based information, screen shots, illustrations and more help make the text each to read. This book is more then a review of software. This book enhances your ideas about publishing and writing and more by integrating the methods for using the software for many worthwhile computer-related tasks.

Weaknesses: Introduction to all of the software packages. The information covers the basics and by no means covers the advanced parts of each application. That is left up to other textbooks that go more into depth. (The book does not come with the CS software for each of the applications or lessons that some other books offer. The user must have the software to use the versions and the applications.)

Adobe has a new bundle of applications called CS. This bundle stands for Creative Suite and the main purposes of the applications are for productive use of technology and their applications. These

packages covered are the newest versions of Photoshop CS, Illustrator CS, Golive CS, InDesign CS, Acrobat 6.0, Imageready CS and a new tracking program called Version Cue.

These packages of CS software represent new upgraded version to all of their software packages. This book not only highlights how the new versions work and give a feel for the basic underlying foundations for using each of the pieces of software but also clarifies how the technology's creative role can help develop productivity.

The book is divided into three parts that covers 17 chapters and an Appendix. The Creative Suite, The Applications and the Projects cover 739 pages. Each chapter starts with an inspirational, creative saying that relates to the work at hand for the each chapter and each application.

The book does more then just "jumping into" and showing how the using the software. The author of the book, who has worked as a product manager for Adobe Illustrated, as a production artist manager and   is a consultant for the Creative Suite series helps expand role of the software for all users. He does so by clarifying the roles of the creative process with technology and the process that develops when these applications will be used and how. In that way, this book is different from most books that outline or review how software works for the user.

In Part 1, chapter 1, there is an overview of the creative process. The importance of the right tools for the jobs and tasks are highlighted and defined so that the user can focus on using the software and why. Figures, illustrations, screenshots along the way, along with a short overview of each application portray a good start to the use of the text.

Chapter 2 highlights the difficulty with many applications. Choices are highlighted, especially which one is best to use under the right circumstances. Does the user have to use all of them is question that is posed that helps select the needs of the user. Taking a first glance at the applications helps define when to use each application, what each does (in a short overview), and the advantages of each application and when to use each application.
When to use Photoshop and Imageready, Illustrator, Adobe InDesign, Adobe Golive CS, Adobe acrobat 6, Version cue software are covered to a minimum to give the essentials.

Chapter 3 expands the use of the software by offering the "game plan" for the use of the applications. Developing a workflow (pp. 54-69) which involves initiating, developing and finishing projects and tasks, assists with helping the process of what it takes to accomplish a "workflow." For those who might not understand print media concepts, the author communicates about the print, the web and beyond and how all these work together or apart. Designing for print, for the web, designing for both prints and the web, as well as moving to a PDF file are covered more in depth. The ending nicely wraps this all together by giving a better perspective of the whole process.

Chapter 4 focuses upon what makes the workflow all work, the integration. Getting started with the suite system and the requirements are covered (although a little bit late). Enabling version cue, which is one of the applications many people do not know about, and using for windows or Macintosh are handled. Launching the application then sets more of the integration by mentioning the need for palettes (hiding and showing, clustering and docking, stashing), customizing workplaces, utilizing tools and the toolbox helps set the use of several applications in motion. Selection in Photoshop is then covered, along with the drawing tools, the keyboard shortcuts, making your own shortcuts as well as moving data between apps (exporting and importing, native support).

In part 2, the application, chapter 5, goes into depth with the use of Adobe Photoshop CS. This premier graphic-editing program allows for a more integrated design with the new tools found in CS.

This chapter expounds upon the new features of this software: a new file browser with better performance; metadata support; automatic capabilities; full integrated support of ram images format; a great shadow/highlight filter; an auto straighten and crop feature; a new match color feature that allows you to map the colors of one file to another; an auto straighten and one file; filter gallery for artistic filter use; 16 bit image support; non square pixel support; a feature with layers, that allows for storing several configuration designs into a single file, which is then easily and even export then all as a multipage PDF.

Chapter 6 covers the use of Adobe Imageready. This is the web graphic smaller version of Photoshop. There is a new interface, support files for the FLASH 9.SWF format, a new content palette that makes it easier to add remote rollovers, conditional actions, support for variables and data sets to automate or creation of graphics

Chapter 7 with Adobe Illustrator highlights creating a new file (using new or template) using vector objects, other tools, enhanced PDF file creator, and new print dialog with print review. There is also an innovative way to save to Microsoft office commands to easily export files to Word or PowerPoint. The capability to create templates along with a number of professionally designed content templates help with starting your work. A new Unicode font and more than 100 OpenType fonts also are useful.

Chapter 8 Using Adobe InDesign is used for making multiple documents which is the successor to the software called Pagemaker, a standard for page layout. This new version has several new features and updates. The Story Editor, is a custom layout oriented word processor. There are flattener and separations palettes that allow for the print professionals prevent potential pitfalls and problems. Enhanced performance tools include zooming, wrapping text, scrolling and the importation of Photoshop, Word and Excel files. There are capabilities to specify document specific "bleed and slug areas (ability to expand outside the area of the boundaries of the page." There are additional options for saving page sizes, columns, margins and other settings. The ability to nest character styles with paragraph styles, enhance text import options, a new info palette that displays text statistics are also found. XML validation, a new standard for publishing, through DTD (Document Type Definition) support, mapping character styles to XML tags and a new Measure tool are added additions.

Chapter 9 using Adobe Golive is one of the software applications I use the most. I like the intuitive feel of the software as opposed to the DreamWeaver (which I called more a Nightmare). It took awhile for me to learn how to use it. (I started with Claris Homepage a number of years ago). While I continue to use the non OSX version of this software for my website work with version Golive 5, this new CS tempts me to make the jump to the newer CS version for a variety of reasons.

Chapter 10 Using Adobe Acrobat 6.0 Professional now if offered in a Standard and Professional version. PDF are portable documents that are read easily by most computers once the document is ported to PDF format. There is here one click PDF creation from various applications, merging of multiple documents into one file, review managing, layer and large format support, ability to print high quality files, form and drawing tools, improved viewing and navigation. Also accessibility enhancements and integration stands used with JavaScript and XML form data are also found.

Chapter 11 Using Adobe Version Cue can be useful to the user in several ways. Project files can be organized, extended searching for files can be maintained more easily, allow access to different versions of files more easily. This new software may help backing up files more readily. Files can be locked automatically. The user can instantly see what is working on a file (within a group of users) is part of the possibilities as well.

In Part 3, The Projects define a series of needs and uses by creating a logo, a business card, a letterhead and an envelope. Chapter 12 communicates about creating a Corporation Identity and Chapter 13 outlines creating a brochure. Chapter 14, Creating an Ad campaign, expands the multifaceted needs of marketing and design. Chapter 15 works with Creating Web Banner for Web based design while Chapter 16 expands this by including the banner by it within a Creating a Web Page. Chapter 17 Creating a business Presentation works with additional business solutions.

Appendix A Final has information about outputting and sending your files to Print and the "love and hate relationship between design and printers. Understanding the printing process and transparencies (the need and use for flattening code for applications and the ease of use for all printing needs with many situations. The angst is taken out and printing is much easier presently. Checklists of eleven designer ideas are highlighted to help this process (pp. 681-2). A lengthy Index then ends the text.

The author has done his work. Is application is highlighted with information about each application and how to use each application package. Each chapter liberally uses screen shots of command and software palettes and other parts of the applications. There is little guess about what parts of the applications the author is talking about. The visual screens help understand how to work through the software packages.

The author does a great job in giving in-depth broad reviews of each of the seven applications. Additional information is added with "Did you Know (– highlighted boxes)" the figures, illustrations and screenshots. In cases, where the author has pointed to certain parts of submenus, shaded areas within the submenus with highlighted arrows also point out to the way. There is enough visual hints and information to add to multitude for the most part, easily read text.

This text is perfect for those interested in learning how to use the whole CS suite of software or most of them. If you are interested in learning how to utilize the more advanced applications of Golive and Photoshop as well as the other applications, you may be disappointed as this is a review of all the packages so to speak.

The text will help in understanding how to use most of the packages and using them for a variety of purposes. Especially if you are interested in the purpose of "how to use applications" the author does a great job by giving purpose and meaning to the applications and integrating them for the jobs needed. In this way the text is great for those who want to learn more in-depth about the use of the software for the full workflow of the applications and the work at hand. Integration of technological tools is partly of the mind, applications and the software tools. The author does a great job with these. If that is what you are looking for, you will not be disappointed.

Camera Phone Obsession Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

PARAGLYPH PRESS

Author: Peter G. Aitken

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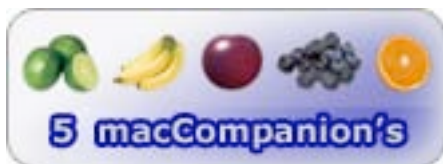
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Novice - Intermediate

5 macCompanion's
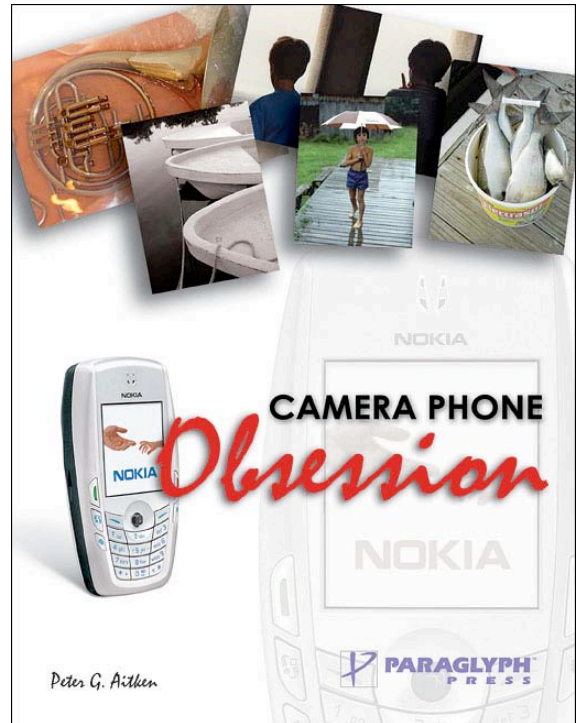
Strengths: "First" book on the videophone phenomenon.

Weaknesses: None found.

Camera Phone Obsession by Peter G. Aitken, brings us the reality of the Dick Tracy-like communications device that has morphed into the cell-phone camera phone. The '90's brought us the cell phone and last year the camera phone became a commodity item.

No zoom-lens and with low resolution the camera phone still saves lives and catches the bad guys and turns us all into voyeurs if we don't watch ourselves when we are watching others. It is more of a camera that also happens to be a communications device. Peter Aiken shows us not only that, but reveals to us such things as MOBLOGs. Not unruly, undisciplined Mob-Logs but Mobile BLOGs where folks put their latest photo-finding online for their "15 minutes of fame" – only it lasts much longer.

The photophone give immediacy to such things as new life in the birthing room, "wish you were here" shots and possibly candid pictures that would never, ever be captured otherwise. Now everyone can be 007 as long as the battery holds out and connectivity continues.

Peter Aikin also discusses at some length the social issues that camera phones create. Privacy issues, permissions, sneaky-shots and even immoral issues, existing and pending laws and common-sense take turns in 10 chapters. Is the camera phone really a revolution of freedom? Which specifications should be looked at? What are photo-phone basics and are the best ways to take photographs? How do photos get from phone to print? What is the best way to share them? What about Moblogs and what are photo-phone etiquette and legal issues that we need to be concerned about? What kinds of cool projects are there that can be done with a photo-phone?

This is a how-to book that also has a plethora of resources listed throughout the book as well as in the Appendix. I enjoyed the discussions on photo formats, color balance and print services. I also liked the coverage regarding 1st Amendment rights and "Model Release" (no, not the latest cell-phone, but permissions to publish after a form is signed by the subject).

I only hope Apple brings out an iPod® iPhone enhancement before Griffin Technologies does. However I feel that Apple has tried desperately to not jump into the photo-phone business too soon. Meanwhile, get this book to learn what is currently on the street and see why this "hobby" has become an obsession.

Final Cut Express 2 for Mac OS X: Visual QuickStart Guide Version 2 Reviewed by Dr. Eric Flescher

Peachpit
Essential books for the creative community

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http://www.peachpit.com
Book site: http://www.peachpit.com/title/0321246926
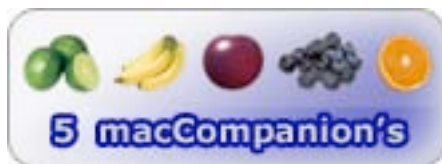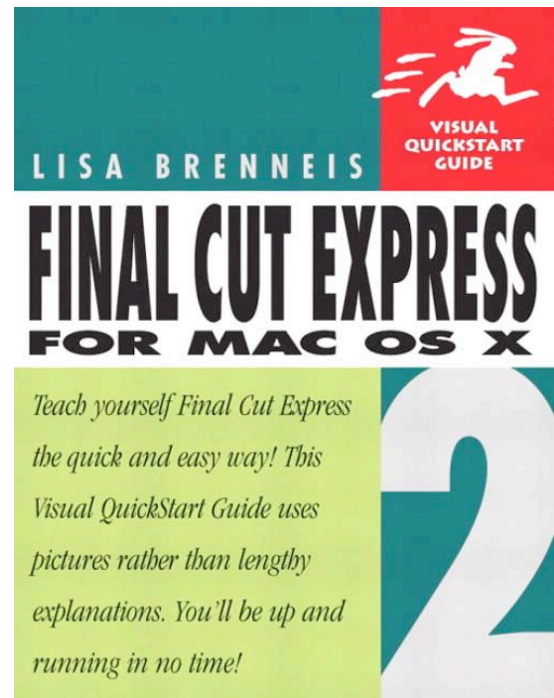**Published:** April 14, 2004
Pages: 551
$22 USD, $32 CN, £17 UK, €18
ISBN: 0321246926
Intermediate to Advanced Photoshopper.
Requirements: Adobe Photoshop 7 or later.

5 macCompanion's

Strengths: This software offers extreme versatility with video editing techniques. The book has a array of tips, techniques and the screen shots and illustrations are well done. The book covered all parts of what is needed to do with FCE2. It is covered in breath and depth. Good price

Weaknesses: This book and FCE2 are not for the novice video editors. You might be able to start with the book and the program instead of iMovie for example, but there are so many other options with FCE2 and in the book, it will be confusing to know where to start. The best way is to start with an less complex editor as you don't needs all the options when you begin. There is a small section concerning troubleshooting. There is no paper manual but working with the FCE manual in the help section may help if you need further information. Does not come with a CD of files or lessons.

Digital video editing is very popular due to latest use of faster computers, better software and digital camcorders. Transferring digital video to videotape is easy unless you want to make changes to the video before you have your movie completed. Videoediting can help edit all or parts of the video, split video scenes, transitions and effects with your video and much more. There are however a range off video editors for creating your movies that also have a different capabilities depending upon your needs.

The prices of video editing software range from free (for example movie) to $50 to over $1000 (for example Final Cut Pro and others). Many people are served well by the movie and lower cost video editing software. However if users want to make the progression to more flexibility and power, users are looking for software that cost over $100. If you are in the higher range of $999 and over, you may not have the funds or the need for all of the "bells and whistles" needed by the very high cost software. However Final Cut Express offers an alternative with more power, added features that some video editors might want to consider at a right price.

This book covers 551 pages, with 19 chapter and two Appendices. The author mentions that this edition is a revision that includes more of the Final Cut Pro 4 software utilities, (which is a new revision itself). In many ways it is a major upgrade compared to Final Cut Express 1). FCE did not come with a printed manual. The best-documented reference is the FCE2 980 page PDF file that is found in the Help menu. Appendix A also has information about known "bugs" as well as online web resources.

This book is not for novice video editors as the author notes. One needs practice with the tools needed to edit.   If you need to start with video editing, with a Macintosh, there is not better place to start then iMovie. It is free with your Mac and actually has a lot off versatility. iMovie can actually take your quite far in your cinemagraphic endeavors. In many ways, you need Final Cut Express for OSX only if you need more tools to accomplish what iMovie may not be able to give you.

The book has several nice features that make learning about Final Cut Express a better learning experience. An "anatomy section" covers the major program windows using illustrations. These sections can be used with or without the step-by-step instructions throughout the pages. The "FCE Protocol" sidebars lay out the programming principles that demonstrate how the program works. This section is recommended for all users. Sidebars cover techniques; suggestions and workflow ideas while the tips include short bits of information about tricks and nice features that might help when using the software.

Final Cut Express (FCE) and the book, particularly chapters 1 and 4 cover basic concepts that some users might need to know. In particular nondestructive editing is a means for editing without actually splitting the digital video into parts. Coding not physically separating the video dictates the operations of the editing. Also covered at the clip and sequence editing needed to understand how Final Cut Express works.

FCE is context sensitive which is similar to other software. Various parts of the user interface change according to external video, setup configurations, program windows that are active or the program sections you just tried. Basically this allows for the same window and interfaces to perform different functions and makes for less clutter. But it does take for some intermediate users time to uncover how this works. After awhile however it becomes second nature once you know where operations are initiated in the interface design.

Also shortcut commands and keyboard menus help make using FCE by streamlining operating more easily and quickly. Appendix B helps to understand many of these.

Chapter 1 focuses on the welcome to final cut express shows how to start integrating with G4 and G6 computers. FCE only allows DV format via Firewire, but allows the use of QuickTime formats for exporting. This chapter explains about the use of drag-and-drop editing (which some users like to use) as well keyboard commands. This chapter has a nice introduction with cute little drawings how to hook up and use your editing skills with the computer, camcorder and more. Nonlinear versus destructive editing is explained and while it takes a little while to learn the concept, it does make sense. It is really

a matter of "breaking your mind set." The screenshots, information pointers to parts of the illustrations help the understanding. But it possibly is the page 18 that is very important for those who might need more the FCE: " Do you really need FCE if you have iMovie and if so how can FCE help me in a better way?" So my search was on.

Chapter 2 includes the installing and setting up. This chapter recommends looking at the Appendix A before starting your work. A g4 with at least 500 MHz is needed with at least 512 MB RAM. Digital video (DV) is needed to produce your work with FCE2. It is recommended to store your files on a separate hard drive as then media software (FCE2) then does more the work and there are possibly fewer problems. NTSC or PAL (Europe, Asia, non-North American countries mostly) can be used. FCE2 can be upgrades from FCE1. This chapter covers information about installation, registration and optimizing performance tasks. If you do not have a real fast g4, then there are also recommendations for working with the preferences and other specifics to enhance the performance few troubleshooting tips (P.36-7) are outlined.

Chapter 3 presets and preferences assist with setting up possibilities, using tools to configure the settings and preferences. There is a very nice list, illustrations and screen shots to help this process.

While the previous chapter sets the some of the applications, Chapter 4 works with the controlling of the projects, sequences, and clips. You are walked through the terminology of the projects and how projects are broken down into separate parts. Chapter 5 starts with the capturing video, which includes capturing clips and capturing, live video. Capturing projects allows the use of device controlled DV camcorder or decks. Chapter 6 includes information as working with graphics (all different forms), video (AVI, QuickTime), audio (AIFF, Audio) and others (Flash).

Chapter 7 organizing clips talks about the heart of organization of clips, while focusing on the browser. Chapter 8 includes the many tasks needed to working with the clips. Chapter 9 has information about basic editing with video, audio, filters, motion, controls and color correction. Chapter 10 works with the editing in the timeline and the canvas. This includes finding out about the tools palette and handling additional ways to work with the Canvas (is the window where you view your video and motions) and the Timelines display works with the editing features as an array of multilane video and audio tracks. Both assist with working all the parts of the video with the way you want.

Chapter 11 final cut established the different between trimming (adjusts previously created) material and editing (adding new material) how to work with both types of editing functions in a variety of ways. Chapter 12 enhanced your knowledge of the audio tools and techniques while Chapter 13 includes the creating of transitions. Chapter 14 compositing and effects overview offers a primer on techniques of combing effects while Chapter 15 highlights allows to change a clips appearance, making smaller or larger (scaling), distorting shapes, adding blur effects and adding motion paths (making objects on the canvas move differently)

Chapter 16 offers information about the host of filters and the combining of two or more images (compositing). Chapters 17 Titles and generating allow for the creation of shapes bars and tones, text, 3D titles and more. Chapter 18 real time (RT) which is a effects previewing mode and rendering which allows for the processing of raw clips and media, filtes and transitions and other effects to produce a particular file. Chapter 19 creating final output helps understand what you will do with your final product. Will this creation be for VHS tape, broadcast, for a DVD, a webcast or all of above? There are varieties of options to select before you decide and this chapter does a nice job in previewing these options.

Finally the Appendix A has a multitude of online resources to read. Appendix B Keyboard shortcuts is helpful to learn the myriad of helpful hints for time saving operations. The Index helps point the way to the host of information in the book.

Reading the many parts of the book, I discovered that there is much more to video editing beyond iMovie, which I love. I've created and distributed movies that I have made with iMovie yet I can see that FCE2 could allow for polishing up more creations for the future. But there is a lot "training" to be done to use FCE2 properly, which requires more time and effort, which at this time I don't have. Reading the book and then "making it so " are to different things. For those of you who are in a similar situation, trying parts of FCE2 may be the way to go before you feel comfortable with using FCE2 on a more full time basis. For those users who want to advance their skills now, this book and software might be the way to go as it has a lot to offer. As in most projects and creations, only time will tell.

How to Wow: Photoshop for Photography Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Peachpit
Essential books for the creative community

Authors: Jack Davis, Ben Willmore
http://www.photoshophalloffame.com/jack_davis.html
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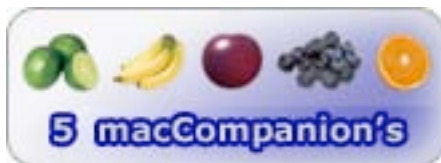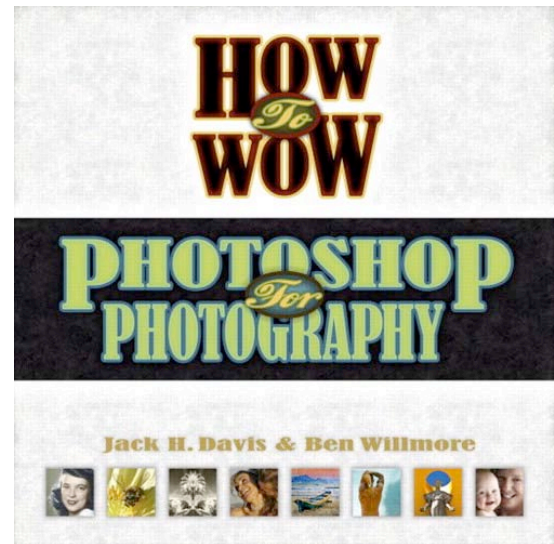**Published:** June 23, 2004
Pages: 270
$40 USD, $58 CN, £30 UK, €34 with CD.
ISBN: 0321227999
Intermediate to Advanced Photoshopper.
Requirements: Adobe Photoshop 7 or later.

5 macCompanion's

Strengths: Best Photoshop How-to I've found so far.

Weaknesses: None found.

How to Wow: Photoshop for Photography by Jack Davis, Ben Willmore created a masterpiece where a picture is worth a thousand words and this book easily has a thousand pictures. It just leaves me speechless.

After going through Al Ward's book on Actions, I also went through this one on Presets, but this one goes much, much deeper into how to use Photoshop® intelligently and in a well-organized manner. This really is a step-by-step real-world tips-and-techniques book that just happens to have a CD that comes with it. I would like to think that this book would be used as a Photoshop 101 course. Okay, Photoshop 201. It is after all intended for more advanced users, but the first 2 chapters speak to the beginner or those who need to relearn the step-through process correctly. And yes, the book does theme on cooking metaphors, but that's okay too. Jack Davis and Ben Willmore do it with great taste.

What's on the CD? How about nearly 250 sample presets as How to Wow tools for each of the 9 chapters on workflow, presentation, optimization, retouching, portraits, enhancements, color, artistic stuff and collaging. But you've got to read this book. It is like having two great masters sitting at both elbows as they gently coach and persuade us through the clunkiness of Photoshop. Think of this book as being a toolbox full of great and wonderful ways to really wow. It most definitely lives up to the title!

Mac OS X Panther QuickSteps Reviewed by Dr. Eric Flescher

Author: Guy Hart-Davis
McGraw Hill Osborne
2100 Powell Street 10th Floor
Emery, CA 94608 New York
http://shop.osborne.com/cgi-bin/osborne/
Published: May 27, 2004
$17 USD, $25 CND, £10 Net UK, €14
Pages: 224
ISBN: 0072255056
Novice through advanced.
Requirements: A copy of Mac OS X Panther.

Strengths: The book is well illustrated, in color, has a great style that makes it very readable and has a great low price. The screen shots are also in color and excellent. Arrows and pointers highlight the key arrows, which make finding the useful information even better. The book covers a wealth of topics and is very comprehensive. Tips and quickstep section make learning even easier. It is easy to understand yet well done.

Weaknesses: None.

Even a Mac diehard user as myself, I was a little weary about the use of Mac OS X versus classic. There was a time when all that I saw demonstrated was the expanding dock icons which I though quite foolish. I wanted Apple to show me, as well as the rest of the computer world and the Windows kingdom, that there is an alternative to the Windows faulty, riddled operating system.

Soon, the versatility and the fact that Mac OS X was safer were touted. I had always thought that the Apple systems were easier to use, but I began to doubt that fact when I "looked under the hood" of Mac OS X. It was like learning a whole new system that it literally was. While I did figure out some of the possibilities in Mac OS X on my own, I began to search for help. I did find some books to help with the earlier versions of Mac OS X. However when Panther arrived, I wanted to find a really good book. I found *Mac OSX Panther Quicksteps* to be a remarkable find for anyone who wished to learn about Panther and enhance your knowledge with the operation system.

The booklet is divided into 270 pages in 10 chapters. The text is remarkable illustrated in full color. The inside of the front cover gives a screenshot view of the Mac OS X screen. A number of the highlights for each part of the Mac OS X are illustrated using a lined-pointer.

The text visually is illustrated in color that helps understand Panther to even great extent and more quickly compared to black and white. The book has a wide and broad array of information. The pages include a wealth of information for learning about Panther through the use of colorized screen shots. Special helpful notes from the author, are located in n the sidebars on many of the pages, along

with tips (inlaid with yellow) and quicksteps (light violet) make the visual appeal even better. The chapters are color-coded and with this, the user can automatically thumb to the section for each reading. The bottom of each page is in color and indicates the name of the chapter. The detail in these sections, as well as other parts of the book, show the well illustrated visually style of the author but also makes finding information a visual pleasure.

Chapter 1 includes Stepping into Mac OS X. This chapter includes using the mouse, screen, Dock, Apple menu, the use of windows, menus, dialog box and getting help.

Chapter 2 is entitled customizing the Mac OS X interface. Reviewed are the open system preferences, changing the desktop and the appearance of objects. In addition customizing the Dock, keyboard, mouse and sounds are also included. Adding items to the menu bar is not well understood or known. The side bar (p. 34), shows what can be changed with the Bluetooth, Modem, Display, Airport, Input Menu, Time and Volume.

Chapter 3 included storing information. Display files and folders, changing views in the Finder along with customizing the Finder are included here, in addition to creating, copying, moving, deleting and encrypting files and folders. One nice feature is the Labels color options in the Finder's preferences. Here you can change the one of seven color labels to synchronize or categorize the names of your files.

Chapter 4 focuses on using the Internet. Connecting to the Internet an browser, setting up communication control security, adding contacts to addresses, using Mail and iChat are all included.

Chapter 5, Managing Mac OS X helps you manage parts of the OS. Learning how to start, stop, hide, quit and switch applications, running System application 9 updates and Mac OSX as well as adding and removing software and hardware are all covered.

Chapter 6, Working with documents and Pictures helps creating and printing documents and pictures. Installing printers, cameras and scanners, handling fonts and setting up, sending and receiving faxes are also included.

Chapter 7, Working with Multimedia has information about playing CDs, listening to radio stations. There is a nice section that includes locating music, copying and organizing CDs, playing DVDs; recording and editing video are covered. A short synopsis of locating, buying, organizing as well as making audio CDs, copying music to an iPod and music online are included. There is a short section surprisingly about Garageband (P. 154).

There is a nice a nice tutorial set of notes about using iMovie, video clips (p. 159) including trimming clips, editing clips, adding transitions and including editing the end of a clip and restoring the original version of a clip. There are minimally covered but give a brief introduction to the software that is on your Macintosh beyond the realm of ISX. This is a nice touch by the author to comprehensively include information to learn more about your Macintosh beyond Mac OS X.

Chapter 8, Controlling security has information about setting up users and passwords, controlling what users can do, sharing files and folders, protecting storing data, turning on the firewall are mentioned here as well. Changing Mac OS X login procedures are outlined as well (p. 170).

Chapter 9 has Setting up networking. Planning, selecting and setting up both wired and wireless networks are included. Using a FireWire network, checking and changing your network configurations.

Chapter 10, using networks has sharing your own and accessing other sharing folders, printers, and Internet connections, as well as accessing your Mac remotely.

The author has done a remarkable job with this book. If you are looked for well-illustrated text to assist you with using Mac OS X Panther on your Macintosh, try this book. Not only is it visually remarkable and well illustrated, this book is authoritatively written yet easy to understand. The text will help you find out more about Panther in quite a number of ways and some ways you possibly would not have thought. In addition, the price is very low but does not skimp on the beautiful visual appeal of the book. If you need help with Panther, this book will solve many of your problems and will be a great resource for now and in the future. It is excellent in every way, well priced and would be a handy resource for those novice, intermediate and advanced Panther users.

Mac Toys: 12 Cool Projects for Home, Office and Entertainment Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Authors: John Rizzo, Scott Knaster
Wiley Publishing, Inc.
111 River Street
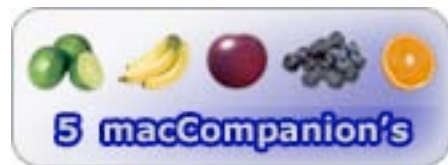Hoboken, NJ 07030-5774
201-748-6000
Fax: (201) 748-6088
http://www.wiley.com
Booksite: http://www.wiley.com/legacy/compbooks/rizzo/index.html
Published: February 2004
Pages: 384
$30 USD, $42 CND, £20 UK, €26
ISBN: 0764543512
For those who would like to toy around with their Macs and still get work done.

Strengths: Back-to-the-Future approach to modding a Mac.

Weaknesses: Requires some assembly and moola to make mods. The back cover color is too dark to see the Companion Website link unless in direct sunlight.

Mac Toys: 12 Cool Projects for Home, Business, and Entertainment by Scott Knaster and John Rizzo has a wealth of up-to-date information on a variety of activities that take the Mac up a notch. A few even use older OS options so those older machines that don't do Mac OS X can have a 2nd life.

I took the liberty of including the Mac Toys companion website above. It has some updates including added information regarding TV-add-ons that also include FireWire port access instead of USB port access devices shown in the book. It also has some more information regarding iPod® attachments and accessories. There is even information about Garage Band™, iMovie® 4 and iDVD® 4. That's not all. The authors also are using the site for Mac Toy history such as the working ElectriClerk typewriter using a 1988 Mac SE and tying it to a 1923 Underwood. Way cool!

This book is sinfully fun! Use X10 technology for just about any Mac OS to do home automation and security, do your own radio broadcasting, watch TV, enhance iPods, turn an iBook or other Mac into wall-mount or desktop picture frames, go wireless, make and mix music with MIDI and see what the professional are doing as they move to the Mac, do the oldie-but-goody arcade-game-thing with MacMAME, turn vinyl to digital, tape and film to DVD. There is a pretty good chapter on how to create great videos where I learned about the rule of 3s (1/3rd down from the top of the screen for the eyes). And the last chapter is about taking 2 Macs and iTunes 4 to use one for streaming music and the other to act as remote control.

Each chapter has lots of links and the summaries are pretty darned good too. This is a great book for learning how to toy around with the Mac. Way cool!

Managing Security with Snort and IDS Tools Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

O'REILLY®

Authors: Kerry Cox, Christopher Gerg
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http://www.oreillynet.com/cs/catalog/view/au/1887
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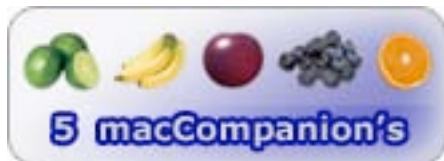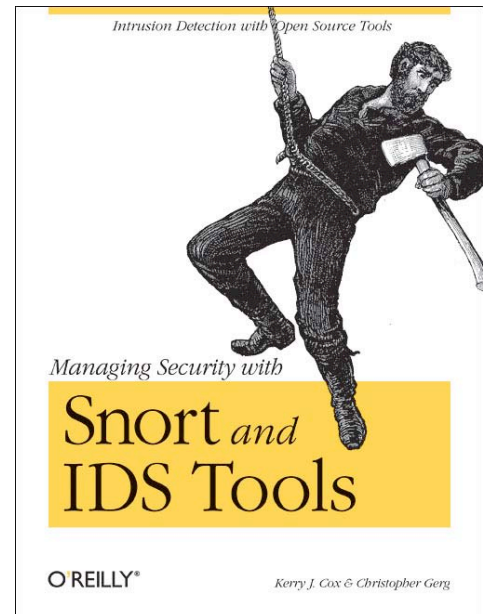**Published:** August 2004
Pages: 288
$40 USD, $58 CN, £28.50 UK, €36
ISBN: 0596006616
For Net Admins who want to do open-source sniffing.

Strengths: Open Source book published by O'Reilly.

Weaknesses: None found.

Managing Security with Snort and IDS Tools by Kerry Cox, Christopher Gerg isn't so much a book on snorting around a network as it is a treatise on intrusion detection. If you don't know the concepts after reading this book, you were not paying attention.

Yes, Snort does work on Macs, but you need to play a little with the Unix side to get it going. Then after it is up-and-running (there is a lot of detail about configuring, tuning and rules-based activities in this book) you too can check for intrusive behavior on your system.

Practically all of the 13 chapters end with a list of links that are also faithfully duplicated in Appendix C.

With a little snorting around you too will see that Snort works pretty much hand-in-glove with other security tools like tcdump and Ethereal.

The book rustles through the underbrush of network traffic analysis, the 5 Ps of an attack ((Probe, Penetrate, Persist, Propagate and Paralyze), all the snort snuff of installing, configuring, deploying, creating and managing rules, prevention techniques, tuning, and looking for both false positives and missed alerts. It also roots up ACID (Analysis Console for Intrusion Detection) and SnortCenter and other tools for IDS Management. It finishes up with a chapter on high-bandwidth implementations for Barnyard, Sguil and commercial load balancers and Christopher Greg's experience getting into using Snort as a Security manager for a high-fiber diet, yet tight-budget network center.

Hey, it is an unkind world out there beyond our networks and Snort does a pretty good job as a base of operations to work from. The alternatives are spendy. Very spendy. Snort as an open-source vehicle is not.

Dig through this book for down-to-earth examples. Maybe ignore the lumberjack on the front cover hanging down from a rope with the ax in his hand. I don't yet know if he is defending or attacking. I do know that the book does provide practical how-tos and with the included links we can dig even deeper, if necessary.

If you are sniffing around for truffles in your network, you can't go wrong with this prize pig of a program named Snort.

Open Office.org Writer: The Free Alternative to Microsoft Word Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Author: Jean Hollis Weber

http://www.oreillynet.com/cs/catalog/view/au/1899

O'Reilly & Associates
1005 Gravenstein Highway North
Sebastopol CA 95472
800-294-4747
Fax: 800-997-9901

order@oreilly.com
http://www.oreilly.com/

Booksite:

http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/openoffice/index.html

Published: July 2004

Pages: 234

$25 USD, $37 CN, £17.50 UK, €21 with OpenOffice.org CD version 1.1 plus

ISBN: 0596008260

Requirements: Mac OS X 2.0 or later; G4/400 MHz or later; 300 MB hard drive space for OpenOffice.org, 600 MB hard drive space for auxiliary applications; 1 GB swap space; Xfree86, XDarwin; Apple X11; dlcompat; libfreetype 6.2+; ESP-Ghostscript 7.05; fondu; knowledge of Unix.

For those unafraid to use Open Source.

Intermediate – Advanced.

http://www.openoffice.org
http://www.neooffice.org/
http://www.mackmoon.com/OOoHelpOutline.html
http://porting.openoffice.org/mac/support.html
http://www.entropy.ch/software/macosx/docs/openoffice-mac/

Alternative to the Alternative:

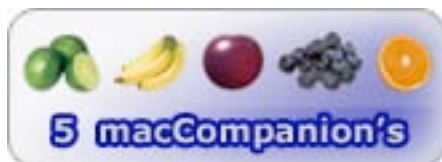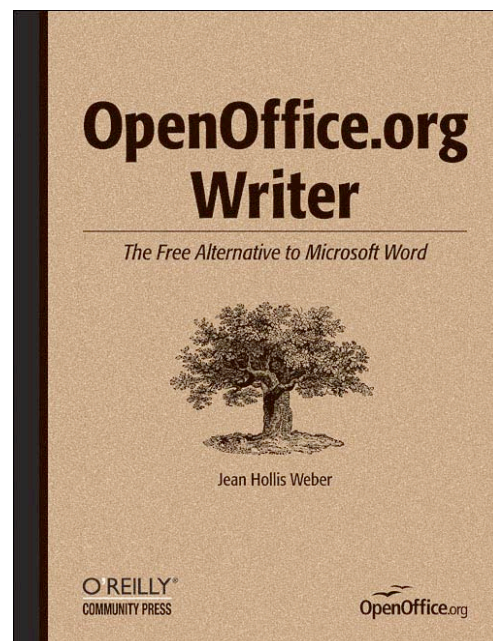http://www.openosx.com/office/

Gotcha:

http://www.microsoft-watch.com/article2/0,1995,1646481,00.asp?kc=MWRSS02129TX1K0000535

Strengths: Provides another cross-platform alternative to MS Word.

Weaknesses: See the Requirements list above.

Open Office.org Writer: The Free Alternative to Microsoft Word by Jean Hollis Weber assumes right off the bat that you already have *OpenOffice.org* installed on your system (that's correct, OpenOffice.org and not Open Office and referred to as OOo). That is why I added the links above - because I did not have OpenOffice.org installed (the CD has OpenOffice.org version 1.1 plus, but the site has OpenOffice.org 1.1.2 for Mac OS X). Pay particular attention to the last link because it walks through how to install X11 so OpenOffice.org can be installed. Oh, you don't have it installed either? Try downloading a current copy at http://www.apple.com/macosx/features/x11/ if you don't have the 3rd CD for Panther. It's a 43MB download and you need to be registered. If you only have Mac OS X 10.1.x, forget it. Upgrade. OpenOffice.org 1.1.2 for Mac OS X is 155MB in size for download at http://porting.openoffice.org/mac/ooo-osx_downloads.html#download. X11 will be located in the Utilities folder in Mac OS X after installation. Run the gauntlet. OOo that was fun…

Writer is a part of OpenOffice.org. This book is now the replacement User Manual for that part of OpenOffice.org, okay?

(Stuck on X11? NeoOffice is working on a Java port for Mac OS X, so I added them as well. And OpenOSX even has an alternative to the alternative, so pick your poison.)

Oh, and see the final link? There is a big brouhaha about Microsoft possibly going after OpenOffice users, so maybe the alternative to the alternative may be the best bet yet.

If that doesn't scare you, then continue.

The book has 10 chapters covering setup, writing, editing and reviewing documents, controlling page layout, using templates and styles effectively, getting the most from fields (not W.C. Fields), creating table of contents, indexes and bibliographies, working on master documents and graphics, a few tips on working PDFs and hyperlinks and migrating from Microsoft Word™.

A few words of caution: this book only covers Writer and nothing else of the OpenOffice suite, but it does it so well!

Even though the Openoffice.org site says it only is for Linux, Windows and Unix, Mac OS X really is included.

Perhaps you've been challenged in MS Word to merge data with Email. Writer does a very good job with that. I've had bad experiences with merging from Word to Email myself, so this makes OOo Writer a plus. Is the pain worth the gain? Well, Writer *is* free. How much is your time worth getting it set up? And it gives us something to do other than deal with Word while waiting for a next-gen AppleWorks to show up (see my review of Mellel in *macCompanion*). Check out those requirements too. OpenOffice.org takes up a lot of disk space.

OpenOffice.org is 4 years old http://www.betanews.com/article/1097685176. On the Mac nearly 2 GB of space is used to run the program – but it is free.

The final chapter in the book compares how Word and Writer do similar things. Now we can walk away from Word-quirks and Word-rot. Who knows? You too may end up saying OOo!

PDF Hacks: 100 Industrial-Strength Tips & Tools Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

O'REILLY®

Author: Sid Steward
http://www.oreillynet.com/cs/catalog/view/au/1754
O'Reilly & Associates
1005 Gravenstein Highway North
Sebastopol CA 95472
800-294-4747
Fax: 800-997-9901
order@oreilly.com
http://www.oreilly.com/
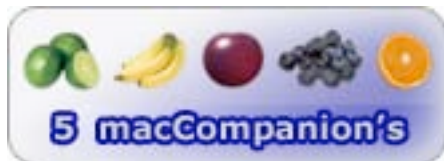**Booksite:**
http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/pdfhks/index.html
Published: August 2004
Pages: 296
$25 USD, $37 CN, £17.50 UK, €21
ISBN: 0596006551
 For those who aren't afraid to tinker.

5 macCompanion's
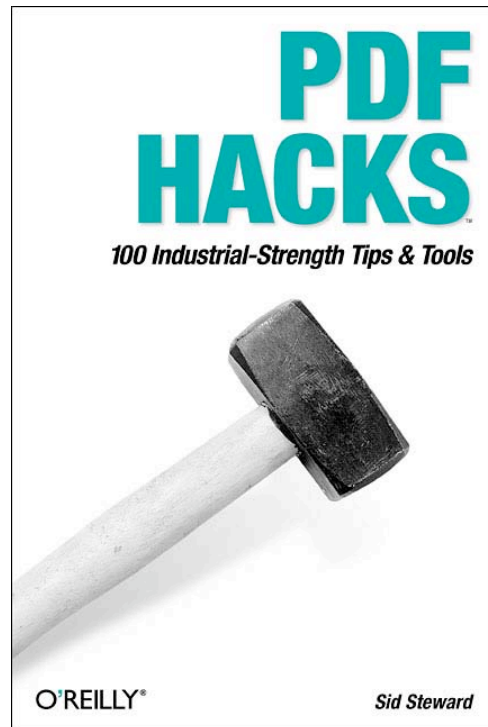
Strengths: A quality resource following the O'Reilly format perfectly.

Weaknesses: Website "home" needs to be rethought. On a Mac, get some serious hard drive space and use a recent Mac system to process the Unix code.

PDF Hacks by Sid Steward reveals a lot of the mystery behind PDF and shows how to make the most of that technology. Don't let the sledge hammer on the cover turn you off. Think of it more like the one used in the Apple commercial of 1984. It breaks open technology so we can make it do so much more than it was originally intended to do. That is the beauty of "hacking".

The website, pdfhacks.com, redirects to amazon.com and so is not the real "home page" - yet.

Here is what Sid Steward sent me when I asked about the website issue:

 Pdfhacks.com isn't a portal. Rather, I use pdfhacks.com as a convenient location for hosting the several scripts and programs I wrote for my book, *PDF Hacks*. The book cites specific URLs where the reader can download the latest code or see examples. For example, http://www.pdfhacks.com/bbox/ is where you can download a plug-in for Acrobat that I wrote for the book, and my Autopaste Word/OpenOffice macro can be downloaded from: http://www.pdfhacks.com/autopaste/.

 In a sense, the PDF Hacks book is the "front page" to pdfhacks.com.

Perhaps I should redirect readers to a page of examples, instead: http://www.pdfhacks.com/eno/.

Many of the hacks refer to using *pdftk* to get work done. Scot Lasley wrote the following to Sid Steward:

> I saw your pdftk site mentioned on the O'Reilly PDF Hacks page. I was able to compile gcj and pdftk using the information on John M. Gabriele's web site you mentioned. I created an OS X installer package for pdftk that includes the needed libgcc, libgcj and libstdc libraries. I have used it to install pdftk on two Macs running 10.3.5, and the program seems to work on both systems. That has been the extent of my testing. I don't know if the program will work on systems older than OS X 10.3. The installer is here if you want it http://home.earthlink.net/~selasley/pdftk1.0.dmg.gz.

I wanted it, downloaded it and struggled using it with Mac OS X 10.3.5. I use Adobe Acrobat® 6 and so I have bookmarked many of the pages found in the 7 Chapters of this book.

Portable Document Format (PDF) tends to be a little clunky when created using Acrobat 6. Over time, I've discovered through other books that there are ways to make it less clunky. The hacks found here help make it soar like an eagle!

Sid Steward pulls back much of the mystery surrounding PDF technology and reveals how powerful it really is. I want to experiment with how *macCompanion* is posted with a part of the book I find extremely intriguing: accessing part of a PDF without actually having to download the entire PDF to do so. Some gurus I respect have told me that this is impossible. Well I think Sid Steward is showing how much what is "not possible", very possible. I'm going to prove him right. Assuming the "hack" works, this will save untold hours of effort in website access to articles and makes the "coolness factor" go way up there with the eagles. [Follow-up – I've got compilation problems and haven't gotten it to work yet. Each part of the compile process ate more of my hard drive space until I had nearly none. Do this with systems that have some serious hard drive space and much faster MHz motherboards than I currently am using.]

The 7 chapters cover reading PDFs with other apps besides Adobe Reader, including slideshowing and using PDF attachments and navigation and manipulation of the same, managing PDF collections, spinning portals (this must be what Sid did with his "website"), authoring and publishing outside the PDF (really a great collection of how to do book-publishing and distribution), creating interactive PDFs, creating and manipulating PDF files and using other technologies to make PDFs dynamic and even scripting and programming Adobe Acrobat.

PDF Hacks brings out the best of the best of the kinds of things that make applications run faster and jump higher by turning clunky into cool. If you use Adobe Acrobat for a living, you will want to get this book, whatever computer platform you use.

Al Ward's Photoshop Productivity Toolkit: Over 600 Time-Saving Actions Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Author: Al Ward

al@actionfx.com

http://www.actionfx.com/

http://www.photospin.com/ (stock images)

Sybex, Inc.

1151 Marina Village Parkway

Alameda, CA 94501

http://www.sybex.com

Published: July 2004

Pages: 160

$35 USD, $49 CN, £25 UK, €30 with CD

ISBN: 0782143342

Requirements: Photoshop, Mac OS X 10.2 or later, Win 2000/XP

For those who want some action in their Photoshop lives.

Strengths: This is where the Action is!

Weaknesses: If you are not into Photoshop-mode, don't even think about getting this book.

Al Ward's Photoshop Productivity Toolkit: Over 600 Time-Saving Actions is all about action. Okay, that was too easy. It is really about a book that is a carrying case for a CD. The CD has 600 Al Ward Photoshop® scripts or "step-shortcuts" called actions or saved series of image manipulations. Think of Al Ward as a master scriptorian and this book and CD show off his expertise.

If you want to see funny, go see Scott Kelby's books. This one is dead serious business. Photoshop is complex and a bit clunky, but anyone who does anything with digital photography owns or uses a copy of Photoshop. Al Ward has taken much of the drudgework and automated it. The trick is finding what you want amidst 600 actions.

The book has 4 short chapters and one long Appendix (no, it should not be removed). The chapters cover Actions introduction and automation, how to load, save, play, edit create and use Actions and other Action Tidbits like which Photoshop versions Actions work with and which Operating Systems play nice too. There are even online resources listed. There is even instruction on how to roll your own actions in case Al Ward's list isn't enough.

The rest of the book is the Guide to the Actions Toolkit CD. The Appendix is categorized into aging, artistic, color correction, enhancement, layout, production, typography, plug-ins and add-ons, 3rd-party

actions and add-ons and stock images. Pretty much everything is one click away.

In the middle of the Appendix are 32 pages of exquisite photographs in "The Ultimate Photoshop Actions Color Gallery". I really enjoyed the page on layer styles and text showing such textures as Gels, glass, wood, stone and metal effects. Sorry, I'm a sucker for 3D.

Anyway, that's it. Go to Al Ward's website above and learn more about what he does for a living besides write scripts for Photoshop. And if you do Photoshop for a living, why not gather 600 shortcuts here why you are looking around for some action of your own?

Ultimate PC Performance Guide Reviewed by Robert Pritchett
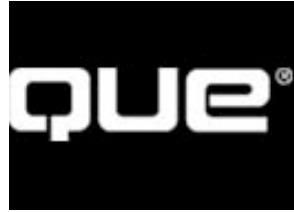
Author: Jon Phillips
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(415) 468-4684
http://www.maximumpc.com/
Que Publishing
800 East 96th Street
Indianapolis, IN 46240
http://www.quepublishing.com
Published: September 10, 2004
Pages: 336
$30 USD, $43 CN, £17 UK, €26
ISBN: 078973317X
Beginner-Intermediate

5 macCompanion's
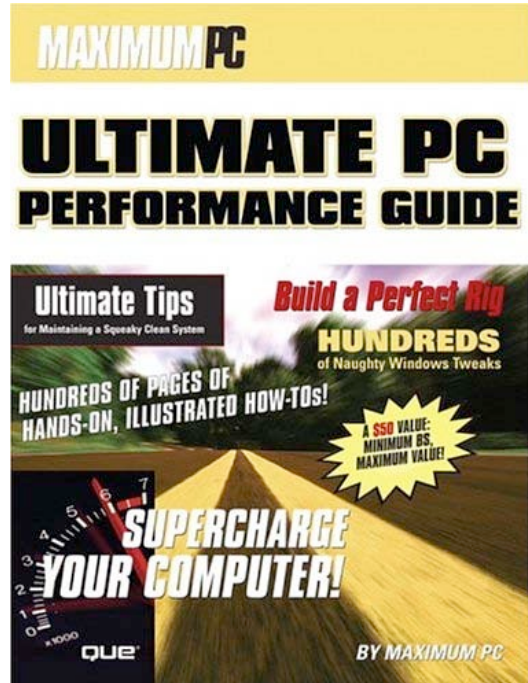
Strengths: Covers the latest in the WinTel hardware world.

Weaknesses: Can they make one for the Mac? Dang that is a heavy mag! – What? 2 pounds?

Ultimate PC Performance Guide by Jon Phillips covers the latest soup-to-nuts best-of-the-best from the *Maximum PC* magazine and has turned those articles into a slick coffee-table book every geek would be proud to own.

There are 5 issues-worth of *Maximum PC* located within the covers of this book that include the 2002 – 2003 How-To Guides, *Building the Perfect PC* and the *Unauthorized Guide to XP Pro* as well as content from *355 PC Answers*.

Okay, I hear you asking, " Hey, this is a Mac-based environment and you are touting a WinTel book. What gives?" Well, many of us have to deal with the WinTel world every day of our lives and this book makes that process just a little easier. If you really want to get crass, think of it as "computer porn" and instead of just looking, we can partake of what is found in these pages.

There are some great ideas that would look great if Jon Phillips got serious about tricking out Macs

too. I can see it now – *Maximum Mac* with the same attention to detail and the super-glossy pages that make *Maximum PC* so popular. Sure, he could do it. Just take a lead from http://forums.appletalk.com.au/index.php?showtopic=802, http://www.macmod.com/index.php, http://www.modyourmac.com/ or http://www.applefritter.com/. We could even add Mac-Retro like the ElectriClerk: http://www.ahleman.com/Props/ElectriClerkPress3.html.

The format is Building, Maximizing, Tuning, Internet Access and Security, Fun & Games and Troubleshooting. This book-issue covers a Guide to SpecSpeak, how to pick the best of every component, optimizing and overclocking and even how to handle dual-monitors, The tuning section focuses on XP Pro® while the next section discusses how to play safe with the Internet connection. The section after that gets into gaming, photography, multimedia creation and turning the PC into an arcade center. The last section is the most important as it covers component and software issues and fixes. John Phillips has quite a moneymaking formula going on here and as long as there are personal computers, he has a guaranteed job pumping out slick mags for the masses.

Would *MacWorld* and *MacAddict* or any of the other hard-copy versions of Mac-magazines mind being turned into book form? Would people something like that from Que? Apparently Jon Phillips can't publish these things fast enough for the WinTel market.

Maybe we should take it on at MPN, LLC. After all, we publish too.

Hardware

1.8GHz G5 iMac 17-inch widescreen computer Reviewed by Eddie Hargreaves

Apple Computer, Inc.
1 Infinite Loop
Cupertino, CA 95014
408-996-1010
http://www.apple.com
http://www.apple.com/imac
Released: August 31, 2004
$1,500 USD
Specifications:
17-inch widescreen LCD with 1440x900 pixel resolution; 1.8GHz
64-bit PowerPC G5 processor; 256MB of 400 MHz DDR SDRAM;
SuperDrive (DVD-R/CD-RW) optical drive; NVIDIA GeForce FX
5200 Ultra graphics processor with 64MB video memory; Two
FireWire 400, three USB 2.0, two USB 1.1 ports; 10/100 BASE-T
Ethernet networking, 56K V.92 Modem; Internal support for
AirPort Extreme wireless networking and Bluetooth; 80GB Serial
ATA hard drive running at 7200 rpm; Built-in stereo speakers and
microphone

Strengths: Speedy performance; beautiful widescreen LCD;
striking design with small footprint; easy access to internal
components

Weaknesses: Paltry RAM; one-button Mouse; built-in Bluetooth
only available from online Apple Store; innovative design has
unknown durability

At first glance, the new iMac® G5™ may seem to have little in common with the original G3
incarnation, considering it isn't fruit-colored. But it's a true descendent in that it's an all-in-one computer
designed to be simple to use and affordable.

The unique hardware design and configuration is what sets the iMac G5 apart from all other
computers. It is incredibly thin for a desktop computer, despite the 17" screen being quite large. It
takes up less space on a desk than any previous iMac but is striking in its appearance.

Similar to its G4 predecessor from 2002, all the ports are located on the back of the machine. It's nice
that they are all hidden from view in a visual sense, especially for unchanging ones like the power and
modem cords. But it's not particularly convenient for often-used ports like USB, FireWire, and the
headphone jack. Thankfully, the entire computer can be easily swiveled on its brushed metallic base.

The power button is also located on the back, which seems odd at first, but later seems completely
normal since there's rarely a need to turn the machine on and off when sleep mode is perfectly silent.

Speaking of silence, the iMac G5 is an incredibly quiet machine ... when it's not doing much. If the processor is maxed out at 100 percent, you will certainly hear the internal fans whirring. A spinning CD can also make a good deal of noise. But under normal use, the machine is very quiet. Room temperature also plays a role; the machine has gotten quieter as the weather has gotten colder.

The speakers, which project sound from the bottom of the machine, are surprisingly good. But anyone that wants a high bass level will want to attach external speakers. That can be said of nearly all built-in speakers, though.

It comes with Apple's standard USB keyboard and optical mouse, despite the promotional photos showing a wireless keyboard. Apple does allow the purchase of built-in Bluetooth capability, but only through its online Apple Store. Anybody who does not want Bluetooth to be shipped with the requested computer will instead have to plug in a USB Bluetooth adapter.

And although Apple is targeting Windows users with this model ("From the creators of the iPod"), it continues to ship a one-button mouse. That's especially ridiculous considering OS X has built-in support for two-button mice with scroll-wheels.

But the company has made a major shift by making the computer's innards easier to access than ever before. It was incredibly difficult to open previous iMacs and replace anything other than RAM. The iMac G5 is not only simple to open up, but allows for the easy replacement of the memory, hard drive, optical drive, power supply, LCD display, modem card and more. This is a welcome change from Apple's past.

Software is not the unique part of the G5 iMac. The newest pre-installed applications are Quicken 2004, WorldBook Encyclopedia 2004, and the games Nanosaur 2 and MarbleBlast Gold. In the middle-aged section are iLife '04 and Mac OS X 10.3, which are nine and 12 months old, respectively. And then there's the stalwart AppleWorks, which has been stagnant at version 6 for nearly five years.

Apple's consumer software focus has largely been on the iLife applications, and most of them perform quite well. iTunes' visualizer is a fun way to show off the power of the G5 processor and even though the optical drive is mounted vertically, I was able to rip CDs at up to an incredible 18x speed.

Although iMovie crashed on its first use, it rendered clips quickly. Even iPhoto, not well known for its speed, performed surprisingly well.

GarageBand, unfortunately, is quite a resource pig, and gave error messages about not being able to play all the instruments of most of the pre-installed demo songs. Apple doesn't send a great message when the software advertised on the packaging cannot perform its demos on the stock hardware.

And, sadly, it wasn't even stock hardware. I had added a 256MB stick of RAM to the default 256MB already installed (standard on all the models). I chose that size partly due to cost and partly because the machine will have a 128-bit memory bus if two identical DIMMs are installed, as opposed to two 64-bit memory buses with two non-identical DIMMs. Popping in a 1GB chip would likely overcome any speed difference from having separate memory buses, but 512MB total was enough to safely run most applications.

The speed of the machine is impressive, and even Virtual PC 7 running Windows XP Pro was usable. Anyone using a G3 iMac will be floored by the speed improvements of this machine. Those using a G4 iMac will probably only be swayed if they're using the 700 or 800 MHz models.

The iMac G5 is an incredible all-in-one consumer computer. Its beautiful LCD display and speedy processor are its biggest strengths. But its incredible design makes it visually appealing, easy to move, and gives it a small desk footprint. And despite going low-end on the amount of RAM and the aging mouse, the price is respectable.

Kanguru Fire Flash Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Kanguru Solutions
1360 Main St.
Millis, MA 02054
508-376-4245
Fax: 508-376-4462
sales@kanguru.com
http://www.kanguru.com
Product:
http://www.kanguru.com/fireflash.html
Released: September 2004
Specifications:
http://www.kanguru.com/fireflash.html#techspecs
128MB $65 USD; 256MB, $90; 512MB, $160, 1
GB, $280; 6pin-to-4pin adapter $13; Docking
station, $13.
The kit comes with Kanguru Fire Flash, 6 to 4 Pin
FireWire Adapter and USB power cord, FireWire
Extender Cable, Drivers & Manual mini-CD.
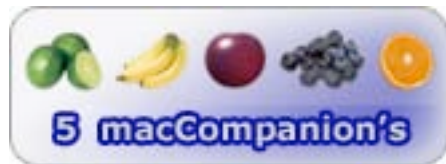
Strengths: FireWire Flash that lasts 1 million writes.

Weaknesses: Can the plastic case withstand 1,000 Gs?

The Kanguru Fire Flash is probably the first FireWire (IEEE 1394) flash drive on the market. It plugs into any 6-pin FireWire port and Linux and earlier versions of Microsoft OS require drivers. It flashes 400MB per second and weighs in at 30 grams in a petite 85mm x 28mm x 15 mm plastic body. The memory chip is NAND Flash Memory that is rated at 1 million flashes before it burns out while writing at 39.1MilliAmps (mA) ~ 39.4 milliAmps and reading at 35.0mA ~ 36.1mA. It can keep memory static for 10 years and can handle 1,000 Gs if dropped. The warranty is for 1 year. Operating temperature is –15 C to 75 C. It will work up to 80,000 feet above sea level and can handle vibration up to 15 Gs. Okay 007, see if you can beat this gadget! And the drive is hot-swappable, if you eject the icon first.

The Flash drive is formatted for FAT so it will need to be reformatted for use with Mac OS X for better transfer rates.

Kanguru Fire Flash

LED Indicator
Red: Write
Blue: Read

6 Pin FireWire Connector

If using the FireWire Flash drive directly is cumbersome, than use the docking station instead.

Docking Station

The 6-to-4-pin adapter uses power from a USB port but is only necessary for use with PowerBooks.

6 to 4 Pin Adapter

If you use the Kanguru FireWire Flash drive with Linux or earlier versions of MS OS, there are drivers located along with the 10-page PDFed User's Guide on a mini-CD.

If USB flash drives are too slow for transferring data, than step up to using a FireWire Flash drive instead. The difference is that USB Flash Drives last 1,000 writes while the FireWire Flash drive lasts 1,000,000 and the pricing isn't all that much different from my perspective. We've come a long ways from flashing in the 70s and 80s (ask someone who lived through those decades) to flashing in 2004!

Yeah baby!

ShowCase 4G Reviewed by Ted Bade

Contour Design, Inc.
10 Industrial Drive
Windham, NH 03087 USA
800-462-6678.
International: +1-603-893-4556
Fax: 603-893-4558
info@contourdesign.com
http://www.contourdesign.com/
Product: http://www.contourdesign.com/showcase/index.htm
Released: September, 2004
$33 USD
Requirements: Requires 4th Generation iPod
Experience needed: none

Strengths: Solid protection, easy access to controls, great view of both front and back of your iPod.

Weaknesses: Belt clip gets in the way of opening the ShowCase.

As often as Apple has redesigned the iPod®, Contour Designs has followed quickly with a new design to their ShowCase iPod cases. This latest version comfortably fits the newest iPod (4th Generation) and offers some nice changes over the earlier version of the ShowCase, although they now come only in two colors, white and black.

The ShowCase is designed to show off the sleek lines of the iPod. It is constructed of a hard plastic case, covered on the edges with a soft rubber-like plastic. Essentially it looks like an iPod, though slightly larger. The ShowCase opens like a book. The iPod is placed within. The entire front of the ShowCase is clear plastic, with a circular hole cut in it so that the entire control pad is exposed. The top has an opening providing access to the iPod's lock button and headphone jack, and the bottom has an opening for the iPod's cable.

With the previous edition of the iPod and the ShowCase that went with it, we had a little problem operating the soft-touch buttons; this was especially a problem for people with large fingers. As you may know, the latest iPod is designed similar to the first generation iPod, in that the controls are situated around the circular control pad. The circular hole on the ShowCase provides easy access to both the circular pad and the soft buttons. By the way, if you are thinking that this ShowCase might fit a first generation iPod, forget it. The first generation iPods are thicker. (Yeah, I actually tried it with my old iPod!)

The back of the ShowCase is clear, giving one a clear view of your iPod's backside, so you can see that wonderful inscription. A foam insert needs to be installed if you have one of the thinner iPods (those with the smaller drives). I was impressed to see that Contour Designs re-designed this foam insert. One of my complaints about an earlier ShowCase was that the foam piece blocked the view of the back of your iPod. The foam piece that comes with this new edition of the ShowCase is more a ring of foam. It serves the same purpose, but because of its open design, you'll see as much of the back of the iPod as you would without it. Great redesign. ;-)

The soft easy grip plastic that covers the outside of the ShowCase comes in two colors, Black and White. The previous version of the Showcase that came out right around the time of the iPod Minis could be bought in a number of colors. Although it seemed like a good idea, some of the colors probably appeal only to a few people. My guess is that the people at Contour figured this out as well.

The soft plastic is very easy to hold, and makes it easier to hold your iPod more securely. I am still concerned about stains on this material, which would be quite apparent on the white material (The black color is a lot harder to stain). However, the material cleans easily. A mosquito that was pestering me while working on this review met its doom on this showcase. I feared that the slightly red and mostly grey stain would mar the material forever, but, as the instructions promised, wiping the exterior with a damp cloth and a mild cleaner removed the bug stain completely.

The ShowCase comes with a belt clip, which easily snaps onto or off the ShowCase using a little spring latch. The clip itself is made of a hard plastic, which with a little effort, clips onto a belt or other thin material. I am a little concerned that this clip might eventually break, but in my short experimenting with it, it did very well. Another thing about the belt clip, if set in place as shown in the directions (or as it comes out of the box), The latch on the clip gets in the way of operating the latch which opens the ShowCase. Which means it would be easier to take the belt clip off before opening the ShowCase, a minor problem, which could probably be designed out in the next version.


If you are looking for a case for your 4G iPod, definitely consider the ShowCase. It protects your iPod, while providing easy access to its controls and connections. It looks as classy as the iPod itself, and its soft plastic exterior makes it easy to hold. It will protect your iPod without sacrificing the cool look of the iPod.

tactilepro™ Professional Keyboard Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Matias Corporation
129 Rowntree Dairy Road #20
Vaughan, Ontario, L4L6E1
Canada
905-265-8844 or 888-663-4263
http://www.matias.ca
Product: http://matias.ca/tactilepro/index.php
Dvorak option:
http://matias.ca/tactilepro/support/resources/
downloads/Dvorak.rtf
Released: September 2003
$100 USD (plus shipping) 5-year guarantee.
30-day money back guarantee.
Requirements: Mac OS X 10.2 or later. No
driver needed for Mac OS X 10.3 or later.
Soundclip: http://bsd.trideja.com/dmw-
review/tactilepro-macally_ikey.mp3
Designed for the hard-of-hearing.
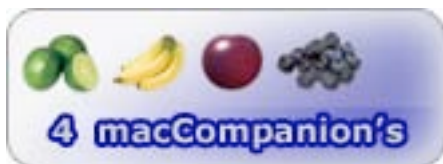
Strengths: 5-year warranty. Heavy-duty. Designed for professional all-day typing.

Weaknesses: USB 1.1 2-port hub and not USB 2.0. Shadow-key issues (key-combo). Weak legs. Noisy keys.

Clickity-Clack the mechanical keyboard is back! Remember the IBM keyboard from the 1980's? I used to repair those for a living. Very mechanical. Well, Matias Corporation has had the *tactilepro™* keyboard around for over a year and I am looking for a possible replacement for my mechanical keyswitch Ortek ergonomic-style keyboard that has lasted me since 1998. The tactilepro uses heavy-duty Alps mechanical keys and that is why they can get away with offering a 5-year guarantee. Beats any $30 keyboard that lasts 3-6 months any more.

This one could very well be it. Noise for me is not a big deal. For some, it may be a decision in an otherwise quiet office that keeps folks from using this one. If you touch-type, than perhaps this keyboard will increase your speed because of the auditory feedback. Listen to the audio clip above. It brings back memories. It is a comparison between the tactile pro and a Macally keyboard.

On either side of the keyboard, there is a USB port – but they only are USB 1.1 ports and not USB 2.0 ports.

The rear legs may make the pitch too high. The keys mostly have more than one symbol on them for option-I\key or shift-option-key setups for international symbols, etc. The two arrow keys shown also below mimic the CD eject and volume control keys.

In one of the links shown above, there are instructions on making the keyboard act as a Dvorak keyboard – that is the one that takes 20 minutes to retrain for and puts all the vowels on the same row and reduces finger-travel by a few orders of magnitude once mastered.

The keyboard connects via a 5-foot long USB cable (no, no wireless keyboards yet). And yes, just like my old Ortek keyboard, this one too has a Power-on button located above the 15 function keys. To turn off, just Command-Control-Power and the system will cycle down.

Along with the keyboard a CD is included for use with non-Panther systems. A keycap indicator LED lights the Caps lock and Num Lock keys.

Is touch important to you and are you willing to swap cheap for functional? Is the fact that the USB ports are not USB2.0 an issue? Will the clickity-clack noise from being busy at the keyboard going to be a bother to you – or others around you? Will you mind using the same old familiar keyboard after 5 years? Maybe your ears will be sad but if your fingers are happy, is that asking too much?
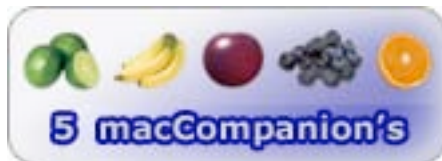
The Mouse BT Reviewed by Derek Meier

MacMice

MacMice, Inc.
130-C Volunteer Drive
Hendersonville TN 37075
(615) 822-9270
Fax: (615) 822-2790
sales@macmice.com
http://www.macmice.com/
Released:
$70 USD
Requirements: Mac OS X with built in Bluetooth or Bluetooth adapter.

5 macCompanion's

Strengths: Responsive, easy setup, stylish. On/Off button.

Weaknesses: No battery monitoring.

The Mouse BT by Macmice has been the only Bluetooth mouse so far I have seen to improve on the beautifully designed Apple wireless mouse. Sleek and sexy, it has the same shape and feel as the Apple Mouse but has the advantage by having a second mouse button as well as a nice, red, lighted scroll wheel. Available in aluminum and white to match the Mac desktops and laptops something Apple should have considered in their mouse.

Setup is extremely easy. It comes with two AA batteries, which are easily inserted by opening the bottom panel, than turning on the on/off button and holding the connect button on the bottom for ten seconds. After that it is as simple as running through the Bluetooth Setup Assistant.

As far as using the mouse, it is just as responsive as Apple's mouse if not better. Apple should take note that having more than one mouse button is a good thing and having a scroll wheel is even better. The scroll wheel on the MouseBT turns very smoothly. I don't think I have ever used a mouse with such a smooth rolling scroll wheel. It's very nice. When the mouse is in motion, the scroll wheel lights up. Ergonomically, the mouse takes awhile to get used to if you have not used the Apple Mouse. Some people may not like the way the mouse feels in their hand so this might turn off some

users. Initially I had felt this way but after some use, I grew used to it quite quickly. On the MacMice web site FAQ, one of the questions is, "Is The Mouse BT good for gaming?" Basically their answer is no. Current Bluetooth mouse is as good as a really good USB mouse. They make no claims that their mouse is ideal for gaming. It's nice to see the company letting the customer know before they purchase. One feature that would have been a nice addition is the ability to monitor battery life in Mac OS X itself, like the Apple Mouse does.

The MouseBT is by far the nicest Bluetooth mouse I have used. Being available in the Apple scheme of colors is a definite plus. It performed reliably and was very responsive. Setup was flawless and easy. Having a second mouse button and a scroll wheel give it an advantage over the Apple Bluetooth mouse. I was very pleased with the MouseBT and I think it is a worthwhile purchase.

Shareware

Impression 2.6 — An accurate hard disk data archiving and restoration tool Reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad and edited by Julie M. Willingham

Developer: Steve Elliott
Babel Company
info@babelcompany.com
http://www.babelcompany.com
File Size: 640 K
Released: July 12, 2004; Version 3.0 is nearing release.
Product: http://www.babelcompany.com/impression
$25 USD, Single user
Requirements: Mac OS X, version 10.2 (Jaguar) or 10.3.x (Panther).
iTunes or Roxio Toast supported disc burner CD-R/W or DVD-R drive (if archiving to CD or DVDs). You will also need free space on the startup drive, computed at runtime and based on backup size. (I have no value for this needed space.)
Audience: All user levels-All you folks who practice safe Macin' and thus need to do regular backups to archive valuable documents.
The software was tested on a 1 GHz dual processor PowerPC G4 Macintosh with an 80 GB internal drive that has ca. 27.6 GB of free space, 2 MB DDR SDRAM, and running under OS X 10.3.5. I archive to a dual partitioned 150 GB LaCie FireWire 400 external hard drive.

Product and company names and logos in this review may be registered trademarks of their respective companies.
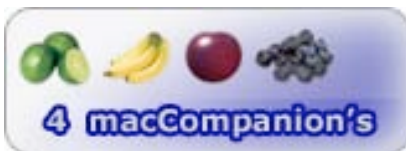
Strengths: Both experts and infrequent computer users should find that this application addresses their needs for a reliable, reasonably priced, open-standard personal backup solution. As Steve Elliot notes, "we all need to back up our data to keep it safe, and a single ~650 MB CD is proving too limited to hold the multitude of files that we generate from our various digital input sources
(video, music, photo, etc.). This application can create reliable archives that span multiple optical discs or securely back up files to disk images."

Weaknesses: The software is not designed to either make bootable backups of your had disk to an external volume, or to directly create as its default preference, Finder readable disk images. To do that requires an extra step in defining the backup conditions using pulldown windows that you manually set with your backup preferences.

Software Overview

Impression is a straightforward, reliable backup application that can back up directories to (and restore them from) multiple optical discs (CD-R, CD-RW, DVD-R and DVD-RW) or disk images on any mounted hard drive (i.e. - iPod, FireWire drive, Network server, etc.). I was also particularly pleased to find a file named "Advice regarding backups for OS X." on Steve Elliot's web site. It contains a well-written "practical primer to help enable smart choices when backing up your data under OS X."

Introduction

As I put more information onto my internal 80 GB hard disk, paranoia is my ghost-like companion each time I boot or wake up my computer. I even burn special backup CDs of all my professional and personal data... as well as keep my disk uncluttered by burning reference CDs of little used technical data and compulsively gathered graphics collection files.

No, I've never suffered a data-destroying hard disk crash, although a number of backups, then on Zip 250 disks, were lost to the infamous "rattle of death." As you've read in my backup series that started with a Backup or Die column (June 2004, Volume 2 Issue 6 of *macCompanion*), I initially experimented with Déjà Vu 2.6.3 and Carbon Copy Cloner 2.3. Both were easy to use and gave me bootable clones from my LaCie drive, but something was missing.

Unlike creating backups under Macintosh System OS 9 and its predecessors, OS X imposes constraints that don't permit using a straightforward drag-and-drop operation to create a bootable backup—but that's another story. When using Carbon Copy Cloner, whether I made make a clone or a disk image of my hard disk, I could never recapture a file directly by using drop and drag techniques from my backup volume on the LaCie drive to my desktop. As a result, if I need the backed up version of a document, I could only recover that file from my backup to another volume—I use a Zip 250 disk.

This was the backup need that lead me to test Impression. Having learned how to make a finder readable archive, with a little bit of real-time help from Steve Elliot, I was set to go. Impression creates the kind of Finder friendly backup volume I need to recover a file that I've subsequently trashed from my hard disk.
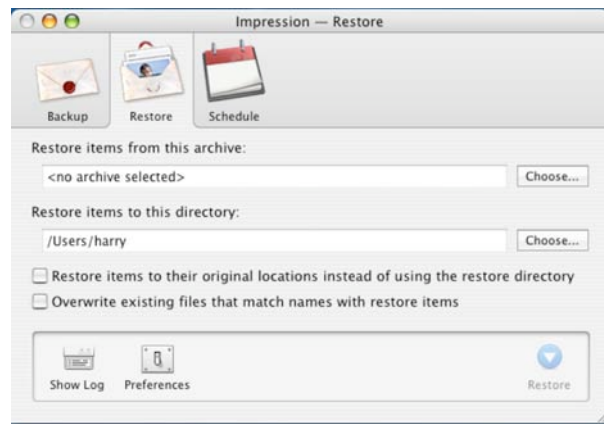
Working With the Product

Impression offers incremental/differential backup options, bookmark-based backup management, compressed/encrypted disk image options, and MD5 checksum validation. It works by creating a temporary archive on your hard disk, sized according to either the archival media (CDs or DVDs) or the external volume you select (e.g., my external hard drive partition.)

Installation of the software is easy and the interface appears deceptively simple.
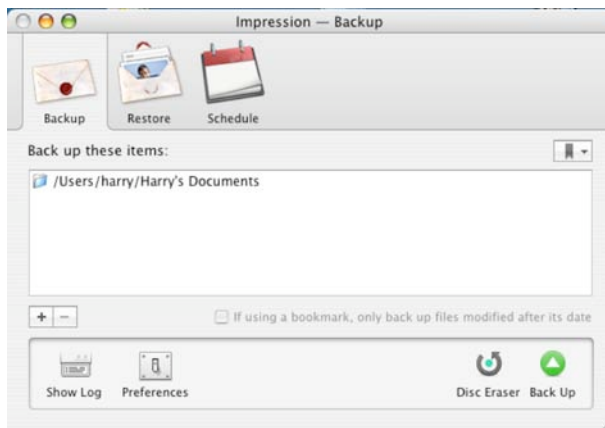
Impression's Main Window   **The Impression Restore Window**

I was able to successfully backup my 23+ GB documents folder onto six — 4.7 GB DVDs, but, as noted by Steve Elliot, this was a time consuming task (6+ hours) even with the DVDs burning at 2X. But reading a Peter F. Hamilton, sci-fi space opera made it seem less arduous. Alas, my DVD collection of [.imps] files was not Finder-readable, much to my frustration. They could be made Finder-accessible via the terminal, as described below, but that's not my bag. I ran out of time, so I did not further check out creating Finder-friendly DVDs with Impression, something I will certainly do in the future. Indeed, I tossed the DVDs and went on to use my FireWire drive as a backup destination both before and after I learned how to make Finder-readable backups. More on this subject later in the review.

The individual archives written by Impression use the command-line tool hfspax, available from Howard Oakley at this URL: http://homepage.mac.com/howardoakley/. The readme file on each archive volume or disk contains instructions showing how to list and restore files from the archive by using Terminal with hfspax. I chose not to download and install that software, so did not test its ability to access individual files. For my occasional needs to recover individual files, this was not a convenient option.

I was, by creating a temporary disk image on my hard drive, initially only able back up to my partitioned 150 GB LaCie external FireWire drive in '(hfs) pax' format. Don't ask—but if this format rings a bell to all of you UNIX users, read the FAQ that Steve provides. With Steve's feedback, I was able to create, by preference, an archived File copy (Finder-readable) back up. Even with instructions, it took two tries to backup to the 'File copy' mode. That mode is meant to be used to archive files in plain, Finder-readable format. The finder-based backup would allow easy, random access to my data using the Apple OS Finder's Find File feature. Creating Finder-readable backups was not discussed in the author's help file. The software's default setting to '(hfs) pax' is bothersome. (The default backup preference I, in my ignorance used is to a hfspax-based, folder package archive.) So I wasted 6-DVDs in the learning of it, 'Using either the File copy' and 'restorable' modes is equally fast and accurate so if you are comfortable with UNIX take your choice.

Showing the advanced options in the backup sheet makes the selection of File copy and Restorable modes. 'Restorable' mode is the default. Both took three and a half hours to archive a 25.2 GB data set. (To succeed in my backups, I chose to turn off both my screen and energy saver, a precautionary step not identified in any of Steve's notes.)

As I explored Impression, I found the sixteen page FAQ helpful, in particular the FAQ entitled Why is temporary or 'scratch' space necessary? "Impression creates temporary, freshly-formatted HFS+ sparse images in order to build the initial archive. This is necessary as to provide a stable, 100% clean

repository for the files to be written to as the archive is built. After the initial archive has been created, this temporary sparse image is then either burned to CD/DVD or converted to .dmg or .cdr format to an external volume as chosen by the operator. The use of a temporary sparse image guarantees a formatted HFS+ file system that Impression can trust to preserve all file attributes during the archiving process, something which is quite important in guaranteeing the validity of data archived during backup processes."

Main Software Features

Impression is a Cocoa-based application, which uses a graphic user interface. It has an easy to use and streamlined user interface. It can create full, incremental, and differential backups, as well as using bookmark-based backup management based on previous backups to help automate your strategy. That allows you to automate backing up only the files you designate and is a great tool for CD- or DVD-based specific file backups as long as you have less than 4.7 GB of data. With more data, it just takes a little more time. The software also has the ability to back up hidden and system files, but not to make a bootable clone. That was not the developer's purpose. Steve Elliot's goal was to allow creation of error-free backup for archive or file restoration purposes.

The software creates archives, using the 'hfspax' standard, that preserve full HFS/HFS+ file metadata such as UNIX symbolic and hard links. It allows file segmentation that breaks up large files into appropriately sized chunks to make best available use of CD/DVD space. For belt-and-suspenders assurance, you can use the software's optional MD5 checksum generation verification on your backed up files to guarantee their integrity. That, according to Steve Elliott, its developer, offers significant peace of mind to assuring a functional restoration should Murphy strike. (You do keep your backup drive turned off, don't you?)

In addition, Impression can create full, incremental, and differential backups whose files and folders can be used to restore lost files, from either 'hfs pax'-based archives ('imps') or to plain, Finder-readable file archives. Impression can create multi-session disc burning, and offers 'write until full' capabilities for supported optical disc formats to reduce disc waste when running multiple small or incremental backups. You will be able to encrypt disk images with AES-128 disk encryption and keep your passwords stored safely in the OS X Keychain. The software compresses disk images for local archive storage. You can use 'Root' user runtime authority to avoid permissions issues.

According to my personal experience and Internet readings, the author is very responsive to bug reports and user suggestions. He also provides help to software users in their hour of need. This is definitely not one of the many shareware products I've downloaded that a developer releases and then moves away from into greener pastures. The release note for version 6.2 noted, "All reported bugs have been fixed." Since my needs were straightforward, I didn't need to use this "personalized" help.

Software Limitations

The software does not contain a de-installer, a capability I deem essential since I do a great deal of software testing and review. Alas, there are features, discussed in the publisher's list of software's features, I needed to accommodate my backup style preferences that were neither obviously discussed in the Help or FAQ files.

I found the help files, which were mostly centered on the information in the FAQs, too limited to be an effective primer to this otherwise fine software product. It would help if choices like user a Finder friendly backup format choices (defacto preferences) were to appear at a higher hieratical level. Such choices are now made two screen levels down from the main window. Items such as selecting a source to backup, its destination, and which type of archive the user prefers also needs to be more accessible.
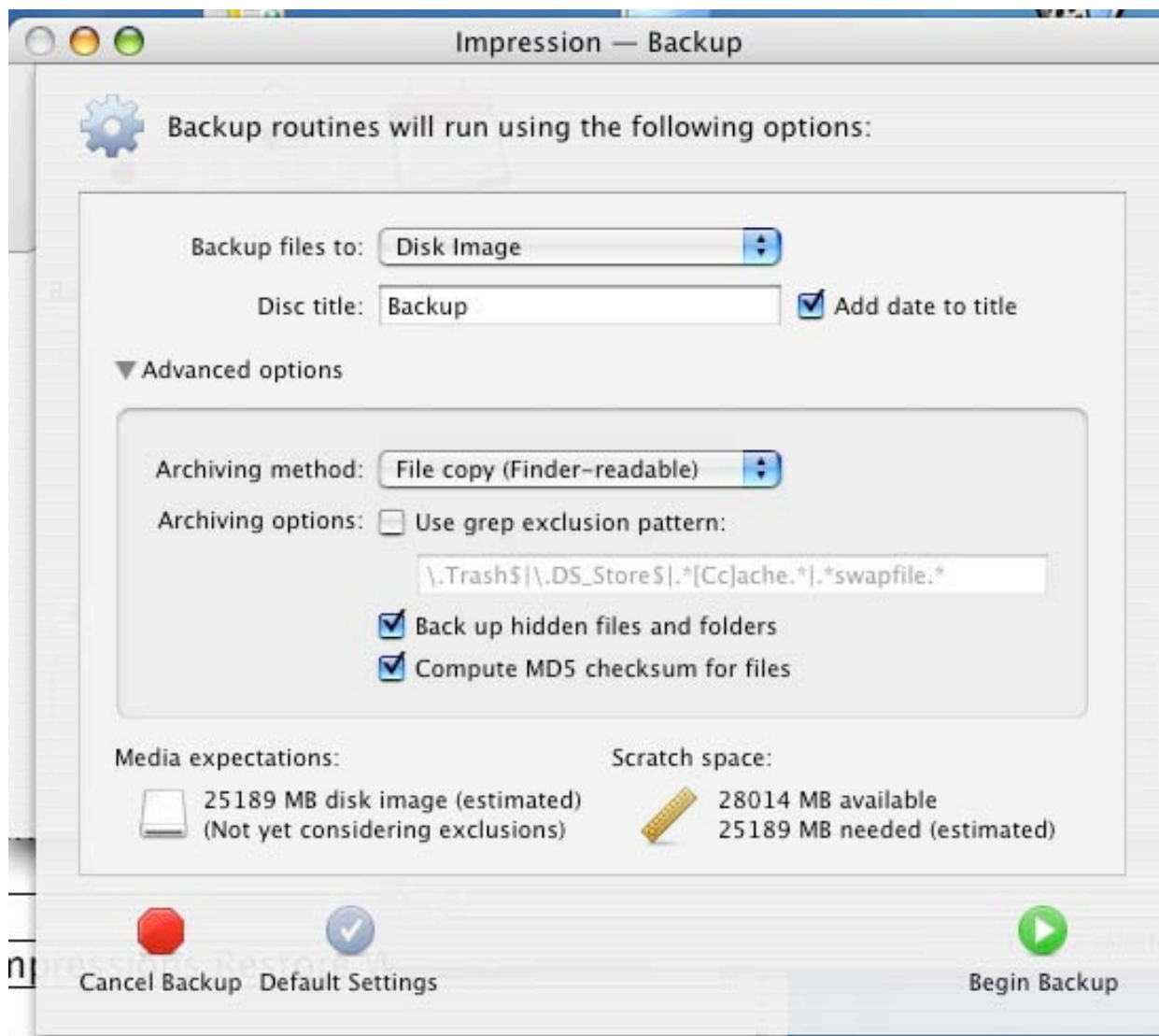
Impression Backup Options

It would also be handy to use a preferences panel to default to your selected backup alternative, especially when backing up to an external volume. That would allow folks like me who have used only software products that predominantly clone or synchronize an entire drive to get it together more easily. If the software is to be attractive to newbies that will read my review it needs a user friendlier interface. Alternatively, a more detailed help, FAQ, or readme file with some of the instructions you provided would also work.

Conclusions

Impression is a personal backup utility and is not intended to clone or duplicate drives. Discs generated using Impression aren't bootable. But it made a great impression on me. As noted earlier in this review, Impression is a straightforward, reliable backup application that can back up directories to and restore them from multiple optical discs or disk images created on any mounted hard drive. Although the software has a learning curve, and is slower than products I have used to clone or synchronize the entire 57.2 GB content of my hard disk, it is a small price to pay for error free backups. At $25, it is a real bargain and less problem-ridden then the Dantz product.

By focusing only on the data you need to preserve, backing up on DVDs is, at times, well worth the time and effort. After all, DVDs are not subject to electromagnetic mishaps. Note that for focused users, with a well-developed backup strategy, it will likely be faster to back up only those data files that you're protecting, as opposed to your whole system. Check out these ideas further in my 3Rs column in this issue, which I've devoted to Steve Elliot's article entitled Advice Regarding Backups for OS X.

Bottom Line — Impression is certainly worthy of 4.0 macCs and, with a better help section including tutorials, a manual aimed at newbies, and user backup default setting preference files, would be worthy of an even higher score.

iNotePad 2.0.1 — An easy to use alternative to the Apple Classic NotePad Reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad and edited by Julie M. Willingham

Developer: Vincent
VoJou Software
info@vojousoftware.com
http://www.vojousoftware.com/
Download: http://www.vojousoftware.com/download.html
$14 USD, Single user.
File Size: ca. 455 KB
Released: August 24, 2004
Requirements: Mac OS X 10.2 or later.
Audience: All user levels
The software was tested on a 1 GHz dual processor PowerPC G4 Macintosh with 2 MB DDR SDRAM running under OS X 10.3.5. Product and company names and logos in this review may be registered trademarks of their respective companies.

Strengths: This is an easy to use, stable software replacement for Apple's traditional NotePad application and with it you can instantly start adding and organizing your notes, willy-nilly, to capture your information tidbits.

Weaknesses: Nothing significant. This is a fine product. (See Software Limitations below.)

Software Overview
iNotePad 2.x is the definitive alternative to Apple's Classic NotePad. It has many more features but it keeps simplicity and ease of use of Classic Note Pad. It can store text notes containing text styles and pictures, print them, and even export them to iPod or to a fileserver of your choice.

Introduction
I have been for some time looking for a simple database storage application, with a NotePad-type interface to replace Dennis Ionov's mostly abandoned Gramotki note-storing software. I needed a product into which I could paste my Gramotki notes in a manner that I could organize them into subject-related folders. And one that also would place no serious demands on my mentation, whether I needed it before my first cup of coffee or after midnight.

So, when surfing on my favorite shareware sites (MacUpdate and Version Tracker), I came across iNotePad and decided to try it out. All went smoothly in my testing, with a little bit of help from its developer as noted below. After about 15 minutes of testing, I decided the software meets my straightforward note collection needs. After creating a set of notes or notepads for that matter, I can easily find needed information by using it's robust find feature.

If your note taking needs are more complex than those handled in iNotePad, check out Bruno Blondeau's iOrganize, now in version 5.5.3 I had reviewed iOrganize 5.4 for macCompanion (June 2004, Volume 2, Issue 6).

To make a long story short, in about 15 minutes I had transferred all my Gramotki files to iNotePad, easily creating a set of focused folders in which they could live. At that time, I deleted Gramotki and all of its associated files.
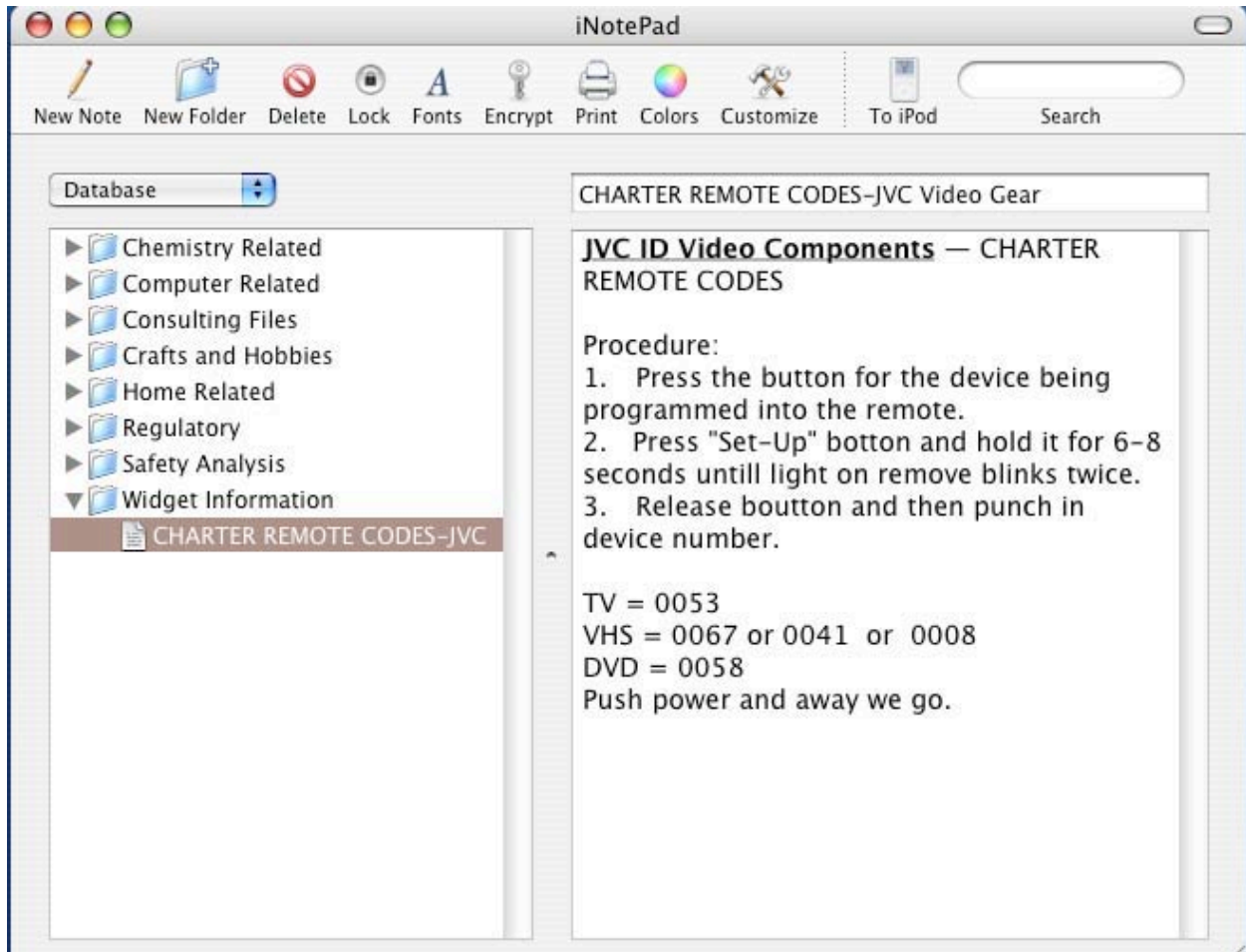
doc_Babad's iNotePad Main Window

iNotePad is the powerful Mac OS X compliant alternative to Apple's NotePad. It has more features but it maintains the simplicity and ease of use of Apple's Classic Note Pad. It can store styled text notes, save them as text files or clippings, print them, encrypt any note, and use alarm/reminder. iNotePad saves its note database every time you switch to another note, and also when the application remains in the background. Note that each new database you create is stored in a file named [<database_name>.iNotePad] inside the folder called iNotePad in your Home Documents folder.

Working With the Product

To install the software, drag the iNotePad application file to your Macintosh OS X application folder. Then either plunge right in, after installing the application, or read the author's "Getting Started" file, and in a minute or two, you're in control and can add notes willy-nilly to capture your information tidbits.

One of the first things you'll notice about the software's user interface is that iNotePad offers all of its features are managed a single window. You have 'instant' access you need to maintain a note-rich and folder organized set of information directly from the window you get when opening iNotepad.

You can see a list of all your notes, including the text of each note, and create a new note or folder at the click of a mouse (in the iNotePad tool bar of menus) or by using the many available keyboard shortcuts. Unlike NotePad, you can use several different fonts in your note, and even color your text. If you choose to export your note to either a text file or a clipping, the font and color information will be retained.

For the paranoid, you can encrypt your note, and even save the password to your Keychain. And for those who have made it, and who hasn't, to the Internet age, you can upload your note to an available FTP server. This is a great solution for those who need to share simple text information with others, especially in a mixed platform environment, where an AppleShare server may not be available.

Software Features

iNotePad is a notepad program with features such as a media player, file manager, web browser, and more. iNotePad features include: the ability to open all files, the ability to convert and view Rich Text Files (RTF), and built-in sound effects. It also, according to its publisher, has the ability to recover a file if iNotePad or your system crashes, which I did not test. I checked out some of the product's customizable options, but, as described below, some of its features were hidden in obscure places, and I could not get the spell check function to work. It also supports and comes with templates for HTML, INI (whatever that is), and text, and provides over 16 Java Scripts for those who want further customization features.
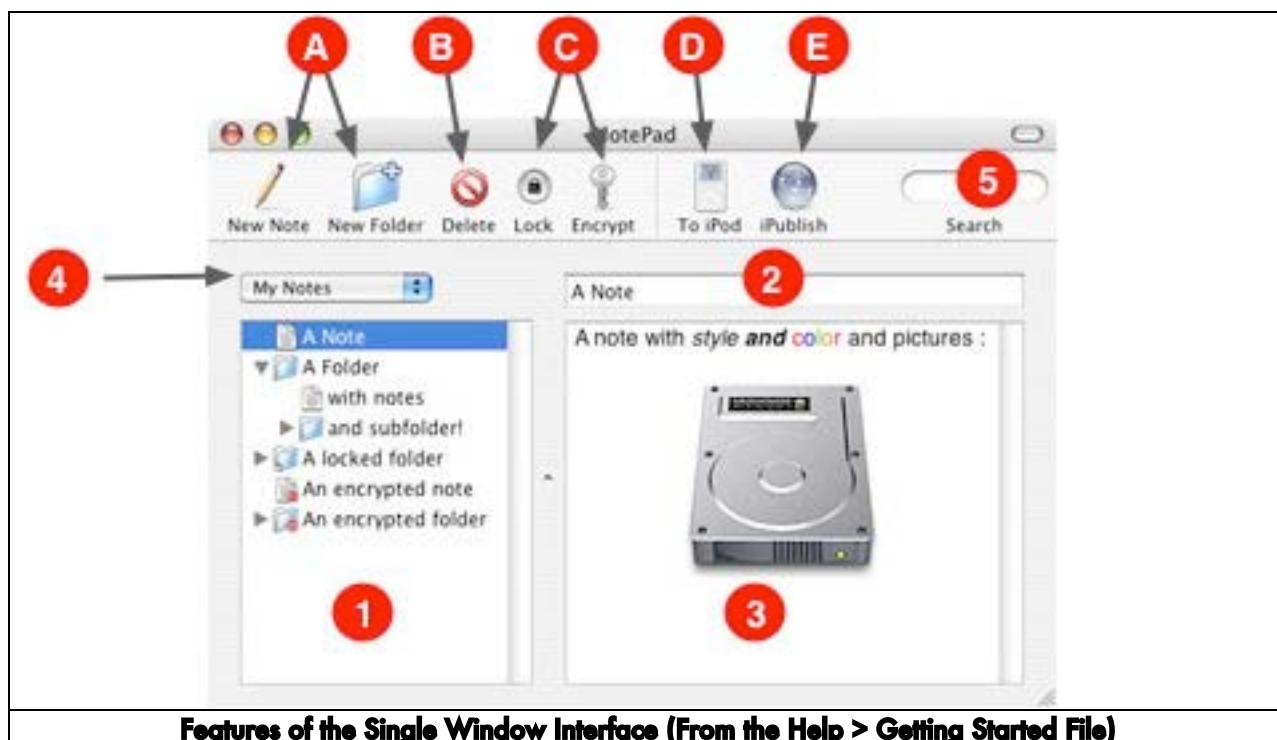
Features of the Single Window Interface (From the Help > Getting Started File)

On-line help [Help Menu] is available as is help, by email for registered users. An information-rich FAQ file is available, can also be accessed from the help menu.

Software Limitations

I would welcome the ability, as is possible in the Apple Finder, to automatically alphabetize my note folders or to drag-and-drop rearrange them manually. This feature would also be useful in arranging my notes in an alphanumeric order. – Oops, it was hidden away in the file menu [Edit > Sort Notes]. Yeah, even though I check out almost all of the menu items when testing new software, alphabetization or sorting notes and folder by date escaped me.

Okay, how about a manual to augment the help files that describe all the individual menu items as well as the icons associated with the software's tool bar? Such a manual should also provide new users with information on how to use the templates for HTML, INI (?), and text, and over 16 Java Scripts.

As I noted to the publisher, I would welcome, as is the custom in MS Word, the ability to activate email addresses and URLs stored in note format. In addition, I would like the software's preferences options strengthened so I could choose, by default, to always interactively spell check a note as I type.

This was my initial greatest disappointment with this product, since no matter how hard I tried I could not get the spell check feature to work. Instead, each time I tried to spell check a note it took me to the fonts window. A quick response from the publisher, to my question about this allowed the creation of active links that resolved these problems.
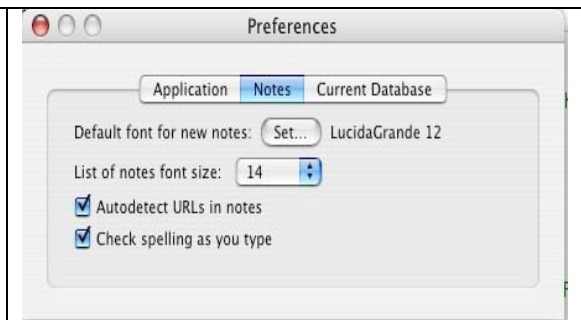
I would also appreciate having more up-front information about the capabilities of the items associated with the Font toolbar items, since they are not all intuitive and many appear grayed out.

Conclusions

This is a great product, despite the blemishes I've noted and my yet unfulfilled wish list. I have now finally trashed my old note storing software Gramotki, after a painless manual transfer of data from my files—both cut-and-paste and drag-and-drop worked. In so doing, I gained the ability to also organize my notes into folders. iNotePad software has a clean single-window interface and is intuitive to use, for the most part. The lack of either a detailed PDF manual or more detailed help notes forces me to downgrade it beyond what its immediate usefulness deserves. I hope a future version corrects the flaws I've found, since it would otherwise be an outstanding product. At this point, I'm committed to using this application. I unhesitatingly rate this product 4.5 macCs.

Software

Contribute™ 3 Reviewed by Derek Meier

Macromedia, Incorporated
6000 Townsend Street
San Francisco, CA 94103
800-470-7211 or 415.252.2000
Fax: 415.626.0554
http://www.macromedia.com/support/email/cscontact/
http://www.macromedia.com/
Released: July 19, 2004
Product: http://www.macromedia.com/software/contribute/
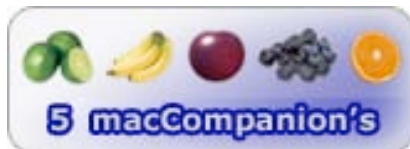$80 USD Upgrade, $150 Full, Full, $700 6-pack USD
Requirements: Power Mac G3 or faster; Mac OS X version 10.2.8
or later; 128 MB RAM, 120 MB disk space.
Tutorials:
http://www.macromedia.com/devnet/?promoid=home_short_tut_
082403
Flash Paper 2:
http://www.macromedia.com/software/flashpaper/

Strengths: Easy to use. Administrator has control of content editing. Includes Flash Paper 2.

Weaknesses: None Found

Keeping your website updated is a constant uphill battle. Macromedia has supplied the tools to fight this battle with C*ontribute*™ 3. Contribute 3 is basically what it is says on the box, "Web publishing for everyone". It allows multiple people to corroborate on a website. Now what kind of skills required for this? Well, if you can use MS Office™ and a browser, you can us it quite easily. As easy as browse-edit-publish.

Contribute 3 has full support of CSS rendering. Also it works with SecureFTP, FTP local networks, or WebDAV. It has DreamWeaver™ 2004 integration and supports Safari.

Starting up with Contribute 3, the first thing it asked was if I wanted to create a connection with my .Mac account. The first thing to do to get started is create a connection. If you do not have a .Mac, it is easy to create a connection. If you have a connection, key setup is as easy as clicking on the key and typing in a password. Even if you don't have a connection, key setup is still simple with the *Create Connection* wizard. Just type in the location, user name and password and you are all set.

As far as editing, it is as simple as editing a word document. Used alone, Contribute 3 does not have the power of the big apps like DreamWeaver, but is highly ideal for continued editing after the page has been created by a more featured application. PayPal payment logos for taking online payments and a Google search box for searching the web or your own website are part of the features you can add to your site. After editing, you can publish your finished item if the web administrator has given you the ability or send the page for review to an e-mail recipient so they can approve the changes.

Flash Paper 2 is also bundled with Contribute3. Flash Paper 2 allows you to convert any printable file to Flash Paper or PDF documents. With Flash Paper 2 you can embed a document into a web page with searching, printing and the ability to zoom into the embedded document (see the *macCompanion* October link at http://www.maccompanion.com/). Flash Paper 2 is a $80 purchase by itself. And its ease of use is a definite plus. It is also a part of Macromedia Web Publishing System.

Contribute 3 is a worthy addition to the Web Admin. Toolkit, also by Macromedia, allowing multiple people to edit web pages on a site with a great degree of control. Being able to make it mandatory to submit for review before publishing is an excellent feature leaving the control to the Web Admin. for what gets published or what does not. Contribute 3 can be purchased standalone.

EazyDraw™ 1.6.3 – A Vector Graphics Tool for Desk-Top Publishing
Reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad and edited by Julie M. Willingham

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N5040 Beach Garden Rd
Poynette, WI 53955
608-444-5245
sales@eazydraw.com
http://www.eazydraw.biz/ (Click on *Demo* for download.)
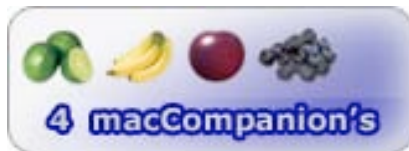**File Size:** ca. 7.9 MB
$95 USD, Single user. Download allows a Try-to-Buy Demo. The alternative is a full-use license for $20 USD that expires after nine months.
Uninstaller: Not Included.
Requirements: Mac OS X 10.2 or later.
Audience: All user levels
The software was tested on a 1 GHz dual processor PowerPC G4 Macintosh with 2 MB DDR SDRAM running under OS X 10.3.5.

Strengths: Think... MacDraw on Steroids! EazyDraw is a new, easy to use (compared to Deneba's Canvas and Adobe Illustrator), general purpose drawing application designed exclusively for OS X. It has a wide range of uses that I detail in the review. You don't need to be a graphic arts professional to use EazyDraw.

Weaknesses: The program package contains no PDF or printed manual. To me, a pre-Mac OS X MacDraw II systems user, using EazyDraw was a bit counterintuitive and a bit difficult to learn. The software has an extensive Help menu function that amply describes its features, but this is a non-linear way to learn a new type of program. (I'm a graphics dummy.)

Software Overview
EazyDraw is a new, easy to use (compared to Adobe Illustrator, Canvas http://www.deneba.com/ now abandoned CorelDRAW [Editor: see http://www.corel./com for CorelDRAW Graphics Suite 12 and Corel Painter IX), general purpose drawing application designed exclusively for Mac OS X. Although I own both Canvas and the Corel product, my illustration needs and the products' steep learning curves made them useless to me. This is not true for EazyDraw. The software allows me to be creative over a large of range of graphics projects including creating simple technical drawings, icons, logos, flow charts, decorated newsletters, business brochures, and simple illustrations, despite my being graphically impaired.

Introduction

Although a person who used only a few of the capabilities of MacDraw II, I have always been a fan of that software. Indeed, over the years I have collected a large library of MacDraw based vector bases images, all faithfully archived in CD format. The translators incorporated in the EazyDraw software have allowed me to once again access, utilize, and enhance these long ago orphaned files. Having only a week in which to experiment, I gained sufficient control over my creations that I did not face embarrassment when I viewed them the cold light of day. For most of my testing, I worked with copies of some of the examples provided for training, often checking with "Help" when I got lost. I also did not explore many of the tool palettes associated with the program because they served to support graphics projects I could not foresee using. [More about the pallets later in this review]

The software's rich features can be accessed from its user-friendly interface in both from the menu bar and its toolbars. Built around Apple's new Cocoa software design technology, it is compatible with both Jaguar and Panther. The user can easily make use of layers, curved text, drop shadows, multi-color blends, gradient fill, transparency, Bezier curves, stylized text, patterns, and much more. There is no limit to the number or size of pages of a project, which is great for brochures, newsletters, cards, posters, and other home or small business communication projects.

I was also impressed with EazyDraw's extensive Import/Export suite (described below) that is provided so you may make full use of your drawings.

Working With the Product

For the more engineering-inclined, EazyDraw is also a tool for creating technical drawings, mechanical, architectural, or electronic schematics. You have full control of the scale and measurement units of the drawing. Automatic dimensioning tools make it easy to produce professional looking useful drawings. The graphic details drawer lets you enter precise dimensions. Grids are available for view or snap. Connectors are great for creating schematics and for flowcharts. A full palette of mathematical curves is provided for quick precise drawing of elements such as sine waves, parabolas, and others. For me, getting used to how EazyDraw looks and how its palettes work was my first challenge—but, to steal from folklore of American slavery, "we shall overcome", and I did.

The main software features and functions are described in good detail on the vendor's web page and cover a cornucopia of topics including

|			
Uses for EazyDraw	Charting	Engineering Drawings	Make House Plans
Create Icons	Work with Math Functions	Create Vector Illustrations	Do Simple Page Layouts
Features of EazyDraw Robust Page Setup Tools	Use Stylized Text Patterns & Stars	Rich Text Tools Work with color blends	Export/Import Graphics Utilize Layers

Technical Drawings — Draw-to-scale support for a wide range of units and rulers, convenient dimensioning tools, interactive or numeric entry of all graphic variables. The later allows you apparently to preset graphic dimensions and measure, something the author notes is a feature of most CAD programs

Flexible Text Tools — Contoured or rotated text fully supported. All text may be converted to Bezier paths for stylizing effects.
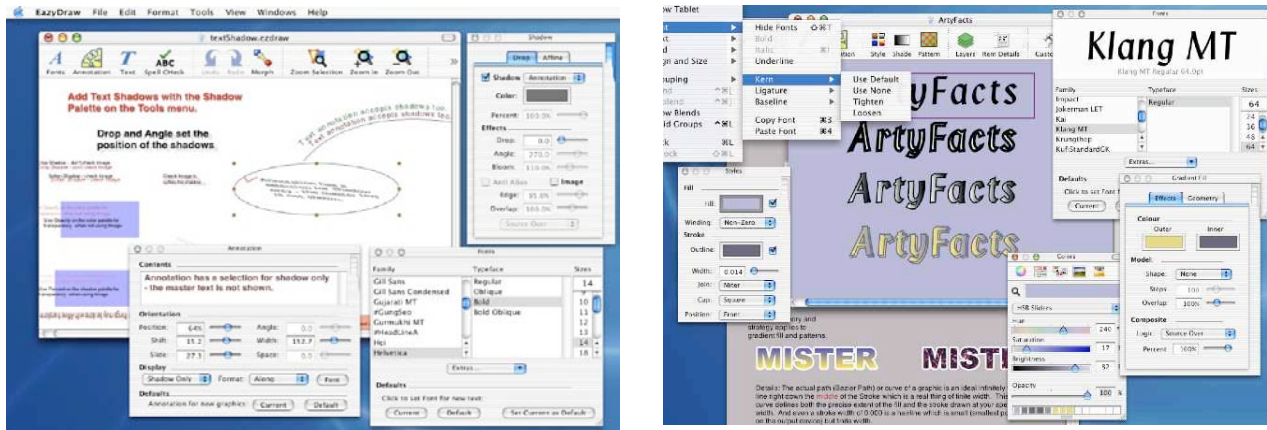
Advanced and Stylized Text Tools

Charting — A large selection of shapes useful for generating flowcharts and other organizational diagrams. The product contains an extensive selection of predefined shapes and supports a powerful connector capability - paths easily attach to graphics.
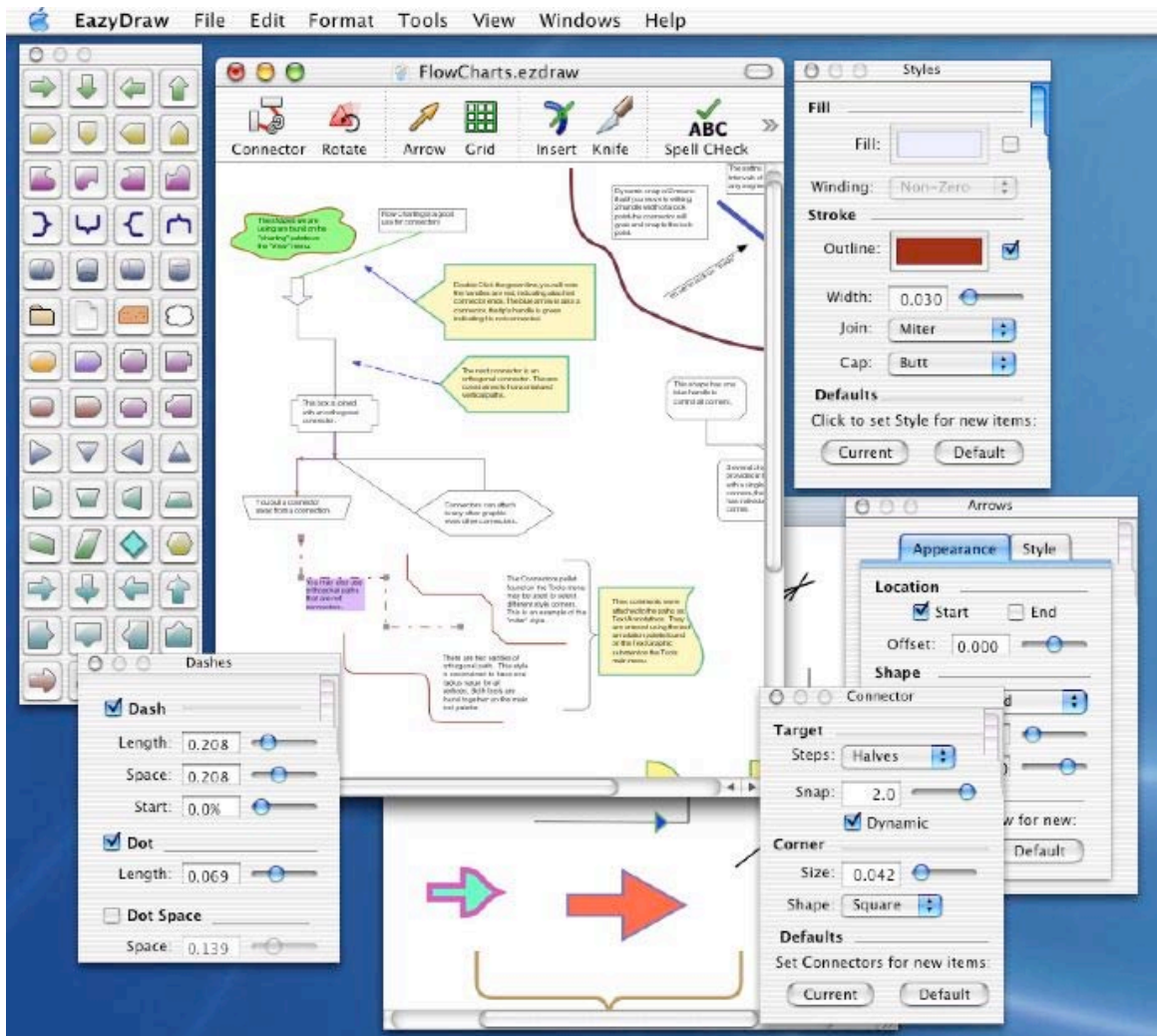

Flow Charting Tools and Pallets

Graphics Patterns — Pattern colors may be designed with EazyDraw and used in any other application on OSX. This support is also integrated with the classic patterns in OS 9 as used in MacDraw and Claris Draw.

Import/Export Capability —PDF, TIF, GIF, PNG, PICT, and JPG are supported for Import and Export. PDF and EPS export of vector information is provided. Allows vector quality imports to MS Word and PowerPoint.

Around the House — Supports architectural projects, house plans, landscaping.
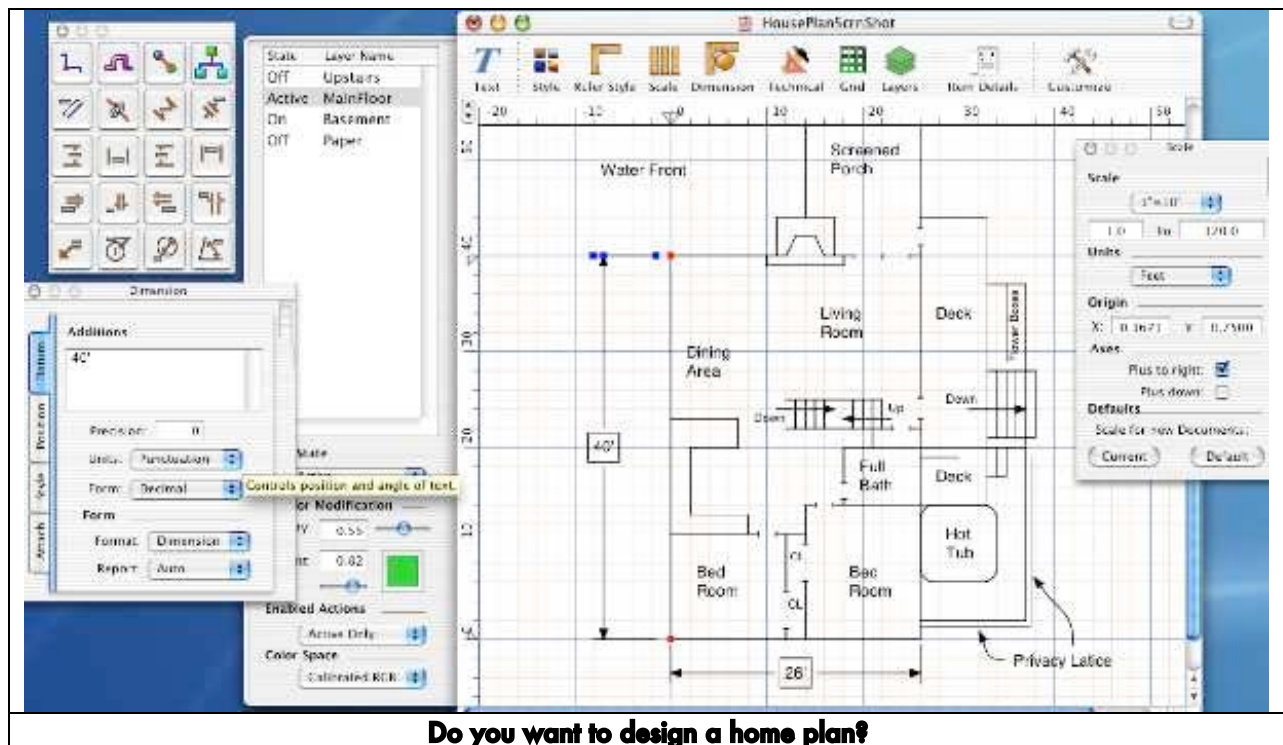
Do you want to design a home plan?

Math Tool Set — Draw curves that follow user defined equation curves. You can access and utilize mathematical curves by means of a full palette of precise mathematical curves such as sine waves, the bell-shaped probability curve and many more.

Full Support of Layers — Each drawing has it's own layers drawer which provides an access for cut/copy/paste/drop of entire layers. Color modification and transparency support can be applied to any graphic or an entire layer.

EazyDraw Reader — The program is unique in that the recipient of an EazyDraw file, opening it using the free EazyDraw reader, is able to view the drawing as well as manipulate, edit, and interact with the graphics and text content. The reader does not allow the creation of new content. Digital designers and their clients can use the application for conferring on design projects. Note that according to its publisher, "There is only one version. The Free Reader, Demo Version, and the Full Capability version are the same. You attain Full Capability by entering the appropriate product license code." [A bit confusing, but I was able to open the provided examples, and do simple manipulations on them, prior to entering my license code.]

Technical Drawing Support — The software contains a tool set for technical drawing, including an old favorite, the Mac Draw autoline, a simple line with its length shown in a dimension format. Other tools are for drawing orthogonal paths, which may have square, rounded, or 45 degree corners. Connectors attach to other graphics at precise (1/4, 1/2, etc) locations. Easily create drawings with full dimensions, a feature illustrated by one of the examples. Dimensions can be automatically linked to graphic objects. And if you need to change the scale of drawing in progress, all objects are redrawn at their "physical" size, a feature not always common to popular priced CAD drawing packages.
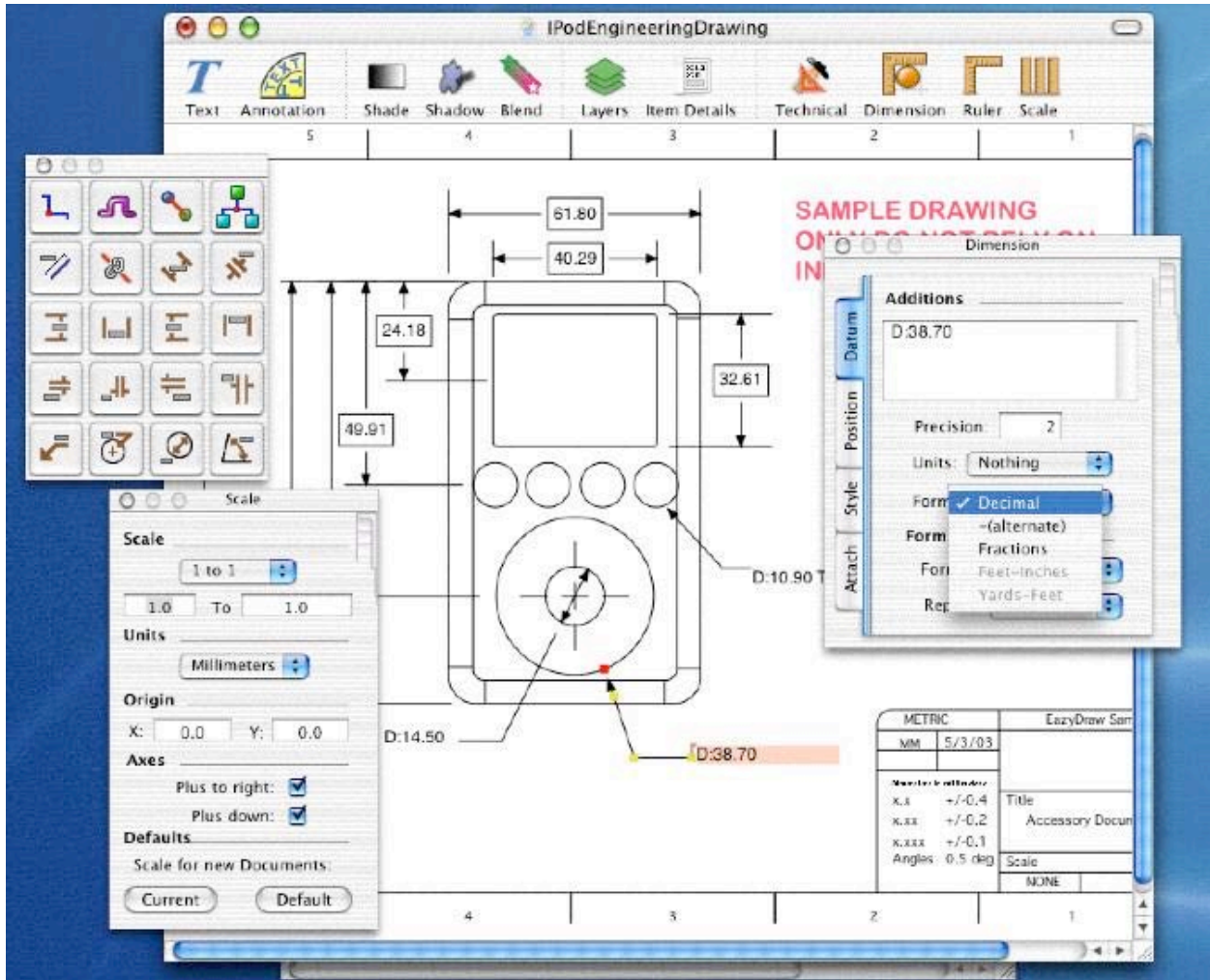
Manual — The full manual (hundreds of pages) is implemented with Mac OS X's Help Viewer. This is the primary documentation. It is downloaded and installed automatically with EazyDraw. This documentation is available from EazyDraw's main help menu. From a learning perspective, I, as noted earlier in this review, prefer a separate from the beginning tutorial.

Software Limitations

The only glitch I discovered was when I, as I always do, put EazyDraw and its assorted examples and ReadMe files into an "EazyDraw" folder, the software did not behave properly. Example icons were turned into black generic icons and clicking to open the files didn't work. So I pulled the application from the folder into the applications folder while leaving the support material in my original EazyDraw folder and all again worked well.

I was at times frustrated by the program's minimal set of keyboard commands and control-click options...perhaps in the next significant update.

This program has so many pallets that even for the relatively simple compositions I created, I got easily lost. [No you're not going to see my efforts. All graphics in this review are the vendors.] As was discussed in a review by the NovaScotian included in the MacUpdate EazyDraw reviews "I'd really like a master pallet that held links to all the others in some intuitive layout format, and this author could do it."

In addition, as noted by the publisher, "there is no planned reading order for the provided 28 tutorial examples. They are designed to augment the primary Help documentation. They generally provide information on some of the more advanced drawing concepts. The drawings are designed to be interactive; you should experiment and explore the content graphics while reading the explanations provided. It's a good idea to copy the entire folder then changes you make to the files will not effect the master originals that came with your installation disk. You can even create new graphics and add notes to enhance these drawings for future reference."

Conclusions

I agree with its publisher that, "If you don't believe that drawing can be relatively easy - take a look at EazyDraw. This very friendly yet powerful app lets you create vector illustrations for use in your documents, presentations or web site - eazily." To my delight, after less than a week of working with the product, I can agree that I didn't need to be a graphic arts professional to use EazyDraw to meet my illustration needs.

EazyDraw is an affordable drawing application designed exclusively for Mac OS X. It is useful for many creative projects, as described in this review. This one is a keeper, a product that will remain on my already crowded 80 GB hard disk. It is the first program that I am willing to accept as a suitable replacement for the projects I spread between MacDraw II (in Classic mode) and the draw features in Apple Works 6. Coupled with GraphicConverter and Disclabel, these are all graphics tools I'm likely to need.

This product is much easier to use that the more expensive higher-end alternatives I've tried. I would recommend that its developer take pity on us graphics newbies: create a true tutorial and simplify and rationalize [link or menu-ize] its many palettes. I, a user with simple but tasty graphics needs, award it 4.0 macC's — lower than I would have liked, primarily because I found its interface confusing and not as intuitive as I would have liked.

TechTool Pro 4.0.3 Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

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Released: November 24, 2003 4.0.3 updater (29.5 MB), August 27, 2004
$98 USD, cross-grades & upgrades $60 USD.
Requirements: Mac OS X 10.2 or later; CD-ROM; 256 MB RAM. A 2nd partition for a 4GB eDrive.

Strengths: Replaces earlier versions. Nearly one-click operation. Excellent tests.

Weaknesses: If you've journaled your hard drive, don't Optimize! Need DiskWarrior capability built-in. 4GB for a virtual recovery drive?

Rule 1: Backup before proceeding.
Rule 2: Don't run maintenance software right before deadlines.
Rule 3: Proceed with caution and if using Mac OS X 10.2.3 or later, don't *fsck* with the main hard drive manually.

I gave TechTool Pro 4 (TTP4) a less-than-pristine rating because I failed to do any of the 3 rules show above and I got bit. Hard. And I missed getting out the October issue of *macCompanion* on time as a result. I apologize.

You don't need to go fsck yourself like I did...

http://www.macworld.com/weblogs/mac911/2004/10/fsck/index.php. I thought I had everything moved over as backup to my external hard drive. Apparently the main issue is that the drive on this venerable old iMac Series D has a bad spot. I've tested around it many times and I always seem to get missing and/or damaged bundled bits, etc. so I knew I was going to run into it again with TTP4. It is a great way to test maintenance software. The irony and the agony is that I was running the final item - optimization - when everything started hitting the fan - and I learned a few things about Mac OS X after-the-fact. But before we go there, lets review what went right first:

The118-page manual touts TTP4 as being the "complete Macintosh problem-solving utility", however, you might want to dust off your copy of DiskWarrior too. When installing TTP4, and the update, Micromat has designed this package to be hard-drive-based and not CD-ROM–based. Even the two things that "require" functioning by being off the main boot partition can now be done off the eDrive ("e" as in **emergency**). Because my main drive is only 6 GB and I read that the eDrive required 4GB of

space to create the eDrive partition, I opted not to do so. Heck, I had an external drive and I had recent files copied to it. I wouldn't need to take the majority of my main drive and turn it into a once-in-a-lifetime usage drive now would I? Oh, you can hear the Jaws-movie music already, can't you?

Once installed, in the Applications folder, TTP4 kindly asks if it can add an icon to the Dock. When clicked, the Tech Tool Pro 4 Interface window appears. IT has 5 areas it offers, Suites, Tests, Performance, Tools and Safety.

There are 3 modes or levels of maintenance: Basic, Intermediate and Advanced. Each runs a pool of things to test and moving from Basic to Advanced takes longer. However, if something has been successfully tested, it can be flagged to be off for the next effort so it doesn't need to be repeated, thus shortening the time to do the job right.

After installation, I went to the website and did the update that was released in August. See, there were some ugly issues with performance with Panther and eDrive creation and wipe data routines and optimization. Support was also improved to match G4 and G5 processor testing and detecting Radeon video memory. Language localizations were added as well as including Safari to the eDrive and Data Recovery dialog.

I ran all the tests and everything worked beautifully and quite well.

Everything is almost one-button intelligent. I really enjoyed the S.M.A.R.T. (Self Monitoring Analysis And Reporting Technology) reports. SMART is supposed to act as preventative maintenance for newer hard drives using predictive diagnostics in anticipation of errors and other issues that could otherwise be worked around – before disaster strikes. Self-infliction doesn't count though. Uh, don't laugh.

Adding the eDrive "in case of emergency" doesn't require reformatting the main drive. What goes there is a copy of the OS, TTP4 and space for other utilities that a road-warrior might want to have, instead of carrying around a bunch of troubleshooting CDs. If there is an instance where the main drive poofs, the eDrive takes over as a messiah to resurrect the dead main partition. Well, that's the idea anyway. If you hear a grinding noise, you had better have had a backup instead folks!

The fun part of running TTP4 was watching a battery of tests running simultaneously. Way cool!

What I saw in action were the volume repair and data recover attempts once I had let TTP4 run overnight as it found errors and went to resolve them with my Volume. When it hit the bad spot, it froze instead of graciously quitting. The system is set up to be able to send out a warning if there is a problem to a pager, beeper or network log function. I didn't have any of those but it sure would have been nice…

See, Mac OS X 10.2.3 and later don't need to have the hard drive optimized. My bad. That is what each application is doing when it plays nice during installation – but I didn't pay attention to that and got into hot water when I ran the optimization function even though the Smart report said my drive had issues.

I went merrily along ignoring the danger signs. I should have fixed first, then moved on, but it did do the "send to the other drive in case of Murphy's law kicking in" message and it did put that information over there, so I figured, why not? And I ran the optimization process. That is when things went bad.

I came back the following day and it was **still** chugging along optimizing. I went and painted the house outside. When I came back, it had frozen again. When I tried to stop it I got error reports on bitmap issues, then volume restructuring processes. I ran the tests and files were okay, but then there were 90 bitmap errors. I ran it again and it went up to 700. I ran the volume structure repairs again and let it sort data.

The **next day** it was still rebuilding data and then it hosed up again. No, optimization was not quick and it turned a bad situation even worse. I got out the *Mac OS X Help Line* book and started reading after digesting the Macintosh File System information conveniently found in the back of the TTP4 manual. I was experiencing each of the areas discussed first-hand. I read in the *Help Line* book that I didn't need to *fsck*, but I already did anyway. Bad move. I had given away my copy of DiskWarrior a few weeks earlier. (You know what happens when you clean out your garage. That is when you need something you threw out…same here.) I spoke with others who had run TTP4.0 and had had similar experiences. I heard chuckling. I was steamed. Hey, this is a Mac and it isn't supposed to be having these kinds of problems!

Once I got the OS back up and running, I hit the "Login Window Starting" screen and it froze. I got out the Panther CD and reset the password and ran the Disk Utility from the Panther CD. Another bad move. Wrong version since I had updated to OS X 10.3.4 and the CD was what, 10.2.3? It said the drive needed to be repaired. Here I am in **day 3,** and the system is not having a good time either. I ran the repair. It said it fixed it. I ran it again. It said it was clean. I saw it needed the volume bitmap needing repair again. I ran that. I was back at the *Login Window Starting* hangup message again. This is what is known as an "endless loop".

So I finally gave up and the next day got a copy of Mac OS X 10.3.5 and installed that. And while that was installing itself, I read this:

> "We do not recommend that you boot from the CD-ROM to Optimize. Mac OS X is designed to be run from a read/write volume (i.e. a hard drive) for proper memory management. When booted from the CD-ROM there is no swap space for Mac OS X's virtual memory. In that case, if Mac OS X runs out of physical memory it may crash. [Duh!] Any unexpected quit during optimization could potentially cause serious volume corruption and data loss. [Double Duh!] (This is the reason we always recommend having current backups before optimizing. You never know when something might go wrong–a power failure, bad block, etc.). [Bad Block, yep!] Since there is no way to know in advance how much memory will be required during optimization, it is best to be safe and only run optimization from a hard drive. We highly recommend creating an eDrive for this purpose. You can then boot the computer and run TechTool Pro 4 from the eDrive to optimize (or repair) your normal startup hard drive volume."

Riiiightt! Mutter, mutter, mutter…

Okay, I need to get a later machine soon and then maybe I can take advantage of the eDrive. I now know by this experience that I should not be optimizing my hard drive, since I am using a later Mac OS X version that does not require it. I also know I should **not be manually fscking with the drive** either since the OS does that automatically on startup. And I learned a painful experience about hard drive configurations and Mac OS X versions. Warning: **There are compatibility issues between versions and Disk Utilities from older version that should not be used on newer OS versions**.

So yeah, one click of the mouse can run the test suites, but be really, really careful when playing with the *Performance* mode and be darned sure you have a recent backup before installing TTP4 and *Optimize* from the eDrive if you really think optimizing the drive is going to speed things up a bit. Oh and don't disable journaling after it has been enabled (not an issue with versions prior to 10.2.3) and then go fscking around with the system. It just causes a lot of grief.

The *Safety* function may or may not work in data recovery operations. I got tired of the round-robin treatment and upgraded the OS instead.

So now with Symantec on the Mac-ropes and Micromat really the only maintenance game left in town, I don't exactly have a warm-fuzzy feeling for TTP4 at the moment. Maybe in a few more weeks I can look back and laugh, but hey, this still hurts because I had work that needed to be done and I was hosed due to a cantankerous hard drive and some dumb moves on my part.

My feeling are that with Unix' self-healing applications, defragging (Optimizing) is not a good thing to do anymore. Old habits are hard to kill. But doing a few painful showstopper activities that TTP4 assisted in causing currently isn't making me feel too well. And I'm not the only one. Unfortunately others have had similar experiences. Improve performance by buying new-and-improved systems and maybe put a warning label somewhere about not needing to do defragging anymore and red-letter the warnings like I did with the quote above.

So 99.9% of TechTools Pro 4.0.3 work extremely well. But that last .01% is a **doozy of a showstopper** if an eDrive isn't used and there are bad blocks that TTP4 and a short attention RAM can't handle processing.

So maybe my rating is a little lower than it should be, but I got left behind in the ditch when I needed the tools to do the job the most and one is missing – fixing bad blocks or working around them intelligently. I shouldn't have to go to DiskWarrior to get that job done if I paid nearly $100 for a "complete Macintosh problem-solving utility", right?

Maybe there is something about it in the *TechTool Pro Quarterly* that costs another nearly $100 annually to subscribe to…

You be the judge.

VectorWorks® Version 11 Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

Nemetschek North America
7150 Riverwood Drive
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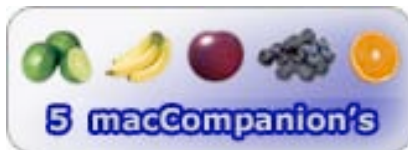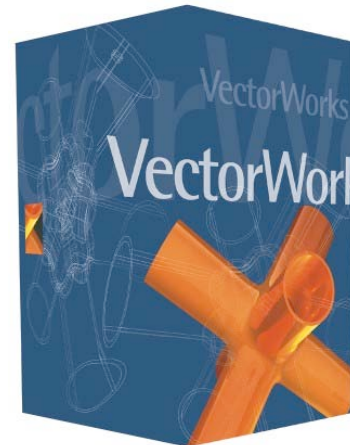410-290-5114
Fax: 410-290-8050
sales@nemetschek.com
http://www.nemetschek.net
Product: http://www.nemetschek.net/vectorworks/index.html
$995 USD; Upgrade $280 USD
http://www.nemetschek.net/vectorworks/new.html
Requirements: Mac OS X or Win XP Pro.
Training: http://www.resolve.ca/
Gallery: http://www.nemetschek.net/gallery/index.html

Strengths: Cross-platform, excellent QuickTime VR presentation, better 2005 DXF/DWG translation and utilizes paper space, improved Split and Trim tools and text interface; easy Resource Browser.

Weaknesses: No URL links (like AutoCAD).

Yes! Smart-sized is right for the professional architectural designer. In my community, Mac Architecture shops live or die by using VectorWorks® as they inter-operate with AutoCAD shops by doing the DWG conversions the other shops require for file transfers. *VectorWorks 11* by Nemetschek is a killer app for Computer Aided Design (CAD). In fact, there is a transition CD available for helping AutoCAD-trained designers and architects move to VectorWorks 11 prepared by Resolve at http://www.resolve.ca/.

What's drop-dead cool is that VectorWorks uses Apple's QuickTime® Virtual Reality technology when RenderWorks™ is used. This delves into creating 3D panoramas from models that can be navigated without any special hardware or software. Those then can be posted online. Multiprocessor support for multithreading makes raytracing 40% quicker too. And a new algorithm has been released that reduces the size of bit-mapped images.

Text editing has improved and Trim and Extend has been enhanced for modifying multiple lines. There are over 370 new realistic textures (including 120 from Forbo® for floors and wall coverings) and 18 new shaders seen at http://www.nemetschek.net/vectorworks/texture_editing.html.

Revision clouds (common on architectural drawings) now have been given better shape control around busy selections.

Attribute mapping provides surface texturing to 3D objects directly. For more information there is an 8.1 MB file that can be downloaded for viewing as a .zip file at http://download2.nemetschek.net/www_movies/BetterTextures.mov.zip.

Transparent objects like crystal, glass and plastic are rendered using OpenGL technology. http://www.opengl.org. OpenGL also helps improve navigation speed. A VectorCaching preference makes copying, pasting, moving, and redrawing faster in files that contain complex polylines and hatches.

Multiple views of designs can be seen using viewports, each with its own scale, orientation, projection, rendering option and layer and class visibility settings. Each can be separately annotated. http://www.nemetschek.net/vectorworks/viewports.html. A 6.6 MB .zip file can be downloaded here: http://download2.nemetschek.net/www_movies/VWViewports.mov.zip

For those from the AutoCAD environment, paper space is now supported too!

Is VectorWorks worth looking into yet? Here's more. Split objects with a line and select which side to be used using the Trim Line Mode of the Split Tool. See http://www.nemetschek.net/vectorworks/trim.html.
A 1 MB .zip video can be downloaded at http://download2.nemetschek.net/www_movies/TrimExtend.mov.zip

When you need blueprints, saved views can be batch-processed or saved for later printing in Batch Print sets for either black & white or color prints. I don't know yet if that also works in PDF mode.

Object editing has been improved with the Eyedropper tool for parameters, textures, text settings, wall types, and recording information between objects.

Dashed lines now begin and end with a solid line, so that the corners on dashed 2D objects will now draw correctly. There are now also 32 different dash styles available.

Text can be moved along a dimension line without changing the dimension's offset.

Resources can be created directly from the Resource Browser menu and dragged and dropped to apply resources such as hatches, image fills, symbols, textures and worksheets.

An object's height, width, area, and perimeter, display in fixed read-only fields can be cut and pasted from the *Object Information* palette directly into a drawing.

Line weights of all hatch levels can be set in the *Hatch Editor* dialog box.

For better AutoCAD interaction, batch processing has been enabled to handle DXF and DWG folders as well as files for import and export with one click. And AutoCAD solids translate correctly without conversion to polygons first using SAT translation technology.

Through RenderWorks, VectorWorks also now exports to Piranesi® http://www.informatix.co.uk/piranesi/index.shtml.

Back to text editing, the *Object Information* palette provides access to X and Y l fields for accurate placement of font, point size, style, alignment, and spacing for any selected text block. See http://www.nemetschek.net/vectorworks/text_tools.html and download the 2.9 MB .zip file at http://download2.nemetschek.net/www_movies/ImprovedText.mov.zip.

Choices are now available for callouts of leader lines of note blocks for shoulder lines for drawing to the top, center, or bottom. And an *Angular Dimension* mode permits creation of an angular dimension between any three points with precision from four place-values to eight place-values for arc angles.

Complicated roofs can be created from round walls or even curved polys using perpendicular or vertical thickness of the roof when the pitches differ. Gabled and walls can be set independently from the roof's thickness so correctly cut holes in the roof can be easily framed. Skylights can be inserted with a vertical cut, perpendicular cut, or splayed cut and stair breaks can appear where needed.

There are more than 50 new API calls to allow access to the new functionality in version 11 for VectorWorks plug-ins.

Ready for doing 3D design yet? Control points now lie directly on the surface using the *Interpolated NURBS Surface* command and their height and taper angle can be edited. Curves and surfaces can be extended. The *Volumetric Properties* command automatically calculates the volume, surface area, and center of mass of 3D objects.

The package comes with a huge *VectorWorks Version 11 User's Guide* that is nearly 2 inches thick and another *RenderWorks Version 11 User's Guide* that is considerably skinnier. Both are excellent reference books.

If your livelihood depends on creating great design and you want to dig into 3D, run, don't walk to Nemetschek's website and check out the other offerings they provide for Architecture, Mechanical Drawing and other disciplines.

It took many years for AutoCAD to get to the point that drawings could be hot-linked to websites. I hope it doesn't take too long for the great engineering team at Nemetschek to do the same for VectorWorks.

CAD doesn't have to be difficult. Nemetschek makes it easy!

Voyager III (version 3.75) Reviewed by Ted Bade

Carina Software
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Danville, CA 94526.
925 838-0695
Fax: 925 838-0535
sales@carinasoft.com
http://www.carinasoft.com/
Software URL: http://www.carinasoft.com/ (click on Voyager III
in sidebar)
 $120 USD
Download site: http://www.carinasoft.com/ (trial version)
**Requirements:** System 10.1 or later. System 10.2 or later is
strongly recommended. An 800 MHz G3 (or faster) Power
Macintosh is recommended. The Macintosh CD comes with a
version that works native in Mac OS 9 as well.

Experience needed: Little to play and enjoy the included demos
and images. For more advanced uses, you'll need to be familiar
with the terminology and science of Astronomy. If you intent to
use this product to control a telescope, you will need experience
with your telescope controls, and with using a USB to serial
converter.
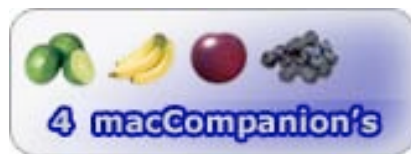
Strengths: Very comprehensive star catalog and many
interesting demonstration files. Allows users to add their own
images to the image catalog. SkyPilot software for controlling a
telescope (see part II of this review) in included in the package.

Weaknesses: A bit Mac OS 8ish in its look and feel. Can be a
bit clunky at times, (but then there is a LOT of number crunching
going on). This program really needs a "Back button" so the
users can back track steps easily.

Voyager III Dynamic Sky Simulator is an excellent program both for simulating and studying the night
sky as well as the entire universe. It comes with Sky Pilot, a program used to control electronically
controlled telescopes, giving the amateur astronomer the ability to see the simulation, then take a look
at reality! It can provide many hours of entertainment as well as serve as a tool for learning about
Astronomy.

There are three major aspects of using Voyager III. First of all it can be used as an atlas of the
heavens. Once you teach it where you are located, it can accurately draw the evening skies as they
look from your backyard. This can be very useful for people (like myself), who are just beginning to
learn about observing the night sky. Even a more experienced stargazer can use this program to help
them delve deep, deep into space. You can use it to simulate the sky, but unlike the real sky, Voyager
III will tell you what you are looking at, provide all types of details about many thousands (even
millions if you care to look that deep) of sky objects, and includes a hefty library of photographs to
help visualize what the object looks like.

The second aspect of Voyager III is to explore the operation and physics of the universe. This goes far beyond what is in the sky tonight. For instance you can simulate planetary orbits, watch the way the moon wobbles in it's orbit, or how the sun changes its position in the sky from day to day over a period of a year. But you can also leave this earthly perspective and observe the motions of the heavens from anywhere; watch the moons of Jupiter orbit from just outside Jupiter's orbit or from any other interesting point of view. Or change your place in time and observe how the stars looked like hundreds of years ago, or how the constellations will look far, far into the future. To get you started, the Voyager III package includes a large number of such simulations for you to enjoy. As you learn and begin to wonder, you can build interesting simulations of your own. The Macintosh version allows you to save these simulations as a movie, which you can then share with others.

Finally, Voyager III can be used to help you explore the universe with your own telescope. It might take a little work, but you can connect a telescope to the SkyPilot part of the Voyager III package, then use Voyager III's abilities to search for objects to observe with your telescope. We will go into detail concerning connecting the telescope to and using SkyPilot in part two of this review.

Installation was straightforward. I would recommend doing a custom installation if you have a lot of hard drive space. If you install the entire contents of the CD you won't need to access it later. This is especially nice if you intend to use your iBook or PowerBook to run your telescope. You won't have to remember to bring the CD nor will accessing the CD slow things down. You can choose to install the entire Hubble Guide Star Catalog and the entire picture library using the custom installation feature. This full installation took up over 445 Megabytes on my machine.

Although the manual included with the package is useful, I was a little unhappy that the installation information doesn't appear to have been updated for this new version. It still refers to older Mac OS versions and older machines. It doesn't discuss the full installation I mentioned above. However, the "Read Me" file on the CD does provide this information.

Overall, the Voyager III manual is very useful. It explains how to set up and use the Voyager III software in great detail. This is very important, since working with Astronomy can be very complicated. Besides information on how to use both the Voyager III software and the Sky Pilot software for controlling a telescope, it also includes lots of reference information. You will find including about objects in the solar system, names of the constellations, all types of information about stars and how they are categorized, a list of objects in the Messier catalog (including the name if it has one), as well as a list of famous named objects, including the more technical designations of these objects. This last one is important to an Astronomy newbie. It helps to be able to find that the Andromeda Galaxy is also referred to as M31 (Messier object number 31) or as NGC224.

Once you install the Voyager III software, you will need to do a little setup to get it to do exactly what you want. First of all, you will need to tell it where you are located so that it can accurately display your night sky. Voyager III includes many major cities in the US and other major cities outside the US. This might be enough for the casual observer, but if you want more exact detail you will want to enter your own longitude and latitude. There are several sites on the Internet that will provide this information to you. Once you enter this information, you need to save a setup file.

Voyager depends heavily on setup files. You will need to save a default file for your particular setup manually. At first glance this seems like lazy programming, but when you think about it you realize that doing this gives the ability to set up many different setups, making it easy to quickly visit the skies of different locations. This comes in handy if you take Voyager III on the road or if you are interested in

seeing how the sky looks in several different place. A time control panel allows you to set time to your computer's time, or to anything else you want.
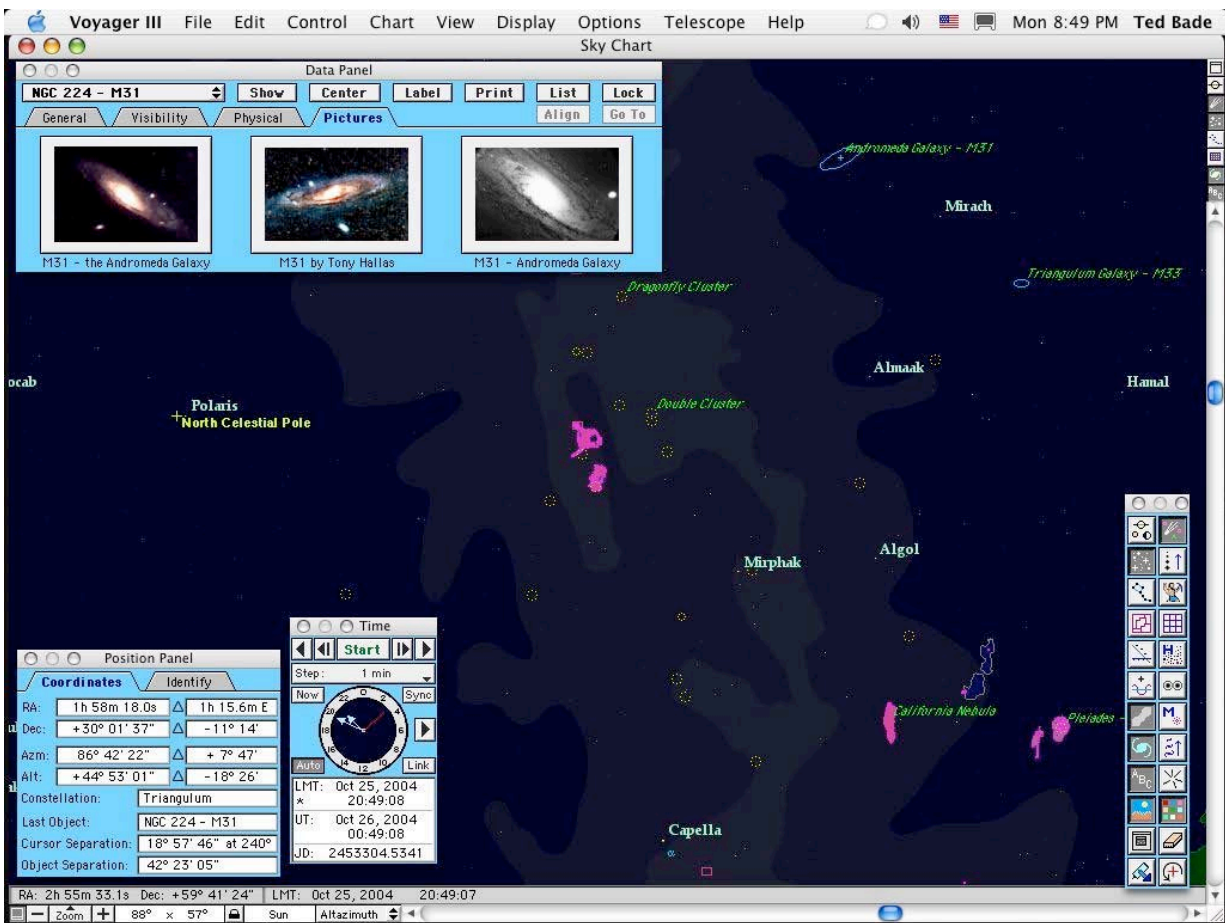
There are a variety of ways to manipulate how you view the heavens within Voyager III. You can select from one of four coordinate systems (Galactic, Ecliptic, Altazimuth, or Equatorial), How the chart is projected and how wide or narrow a piece of the sky you see (you can go from a full 360 degrees to a very small slice). An interesting feature for the amateur observer is the ability to draw the obstructions of your local horizon. Although the tools provided are rather crude and depend heavily upon you own artistic abilities, you can draw trees, hills, or anything else that obstructs your local sky. Then when you create a star chart for observing, you will have a more accurate idea of the object is something you can see or not.

You can turn on and off any type of sky object, their labels, and orbit traces. This is useful if you are trying to see how a particular object moves through the sky, or if your computer doesn't have the horsepower to quickly redraw the millions of objects that appear in the sky! Voyager III offers a variety of ways to control the display of most object types, such as minimum magnitude, how names are displayed, the glow of the Milky Way, and much more. A real purist can even turn on a "natural sky", which puts a glow near the horizon. On the other extreme, you can make the horizon (i.e. the Earth), invisible, giving you a view below your horizon as well. One can literally spend hours trying out all the ways to control the view this program provides. It is truly amazing.

Once you have a start chart on the screen, you can click on any object and Voyager III opens an information panel concerning this object. The information panel is broken into four tabs (general,

visibility, physical, and pictures), Each tab provides specific information about the object, such as what it is, alternate names or designations, sky coordinates, when and where it can be seen, how far away the object is and much, much more.

The pictures tab links images included on the Voyager III directory to the object. Obviously not all sky objects have pictures, but many of the more famous ones have one to several images. The CD comes with over 1000 images. Voyager III allows the users to link their own images to sky objects as well. You can import images you create or those you get from other sources. The only problem is that the images need to be in PICT format. Which means you'll probably need to convert JPEGs to PICT if you want to use this feature. IMHO, it would have been better both compatibility and space-wise to use JPEG format. However, using this feature would be a very interesting way to organize your personal space image collection.

Since you won't be able to see every object in the sky, even if you have everything turned on, Voyager III a search feature. You can do a general search or limit your search to a particular category of objects. For instance, searching for "jupiter" in general brings up both the planet Jupiter and a planetary nebula known as the "Ghost of Jupiter". Once a match is found, you can either continue the search or center the object on your sky. If you limited the search to planets only the Planet Jupiter would result.
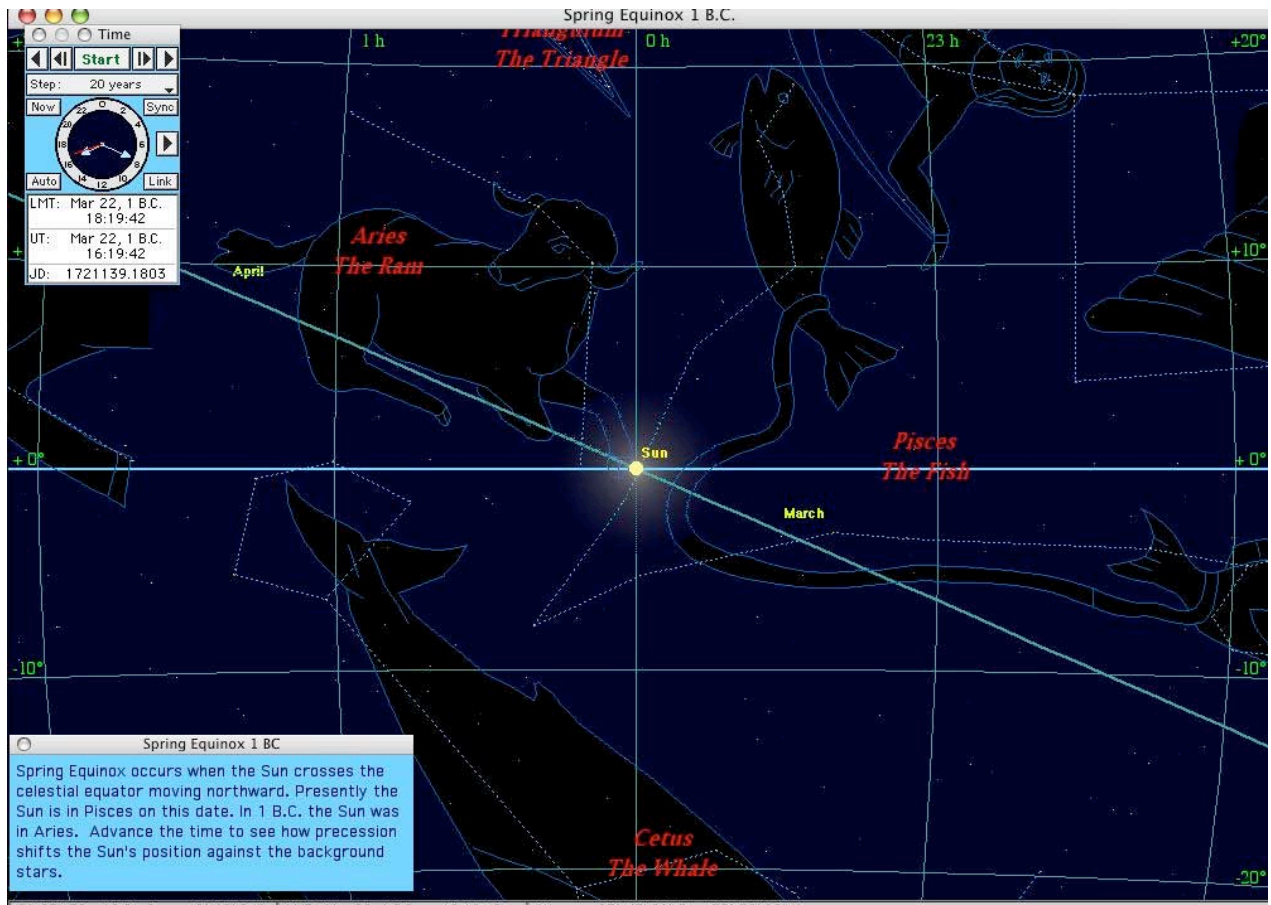
Beyond simply looking at objects in one's own sky, Voyager III allows the user to move the viewpoint to another point of the universe, hold a particular object in one position and see how the other objects move around it, change the date, view the object from different points in the universe, and more. There are many demonstrations of interesting situations provided on the Voyager CD. Missed the lunar

eclipse at the end of this October (you were watching the World Series and not the sky, right)? Use Voyager III to see how the moon looked in your sky. Want to see how the sky looked 100 years ago? How about 1000 years ago? The possibilities are endless.

Voyager III also has the ability to oven multiple screens and watch a certain even from different perspectives at the same time. You could watch the moon go into eclipse from various areas on the earth or even include a perspective of how the earth looks from he moon during this event! Multiple screens can each do their own thing or be synched together in some way. For instance you can keep a wide backyard view of the universe open, then open another to zoom in on a particular object or area of the sky.
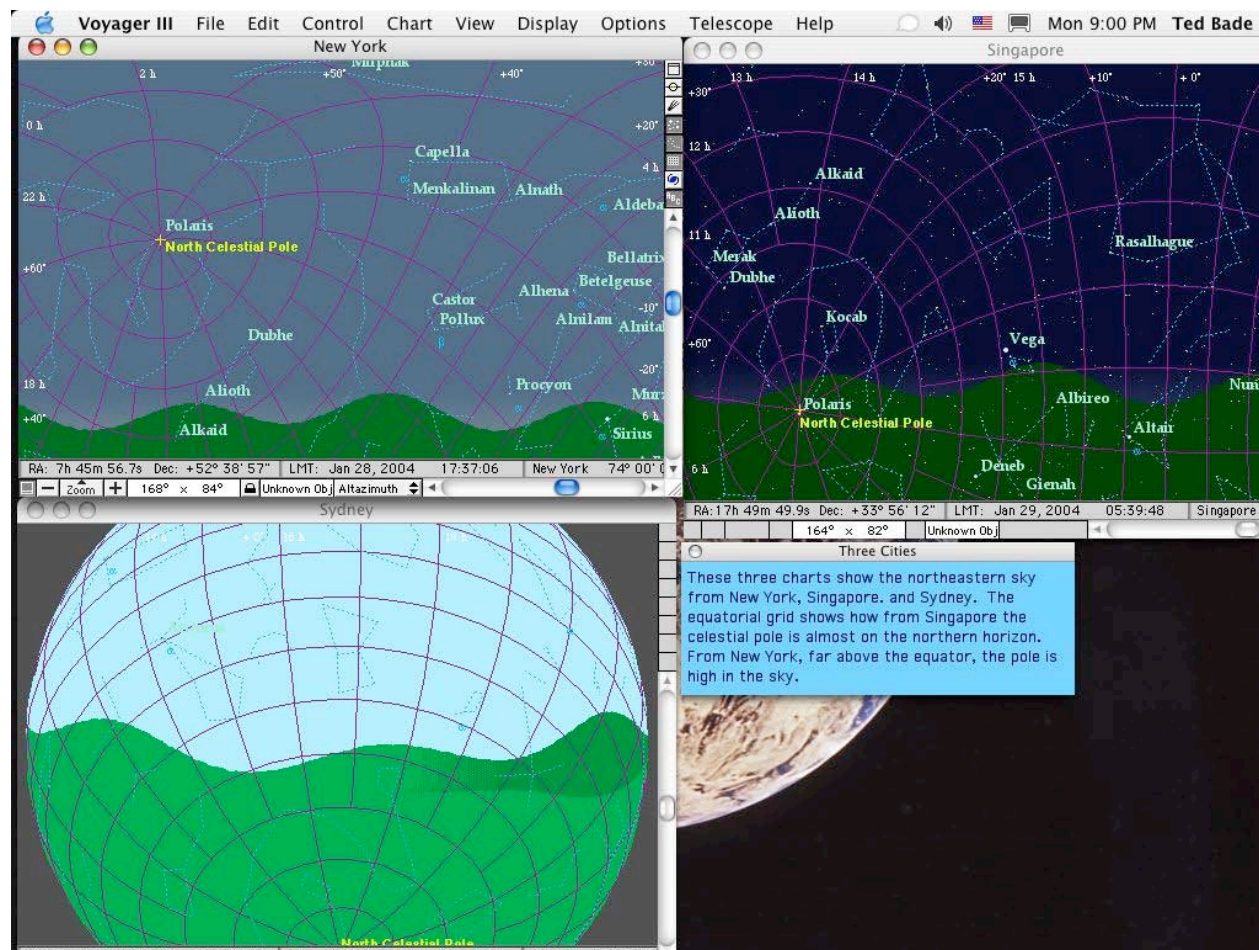
I have only touched on a few of the abilities of the Voyager III package. There is a lot more to explore in this program. I know I will continue to explore and try different things as time goes on. This program provides so many features and abilities that I might still be learning about how to do certain things for quite a while.

Overall, Voyager III runs well, however I did experience a few bugs and one crash while testing it. I spoke with a Carina Software representative and they indicated that a fix was in the works. The biggest problem I had with Voyager III is that it really feels like a Mac OS 8 program that was brought over to Mac OS X. It just doesn't have that "Wow, this is a Mac OS X program" feel. It was also a little sluggish at times. I tried the program both on my G5/1.8 and my G4/550 PowerBook. It did okay in both cases, but sometimes seemed to hesitate. In my opinion, if the programmers put their minds to it, the next version should see some impressive image and speed improvements. Voyager III could really benefit from this.

Another problem I kept facing was zooming onto an object or centering on something not in my area of the sky, then not being able to return to where I was. The program doesn't have a back button. If you zoom into an object, there is no easy way to step back and say, hey I really wanted that star to the left of where I clicked. You can easily return to your starting point by opening a new startup window, but you cannot step back a step or two.

Voyager III is a great choice as a sky simulation and telescope controlling software package. It works very well and it works in Mac OS X. It provides more information about the objects in the skies then one person will probably be able to explore in a lifetime. It is an excellent choice and well worth the cost. If you are interested in any of these features, definitely check out Voyager III.

In part two of this review, I will discuss the trials (and perhaps tribulations) of getting my telescope to communicate with SkyPilot and to work with Voyager III. We will also discuss working with Voyager III and a telescope.

Special Note: This Mac OS X version was just released and while I was writing this review, the Carina web site didn't yet reflect this new version. A Carina Software representative assured me that the web site would be updated soon. So if you visit and don't find information about the Mac OS X version, just check back again. In addition to information about the new version, there should be a demo download.

macCompanion Media Kit

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