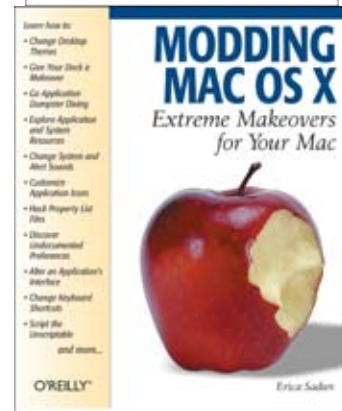
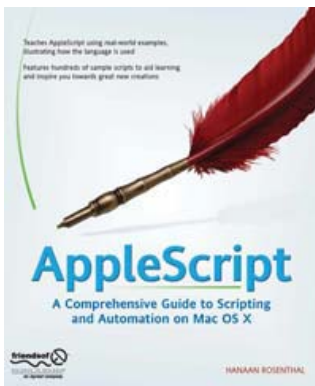


# macCompanion



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

## Letter From the CEO by Robert Pritchett

### Smoothing the Process to Mindshare for “Aware-ware”

The following is part of an exercise in garnering both marketshare and mindshare “Aware-ware” for *macCompanion* and MPN, LLC and drills down from a global perspective to a local perspective in an economic and computer environment analysis study.

MPN, LLC is interested in helping improve a global economy, but for the sake of argument we present a top-down view of the current economic situation:

### Economic Conditions

#### The World

Perhaps one of the best indicators for the world economic situation is derived from the downloadable 84-page PDFed *World Economic Situation and Prospects 2004* that was created for the United Nations. It says that the world is experiencing 2% sustainable economic growth.<sup>1</sup> This is being driven by the economic situation in the USA as 30% of world Gross Domestic Product (GDP) with world trade growing by nearly 4.75%.

#### US National

With the recent political situation stabilizing and with a conservative United States president moving forward into a 2<sup>nd</sup> term, the stock market continues to show strong improvements and a healthy future with GDP being 3.7% for Q3 of 2004.<sup>2</sup> The data provided by the United States Department of Labor shows an overall positive trend with more jobs added to the workforce than taken away, with unemployment averaging around 5.5%.<sup>3</sup> A non-published op-ed piece from the Council of Foreign Relations by Roger M Kubarych shows that housing, imports and goods as well as defense-spending is up with inflation being affected by increased housing costs and oil.<sup>4</sup>

#### Pacific Northwest Region

The Pacific Northwest continues to struggle with Oregon suffering the most with one of the highest unemployment rates in the Union. Meanwhile the Puget Sound area has the highest per capita billionaire ratio in the cyberutopia.<sup>5</sup> High Tech is expected to continue improving the economic situation even as manufacturing is being redistributed elsewhere.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.un.org/esa/policy/wess/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://homepage.mac.com/jbdelong/TheWorldEconomy.html>

<http://www.bea.doc.gov/bea/dn/home/gdp.htm>

<http://homepage.mac.com/jbdelong/AftertheBubble.html>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.bls.gov/bls/newsrels.htm>

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.cfr.org/pub5165/roger\\_m\\_kubarych/us\\_economic\\_situation\\_strengths\\_and\\_weaknesses.php](http://www.cfr.org/pub5165/roger_m_kubarych/us_economic_situation_strengths_and_weaknesses.php)

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.gonorthwest.com/Visitor/about/economy.htm>

<http://www.nytimes.com/2003/03/03/national/03PULS.html>

<sup>6</sup> [http://www.technet.org/press/Press\\_Releases/?newsReleaseId=2126](http://www.technet.org/press/Press_Releases/?newsReleaseId=2126)

## Washington/Oregon Columbia Basin Region

Our Home Base is located here, so we need to take a look at local conditions: The local economy is moving away from the Department of Energy nuclear and Department of Defense-based industry to a more diversified service industry and back towards an agricultural-based economy.<sup>7</sup> Employment offices keep busy by offering positions to the local population.<sup>8</sup>

## Computer Industry Analysis

The Computer Industry jobs in the USA are listed in two areas in the US Department of Labor. They show for October 2004, in the Information Industry category for Internet publishing and broadcasting, that there are 35,700 salaried people employed. In the Professional and Business Services under Computer Systems Design and Related Services there are 1,143,300 salaried employees and in Management and Technical Consulting Services, there are 798,600 employed.<sup>9</sup> Many Information Technology jobs are now being outsourced outside the USA. A few of those positions are now being backfilled.<sup>10</sup> Not identified are all the Independent Consultants that are self-employed and no doubt make up a large portion of consulting services in the computer industry.

A study showing computer use in 2001 shows that in the USA alone, there were 72.3 million people using computers at work and those were only 53.5% of the workforce at that time. Two out of five employees use computers for Internet activity and Email. Three years later, that number has to be much higher. Even then, nearly 80% of the office environments were using computers as they rapidly replaced other office equipment (typewriters, calculators and other stand-alone office equipment) with “all-in-one” systems.<sup>11</sup> And computing systems continue to become ubiquitous in practically every aspect of business around the world.

Every year since 2000 the net sales in computing equipment has been well over \$3 billion per year with the growth rate being 19%, 6%, 15%, 22% and 27% on gross profit margins on average of 27%<sup>12</sup> since then. Somehow we think these statistics are US-centric and do not take into account worldwide numbers. Case in point – Apple’s sales statistics.

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.tcajob.com/>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.wa.gov/esd/employment.html>

<http://richland.jobs.topusajobs.com/>

<sup>9</sup> <ftp://ftp.bls.gov/pub/news.release/empsit.txt>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.cio.com/archive/101504/outsource.html>

<sup>11</sup> <ftp://ftp.bls.gov/pub/news.release/ciuaw.txt>

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.ventureonline.com/SampleOneIndustry.asp>

## Competitive Situation – Focused Expertise

Within the multibillion-dollar computer industry there are quite a few publications with a few that have long since disappeared and many new ones eager to take their place.<sup>13</sup>

To focus on an area of expertise we are very familiar with, we center our attention on one segment of the Computer Industry – **Apple**.<sup>14</sup> Here is a company the rest of the computer industry wished didn't exist and have tried time and again to squash it, but it keeps alive because of its clientele.<sup>15</sup> Because of its good fortune and great advocates, it is totally solvent, debt-free and its stock has gone from a low of \$16 all the way up to close to \$70 per share within this past year.<sup>16</sup> Some on Wall Street predict \$100 per share soon. So far they have sold well over \$8 billion of goods and services in 2004 worldwide with sales growth of 33%. Only two computer-manufacturing companies made any profits last year. The other was Dell. Gartner just posted a report saying 3 of the top 10 computer manufacturers will be out of business in the next 3 years (see our Blog for more info.)

Within the Macintosh environment there are a number of Blogs<sup>17</sup>, Career Sites<sup>18</sup> Consultants<sup>19</sup>, Developers<sup>20</sup>, Forums<sup>21</sup>, Link Lists<sup>22</sup>, Magazines<sup>23</sup>, Macintosh User Groups<sup>24</sup>, News Sites<sup>25</sup>, Radio Sites<sup>26</sup>, Review Sites<sup>27</sup>, Rumor Sites<sup>28</sup> and Training Sites<sup>29</sup>. We have established links with many (but far from all) of them as noted in the footnotes below and with others on our own website, [macCompanion](#).

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<sup>13</sup> <http://www.internetvalley.com/archives/0396top100mag.html>

<http://www.globeinstitute.org/Library/journals.htm>

<http://www.computerhope.com/mag.htm>

<http://www.hal-pc.org/~farleycw/KSatellite/200CompMags.html>

<http://www.cmpcmm.com/cc/media.html>

<http://www.ezinedepot.net/browse.php3?cat=70>

[http://www.go-ezines.com/Computers\\_and\\_Internet/Computers/more2.html](http://www.go-ezines.com/Computers_and_Internet/Computers/more2.html)

<sup>14</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apple\\_Computer](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apple_Computer)

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.it-analysis.com/article.php?articleid=12226>

<sup>16</sup> [http://www.hoovers.com/apple-computer/--ID\\_12644--/free-co-factsheet.xhtml](http://www.hoovers.com/apple-computer/--ID_12644--/free-co-factsheet.xhtml)

[http://www.hoovers.com/company-information/--ID\\_12644.ticker\\_AAPL--/free-co-fin-stockquote.xhtml](http://www.hoovers.com/company-information/--ID_12644.ticker_AAPL--/free-co-fin-stockquote.xhtml)

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.maccompanion.com/companions/blogs.html>

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.maccompanion.com/companions/macjobs.html>

<sup>19</sup> <http://www.maccompanion.com/companions/consultants.html>

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.maccompanion.com/companions/developers.html>

<sup>21</sup> <http://www.maccompanion.com/companions/forums.html>

<sup>22</sup> <http://www.maccompanion.com/companions/linklist.html>

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.maccompanion.com/companions/macazines.html>

<sup>24</sup> <http://www.maccompanion.com/companions/mugshots.html>

<sup>25</sup> <http://www.maccompanion.com/companions/news.html>

<sup>26</sup> <http://www.maccompanion.com/companions/radio.html>

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.maccompanion.com/companions/reviews.html>

<sup>28</sup> <http://www.maccompanion.com/companions/hearsay.html>

<sup>29</sup> <http://www.maccompanion.com/companions/training.html>

## Our Strategic Approach – macCompanion Website

If companies can sell canned, dehydrated water<sup>30</sup> for a profit, we should be able to generate an income from a website that purports to be “All Things Macintosh”. So we created the *macCompanion* website with a plethora of links to other sites after establishing trusted relationships with them.

Our main “product” is our monthly *macCompanion* magazine, filling nearly 100 pages with Commentary, Editorials, Features, Book, Game, Hardware, Shareware and Software reviews and information on Training for those interested in moving to the Macintosh environment. We have not begun to sell it yet, since it is still only in electronic form. (Okay, we tried but didn’t get very far.)

## Our Other Strategic Approach – Migration Consulting

Our other area of expertise is in helping folks move from non-Mac environments to Macs. We have seen a need and are in a position to fill it. We can do that from our ProApple.com website (not active yet) and segue our partnership with Vagon, experts in Computer Forensics<sup>31</sup> as well as others. So far in 2004, crackers have caused considerable global economic damage well over \$103 billion. Add another \$166 billion in malware attacks from viruses, worms and Trojans. When seen in this light, moving to a platform and operating system that has ***not had a single successful virus, trojan or worm in the last 3 years***, is it any wonder that cyberwar-weary folks want to jump that direction to avoid both crackers and malware?<sup>32</sup> Less than 20% of non-Mac systems have ***not*** been reported as having been compromised, cracked or otherwise disabled. (More than likely, they just haven’t looked far enough yet.) This is where our consulting expertise can make a difference in guiding them towards a Macintosh solution and away from their computer-based woes.

## Strategic Moves

As we expand the Macintosh Professional Network, we can continue to partner with localized consultants who are trained and experienced in helping battle-scarred non-Mac refugees “make the move”.

As part of our strategic positioning, we will need to become Apple-certified. We will need to spread our “Awareware” to non-Mac publications and other media to get the word out and to expedite mindshare and eventually marketshare.

The global market is ready to move. We can smooth the process. You can help by letting your friends, neighbors, acquaintances, business associates and others know we are here to assist in the transition away from bad computer experiences to good ones.

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<sup>30</sup> <http://www.buydehydratedwater.com/>

<sup>31</sup> <http://www.maccompanion.com/companions/consultants.html>

<sup>32</sup> <http://www.mi2g.com/cgi/mi2g/press/021104.php>



## **Letter From the Editor** by Robert Pritchett

### **Looking Forward to a Bright New Year!**

Happy Holy-days! Chanukah, Kwanza, CHRISTmas and all other Holy-days that make the Winter Months more enjoyable. May Apple-based gifts be considered for you and your families now and throughout this coming year.

It really is hard to believe that we have come to the end of 2004 already. My, how time flies when things get interesting!

And speaking of interesting, we have a few more Audio, Book, Game, Hardware, Shareware and Software reviews you might be interested in reading this month.

We want to do our part in getting the word out about products that make computing easier.

Did we do a year-end best-of-breed? No. Did we create a gift guide? No. Those have been done so well by others elsewhere (see our Blog). We just want you to sit back, relax and enjoy some quiet time, reading what our reviewers provided for the December issue for your enlightenment.

The focus this month might be considered to be “global” in nature. Maybe even a bit “earthy” with Shareware items that circle the globe. Purely unintentional, but it just worked out that way as we began looking at software that looks towards earth from space and perhaps even puts our personal issues into proper perspective as we look inward for peace and upwards and outward to a brighter future in the heavens.

May each of you be blessed with health and happiness, peace and prosperity and hearts filled with love and charity.

## Views From the Ivory Tower by Ted Bade

Keeping track of what is going on in the world of Macintosh, Apple Computers, and computer technology in general can be very interesting. For some unknown reason (unknown at least to me), people who enjoy working with computers often seem passionate about their platform of choice. Some have likened this to a religious fervor; users of whatever platform expounding the virtues of their way, trying to gain converts both from those already with a computer and from those without.

But many people become passionate about something they are interested in. Take sports for instance, many people follow teams and some become very passionate about it. You have seen it before, when a team loses, it's, "my team lost", or if you say something derogatory about a team, you actually insult the watcher. It is weird, but this is the human way! So get out there and support the Macintosh computer platform. It's the only right way. I know it. You know it and those that don't know it are just ill-informed ;-).

Seriously though, there are a lot of reasons to support the Mac. According to an article in *Consumer Reports*, there are 59,940 good reasons! (see below). For whatever reason, there are fewer pieces of malware written for the Mac [Editor – in fact there are none known to exist yet]. We would like to think that at least part of the reason is that Mac OS X is more secure than Windows.

Apple Corporation is the best computer company around that makes an MP3 player. Or should one say that Apple Corporation is the best MP3 maker around that also makes computers? It's difficult to say which. But that fact doesn't seem to affect the feelings of Wall Street. Apple has seen quite the increase in stock prices this past month, and predictions for future growth are very good.

**Still the world's safest platform** - Once again the mi2g Intelligence Unit in London reported that safest 24/7 computer platform is the Open Source platform of BSD (Berkeley Software Distribution) and Mac OS X based on Darwin. This analysis considers both the operating system and the applications used. The study covers the past 12 months.

According to an article posed on the Star Online site, <http://star-techcentral.com/tech/story.asp?file=/2004/11/2/technology/9302251&sec=technology> this past 12 months have been one of the worst in terms of malware. The mi2g Intelligence Unit said it analyzed 235,907 successful breaches on companies that all had at least some basic antivirus and security features in place.

The article had some interesting statistics. Almost 33% of the breaches were against micro entities, 58.8% against small entities, 6.1% for medium, and 2.5% against large entities. The study also pointed out that Linux was the most breached computer environment with 65.6% of the breaches, followed by Windows with 25.2% of the breaches. Mac OS X and BSD computers combined, accounted for only 4.8% of those successfully attacked.

The article quotes:

"More and more smart individuals, government agencies and corporations are shifting towards Apple and BSD environments in 2004," said mi2g executive chairman D.K. Matai.

I am happy to know that my machine is that much safer than the rest. We all know that Windows is a very popular OS and it appears it is quite popular with the virus people too! But you all know this. While reports like this are good news for Apple, too few companies really care to convert, content to maintain the status quo and fight their daily battles with malware.

**Macs cheaper???** - For as long as I can remember, buying a Macintosh meant paying more than what you would pay if you bought a similar PC. The PC might not have all the bells and whistles of the Mac, but if you weren't interested in that the ones it lacked, the PC was less expensive. This fact caused a number of public organizations such as schools and libraries to buy PCs. But that might be changing.

Recently Paul Murphy wrote an article for *LinuxInsider* that considered this particular point and that it is currently not true. In his article he states that the Dell dual Xeon Precision workstation has most of the features of a Mac G5, but costs \$1,000 more and the 15-inch PowerBook is \$180 cheaper than the Dell Inspiron. However, the low end Dell 2400 is \$350 less than the eMac, yet when you consider that the Dell 2400 won't run Windows XP effectively. If you upgrade the 2400 to match the features of the eMac, it becomes more expensive. (The article doesn't mention it, but the eMac, as purchased, will run Mac OS X effectively).

The article has a lot of other interesting things to say about how people perceive the Macintosh incorrectly. It is definitely worth reading this article and sharing it with your friends at <http://linuxinsider.com/story/37806.html>.

**59,940 reasons to reconsider Macs** - *Consumer Reports* recently printed this very comment in their issue covering PCs. The writer's point was that there are about 60,000 pieces of malware for computer, but only 60 or so actually affect the Macintosh (of all types), which means you have to deal a LOT less with these types of problems (the information on the number of viruses came from Symantec). I have to applaud the writer for this particular way of phrasing it! No one wants to deal with malware. At some point consumers might even begin to realize this and go out and buy a Mac.

The *Consumer Reports* article also said that:

“Apple Computer has actually raised its support satisfaction for desktop computers over the past three years to levels well above all competitors, while offering the most reliable desktop hardware. “ The low expectation the statement refers to, is in lowering of satisfaction consumers have with computer related technical support.

The article includes a section on “How to choose” which begins with: Consider a Macintosh. “Using one is the surest way to get top-notch reliability and support while minimizing exposure to viruses and spyware.”

This is certainly high praise coming from a magazine that tests products and publishes the results giving the consumer the tools to make an informed decision. I have been saying these things for year, but people don't listen to me (well some of them don't), because they know I am a dedicated Mac user. Having *Consumer Reports* print this is a really good thing.

**Apple doing well** - In last month's article we mentioned that Apple released several new iPods, including the iPod photo. This must have done some good for Apple Corporation in general, since the stock value has sky rocketed over the past month. It actually reached a 4-year high in November and the pundits that predict such things expect to see the stock price top \$100/share.

When Apple opened the Apple store in London, it drew quite a crowd. Apparently there were about 5,000 people waiting up to 25 hours to get into the store on opening day! Wow, what a crowd. If you would like to read about the opening of the London store, check out the article published by BBC News at [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk\\_news/4028363.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/4028363.stm).

Another sign of Apple doing well are articles like the one posted on the CNET news site. The article titles: "Survey: Some iPod fans dump PCs for Macs", discusses some information collected by them. It appears about 6% of iPod owners are considering replacing their current PC with a Macintosh and another 7% are considering doing this. If this actually happened on a marketwide basis, Apple could gain some of the market share ground it has lost over the last decade.

In the CNET article [http://news.com.com/Survey+Some+iPod+users+dumping+PCs+for+Macs/2100-1042\\_3-5465935.html](http://news.com.com/Survey+Some+iPod+users+dumping+PCs+for+Macs/2100-1042_3-5465935.html) an analyst says that the success of the iPod is having a positive effect on Apple and that this effect might go on for a while. Among the reasons for switching are ease of use and better security.

That is primarily what I have been talking about here this month! It seems like daily we hear about security problems in the computer areas, and almost daily there is an article that Mac OS X is more secure and less prone to such problems.

May this December be a great one for you. We will see what 2005 brings in the way of exciting announcements from Apple and the world of computers in general.

## Rants, Raves and Revelations

### The Macintosh and Consumer Reports — My Love-Hate Relationship With CR by Harry {doc} Babad, Edited by Julie M. Willingham

I have been both a *Consumer Reports* (CR) subscriber and a Macintosh user for more years than I want to contemplate, as I approach my 69th birthday. I have read each issue of CR almost from-front-to-back, and, more often than not, based family buying decisions on what I've read. Well, that's not completely true. I have long had a hot-button issue about the way CR treats my beloved Macintosh, so for this column I decided to rant about it. But, to maintain a sense of fairness, I went back and reviewed all computer-related articles in Consumer Reports between March 2002 and December 2004, my most recent issue.

This article, which reports my overall conclusions, is less anger-ridden than my feelings and unprintable responses, over the years, as I read these same articles one at a time. One general concern with CR's treatment of computers is not making its readers aware of the general academic discounts available from many manufacturers, including Apple, which lowers the cost of buying PCs and software. I also continue to despair about the fact that CR has not yet fully recognized that almost all mainstream applications used in the PC world are also available for the Macintosh, usually with a 90% or greater feature set compatibility. That includes MS Office, Adobe products, the FileMaker Pro database, and many other niche software products. We've discussed many of them in *macCompanion* reviews.

I have divided my comments into sections on desktop computers, laptop computers, and articles that feature discussions of personal computer software. The overview summarizes my findings, and my rants end with my thoughts on "So what is there not to like?" about CR's treatment of things Macintosh.

Focusing up front on the discussions in the December 2004 issue, CR still doesn't get it!

"HOW TO CHOOSE — Consider a Macintosh. Using one is the surest way to get top-notch reliability and support while minimizing exposure to viruses and spyware. But converting from a Windows PC will cost you: The computer costs more than a similarly featured Windows PC, and you'll likely need new software and spend time converting your existing data files. Mac users also have fewer choices in software." — CR

As noted later in this column, much of the more extensively used software these days is cross-platform. Word processors, whether as stand-alone applications or imbedded in so-called "suites," can exchange both content and format by using .rtf-formatted documents.

As for there being more software options for the PC, some of that is smoke and mirrors. Perhaps I'm biased, but based on dialogs with PC users, I noted that most I know continue to be appalled by the large number of junk applications available to them. Such products don't make it on the Macintosh market. As for those specialty applications you must use that are PC-only products, *Virtual PC*<sup>™</sup> (now owned by Microsoft) is an excellent answer. After all, if your needs run to specialized medical, engineering, design, and drafting programs, which for the most part cost well over \$750, why balk at the cost of Virtual PC? For the rest of us, to handle unusual translations, there is always DataViz's *MacLink Plus*<sup>™</sup>.

Since I am at times of iconoclastic bent, I do wonder when CR will develop a metric that discusses model abandonment by users. Of course, creation of such doorstops, or foisting them into understaffed public school programs, long practiced by too many of us, has always seemed like cruel and unusual punishment to me. But if you itemize your taxes, it's obviously worth a few bucks to you.

#### OVERVIEW

Although I would have liked to conclude that CR is both purposely biased and reports inaccurately about my favorite computing platform, in all fairness, I can't do so.

However, their articles are laced with innuendos, the old IBM-like statements that would foster a sense of fear, uncertainty, and doubt (the FUD factor) in readers, those either seeking a Macintosh for the first time or seeking to switch from a PC. But time marches on, and such innuendo has long since (2003) disappeared from CR discussions of computers and their software. As part of my reading of CR computer articles, I was particularly struck by the

evolution of personal computer systems that make the shift of focus from desktop or laptop systems to discussions of desktop vs. laptop systems, with an ever-narrowing gap between the two. I was particularly pleased with the focus of the lead paragraph in the March 2004 article (which I discuss under laptops) in this column.

"Which differences between desktop and laptop computers are real and which are myths based on yesterday's designs? If you can't answer that question, your next computer might be one that doesn't meet your needs or, just as bad, one with unneeded costly extras." — CR

Rather than deluge you with repeated examples of what I consider inappropriate dings on an issue-by-issue basis, I'll summarize them in the list that follows, citing the issue date for reference. The models and full article names are provided individually in the sections that follow.

**CR Concern or Issue Article X-Reference Dates** Macintosh computers are too expensive. All Articles; Software is scarcer than for PCs. Most Articles; Low speed USB port, Dec. 2002; Sept. 2003. Lack of hard disk activity light, Mar. 2002; Dec. 2002; Sept. 2003. Lack of floppy drives, Mar. 2002; Sept. 2002. Lack of Included virus protection software, Mar. 2002; Dec. 2002. Lack of {sufficient} expansion slots, Mar. 2002; Dec. 2002. Lack of docking-station plug in portables, Dec. 2002.

**If you, our gentle reader, do not want to read an issue-by-issue, blow-by-blow treatise, feel free to jump immediately to my conclusions in the section called So What is There Not to Like?**

## ARTICLE CHRONOLOGY—LOOKING BACKWARDS IN TIME

### Desktop and Laptop Systems

In the December 2004 issue, CR once again discusses both laptops and desktops in an article entitled, *Computers — Shiny Apple*. Has the Messiah come? Of course, the focus of CR's eye is the new G5 iMacs, but I found reader satisfaction with WinTel systems more compelling than the newest and greatest from Apple.

"Since 2001, our surveys have shown, satisfaction with technical support for desktop computers has sunk, making it one of the lowest-rated services we evaluate. (Our most recent survey for laptops, in 2003, also yielded low satisfaction levels.) In our latest survey of ConsumerReports.org subscribers who own a desktop, only 37 percent gave manufacturers high marks, eight points lower than we reported in June. A second major brand differentiator, reliability, has held steady, although repair rates are still higher for computers than for most products we track." — CR

Across both of these metrics, Apple still rules the roost. I encourage devout Apple users to check out the reasons, listed in detail in the CR article, why Apple is doing so well. It is well written, despite its somewhat apologetic tone. Okay, which Macs is CR happy with?

For the desktop system, CR recommends the iMac G5 17-inch 1.8 GHz Power PC G5 (\$1,674). CR's choice for laptops remains true to its earlier picks — the Apple PowerBook 15-inch 1 GHz Power PC G5 (\$2300), and the Apple iBook 14-inch Combo 933 MHz Power PC G4 (\$1300). All in all, these are reasonable choices for the home, college, and small business user.

\*\*\*\*\*

In the September 2004 issue, CR discusses both desktop and laptop in the article titled, *Computers — Power up, prices down*. These CR picks focus on both budget and—a new term—workhorse systems. The term seems to have replaced the term "mid-price range" used in earlier articles. I was particularly impressed by the following recommendations, which most Macintosh users routinely do — especially opting for more memory and larger hard disks than Apple routinely provides.

"Configure for the long term. A setup that seems adequate today may not be in a year or two. It's easier and usually less expensive to configure a computer with capabilities to spare at the time of purchase. Later upgrades, especially on a laptop, may prove difficult, because components may not be available. You can always take a computer off the shelf, configured by the manufacturer. But customization is usually better. Our surveys have shown that readers are generally more satisfied when they buy a computer over the Internet, where it can be configured to order." — CR

The Apple systems selected were the desktop Apple iMac 17" 1.25 GHz Power PC G4 (\$1874) and the Apple eMac Combo 1.0 GHz Power PC G4; both rated very well. I found nothing terribly biased in the article, but perhaps I'm getting burned out.

\*\*\*\*\*

In the March 2004 issue CR once again discusses *Computers — Desktop vs. Laptop* and notes that;

"Overall, budget desktops and laptops are nearly equally capable, though laptops cost a couple of hundred dollars more. Both types have comparable, if not identical, hardware, including CD-RW and DVD drives, as well as capable graphics processors with enough horsepower for photo editing and gaming." — CR

CR's Macintosh recommendations include the "budget" category Apple eMac Combo (\$960 desktop) that got a very good, solid rating, and the low-end Apple iBook G4 933 MHz Power PC G4 with a 14-inch screen (\$1300). Apple once again rules for technical support and has the lowest frequency of repair record. (I really do wonder when CR will develop a metric that discusses model abandonment by users. From my limited survey, I find that PC users buy new systems more often than do Mac users, perhaps much to Apple's chagrin about customer inertia. This article had no comments that pushed my buttons - it must be the re-dawning of the Age of Aquarius.)

\*\*\*\*\*

In the September 2003 issue, in an article entitled, *Laptops: Your Next Computer?*, CR recommended the Apple PowerBook 15-inch (\$2080), Apple PowerBook 17-inch (\$3,300) and the Apple iBook 900 14-inch Combo (\$1580). This article correctly distinguishes between a laptop as a desktop replacement or for mobile use as a portable. The CR review correctly noted that when listening to DVDs on the PowerBook, headphones were recommended. Overall, the article provides information on the 12" & 14" iBook and the 12", 15" and 17" PowerBooks. It also recognizes the PowerBook's hot-lap problem that caused Apple to redesign its later portables.

I did find the comment about platforms disingenuous in light of the availability of dual platform software and the ease of moving such document files from a PC to a Macintosh. The high ratings for service and durability that Apple continues to gather also discounts the pain that PC users must accept from their overly complex and trouble-prone and vulnerable WinTel systems. Check out the article in the November 5, 2004 issue of *The Economist* magazine entitled, *Make it simple*, for a peek into PC complexity. The whole series of articles on Information Technology is worth a visit to your library.

"Windows vs. Macintosh. Most people will choose Windows because it's what they've always used. Apple's hardware will suit you if you're interested in simple photo editing, music, video, and other multimedia applications. For now, a Macintosh is the only entry to the wildly successful iTunes store for music downloads. The Apple PowerBook and iBook are expensive as laptops go, however." — CR

#### Desktop Systems Only

In the December 2003 issue, CR looked at desktop computers from the perspective of budget, midrange, and high-end models in an article entitled, *Desktop Computers — Getting down to Realities*. The article recommended both the high-end Apple PowerMac G5 1.8 GHz (\$3,490) and the midrange Apple iMac 15-inch 1 GHz Combo (\$1400). The article did not rate budget models. As expected, the G5 received an excellent rating, while the iMac got a very good rating, losing points only because of its low 'only fair' graphics speed. But we all knew that, didn't we? Apple retains its dominance of 91% rating for its website and catalog, but the article does not mention its retail stores, which were just being opened in major cities around the US. IBM and Dell follow closely with 85% scores. Apple once again gets the top score (74%) for technical support, trailed by Gateway and Dell, whose customer satisfaction scores were in the very low 60's. Once again, the iMacs were downrated for lack of expansion slots. Apple's score on iMac expansion (fair) was low compared to the midrange PCs that received good to excellent scores for this feature. This article was surprisingly free of dings about Apple systems: perhaps lack of flashing lights and floppy drives are no longer an issue.

\*\*\*\*\*

In the December 2002 issue, CR recommended, in an article entitled, *Computing in a buyer's market, the Apple eMac Combo (\$1235)*. The article specifically noted that "unlike the value-line Macs previously tested, its graphics meet the demands of avid game players." Once again, the familiar refrain bemoaning the lack of a floppy drive (which most other makers have now adopted), and a lack of a hard-drive activity light had begun to sound repetitious to me. The new complaint was the absence of USB 2.0 ports. Apple had the highest ranking for technical

support at 67% compared to Dell at 66%, and was top rated for its website and catalog. The article noted that all retail outlets for computers performed poorly relative to its criteria, other than perhaps for cost. This article was written long before Apple started opening up their retail stores — but that's another story.

\*\*\*\*\*

In the September 2002 issue CR recommended, in an article entitled, *What you don't know about desktops can cost you, the \$1600 iMac*, ignoring Apple's eMacs (educational market-oriented models), which soon became available to everyone who wanted an all-in-one box. (Hey, they were grownup Macintosh SE-30s or Macintosh Classics, which some of us loved.) These days, for the most part, at universities around the country, portables are king.

The CR article noted that for greater expandability a user should consider a PowerMac G4 desktop model, for which they provided no information. The article also noted that Apple had the next to best rating (Dell took top honors that year) for providing help and getting repairs accomplished, while for overall technical support Apple rated 74% vs. Dell at 65%. Apple was dinged for the lack of a floppy drive, despite noting their wide availability at low cost. But we all complained loudly at the change when all Macs lost the floppy drive, ignoring the fact that many models, at the time, came with both CD read and write drives and optional Zip drives.

#### Laptop Systems Only

In the December 2002 issue, CR recommended, in an article entitled *Portable Power, the Apple iBook 800 Combo (\$1600)*, noted that this computer was an excellent overall value and was the lightest weight among all models tested. CR also noted that the owners manual "was better than most." Its deficits were no PC-card expansion slots, no keyboard control panel (not true), and the now proverbial lack of hard-drive activity light, antivirus protection, a separate standby button (whatever that is) or docking-station plug. Now, since the Apple OS comes with a robust Energy Saver preferences panel, and docking stations for Apple portables plug directly into the back edge of the computer, I don't understand the last two issues.

\*\*\*\*\*

In the March 2002 issue, CR recommended the Apple iBook (\$1500), in an article entitled, *The 'everywhere' computer (Laptops)*. The 12-inch monitor version was given a high very good rating, but the article noted that the 14-inch model had just been released.

The Apple product was downgraded because they did not provide virus protection software. Readers should note the orders of magnitude difference between frequency and severity of such attacks on WinTel systems vs. the Macintosh. Lack of slots to support expandability was the most significant drawback to this computer. Also the recommended models, once again, lacked a floppy drive and a hard-drive activity light. Hmm.

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#### Other CR Reviews — Mostly Software-Related

In the September 2003 issue of CR, there are articles that should be must-reads for all computer users. These include a primer on *Protect Yourself Online; Death Taxes... and Spam*; as well as "phishing" and spyware. Phishing, if the term is new to you, is a means of identity theft initiated when you respond to an urgent request from PayPal, your bank, or favorite department store asking you to verify your personal account information. Just delete such messages in the same manner that you hang up on the folks asking you such information by phone.

My only concern about these articles is that they do not do justice to the products that Macintosh software vendors sell, to allow you to create robust and updatable protections from spam, virii, and spy software. Oh yes! You really must update them at least monthly—it's like backing up, belt and suspenders protection. The August 2004 issue focuses on Email SPAM and provides little information on the wonderful and effective shareware products such as the \$40 *Spamfire* and *Spamfire X*, as well as Email client-specific spam filtering software available for download either as freeware or at costs lower than or comparable to that for WinTel systems.

In the May 2003 issue, CR discusses, *The desktop darkroom — Photo software*. The article provides readers with a very good discussion of image editing programs for the PC, but neglects one of the best available products for the Macintosh. Conspicuously absent from the article is Lemke's *GraphicConverter* at <http://www.lemkesoft.de/en/index.htm>, which I've used to meet my image editing needs. The article correctly mentions iPhoto® (provided with the Mac OS X operating system) and Adobe's Photoshop® Elements (now as version 3), the latter being my favorite for tasks that GraphicConverter can't handle.



### So, What is There Not to Like?

Checking out the evolution of *Consumer Reports'* treatment of the Macintosh has been enlightening. When I proposed this review to our Editor-in-Chief, I expected it to be a high-energy rant. Indeed, my strongest memory of reading these articles, when they first appeared was anger that our beloved computer system was not rated more highly. After all, price was not everything, and ease of use and a trouble-free user experience must count as something great.

But in the ensuing years, I've had occasion to read both *Apple Confidential* by Owen W. Linzmayer [No Starch Press, 2004] and Scott Kelby's insightful and almost painfully satirical *Macintosh...The Naked Truth* [New Riders Publishing, March 2002], the latter reviewed in the *macCompanion* December 2003 issue. These fine treatments, almost epistles of things Macintosh, have enhanced my sense of treating graciously those who offend my sense of the rightness of the Macintosh vision.

So despite the various dings that I feel are unfair, I must conclude that CR has treated the Macintosh fairly, if not with the grace I would have liked. So, readers, please don't excommunicate me or take my Macintosh away from me. Pull out your old CR issues and reread the computer-related articles, as I did, and let your anger about being mistreated fade.

But after this article is said and done, I still have a nagging doubt. With a selection of alternate available systems to test, would the *Consumer Reports* ratings have changed? Oh well, that's more work than I want to do.

After all, the December 2004 CR issue says it all! There are indeed "59,940 reasons to reconsider Macs!"

A Heads Up!

One last thought: While surfing the Internet -- well it was just a slightly out of control Google search -- I came across a set of fine articles by John Papola. With the author's permission, which I just received, we will be reprinting them in the next few issues of *macCompanion*. They directly attack the premises that *Consumer Reports* and other Macintosh naysayers have preached for years. They are entitled:

- NO, Macs are NOT OVERPRICED!!!
- The Big Picture on Market Share: Part 1

The Apple Way: A broader take on the "Mac vs. PC" debate

So keep reading...

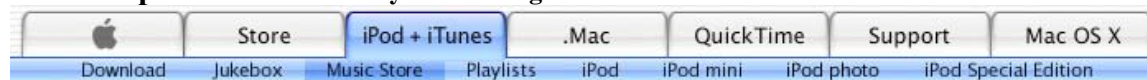
Flash!

Check out *Consumer Reports Almost Gets It* by Adam C. Engst for a harsher and perhaps more incisive view of their Macintosh legacy of *Consumer Reports* in *tidBITS* at <http://db.tidbits.com/getbits.acgi?tbart=07890>. After that link up to *LinuxInsider* features an article that claims Macs are in fact cheaper than similarly configured PCs from Dell at <http://linuxinsider.com/story/37806.html>. The article called *But There's No Software for the Mac, Right?* by Paul Murphy in *LinuxInsider* is broader than its title and makes for 'interesting' reading. Then follow the article chain one step further to *But Macs Are Slower, Right?* by Paul Murphy in *LinuxInsider* at <http://www.linuxinsider.com/story/36964.html>. (Thanks to Robert Pritchett for the lead to this great material!)

Now my column and those cited herein are and insufficient reason to cancel your subscription to *Consumer Reports*. But how about starting a massive mail campaign both by Email and SNAIL mail — strike a blow for our beloved Macintosh – Write Now! Quote liberally!

## Audio

### The Complete U2 Reviewed by Eddie Hargreaves



Apple iTunes Music Store

<http://www.apple.com/ipod/u2/boxset.html>

\$150 (\$100 w/coupon from iPod U2 Special Edition)

**Released:** November 2004 **Requirements:** iTunes 4.7 (which requires Mac OS X 10.1.5 or later, Windows 2000, or Windows XP); broadband connection; iTunes Music Store account



**Strengths:** All of U2's albums and singles; A dozen killer unreleased tracks; Three live concerts; Digital booklet with liner notes.

**Weaknesses:** Many popular songs duplicated; Most cover tunes missing; Some mistakes and inconsistencies; Years dated incorrectly.

Steve Jobs announced in October with much fanfare that the iTunes Music Store would deliver the world's first digital box set - The Complete U2. Unlike Apple's hardware products as of late, it has arrived on time. Does it live up to the hype? And, more importantly, is it worth the steep price tag?

It's billed as containing more than 400 tracks spanning the band's career, including every album they've ever released. That's both technically true and somewhat misleading. There are 446 songs in the set, but because albums, singles, and greatest hits collections are included, the same songs show up two or three times (All I Want Is You, Beautiful Day, I Will Follow, One, Stay, etc.)

A benefit of including the singles, though, is that those hold the bulk of U2's rarer, hard-to-find gems. Also, every single track includes the original album art. Even their first album, "Boy," has the original cover that can't be found in America to this day.

What makes this iTMS purchase even more unique is the digital booklet included. It's a PDF file that appears as a track in iTunes and opens in your default PDF-viewing application (Preview, Acrobat, etc.) when double-clicked. It includes liner notes on all of U2's albums by renowned writer Bill Flanagan and commentary by The Edge on the other special tracks.

Those special tracks include 10 unreleased songs, some of which are alternate (and superior) versions of songs from their latest album, "How To Disable An Atomic Bomb." There are also three early demos from 1978. Any hardcore U2 fan will want to nab this handful of tracks.

Most of the other rare tracks are those that were previously scattered on different compilation or soundtrack albums, such as "Christmas (Baby Please Come Home)," "Jesus Christ" and "Stateless."

There are also three complete live shows included: Boston, March 1981; Dublin, Dec. 31, 1989; and Mexico City, December 1997. The latter show was already available as a fan-club-only CD, but the first two have never been officially released.

The other fan club CD, "Melon," is included ... mostly. The liner notes mention that it was composed of 9 remixes, yet only 7 tracks are included. Those types of inconsistencies pop up in a number of places, since two of the remixes listed in the Unreleased & Rare section were released a few years ago on The Best of 1990-2000's B-Sides disc.

The other problem is one that haunts the iTMS as a whole: albums are dated by when they were last released, instead of originally released. So every track in "The Complete U2" is dated 2004, making the year category particularly useless until you hand-edit the fields.

Of all the tracks I noted missing from this collection, the one thing they all had in common was that they were covers. "Everlasting Love," "Can't Help Falling In Love," and "Night and Day" are just a few of the great tunes U2 has covered over the years and it's disappointing those tracks are missing. Even Jimi Hendrix' "Star Spangled Banner" lead-in to "Bullet The Blue Sky" has been excised from the "Rattle and Hum" album. I think we can all blame lawyers for those omissions.

It also would have been gratifying to have the songs from the "Rattle and Hum" film that couldn't fit on the original album. The film version of "Sunday Bloody Sunday" is considered one of their greatest live performances.

All in all, "The Complete U2" is not 100 percent complete. But it's a massive and far-reaching collection, nonetheless. It's very difficult to find many of U2 b-sides and remixes. Some exist only on vinyl and some are only on European Imports, which tend to cost \$10 for two songs, so it's great to finally have them available for individual purchase.

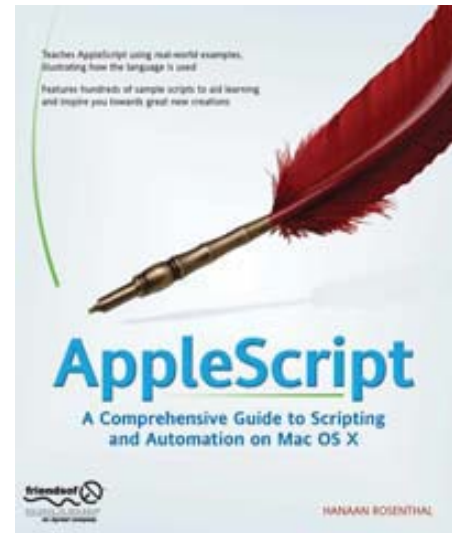
Is it worth \$150? If you can count up 150 or more tracks in the collection that you don't have (this can now be easily done with iTunes 4.7 by dragging the songs from the Music Store into a playlist). And if you've bought the Special Edition U2 iPod, you've got a \$50 instant rebate, so only 100 songs make it worth your money and downloading time (which, at 2GB in size, is lengthy). Otherwise, just pick and choose the tracks you want. And enjoy.

## Books

### AppleScript: A Comprehensive Guide to Scripting and Automation on Mac OS X Reviewed by Robert Pritchett



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<http://www.friendsofed.com/>  
**Booksite:** <http://www.friendsofed.com/books/1590594045/index.html>  
**Released:** November 2004  
\$60 USD, \$84 CND, £32 UK €49  
**Pages:** 900  
**ISBN:** 1590594045  
**Code Downloads:**  
<http://www.friendsofed.com/books/1590594045/code.html>  
Novice to Expert  
**Requirements:** AppleScript Studio.



**Strengths:** Leaves no stone unturned regarding AppleScripting.

**Weaknesses:** Needs an errata link somewhere.

*AppleScript: A Comprehensive Guide to Scripting and Automation on Mac OS X* by Hanaan Rosenthal and Bill Cheeseman as technical reviewer, have put together the best of the best regarding AppleScripting so far. I asked if Tiger's Automator would have an impact and they are reviewing that aspect. Meanwhile, here is the latest on AppleScripting that doesn't treat you like a newbie or presume you already know everything. It is a productivity kind of book for folks who want to not be overwhelmed by esoterica, but want to get work done.

This 900-page, 32-chapter book is soup-to-nuts on AppleScripting from the basics all the way to automating media workflow and consulting. Are you interested in taking complete control of your Mac? Master AppleScript. The book is organized into 3 parts; One is the Intro, Two is on how to AppleScript and Three is on the wild world of AppleScripting.

Part Two consists of chapters 2 through 18 and covers basic AppleScript programming grammar such as values, numbers, dates, lists and records, commands, variables, operations and coercion, making decisions, repeat loops, user interaction, working with files and the clipboard, turning errors in your favor, control statements, calling subroutines and scripting objects.

Part Three, chapters 19-32 is composed of amenities, scripting additions and extensibility, fundamentals of automating applications, debugging, scriptwriting practices, scripting Apple apps, scripting data and databases, automating media workflow, Smile (an integrated AppleScript production environment by Emmanuel Lévy, <http://www.satimage.fr/software>), automating UNIX apps, scheduling scripts, controlling remote apps and the business of automation.

Because the book is so huge (like War&Peace huge!) and covers so much detail, there are bound to be a few errors in this first printing. I hope FriendsOfEd creates an errata page on their website to cover the few typos. If something looks confusing, refer to the healthy Index for help on any topic. Also, don't pay too much attention to the pixelated graphics on the cover page of each chapter. For those into Graphics design, you will see that they obviously need some graphics instruction. (I've done worse.)

AppleScript A Comprehensive Guide, is the accumulated work of over 10 years of experience working with AppleScript - and making good money with it. The links provided above will take you further. I've also included the link to the download section for the over 600K of example scripts used throughout the book in practically all of the chapters.

For digging deeper, go to the two websites listed with the author's names, because they have links to more AppleScripting websites there.

For those coming from the WinTel and LinTel environments, this book may appear to be rather overwhelming. For those well versed in Mac OS X, this book opens some behind-the-curtains areas of Mac OS X you may not have wanted to dig into just yet. Now would be a great time to do so in anticipation of what is coming with Tiger Animator.

## The Art of the Start: The Time-tested, Battle-Hardened Guide for Anyone Starting Anything Reviewed by Robert Pritchett



**Author:** Guy Kawasaki

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

<http://www.guykawasaki.com/books/>

Portfolio

Penguin Group, Incorporated

375 Hudson Street

New York, New York 10014

<http://www.penguinputnam.com/static/html/aboutus/adult/portfolio.html>

**Released:** September 19, 2004

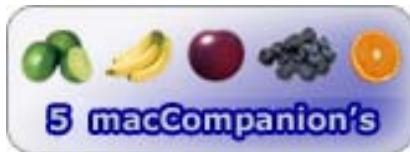
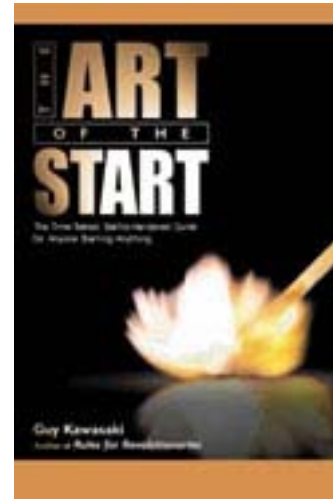
\$27 USD, \$39 CDN, £15 UK

**Pages:** 240

**ISBN:** 1591840562

For Starting Entrepreneurs.

See also <http://www.changethis.com/1.ArtOfTheStart>



**Strengths:** No-nonsense hit-the-ground-running kind of entrepreneurial startup book.

**Weaknesses:** None Found.

*The Art of the Start: The Time-tested, Battle-Hardened Guide for Anyone Starting Anything* by Guy Kawasaki (Rules for Revolutionaries) is a no-nonsense approach for entrepreneur wannabees to begin stepping into funding resources and what is expected to get those resources.

What is the difference between a business plan and a “pitch”? What is the difference between a mission statement and a mantra? Which has more value to the bottom line, ; an engineer or an MBA? Which of the two is a liability and which is money in the bank?

Don't spend years and months burning through seed money “planning for gold” when you could be out there healing the world from untold pain and “panning for gold”.

Guy Kawasaki uses plain English and lots of resource material and personal experiences to bring out a book that cuts both to the core and to the quick.

I've been spending time and money on chasing the grant process for funding *macCompanion*. Here is a book that costs a lot less and delivers a lot more. Each of the relatively short chapters on Causation, Articulation, Activation, Proliferation and Obligation start with GIST - Great Ideas for Starting Things and provides techniques on bootstrapping, branding, networking, recruiting, pitching, rainmaking, and building buzz (we've got to build more buzz!).

Well, here at *macCompanion*, we have done a lot of those things including building buzz. Now we need to work on producing product that people actually want to pay for!

Can we make a mantra that is two to three words long? Can we write deliberately yet “act emergently”? Can we master the art of branding?

One thing Guy Kawasaki did for the cover of his book was to create a contest for covers. Then he chose one and added all the others to the inside of the front and back covers as examples of other ideas for the cover of his book. One won, but all got to be included (some of the others are much more than honorable mentions).

The book is replete with not only what-to-dos, but also, what-not-to-dos. Now we just need to put the processes into practice.

Throughout the book are comparison tables with Guys’ irreverent humor and “stick-it-to-‘emness that is Guy-style to the “T”.

And of course, he takes what he knows about Venture Capitalists (the “other” VC – but sometimes just as crafty and ruthless – not all are “angels”) and weaves that into the storyline as well.

Each chapter ends with Frequently Avoided Questions (FAQs) and references. The book ends with a hand-crafted Index.

Don’t gloss over Guy’s 10-20-30 Rule; 10 slides, 20 minutes, 30 font for presentations.

You learn to swim by swimming and riding a bike by getting on it and falling down a few times. Guy’s book provides water wings and training wheels for the innocents who have a dream to reduce pain and increase joy while trying to make a difference in the world. His last chapter on achieving Menchhood (an ethical, decent and admirable person) puts it all in beautifully proper perspective.

Oh, and don’t try to please the “experts” by jumping through their hoops. What matters is the value of your product – whatever it is – to humanity. Let Guy Kawasaki be your guide.



## Building the Perfect PC Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

QuickTime™ and a  
TIFF (Uncompressed) decompressor  
are needed to see this picture.

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**Booksite:** <http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/buildpc/index.html>

**Released:** August, 2004

\$30 USD, \$44 CND, £21 UK €23

**Pages:** 350

**ISBN:** 0596006632

For computer shade-tree mechanics and tinkerers.



**Strengths:** Great whys and wherefores as to what to consider in building non-Mac computer systems.

**Weaknesses:** Some objectionable language.

*Building the Perfect PC* by Robert Bruce Thompson and Barbara Fritchman Thompson is a great “How-To” book on building a Personal Computer that is the best system that money can buy if you are not into grabbing the first thing you see off the shelf in a “big-box store”. Okay, actually they walk through building 5 great systems: a “mainstream” PC, A small-office/home office (SOHO) server, a gaming machine, a multimedia system and a micro-mini computer. One word: customization. Tim “The Toolman” Taylor would be proud.

Why am I reviewing this book in a Mac-oriented magazine? Well. I spent many, many years installing and maintaining computer systems and a lot of water has gone under the bridge. I’m guessing many of you have “been there, done that” too. I was curious to see what else had occurred in the non-Mac environment besides the *Ultimate PC* book we reviewed last month. Bob and Barb have been doing this kind of work for quite some time now and they know what the “gotchas” are when it comes to putting one of these machines together. If I had stayed in PC Maintenance instead of going Mac, I probably would have written the book, but they did a superb job with this one. All the 4-color eye-candy photos are top-notch. There are plenty of troubleshooting tips and techniques here too. You really have to visit their hardwareguys.com website posted above. They keep the dialog going on the “best” parts and pieces per the 5-system topics they provided in the book.

I appreciate the section on “balanced design” and it gives me a whole new appreciation for the effort that Apple’s engineering team has done in providing the real “perfect” PC and options provided for “customizing” a Mac.

One thing I learned from this book was that the expected dB noise levels for PCs is considerably higher than for Macs. Apple’s latest iMac G5 machines are what, 18dB? The best a PC can do is 20dB with extra sound-absorbing materials, special fans, hard drives, power supplies, etc. After going through this book, my hat is off to Apple for sheer genius in making Apple computers as good as they are.



I just hope Apple has taken some serious thought on making the perfect Home Theater PC, what with competition from Linux-based Personal Video Recorders (PVRs) from MythTV (<http://www.mythtv.org>), and Freevo (<http://freevo.sourceforge.net>) and a host of similar functioning systems for WinTel boxes listed in the book. There is a lot of really cool effort going into turning a computer into a video entertainment center. (Maybe we will see something in 2005 from Apple.)

The LAN Party PC project takes the best of the best and then takes it up a notch. See <http://www.lanparty.com>. Rob Kalish has opened a new shop locally (The Computer Zone) that sells PC gaming machines and he enjoys on-line competition and probably makes most of his money sponsoring LAN Parties. This is a niche market that is going places.

*Building the Perfect PC* is compiled of 7 chapters covering from why even bother building one, prepping, choosing parts to troubleshooting. Then the 5 projects each cover determining functional requirements, hardware design criteria, component considerations, building the systems and final words regarding each project.

I'm still shocked at the server prices that companies used to command for their so-called server systems. The chapter on creating a SOHO server is excellent. I learned that the Mac servers have substandard hard drives as far as RPM is concerned. I'd like to see Apple offer more than one drive type for their server systems. I'd like to see a book on *Building the Perfect Mac*.

I gave this book less than 5 because of some of the language used in the book. Sorry, I'm just that way. I prefer books that do not resort to swearing. [All authors and publishers take note. You cuss, I take off points. Get used to it. Those are my standards and we can both speak and print in a civil tongue.] Then again, maybe it is the nature of the WinTel PC to bring that out in a person anyway.

Bob and Bard do move us away from the razor-edge cases that took a lot of my blood and left scar tissue over the years, to boxes that have been machined so they don't leave blood behind. I hope if you want to "roll your own", that you have an account at Fryes and use the resources offered in the book and on their hardwareguys website.

If you feel like being a computer shade tree mechanic and don't mind diddling with computer boxes that use operating systems rife with worms, trojans, virii, spyware, adware and other Internet nasties, than you will do well buying this book. Just remember, you really do get what you pay for. If you are the least bit interested in modding your PC by making it perform its best, this book will get you there. If you want quality from a non-Mac personal computer (speaking of the hardware), start here.

**Creating a Presentation in PowerPoint: Visual QuickProject Guide (Visual QuickProject Series) Reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad, Edited by Julie M. Willingham**



**Peachpit**

*Essential books for the creative community*

**Author:** Tom Negrino

<http://www.peachpit.com/authors/bio.asp?a=de2deb65-1f07-4eb1-83b0-b64e4ef58bb4>

Peachpit Press

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**Fax:** 510-524-2221

<http://www.peachpit.com>

**Booksite:** <http://www.peachpit.com/title/0321278445>

**Released:** October 6, 2004

\$13 USD, \$19 CND, £10 UK €11

**Pages:** 160

**ISBN:** 0321278445

**Experience Needed/Audience:** All users new to PowerPoint or those who need a refresher to enhance their presentations.



**Creating a Presentation  
in PowerPoint**



**Strengths:** The book "steps readers through on a single, basic presentation, showing them the quickest, easiest, most effective way to communicate their ideas."

**Weaknesses:** Tom Negrino pays insufficient space to discussing the importance of style in creating an effective presentation.

**Book Overview** [from the publisher's web site]

"PowerPoint is nearly ubiquitous in today's world--in business settings, of course, but in schools and universities, clubs and organizations--almost everywhere you turn. It's not a difficult tool to use, but the presentations people create in PowerPoint range widely in quality--dazzling or dull, enlivening or enervating. Now, to help users deliver high-quality presentations, even when they're short on time, is this smart, concise guide designed to take them from standing start to stellar finish on their first presentations. Rather than cover every-last option PowerPoint offers, author Tom Negrino steps readers through on a single, basic presentation, showing them the quickest, easiest, most effective way to communicate their ideas. Each short lesson builds a component of a basic presentation, from creating slides, formatting charts and tables, incorporating sound and video, creating transitions, and adding a bit of polish to their debut presentations."

I agree.

**Introduction**

Although I've prepared presentations for a small and intimate audience as well as for national or regional meetings, I've never felt comfortable with PowerPoint. Perhaps it's because I need to use the software only once or thrice a year. Or is it because, for the most part, because my presentation needs are simple and can be satisfied using MS Word outline view? Anyway, having neglected learning about PowerPoint, I consider myself a newbie. So I found this book a valuable aid in organizing my head when creating a new presentation. I found the reader (user) friendly, step-by-step instructions and large, full-color screen shots in this book made getting started in PowerPoint a low stress task.

**The Book Itself:**

"This to-the-point volume packs a big punch when it comes to getting users up and running fast on their very first PowerPoint presentations!

- With an estimated 400,000 users, PowerPoint is a key component of just about any business user's toolbox.

- New Visual QuickProject series provides the ideal jumping-off point for further exploration--some readers will never need more!
- Low price and razor-sharp focus make this project-based guide the perfect way for users to get their feet wet fast with PowerPoint!" [From Pearson Books, <http://www.pearson.ch/default.aspx?pageid=32>]

A quick look at the chapters covered gives you an idea of the simple depth of this book. It's chapter list: *Introduction; Explore PowerPoint; Write Your Presentation; Gather Image and Sound Files; Pick A Design; Work With Text; Illustrate Your Presentation; Make It Move; Prepare To Present; Deliver Your Presentation; Present Everywhere; Index*. As usual, I only skimmed the information on sound files and on using video clips, but if you are so inclined, an introduction to using such material in your presentation appears to be clearly explained.

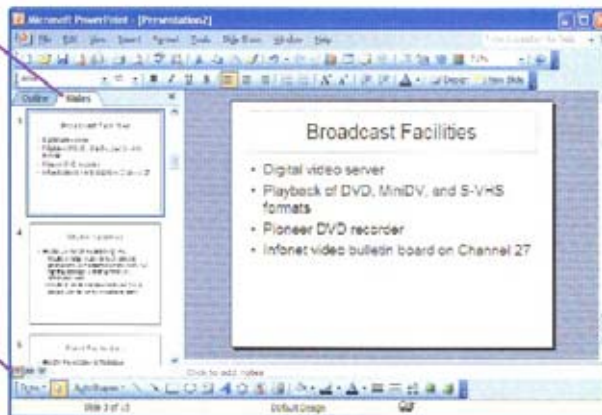
I've illustrated one page below so you can all see an example of how clearly the book is illustrated and written. However, if you've done more than three or four PowerPoint presentations on your own, this book won't add much to your understanding. It's not meant to be a reference guide, nor is it meant to give you the "whys" or a lot of detail. The target audience is someone who wants to get something done quickly without getting bogged down in all the minutiae, and it well meets my expectation for that task.

# review your slides

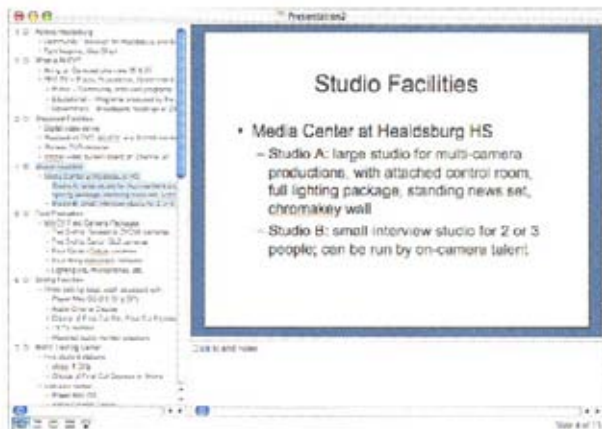
For the first time, we're going to look at material on the slides, rather than in the outline, with an eye to deciding where we want to add images or sounds. You'll need a notepad or scratch paper to take notes as you browse the slides.

On Windows, click the Slides tab, and if needed, drag the border between the Normal View pane and the Slide pane to make the slide thumbnails easier to read.

Click the Normal View button at the bottom of the PowerPoint window, or choose View > Normal.



On Mac, you'll use the Normal View as is, working with the Outline and Slide panes.



24

gather image and sound files

## Information Provided is Easy to Read and Understand

From my perspective, since I always get very tied up in the contents and software use technical details, I found the "must read" chapter (Chapter 8, *Prepare to Present*) a good reminder that my presentations are for my audience and not just to make me proud. Although the chapter's material was not new to me, I all too often get too busy to:

- Get colleague review(s).
- Rehearse my presentation.
- Create speaker notes (cheat sheets).
- Rehearse my show from ad hoc introductions to final acknowledgements.
- Work out answers to likely questions (with a colleague) to add them to your speaker notes
- Create backup slides to use when answering questions.
- Rehearse my presentation.

## Major discomforts

Style Appeared Not to be a Concern — As a student of Robin Williams (or at least of her books), I have major issue with the book in that it does NOT explicitly discuss style considerations. Indeed, the illustration of a slide with a variegated red background with white letters (Chapter 2, page 13), a slide illegible when projected, demonstrates the author's apparent lack of concern with style issues in developing attractive presentations. I would have liked some simple style guides about overdoing font styles, guidance on header vs. body text, and, of course, following the KISS rule when placing graphics—unless you're doing a slide show of your photograph collection. Of major importance to your viewers is also the rule developed for viewgraphs: If you can't read all the words in a view graph (substitute computer screen) from six feet away, your slide is way too busy. (In my youth, I taught persuasive presentation, and since growing up has been continuously victimized by bad slides at meetings.)

Thomas Duff also raised this point in a review on Duffbert's Random Musings

[<http://hostit1.connectria.com/twduff/home.nsf/plinks/TDUF-66B2VL>]

" My only real issue with the book is that it doesn't talk much about style considerations. When a new person is shown how to make the text dance and shimmer, they tend to think all their slides should do that. But just because you can, doesn't mean you should. I would have liked to have seen a bit of coverage of basic design concepts to prevent new users from going wild with all the features."

The Number of Slides You Need — A relative overall approach to presentations would be acknowledging that the slides for your main presentation, not your backup information, should be presented at no more than one slide a minute. If you talk fast (I'm a New Yorker), you can allow 45 seconds per slide, but count all the slides, including those for topic transition and your original title slide.

## Macintosh Support —

- This is supposed to be an ecumenical book, aimed at both Macintosh and PC users. Somewhere around the middle of the book, that author, who has written excellent Mac-centric books, forgot the Macintosh-related illustrations (e.g., page 51-55). But the Windows images are easy to follow and, with few exceptions the processes described work on a Macintosh
- There are no examples of the way to add diagrams (organization charts) to a Macintosh presentation, since Microsoft has omitted this feature from PowerPoint X and 2004. I get around this limitation by using *OmniGraffle* by the Omni Group to create my diagram, and then export it into any standard graphics format. That image can be placed into a PowerPoint slide. A bit roundabout, but *OmniGraffle* and its Pro version are great tools. <http://www.omnigroup.com/applications/omnigraffle/beta/>

An Open Question — The author notes that in PowerPoint for the Macintosh, you can't create links to backup slides (page 58). I haven't been able to disprove this statement, but I am relatively sure that I've seen presentations created on a Macintosh that had backup materials hot-linked (hyperlinked) to specific spots in the presentation. That feature is especially useful when responding to questions, or requests by the audience for more information. You don't make backup slides? —Shame on you!

Errata — On page 51, Chapter 5, the illustration of the *Macintosh Formatting Palette* defines the sub- and superscript icons as being used to make text either smaller or large – Tom, it ain't at all so.

About the Author—Macintosh expert Tom Negrino is a contributing editor to *Macworld* magazine as well as the author of numerous books on software and technology. In some of his other books, he has focused on JavaScript, Microsoft Office for the Macintosh, Quicken, Keynote, and Macromedia books. He is also a consummate presenter, frequently teaching and speaking at industry trade shows and conferences.

## In Closing

If you're new to creating PowerPoint presentations and need something to help you talk through your first one, try the book *Creating a Presentation in PowerPoint* by Tom Negrino. If you need to create a PowerPoint presentation, don't feel disheartened or depressed. Buy the book! At a \$12.99 list price, it's cheap, and the applause you get when you and your presentation connect with your audience is a great big high! By concentrating on a single, simple PowerPoint presentation, rather than exploring every last feature, Tom Negrino takes you from start to finish on your first PowerPoint presentation. This is an excellent book, despite my gripes, and is worthy of **4.5 macCs**.





## Creating Résumés, Letters, Business Cards, and Flyers in Word: A Visual QuickProject Guide Reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad



**Author:** Maria Langer

<http://www.peachpit.com/authors/bio.asp?a=9fd68625-8109-4abe-9f5e-1dc087264408>

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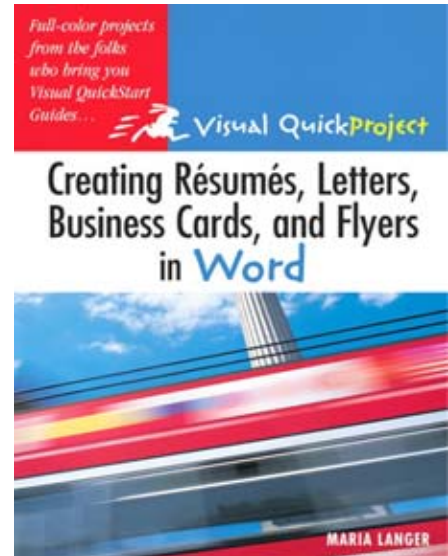
**Released:** September 4, 2004

\$13 USD, \$19 CDN, £10 UK €11

**Pages:** 143

**ISBN:** 0321247515

**Experience Needed/Audience**— Beginning and intermediate level users of MS Word



**Strengths:** This Visual QuickProject Guide uses big, color illustrations coupled with clear, concise step-by-step instructions to show you how to complete a few specific projects in a matter of hours.

**Weaknesses:** Almost none, and none are serious or off-putting. I would have welcomed a stronger statement in the book that those who still prefer MS Word X can indeed easily use it.

### Book Publishers Overview

"You've got Microsoft Word, the powerful, top-selling word processing program. And you've got ideas for promoting yourself and/or your business. What you don't have is the know-how to use Word to create the custom documents you envision.

"Here to help you use Word to quickly create professional-looking documents is this slim, focused volume by Word expert, Maria Langer. Rather than cover every last feature and option, she leads you along the quickest, easiest route to creating the documents you'll use most to make yourself--and your business--shine. On these pages, you'll find large, colorful screen shots and clear, step-by-step instructions for creating a letterhead template, business cards, flyers, envelopes, and return address labels. As you follow along, using your own content to complete each project component, you'll learn how to enter and format text, insert and position graphics, add page borders, and use Word's built-in envelope and label tools. Best of all, you'll have the key documents you need to sell yourself or get your business off and running!"

### Background

Chances are, if you've used a computer for anything besides sending email or surfing the Web, you've used Microsoft Word -- it's that ubiquitous. It's far less likely, however, that you've used it to its full advantage, employing not just its powerful word processing capabilities but its Web authoring, drawing, graphics, and proofing tools as well as its skintight integration with the rest of the Office 2004 software suite. Maria Langer's guide shows you how! Best-selling author Maria Langer explores Word 2004's key features and techniques in the way you learn them best: through simple step-by-step instructions peppered with plenty of screen shots and loads of time-saving tips. The book begins with the basics and then moves on to more advanced techniques like inserting objects and multimedia events, creating outlines, and publishing Web pages. Throughout, you'll find coverage of Word 2004's

many new features as well, including the Notebook Layout View. For those who still, like me, still use MS Word X, never fear — 95% of what Maria present works for us.

The book is written to accommodate both Macintosh and Window users, but unlike many such software, project or quick start guides; Ms. Langer does not abandon the Macintosh midway in her book.

### **Introduction**

You've got your office, you've got the ideas -- all the raw materials to make your newborn business or volunteer organization a success. What you may not have yet is a professional identity to present your venue to the world-or a lot of time to produce it. Maria Langer's book is here to help you use Microsoft Word to quickly create a business look is this slim, focused volume by a MS Word (MSW) expert. Rather than cover every last feature and option in this well focused and clearly illustrated Quick Project Guide [QPG], Maria leads you along the quickest, easiest route to creating each component of a business or other enterprise ID -- from adding graphics to a business card to creating a simple, elegant layout--and presents it through large, colorful screen shots and clear, step-by-step instructions.

Throughout the book, you'll learn by doing, using your own content to complete your project. By the time you're finished, you'll have used aligned and styled text; created layouts for a business card, newsletter, and flyer; produced form letters with mail merge capability; and printed matching labels and envelopes. In short, you'll be in business! And to add to the richness of this book, Ms. Langer has posted on her website, downloadable sample files that were used in this book at <http://www.langerbooks.com/wordquickproject/>. The site also contains articles about getting the most out of MS Word links to other MS Word online resources. Now why don't other authors get with the program?

### **The Book Itself**

Now, I'm sure you'd rather not have me go through the table of contents of this fine book, suffice it to say that all the subjects and more identified in the title are discussed with excellent illustrations and great textual description — in living color! I would like to note that each of the nine chapters has a fact-filled section called "extra bits" which contain additional tips and shortcuts that would enrich the reader's experience when creating the documents for your organization, bits that Ms. Langer notes "are not absolutely necessary". Fronted by a focused introduction to Microsoft Word, "Meet Microsoft Word" and ending in an excellent Index, this is a reader's, easy to read and use, book.

But just for fun, I'll catalog all the nifty things, I, a long-time Word User, leaned from the author.

**Triple-Clicking to select a full paragraph:** I didn't know what the "format painter" button in my toolbar did. Wow, it can allow you to manipulate or duplicate the format of the pasted material. [Pages 72-74]. This is faster than the tedious methods I've previously used in my documents.

**Using the document justification feature to deal with the contents of a short letter:** By justifying the page content, you avoid clumping all of the page contents on the top half pf your doc document page. [[See Page 78.]

### **Minor Discomforts**

Customizing MS Word (Macintosh) — Although outside of the scope of the lessons, Maria could have mentioned that many of the tools in MS Word {Mac} can be added directly to the tool bar by using MSW's customize feature. [Tools> Customize > Format] and adding the desired items to either an existing toolbar or creating a new one for such use.

Hyperlinks — Macintosh users would have found it helpful had it been noted [Page 43] that 'Insert > Hyperlink' [command-K] can be used to create or disconnect hyperlinks — only the PC instructions were provided.

Two Page Stationary — When creating letterhead stationary [templates], it would have been of major help in the book had gone one step further to show users how to create a second page whose header only contained the business name. After all, there are times when more than one page is needed and the full headers on follow-on pages waste space. [See Page 3.]

Business Card, Am I Confused? - On page 91, duplicating the card, the author tells reader to paste the card contents in each of the business card template form. I was under the impression, but have not validated, that MSW can print a full sheet of business cards from the contents of the initial field. Can anyone out there help? I usually create business cards in other more graphically oriented packages such as Business Card Composer at <http://www.belightsoft.com/products>.

Downloading the Lesson Templates — In Ms. Langer's webpage, the items that were actual MS Word documents {.doc}



downloaded cleanly by simply clicking on them. However, in Safari, when I double clicked both the image files and the template file provided, I got gibberish. Therefore, I did have to play around a little bit when I attempted to download the template file [Letterhead.dot] and the Logo Image [flyingm.tiff] from Ms. Langer's website. For the former, by holding down the option key, I could then download a file called Letterhead.html, which when opened could be saved in MSW template format. [I had to rescue it from the My Templates folder in the Templates folder in Office System Applications folder. A comparable action for the image file gave me a flyingm.html file that I converted by changing the extension from html to tiff. I also found that I could have saved time by changing the html extension to .dot, so I learned a bit more about extension fussing.

### **About the Author**

**Maria Langer** has written more than 20 computer books. She also writes for *MacWEEK*, *MacAddict*, *NetProfessional*, *FileMaker Pro Advisor*, and *Computer User*. She is a consultant, Webmaster, computer trainer, and frequent speaker at Macworld Expo. I have had the pleasure of reviewing other books by Ms. Langer for *macCompanion*, and continue to find comfort in her clear writing style, clarity of thought and insightful asides. Check out her other books.

### **In Closing**

This Visual QuickProject Guide, which I rate **5.0 macCs**, offers a unique and exceptionally simple way to learn about Creating Résumés, Letters, Business Cards, and Flyers in Word. The Visual QuickProject Guide uses big, color illustrations coupled with clear, concise step-by-step instructions to show you how to complete a few specific projects MS Word in a matter of hours. I especially found Chapter 7, Produce a Flyer useful, since I've always done flyers the hard way... no I'm not telling! This is a wonderful, easy to read and use book and should be a part of very MS Word user's library. My only significant fault with the volume is that it does so good a job, that you soon outgrow it, so pass it on to a friend.

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

**Apple Training Series: Desktop and Portables: A Guide to Supporting, Servicing and Troubleshooting Apple Computers** Reviewed by Robert Pritchett



**Peachpit**

*Essential books for the creative community*

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<http://www.peachpit.com/ats.desktop>

**Released:** June 18, 2004

\$50 USD, \$72 CND, £38 UK €41 with CD-ROM

**Pages:** 864

**ISBN:** 0321256115

Beginner - Intermediate



**Desktop and Portable Systems**

A Guide to Supporting, Servicing, and Troubleshooting Apple Computers

CD-ROM included



**Strengths:** It is part of the Apple Training Series

**Weaknesses:** None found.

Desktop and Portables: A Guide to Supporting, Servicing and Troubleshooting Apple Computers by Wendy Katz as editor and a host of others, has created a masterpiece book on handling iMacs (slot loading), eMacs, iBooks and PowerBooks. There are 31 lessons on tools and practices, hardware and technologies, desktops and portables.

The book is full of proper practices on priming Apple's best desktops and portables. This is a must-have for anyone considering also getting the \$300 AppleCare Technical Training Kit or in becoming an AppleCare Service Desktop or Portable Technician.

Each lesson ends with questions geared towards passing the certification exams. Don't worry, if you ever had to slog through expensive Microsoft training and silly questions designed to make you fail, this is a piece of cake. Obviously Apple wants you to succeed! If you are successful, your customers will be fully satisfied. What you read is what you get and if you have half a brain and can remember what is in the step-by-step well-illustrated processes, you should have no problem whatsoever getting through the exam process. After all, you have a passion for the product, right?

The hidden and welcome surprise is that the book comes with a CD that has some of the diagnostic tools and documentation for repairing and maintaining iMacs, eMacs, iBooks and PowerBooks. Those would be the Apple Hardware Tests (AHT) MacTest Pro (MTP) and Apple Service Diagnostic (ASD) as sample tests for the exercises in the book.

Chapter 3 teaches troubleshooting theory. If you can follow the format, you can fix anything Apple and may even assist with cross-learning in troubleshooting techniques for other platforms as well.

Many of us didn't have this wealth of resources at our fingertips like there is now. You do. Don't waste it. May you always be a "Maytag Repairman" when it comes to keeping Macs healthy and productive!

## Garageband: The Missing Manual Reviewed by Dr. Eric Flescher



**Author:** David Pogue

<http://www.oreillynet.com/cs/catalog/view/au/347>

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

**Booksite:** <http://www.oreilly.com/catalog/garageband/index.html>

**Released:** June 2004

**Pages:** 304

\$20 USD, \$29 CND, £14 UK, €

**ISBN:** 0596006950



**Strengths:** Book offers a wealth of resources, ideas, hints and much more. Book displays additional resources on website not on CD. Information for many parts of using Garageband are well done in this book. Good price for the wealth of information.

**Weaknesses:** Definitely not a book for those who want to learn music in a structured play by play manner. Book is possibly better for intermediate and advanced user. Keyboard displays are in Black and white, which makes locating some of the keys and additional information a little hard to find.

Garageband® is the newest member of the iLife® family. This software reminds me of an innovative computer program I used in the 1990s, with the Apple IIGS, called Color Music. It used colors; different instruments and you could jam, change instruments and more. Comparing it to Garageband, Garageband is more versatile, powerful and flexible. The key is, could I learn how to play music with this program?

David Pogue, the author, is a computer columnist for the New York Times and has written several books with this Missing Manual Series. A big premise to this book and the author's, is that Garageband is now a tool for the masses in terms of music creation. An interesting note by the author that I did not know is the underlying software architecture for Garageband, was acquired by Apple from a \$1,000 professional recording program called Logic, which was bought in 2002. But now that I have the book and the software, could I play some music?

This 254-page book attempts to make music creation better by offering more information, ideas and tutorial type activities to learn more about Garageband. Version 1.1 is needed for this book and the relevant information. The main aim of these book acts to supplement the Garageband manual through the use of shortcuts, ways to work beyond information and uncovering important information possibly you might not uncover without this book. The book included additional files, news, articles and updates. The book does not come with a resource CD, but its website access area has material that will be helpful. The price for this book is good for those who want to try Garageband. It has a lot of helpful ideas and information, but you might have a little trouble hunting for creating music you want in the beginning. The title tabs on the top of the pages along with the fine index help locate that which you might want to find.

I dabbled with Garageband and music before I starting using this book and previewing it. I was introduced to the program at a computer workshop and by looking through other books. Being a music novice, I found a more structured tutorial a better way to start learning about the program. This worked well for me to start really working with Garageband after I had worked with the program during a computer workshop a few months before. A more grounded and tutorial was good for me in this case as I got a better grounding in starting out with the program. This approach allowed my learning more about music with Garageband and it's tools versus learning about the Garageband's tools and trying to make music with Garageband. Starting the building of some music in this way was the best for me. Mind you not the greatest piece of music ever but music that I liked, that I created and that I would be able to use later with iPhoto, iDVD and iMovie. The Manual approach might not have gotten me as far in the amount of time I needed. So I began to look at this book, as a way to supplement what I had already learned and could help me improve my novice Garageband knowledge.

There are two types of music. There is digital audio, which is sound you can record with microphone, and the second is the Midi Data keyboard oriented music.

In Part One of the book, Building the hit, covers the areas of loops, recording from a MIDI music. This section covers the three main song construction tools, loops, recording from a MIDI. Structured plays by play tutorial on how to produce a musical piece. The way this chapter works involves outlining the parts of Garageband and using the many tools and parts of Garageband.

The first chapter, Setting up Garageband, highlights the requirements for the computer system. Main requirements are a 600 MHz or faster Macintosh, OSX 10.2.6 or later with Panther being better. Also needed is at least 256, memory, QuickTime 6. 5.1 or better, 1024 by 768 pixels resolution on your screen, two-gig space on your hard drive with music equipment optional. Of course you need Garageband but if you don't have it already, getting it from iLife or from Apple.

The book uses nicely illustrated screen shots. However these are in black and white instead of color. One of the really beautiful things about Garageband is the variety of colors with the tools, instruments, and other parts. While the information highlights some of the colorful tools and what to do (like the yellow stripe looped region on page 14 using a lined pointer), it is little difficult to know what actually goes on without the color. Close inspection of the colored parts of Garageband might clear up any difficulty in knowing what to do regarding these illustrations. I found that I missed the color when viewing the book's sections. But the price is reasonable so you will find with a little time, it is necessary but in this case not needed.

Chapter 2, playing with the music and the loops, really starts with this chapter. Here you learn how to start music "project," learn how to use the loop browser, placing a loop and working with more loops.

Chapter 3, this chapter, "Regions," was a good one for understanding how to manipulate the music in different ways especially dealing with the music blocks in the timeline. This area of the book was most helpful in learning how to navigate and use the regions in different ways beyond music I had already learned.

Chapter 4, Software instruments, involved using online synthesizer instruments or obtaining an actual external MIDI musical instrument. However my music knowledge I felt, I would stick with the other ways to use music. If you just want to stick with the computer keyboard and loops, you will skip this section.

The track editing in Chapter 5 are interesting as with this panel editing with the midi performance is possible. Changing notes, changing the beats and other editing possibilities abound. Those who might know more about musical may be able to do a better job with this chapter. This chapter is good for actually more in depth music construction but if you are starting out you might skip this chapter for possibly later use in the future.

Garageband also acts like an alive audio recording studio. In Chapter 6, this takes an extra step by using a microphone and using and mixing tracks. You can prepare new ways to record music and audio recordings while Chapter 7, effects can be applied to real and software instruments.

Part Two of the book, Beyond Garageband, takes your music even further. After you record a song, this section covers exporting to iTunes burning to CD, posting online and using with online music for iMovie®, iPhoto® and iDVD® along with troubleshooting ideas and other ways of making you're your song experiences better.

Mixing and publishing, Chapter 8 allows you to mix and adjust tracks, master the tracks and publish to iTunes, Converting to mp3, AAC WAV, Apple lossless is also outlined quite well. Burning Garageband CDs and working with iMovie, iPhoto and iDVD provides much assistance in this section.

With Chapter 9, here you can learn to transfer your loops to another drive, making your own loops and using the additional software called SoundFonts. The iSight microphone/video instrument can also be used.

Chapter 10 focus upon modifying what you have, converting loops and reducing tracks and different ways to maximize the performance of this powerful software.

Chapter 11 lists a host of troubleshooting tips and tricks are here.

Chapter 12 includes importing midi files, importing from the iTunes music store, and building your own drum loops. And finding Garageband resources online are covered here.

The three appendices include more specific information. Appendix A deals with the Garageband music crash course (measures, time signatures, note values, keys and tempo). Appendix B, Garageband Menu by Menu, is a nice section that focuses on the various menus (file, edit, track, control, window, help). Appendix C illustrated the keyboard shortcuts that are ways to find and make your music more effective and quickly.

This book serves as a supplement to the user manual. This manual may be a good one for anyone, but probably more so for those who like a less structured approach to musical creation with Garageband. As with many manuals, one may not necessarily know how to use the tools to learn from the start, which is why users start with the manual and in some cases, need more assistance. For the most part, a novice user might be better served with a different book to start out with. Intermediate and Advanced users of the program will find this manual quite useful. I was better served having had a little assistance during a workshop with Garageband, working with the software, and using others books before I found this book.

This book has a lot to offer, but it might depend when you decide to work with Garageband I think whether you want to use this book depends on where you want to start. You might be more able to learn more by starting out with Garageband using this book but in my case, I felt more comfortable “jumping” into this book and learning “more” about Garageband after I had some conceptual knowledge previously. Having begun my music making with Garageband beforehand, I was better prepared to try music with this book after I started out and not before I was introduced to this book. I feel this book is best to complement Garageband after you get started.

The Missing offers a lot, but you will have to pick and choose how to use the book and Garageband. If you already know much about music you possibly can draw the parts of the book to use music. For some like me, not so musically inclined, I might not get to some chapters or even at all in the future. But there are chapters that are most helpful. This book is a valuable resource as I learn more about Garageband. It arrived for me at a time that I needed to learn with Garageband. If the time is right for you, you will also find this *Garageband: The Missing Manual* a valuable resource.



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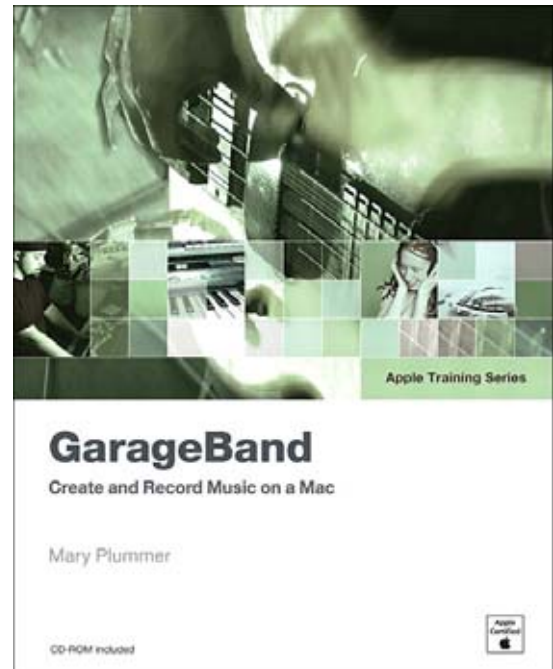
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**ISBN:** 0-321-26876-8



**Strengths:** Test and lessons make it easy to use even for a music novice. Colorful screen shots and illustrations help the visualization and reading of the lessons most helpful. The style of the lessons and the rest of the text are oriented in a teacher/student-oriented style as opposed to using a piece of software. This is very helpful, especially for those who are musically challenged and novice users. Well done CD, great lesson format and great instructional practice. Novice, intermediate and advanced users will find all or parts of the book helpful.

**Weaknesses:** The chapter titles are listed at the top. However the number of the chapter was not. This made it difficult to find the positions of some of the chapter pages by thumbing through the tops of the pages instead of working with the outline pages.

Music-savvy Macintosh users have been using iTunes® for managing and playing their MP3 and AAC-formatted music for quite a while. Now Apple's *Garageband*® software has arrived as the newest member of the iLife® family. Garageband, a versatile, powerful and flexible program is a music creation program for the Macintosh® user, even those like myself who are not musically inclined.

At first glance, this software reminded me of an innovative computer program I used called Color Music, with the Apple IIGS Music, in the 1990s. It was a very innovative program with colors instead of notes and allowed for free “jamming” with your chosen instrument(s) with other songs. But unlike my son and daughter, I don't have an “ear” for music. That was the limit of my music playing abilities until now. I could “jam” with Color Music but the key was whether I could use Garageband to make my own music. While I started on my own at a computer workshop, I found *Apple Training Series: GarageBand*, helpful and decided that the program could take me further.

Before I started reviewing this book, I had to find some objectives for myself. I needed to think about a way for determining how well I could actually use this book and the software. I wanted to find out if the book helped do the following with the software: (1) Would this book help me learn how to use most of the software?; (2) Would this book assist me with creating some of my own “beautiful music?”; (3) Would I be able to understand more of the intermediate and/or advanced tasks?



The author, Mary Plummer, is a professional musician, composer, and video editor. She has edited and scored music videos, independent feature films and documentaries. She has her own music publishing company and is an Apple certified trainer. Not only does she know her work well, she has done a nice job of integrating the software and how to create music by using the lessons she has designed.

The 415-page book is well-written and comprehensive. It comes with a CD-ROM with media files and 20 hours worth of training lessons focusing with step-by-step practical music projects. Also included are lesson goals and estimated times of completing the instructions and lesson along with chapter reviews. Summaries of what was learned are also provided. This helps teach as an instructor might, not as a software designer. Many might find this strategy most helpful, as I found in several sections particularly, as I'm learning as a student learning music, not learning a piece of software. This integration is well done, but more assistance helps as well.

"Getting Started," begins the priorities that are needed for the system. Before one starts with Garageband, one needs to know the needs of the software system that is a little more intensive than the other iLife software requirements. Requirements are; 10.2.6 or later, installed on a Macintosh with at least 600 MHz G3 processor. Also required are; at least 256 Megabytes RAM (memory) and 2.5 GB of free disk space to install Garageband. It is strongly recommended that with software instruments, a G4 or better be employed and have a screen resolution of 10-24 by 768 pixels or more.

The screen shots and illustrated layouts are in color in the book. These colorful, illustrated screen shots really help in locating, pointing out and understanding the use of the various parts of the Garageband software, which initially can be overwhelming. Colors do help in this case to locate what you want to know instead of the normal black and white illustrations.

In addition, there is a lot of white space among the page lines, illustrations and instructions so the text gives a very warm and helpful feeling, especially to the musically challenged user. The lessons have helpful titles and each subsection has numbers, which helps spread apart the information. This is helpful to insure that you are learning at your own pace instead of feeling that you need to rush to understand the material at the pace of the author. I found this refreshing, since I am a teacher myself. Also helpful was the way that the author clarified the terms and necessary song-laden information that made the text easy to understand.

Learning about the interface and working with the Timeline is included in the first two chapters. Garageband is made for those who are frustrated with music and want an easy way to turn their music into a music studio. These two chapters begin leading to a rather simple way of doing music, even for the musically challenged.

Lesson 1, "Working with the Interface," helps the user explore the Garageband windows. Learning the ways to try the music loops in the part of the interface called the Timeline also starts here. The illustrations also include labeled-pointers, which identify icons and parts of the screen shots that are used to accomplish a number of the tasks (this is useful for pointing out more specific parts of the screen shots instead of hunting for these specific command parts of the interface).

Musical pieces have different tracks, each usually with a different instrument, rhythm etc. Exploring the track editor and working with the tracks even further led me to understand the Regions. Within the tracks, these represented different duration of the songs or represent musical parts played by different instruments at different times in the song.



When I started using the first lesson on the CD, the multicolored panes popped on to the screen. At first, it seems there was an error accessing one of the first lessons. Since that error did not disappear, I started with another lesson and that worked fine. This gave me a better understanding of using the different instruments in a sample song. Different junctures of the regions, each with different colors representing different tempos and duration were aligned in the total song within the regions and were easily seen. Jumping a little ahead, I used a few loops and made a song with drums by myself although not as precise as the lesson one song. But it was mine and making my own is the focus that I wanted to learn how to do.

Lesson 2 working with arranging, adding and deleting Tracks in the timeline, helped the initial stages of trying to making more in-depth musical creations. I dabbled with the other lesson on the CD and on my own. Of course, as a novice computer musician, I had a long way to go, but at least I was starting to grasp an understanding of using Garageband by trying music loops. I also began to understand the different parts of the musical apparatus regions. I was mainly interested in just making some music on my own and integrating loops for possible use with movie and iDVD productions, and so at this point, I felt I had a good start.

The second section of the book, focuses upon using the different types of Garageband musical regions, including the software instruments, real instruments and Apple loops, Lesson 3, "Working Software Instruments" deals with working drums, changing tempo and working with the virtual instruments that can be used with Garageband. Being new at computer music, I did not do anything with this section, but other users will find it most helpful. I also passed on using Lesson 4, "Working With Real Instruments" and connecting with instruments works if you have the extra keyboard hardware. I didn't, so I really skipped that chapter.



Lesson 5, “Working With Apple Loops,” is where much of the fun can start for anyone, but particularly a novice. By clicking upon the loop browser button (looks like “eye with a ball in center,” brings down a display of a number of instruments and musical options. There are 1000 pre-recorded, royalty free loops. Music can be built from scratch, but most will want with some of these loops and try to mix and match their own. The lessons let us try several possibilities and then it is easy to try our own. I made a small song loop called Crunchy guitar by meshing several loops and trying different ones. I began to see musical possibilities.

The last section, “Arranging With Garageband,” includes arranging, mixing and exporting a final piece, allowing for more flexibility. With Lesson 6, “Arranging Music With Garageband” helps extend the use of the loops and more while Lesson 7 “Works With Mixing (music) And Effects,” allows the user to go even further.

Lesson 8, “Sharing Your Finished Songs,” includes exporting in several ways to iTunes and is a section that most will want to use. Using your iTunes’s playlist with iLife can help. Also, most songs or part or an entire part of the playlist can be used in iPhoto® slideshows. For iMovie® and iDVD®, AIFF and MP3 format can be integrated. This chapter highlights information that really eases the work with iDVD and iMovie. While at this time, I did not use my created music integrate with iLife or this chapter, but I could see that I would soon in the future. Using some videos and slide shows that could enrich my future iLife productions was very tempting now.

Lesson 9, named “Advanced Garageband Tips And Techniques,” helps with mixing down tracks to iTunes, reusing your real instruments recordings, adding loops to Garageband, loops browser and to other applications. There is also a way to work with multiple control points in the Timeline, searching for loops by scale and more. At this time, I found most of this beyond my scope to attempt, but someday I might be able to use parts of it. Others who are musically inclined might find this chapter of more use.

## Appendices

Appendix A, Exploring the Garageband Jam Pack Expansion is full of tips and techniques that are used for working with the additional Jam Pack expansion pack (this addition has 2,000 more Apple loops in a variety of instruments, 100 additional audio effects, 100 added Garageband software instruments and 15 new guitar amp settings. I had my hands full with the materials already provided. But this addition set of resources may be good for more advanced users who need more musical versatility.

Appendix B included working with other Apple professional products such as DVD Studio™, Shake™ 3, Final Cut Pro® 4, Logic® Platinum 6, which are for high end user and users of the higher end of the professional software.

The book helped me, and so my three goals/objectives were realized. This book is a pleasure to read even for a computer music novice person like myself. The lesson format, the CD and the colorful visual screen shots help make the learning of Garageband a worthwhile endeavor. Being musically challenged, the software and the book definitely helped take me farther, where I could make some music now and make creations better later. The additional information with time, would allow me to port the music to iTunes, iDVD, and use it with iMovie as well.

In time, I can do more with this book and the text has definitely shown me the “musical way” with the software. And that is saying much for myself. I think there are many people out there who may want to use the software but might find it too complex. I tell them to try it and use this book, with or without all or parts of the CD and/or lessons. Intermediate and advanced users may find all or parts of the book helpful as well. With time, you will create the music you want for different videos, slides and more. Time will tell how far I can advance using the software with the help of the book, iLife software and more.

## Mac OS X Power Hound, Panther Edition: Teach Yourself New Tricks Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

QuickTime™ and a  
TIFF (Uncompressed) decompressor  
are needed to see this picture.

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**ISBN:** 0-596-00818-X



**Strengths:** Takes the best from “Mac OS X Hints” and organizes them into book form. And then adds two great chapters on Macinized Unix.

**Weaknesses:** No wireless coverage.

*Mac OS X Power Hound Panther Edition: Teach Yourself New Tricks* by Rob Griffiths and Kirk McElhearn brings out the best from Rob’s Mac OS X Hints website <http://www.macsoxhints.com>. And put it into book form, organized, indexed and with a great Table of Contents. It is a compilation of at least 3 years worth (650) of hints, tips and tricks on how to best optimize Mac OS X.

Now if you don’t want to dig through years of website stuff out on Rob Griffith’s website, you can get the meat here in this book.

There are 16 Chapters covering customization, manipulating the Finder, Desktop and Dock, managing programs and applications, controlling System Preferences, getting a handle on networking, Email, mastering iTunes, iPhoto4 and other iApps, digging into the Address Book, Calculator, Font Book, Utilities, Image Capture, Keynote, Preview, Printer Setup, Stickies and TextEdit, working with just about every web browser known to Mac OS X, and two chapters on other apps like Acrobat Reader 6, BBEdit, DragThing, Microsoft Office 2004, Photoshop, Quicken, SnapsPro X, other add-ons and finally 2 chapters by Kirk McElhearn on Unix Hints.

This is an “A-Hah!-book”. A Montessori discovery method book. A potpourri of Panther processes and profound invaluable information at your fingertips. This is not a sit-down-and-read book. It is a “Hey, try this!” kind of book.

In the last two chapters, Kirk McElhearn has 91 Unix tricks in one chapter, so by the time you get through it, Unix is no longer so mysterious, and the next chapter has 47 more! (I’m so glad I know him from working with us on our pre-*macCompanion* efforts. He said he was working on a Mac Unix book and I guess this is where much of his expertise has found a home.) I added Kirk’s website above so you can see what else he has been working on lately.

What don’t you know about Mac OS X Panther? You may no doubt find it here.

## Modding Mac OS X: Extreme Makeovers For Your Mac Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

QuickTime™ and a  
TIFF (Uncompressed) decompressor  
are needed to see this picture.

**Author:** Erica Sadun

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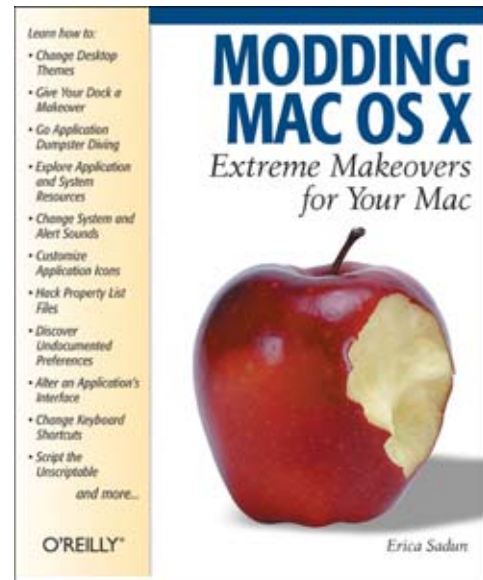
**Pages:** 300

**ISBN:** 0596007094

**Modding Stickies:**

[http://www.macdevcenter.com/pub/a/mac/2004/11/23/stickies\\_1.html](http://www.macdevcenter.com/pub/a/mac/2004/11/23/stickies_1.html)

Novice to Expert.



**Strengths:** Shows how to tweak Mac OS X.

**Weaknesses:** None found.

*Modding Mac OS X: Extreme Makeovers For Your Mac* by Erica Sadun is not a Modding the Macintosh hardware book but rather, a Mac OS X mod learn-by-doing kind of book for those unafraid to swim around and explore the hidden corners in the safe-haven of the Mac OS X pool. Her expert guidance and watchful eye as a lifeguard will keep us from drowning while learning to swim beyond the kiddies-end of the pool.

Interested in getting under the skin of Mac OS X and geeking/hacking it? Erica Sadun comes from the premise that you bought the box and the Operating System. It is yours to do as you wish. So customize the way you interoperate with both the OS and the applications. Take note MicroSofties! Apple empowers you to tweak its crown jewels! “Empower your inner geek.”

There are 10 chapters that cover; changing the look-and-feel of the desktop, screensavers, Dock, Finder, icons, themes and boot panel; learning what is inside application bundles, their structure, analyzing the Resources Folder, playing with plug-ins, property lists understanding localizations and reducing the size of the applications by removing localizations not used; Application” dumpster diving” into Xcode tools, changing sounds and images and playing with String Files; Creating and changing icons and creating a pseudo-application; discovering, managing Preferences and Property Lists; discovering Domains and support files in folders and Libraries; changing Interface elements like window styles, buttons, drawers, adding and changing Objects from NIB files; altering keyboard shortcuts and equivalents and turning them into speakable items; learning basic application scripting and expanding Suite possibilities and updating the Core suite. Each chapter starts with a3 bar graphs on how much time each Mod takes, how difficult they are, what much Geekitude is needed to do the work and a “Chinese take-out equivalent” to determine if you really want to “go there”. Also each chapter ahs a “Bill of materials” list including Mac OS X tools and software, 3<sup>rd</sup>-party software and website links for more information. Each chapter ends with Final Thoughts, summarizing nicely the information just covered.



I particularly enjoyed the sections on *Internationizing Sounds*, *Adding the Exposé Blob* and *Undocumented Preferences*.

Now realize when you upgrade, all this effort tends to go out the window, but it is easy enough to get back into the mods once the upgrade process has been completed. So far, everything in this book looks transferable to the next version(s) that Apple will release. However, I strongly suspect there will be a complete rewrite once Tiger is publicly released.

Meanwhile, why not learn just how applications do their magic? Modding comes into play when you see that it is possible to import external files or change what is there first. Erica Sadun shows how to copy the original, tweak the new files and if you like what you've accomplished, replace the originals with the mods. And before Automator is released with Tiger, learn how to script the unscriptable.

Can the same kinds of things be done with WinTel and LinTel boxen? Yes, but not so cleanly or easily. Apple did a superb job structuring the process for bundling applications so modularization can take place – and thus, so can modding.

And Erica Sadun has done an excellent job showing how Terminal commands can be used without making us feel like unwashed Unix wannabees. If you follow her step-by-step processes, you won't break your Mac. You will however, show that you can swim in the deep end and do some fancy flips from the high dive without belly-flopping.

The book cover shows an apple that has been partially eaten. You won't have to wait an hour to dive into the Mac OS X pool after having taken that bite however. Learn how to swim around in Mac OS X from an expert instructress. Who knows? You might just become an Olympic class swimmer. Begin training now!

## Nessus Network Auditing Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

# SYNGRESS

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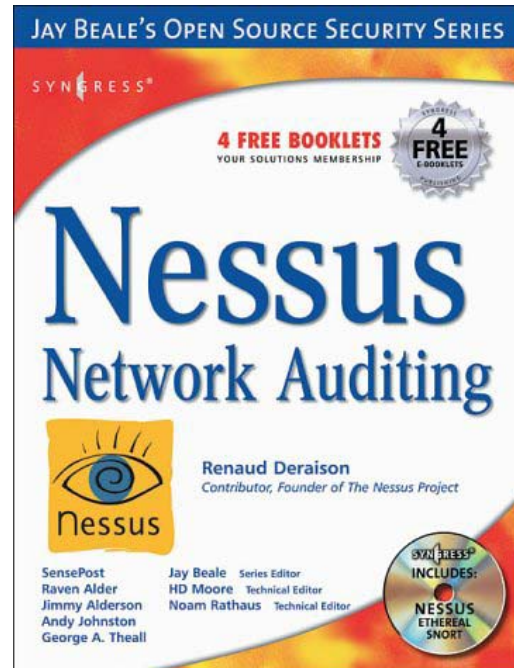
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For Computer Security professionals.



**Strengths:** Great user guide for the Nessus Security Scanner.

**Weaknesses:** No mention of how to use with Mac OS X. CD is WinTel-only. The Syngress website should have a place for adding additional information and errata.

*Nessus Network Auditing* is a book created by a team of security experts that are associated with Nessus at <http://www.nessus.org> (Version 2.2 is now available) and Tenable Security <http://www.tenablesecurity.com/>. Renaud Deraison is the founder and principle contributor to the Nessus Project and owner of Nessus Consulting. Nessus is an Open Source remote security scanner for Unices (more than one Unix) like BSD, Linux, Solaris and there is a version for the WinTel platform as well through Tenable Security known as NeWT (Nessus Windows Technology). Funds to keep Nessus as an Open Source environment is paid for through sales from Tenable Security in the Wintel environment.

Nessus has a number of plug-ins for performing remote security audits and provide reports via ASCII text, HTML, LaTeX or XML formats. What Nessus Network Auditing does is bring together most of the knowledge needed to use Nessus in 12 Chapters and 2 Appendices. These break down into what vulnerability assessment is, what Nessus is and how to install it (with a passing mention on Mac OS X), running scans and interpreting the results, what kinds

of vulnerabilities there are and how to identify false positives, getting into the architectural design concepts of Nessus and its knowledge base, doing enterprise-level scanning and scripting the Nessus Attack Scripting Language (NASL), and the Nessus User Community. The 2 Appendices care the NASL2 reference Manual and utilizing Domain Credentials to enhance Nessus scans.

The CD holds software for Nessus, Ethereal and Snort as well as NeWT, and is not usable on a Mac. There is a lot of interest generated in the Mac OS X community, so perhaps there will be a Mac OS X-friendly CD sometime in the near future.

I did some digging of my own to see how Nessus can be used in a Mac OS X environment and discovered the following:

Mark Dulong has published a way for Nessus to work with Mac OS X 10.3.x with **Nessus on Mac OS X 10.3.x** at <http://homepage.mac.com/duling/halfdozen/Nessus-Howto.html>.

Code511 generated an earlier **Nessus FAQs for Mac OS X** at <http://deepquest.code511.com/main.html>.

Andrea Ghirardini pantherized the Nessus installation process for Mac OS X with a 3-page PDF located at <http://nessus.org/documentation.html>.

Nessus has been in Security Professional's arsenal since 1998. If you do any kind of security support, it behooves you to be using it. The book is essentially the latest User Guide to learning how to scan, what to scan for and how to not impact the networks too much when doing so. Only about a third of the book is on Nessus itself. The rest is on conducting vulnerability assessments.

This provides just one more tool in the security utility belt along with Snort and Ethereal.

**Steal This File Sharing Book: What They Won't Tell You about File Sharing Reviewed by Robert Pritchett**



**NO STARCH PRESS**

**Author:** Wallace Wang

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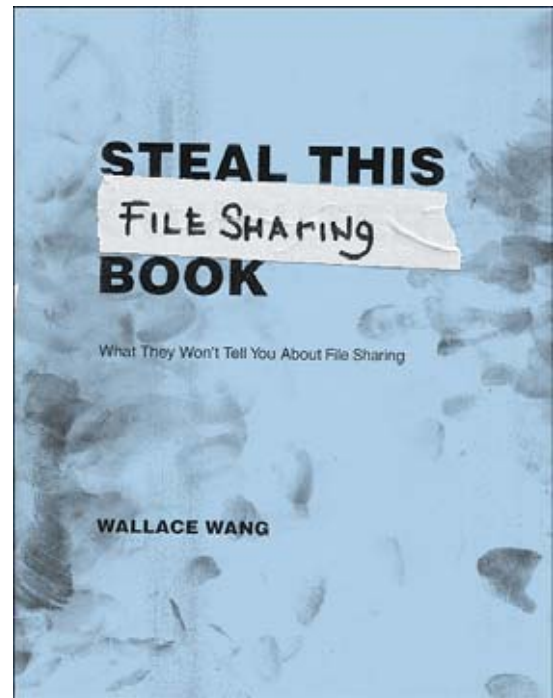
1005 Gravenstein Highway North

Sebastopol, CA 95472 USA

1-707-827-7000 or 1-800-998-9938

**Fax:** 1-707-829-0104

For those wanting to know how to share files.



**Strengths:** Provides a RAR opportunity to learn both sides of the file sharing culture.

**Weaknesses:** Contains some objectionable links and strong language, rating it "R".

*Steal This File Sharing Book* by Wallace Wang is a "dirty" book (notice the inky fingerprints on the front [and back] cover and inkblot page-numbering scheme inside the book). It gives that "underground" feel to the book. And I gave it an "R" for some words that could have been better left out and the section on Porn. Wallace Wang is a humorist and he takes that humor and puts it to good effect here. He provides lots of links to issues related to file sharing.

Information wants to be free, but of course, just about everyone wants to charge a premium for that information. Here is a book that provides a balanced approach to both sides of the information sharing/non-sharing issues.

What are the dangers of using on-line file sharing and what legal obstacles need to be overcome? Can we practice "safe" file sharing without getting deluged by Internet nasties and lawsuits? Do you want to know how to get your hands dirty by sharing secrets and banned information? Do you want to see how the battle is raging between unlawful information pirates and the law?

Are you remotely interested in BitTorrent, FastTrack, Gnutella, Instant Messaging, ICQ, IRC, and Newsgroup film, music and video file sharing using RAR?

How about learning how to secure your own files?

Here is the 17-chapter list in 3 Parts of Learning about File Sharing, Stealing Files and The Future: Finding The Files; The Peer-To-Peer File Sharing Networks; Navigating Newsgroups; Instant Messaging and Online Chat Rooms; Finding Files on Web and FTP Sites; Protecting Your Identity; Protecting Your Computer; The File Formats; Sharing Music; Finding Movies (or TV Shows); Sharing Books; Pirating Software (Warez); Sharing Video Games; Sharing Pornography; Miscellaneous Thievery; The Legal Alternatives; How The Corporations Fight Back and the Index.

On the back cover is the disclaimer of, "WARNING: This book is not to be used for violating copyright, pirating software, bootlegging movies, stealing video games, or any other miscellaneous thievery or illegal activity".

This book gave me the "RAR" opportunity to learn about Newsgroup feeds and how I can paste RAR2 files together to view the parts and pieces on my own Mac. All I need now is lots of bandwidth, and unlimited electronic storage if I want to take this extremely not-to-RAR process and put it to work. Oh, and maybe subscribe to a few newsgroups. By the way, I heavily bookmarked this one, so I would have given the book a 5 if not for the indecent stuff (links, language) but also, I knocked it down a bit because it tends to give some misinformation that really should be corrected. In the otherwise wonderfully tasty *The File Formats* chapter, I found, "Portable Document Format (PDF) files can only be viewed using Adobe's free Acrobat reader software..." And we all know that Macs cannot only view PDFs in *Preview* in Mac OS X, but also print files to PDFs from any application. Wallace Wang wrote at least 40 computer books so far. He should have caught that one.

Go ahead and buy (don't steal) this book if you would like to understand the background and issues surrounding file sharing. I think Wallace Wang did a great job pulling the information together and I hope he can keep the website updated.

## Web Programmer's Desk Reference: A Complete Cross-Reference to HTML, CSS, and JavaScript Reviewed by Robert Pritchett



**NO STARCH PRESS**

**Authors:** Lázaro Issi Cohen, Joseph Issi Cohen  
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1-800-420-7240 or 1-415-863-9900

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

**Book link:** <http://www.nostarch.com/wpdr.htm>

**Updates:** <http://deskref.softmartinc.com>

**Published:** September 2004

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Sebastopol (Corporate Headquarters)

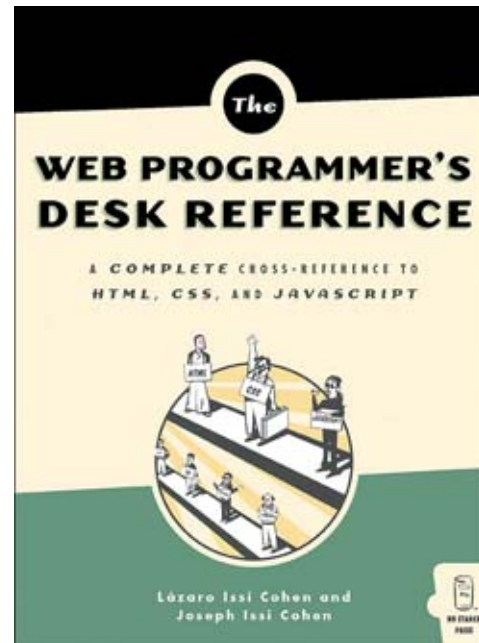
1005 Gravenstein Highway North

Sebastopol, CA 95472 USA

1-707-827-7000 or 1-800-998-9938

**Fax:** 1-707-829-0104

Intended for Webmaster Professionals.



**Strengths:** One-stop-shop for the triad of HTML, CSS and JavaScript.

**Weaknesses:** Referenced for only Internet Explorer and Netscape Navigator versions of browsers.

*Web Programmer's Desk Reference: A Complete Cross-Reference to HTML, CSS, and JavaScript* by Lázaro Issi Cohen and Joseph Issi Cohen is an incredibly huge book covering every teeny weensy variable associated with each of the HTML, CSS and JavaScript languages. Every HTML attribute, element or event, every CSS behavior, filter or style, every JavaScript method, object or property, no doubt, is listed here. And if it isn't, the Updates link listed above will probably have it.

Before you begin, it would be a really good idea to have a working knowledge of Dynamic HTML (DHTML) or this book may not make a whole lot of sense. Part 1 consists of 4 short chapter appetizers (about 60 pages) dealing with fundamentals of Cascading Style Sheets (CSS), Object-Oriented Programming (Document Object Model and Node Tree structure in JavaScript, Events and Event handlers and JavaScript basics. Part 2 gives the comprehensive reference full-course meal, consisting of Chapters 5 through 15. That is followed by a short index of the web technology triad of HTML, CSS and JavaScript listings.

Chapters 5 through 15 cross-reference each other with each chapter heading being: HTML Elements; HTML Attributes; Event Handlers; CSS Attributes and JavaScript Style Properties; Microsoft Internet Explorer Behaviors; Microsoft Filters and Transitions; JavaScript Properties; JavaScript Methods; JavaScript Collections; JavaScript Objects; HTML+TIME Microsoft Technology. There are over 1,000 examples of how each DHTML element acts and feels with cross-references that each element works with or could work with. And everything is XHTML standards-compliant.

The synergistic format reference ends each element line with a number in parenthesis. That number is another chapter that the element is cross-referenced to. There may be a compatibility list showing which versions of Network Navigator and Internet Explorer the element is recognized by. Once the format process becomes familiar, navigation does too. Now all those revealed source code websites can begin to make some sense and troubleshooting can be done to resolve any issues with webpage views and feeds, right? Not only are the websites interactive that use all 3 technologies, access to how each of the 3 languages interoperate also magically reveals themselves to view.

What is missing is a Rosetta stone-like cross-reference to all the other non-Netscape and non-Microsoft various browsers and their flavors too. (I guess that is what W3C is supposed to provide.) Here at least we can get a feel for what works within the confines of Netscape Navigator and Microsoft's Internet Explorer. Maybe that browser cross-reference is going to become the subject of another book.

Anyway, if you don't have a full-blown website developer package, or even if you do, and the power is off, this book will pay for itself in no time, when searching for elusive "why isn't that working?" episodes are made manifest.



## Games

**BrickShooter™ 1.5** Reviewed by Derek Meier



Terminal

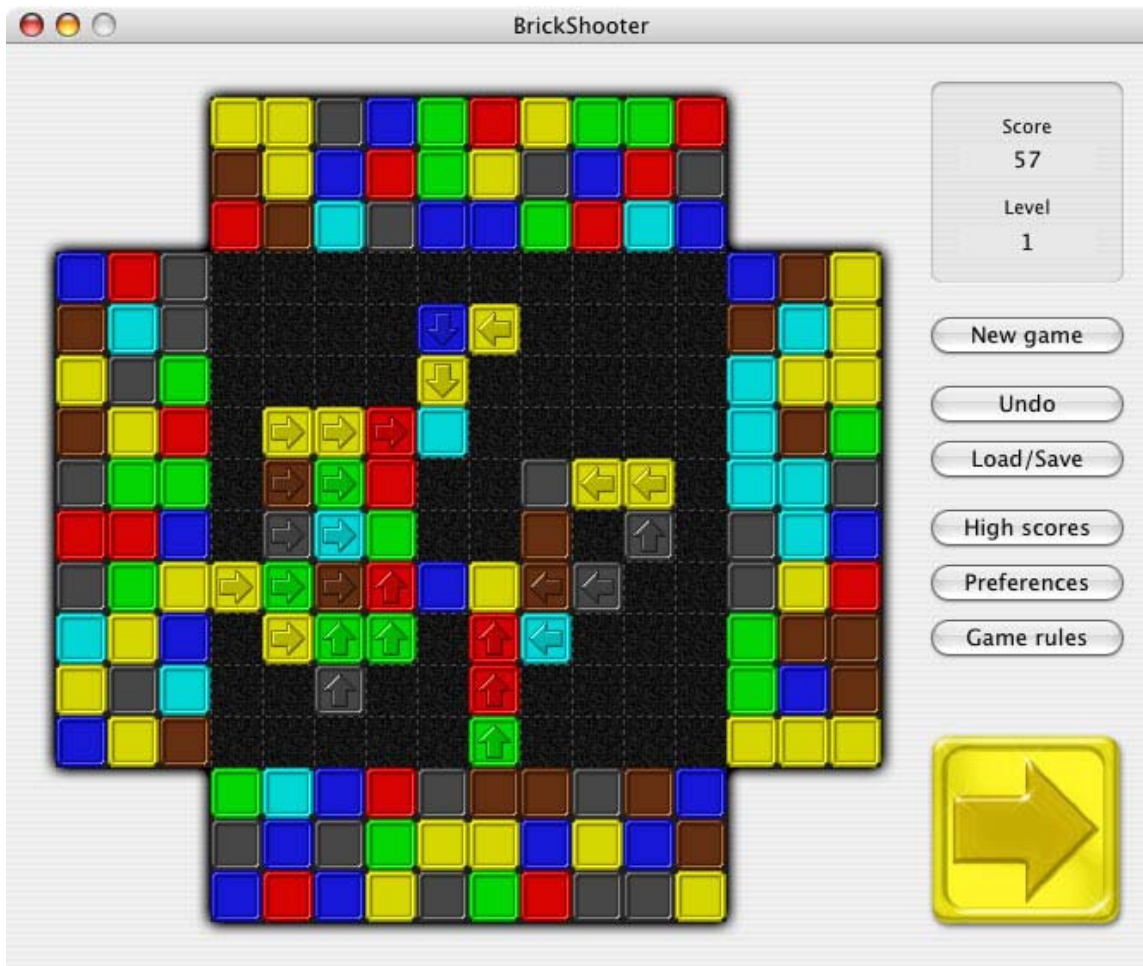
Studio <mailto:support@terminalstudio.com> <http://www.terminalstudio.com/> <http://www.brickshooter.com/> **Download:** <http://www.brickshooter.com/download.php> \$15 USD Download version, \$30 CD with Windows/Mac/Pocket PC/Palm. **Requirements:** Mac OS X 10.1.5 or higher.



**Strengths:** Fun and challenging, easy to play for all ages.

**Weaknesses:** None.

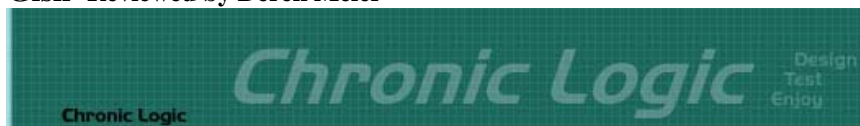
*Brickshooter* is a puzzle game for all ages. It reminds me of Tetris without the time limit that puts you on edge. The object of the game is similar to Tetris. You need to join 3 or more bricks of the same color horizontal, vertical or an L shape. When you get 3 bricks, you get 3 points, 4 bricks you get 6 points and 9 points for 5 bricks. The object is to score the most points before the area is filled with bricks.



Clicking on a brick located on the first layer of bricks sends the brick moving into the direction of the arrow. When it hits another brick, it stops. Unless you have three or more bricks of the same color they disappear. You continue to do this to accumulate points. If you clear the area, you get 100 bonus points and they multiply each time you clear the area. You also have the ability to save your game, which is great for when you spend a long time on your game and decide that you have to eat someday.

BrickShooter is a very engrossing game. It's fun, challenging and is easy to get started and play. It provides hours of replayability. Careful, like Tetris, this game can be highly addictive.

## Gish Reviewed by Derek Meier



Chronic Logic 501 Mission St. Ste. 6 Santa Cruz, CA 95060 [support@chroniclogic.com](mailto:support@chroniclogic.com) <http://www.chroniclogic.com> \$20 USD  
Download version, \$26 USD, CD version via US Postal Service. **Requirements:** Minimum G3 1000+ MHz processor; OpenGL video card; 32 MB of memory. Recommended G4 1500+ MHz processor, OpenGL video card 64 MB+ of memory, 256MB of memory.



**Strengths:** Original storyline, Fun to play. Unique character.

**Weaknesses:** Jumping takes practice.

Gish is a blob of tar. Not what you would expect a typical hero to be. Yet Chronic Logic has taken this glob of goo and placed him in one of the most funniest 2d sidescrolling games I have played in a long time. You of course play as Gish the blob of tar trying to rescue his girlfriend, Brea. She gets pulled into the ground by a shadowy figure. Gish then goes and searches for her in the sewers of the forgotten city of Dross.



## GAMEPLAY

As Gish, you are not without your special abilities from a pathetic hop, becoming heavy, sticky or slippery. These abilities will help you in your quest to rescue your gal. Becoming heavy is a great asset when you confront your enemies and you can drop down on top of them, squishing them with your weight. You can also become heavy to break down walls. Or you can use your stickiness to avoid falling on a bunch of spikes that stick up from the ground below you. Another way you could use your stickiness abilities against enemies is by sticking to, then rolling over them, then releasing them into the air. Also you can use stickiness to solve puzzles like pulling crates onto levers to open doors. Sliding allows Gish to squeeze through tight passages that he normally cannot go through. And lastly, hopping. Hopping takes a bit of getting used to. You first start out with a small hop then you have to hop in the right moment when Gish is flat to go any higher. Continuing with this method, you get higher with each jump.

Besides the single player story mode, Gish has a multiplayer Vs. mode. Vs. mode has several games for a cool sumo game where two Gish's fight it out to knock each other off swinging platforms and a coin collection game where you can compete to collect the most coins.



## GRAPHICS

The graphics in Gish is not spectacular. They are smooth-flowing and the animations are cartoony, but it looks pretty good. The lighting also looks nice, but what makes Gish a good game is not it's graphics, although the graphics don't disappoint.



### **SOUND AND MUSIC**

Gish features some nice background music that fits the game quite well. The music does not drive you nuts after playing the game for hours. As far as the sound effects, there are few in the game. Although I do like the bone crushing noise when you squish some of the creatures in the game.

### **VERDICT**

Chronic Logic has created a fun and unique little game. It's entertaining and easy to get into. Gish is one of the funniest games I have played in awhile. This company has a winner with Gish and I hope to see a Gish II in the future.



## Massive Assault Reviewed by Derek Meier



Freeverse Software

<mailto:Info@freeverse.com>

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

Product: <http://www.freeverse.com/mass/>

\$40 USD

**Requirements:** Mac OS X 10.2 or later;

G3 600 MHz CPU; 256 MB RAM;

32MB; OpenGL 1.3 video card;

650 MB hard drive space; Internet

Connection for Online Play.



**Strengths:** In depth, entertaining, replayability, 3D graphics.

**Weaknesses:** Can't play multiplayer instantly.

In 2056 WW II ended on earth now in 129 the first war of the new world begins with the Free Nations Union vs. the Phantom League. This is the premise of Freeverse's Massive Assault. Massive Assault is a turned based strategy game that takes place on many worlds and terrain.





## Gameplay

In Massive Assault you take control of air, land and sea units. Each side has distinctively different looking units but with much of the same firepower. Much of the action takes place on land with both powers vying for control of the countries.

Massive Assault has 4 single player modes: Training, Scenario, World War and Campaign. Training Mode allows you to get the basics needed to wage war with your opponent. Training mode is really well done allowing you to learn what is needed and is really all you need to get started without the manual.

Scenario mode is a series of games you fulfill certain objectives to get through the missions. Campaign mode is basically like a bunch of scenarios combined to make a story. War World mode has the player and enemy with equal controlled countries with a few secret allies. This mode allows unlimited playability as no two games are alike unlike the scenario made and campaign mode.



Massive Assaults multiplayer mode has two methods of play Hot Seat and online mode. Hot Seat mode allows you to play a World War game on they same Mac. Massive Assault is not a real time strategy game and its multiplayer mode is not real time as well. Unfortunately you cannot just jump in and find a player and start immediately. After registering, you have to issue a challenge, which could take awhile before that person logs back on to receive that challenge. Your turn is submitted and then you wait for the other user to log on and submit his turn, which can turn out to be a very long time. No instant gratification in multiplayer mode.

The game is divided into turns. Turns are divided into four phases: Disclosure, Guerrilla, Movement & Combat and Recruitment. The disclosure phase is only used in world war player mode. In the disclosure phase the player chooses some of the countries on the map that are secret allies and then the enemy now can see that the country belongs to the player. The player is then able to collect money and recruit for that country. The Guerrilla phase only occurs if the enemy attacks a country it does not own, the player hen can raise guerrilla forces in that country to repel the enemy invasion. The movement and combat phase allows the player to move and attack the enemy with his units. The recruitment phase allows the player to purchase new combat units for each country that has money that turn.





### Graphics

Graphics wise Massive Assault is beautiful. Fully 3D-rendered, you can zoom in and out of the mp. Units have different effects. The weapons and the vehicle designs themselves are cool especially the bots. Great detail was taken in the trees and water effects as well. Of course, if you are on a lower end Mac, you could drop the resolution or set it to 16 bit graphics to speed up the game, but it would be disappointing to miss out on the visual details. On my 1.25GHz Powerbook, I did notice a bit of a slowdown when there were a lot of units on the screen.

### Sound

There is nothing groundbreaking in the sound department. The soundtrack isn't bad and goes well with the game. The sound effects just seem to do the job.

### Verdict

I have played many real time strategy games and have enjoyed them immensely. Massive Assault being a turned base real time strategy game took some getting used to, but it performed quite well. Gameplay is engrossing and addictive. The well-made tutorial gets you educated quite quickly. One of the biggest weaknesses is its online multiplayer aspect. You can't get into a multiplayer game very quickly. And it could potentially take a long time just to get a game started and you may not be able to complete the game. As a single player game, Metal Assault rocks as a multiplayer well as I see only a patient hardcore wargamer need apply. Multiplayer does not seem to be a good choice for the casual gamer. But if your looking for a strategy game you that keeps you coming back, Massive Assault is it.

**Super TextTwist® 2.23 and WHATword?® 1.0.3 Reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad, Edited by Julie M. Willingham**



GameHouse, Inc.  
100 South King Street, Suite 620  
Seattle, WA 98104

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

\$20 USD. Downloading allows a try the available demos, which are limit to 10 trial sessions. Both games on one CD. Versions also available for both the Palm and WinTel platforms. There are also web versions.

**Requirements:** Mac OS X 10.1 or later.

**Audience:** All user levels.

**Uninstaller:** If you decide to remove it, drag the Super TextTwist or WHATword? icon to the Trash.

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.



QuickTime™ and a  
TIFF (Uncompressed) decompressor  
are needed to see this picture.



**Strengths:** These are fun, easy to learn, straightforward games for those who like to play with words. They work for both youngsters and adults. They have the added benefit of nary a bang, scream, or blotch of gore! The games are challenging and can build a player's vocabulary, or so their publisher claims. (The latter is an effect I did not notice, nor did the publisher reference any claims to that effect—What can I tell you? I'm a scientist by profession.) The games would greatly benefit anyone wanting to expand their knowledge of words while playing, and *Super TextTwist* provides access to a dictionary when you correctly select a word. All of this without your needing to either become a linguist or join a word-of-the-day club. At least for now, they're just plain fun, especially *Super WHATword?*.

**Weaknesses:** I found that TextTwist got boring after playing 25 or more games over a few day period, but that is just me, a lover and collector of obscure and, at times, historically dated words who hates things of a repetitious nature. Perhaps spread over a week or two or playing with grandchildren, I'd be less weary of the game.

I dove into WHATword?, set the option to untimed play, and I was off and running before I had time to think about learning the game. From my perspective, it has no significant weaknesses, but I'd like to see a few things changed to make the game more challenging.

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### Software CD Overview

The CD set contains two games: *Super TextTwist* and *Super WHATword?*. *TextTwist* focuses on how many words you know. Make as many words as you can with the letters provided. Use all your letters to make a word and you'll move on to the next round. *Super WHATword?* asks the player to swap letter balls in a 5x5 grid to form words. Form the special *WHATword?s* to move onto the next level.









WHATword? Game Screen Shot



WHATword? Options Screen



To advance to a higher level of play, gamers must also form all the words listed under a category called "WHATwords" before the timer runs out, or, if you're laid back like me, at your own pace. The letters with the STARS multiply the value of the entire word. WHATwords are worth the most points. To get the greatest score, use as many STAR letters as possible when making the WHATwords. Or just play around for a while, building your score by teasing out more and more words, the longer the better. The game is more fun greater than three letter clock-less play mode but with youngsters the three letter mode is a good starting point.

Play options include:

- Play in windowed or full screen mode
- Why the rush? Play the (no timer) Puzzle mode for a more cerebral challenge. For this mode of play, I went directly to words four or five letters long.
- Timed mode pits you against the clock forcing you to focus mostly on finding the designated target word or words (I prefer the speed of a turned off chess timer when I play computer games.)
- Play against the clock in easy mode (three-letter words) with younger kids or to get started. Then you can switch to hard mode (four-or five-letter words).
- There is a 'BLAST' button that changes some of the letters if you get stuck, giving you a refreshed diverse letter grid to play from rather than having to work with the letters left from a previous word.

A word to the wise! For those who prefer the challenge of a running clock, getting the WHATwords is the key to the game - but to get the highest scores it means that you also have to take advantage of any bonus letters that appear! These are highlighted, and if you use one in your word, your score will be much higher! If you can use more than one, the score is higher still, and, if you manage to use them in your WHATwords, you'll be getting the highest scores of all! There's strategy even in word games, as those of you who play Scrabble know.

Furthermore, there are lots of V-W-X-Y-Zs in play. Check your favorite word list. I used, after taking a break from the games, the "Follett Vest Pocket 50,000 Words" booklist to refresh my memory on these, but it's no help if these letters are in the middle or at the end of a word.

### **WHATwords? Game Limitations**

I Want Seven-Letters — I got real good, in no-timer mode of course, at five-letter words, once I figured out how not to let the game shortchange me. How about a WHATwords? Professional?

Software Locked Up — I tried a shortcut to get out of the game without going through the screen sequence and the game froze my screen. Using force quit, everything was fine again. Since I wasn't able to remember how I locked things up, a bug report would be useless.

Random Missed Plurals and Missed Vertical Array Words — Most of the time adding the letter "S" to form a plural worked, but on occasion it did not. The word *pools* wasn't recognized. On a few occasions, a word in which the words were in vertical order did not get recognized. A workaround was easy, but a little time-consuming. My notes suggest that this problem was minimized when the vertical word started at the top line of the grid.

**WHATwords? Game Review Conclusions**

I really got off on this game. I will start use it to unwind between more serious tasks such as writing reviews or technical papers. It plays faster than my usual serious gaming favorites — mahjong solitaire, chess or backgammon, reducing my type guilt. You see, what makes the game interesting is that as you create a new word, those 'used' letters disappear. They're eliminated from the board and new letters cascade down from above to fill in the gaps. So each time I play, it's a new deal. What fun! I rate this product 4.5 macCs.

At a mere \$20 [list price], these games should be a real bargain to all who love word games.

## Hardware

### ANYCOM Blue Mini Mouse BTM-100 Reviewed by Derek Meier



ANYCOM 1720 E. Garry Ave. Suite 225 Santa Ana, CA  
92705 877-292-0010 FAX: 949-553-  
9426 <mailto:us@anycom.com> <http://www.anycom.com/anycom/index.php?lang=us> \$60 USD **Requirements:** Bluetooth  
embedded or adapter, Mac OS 10.1 or later, a free USB 1.1  
compliant port.



**Strengths:** Rechargeable batteries included, carrying pouch included, Long lasting Charge, Can be used while charging.

**Weaknesses:** Shape of the mouse takes some time to get used to.

One big disadvantage of most wireless mice is having to replace their batteries all the time. Anycom has a great solution with the *Blue Mini Mouse BTM-100*. The BTM-100 package includes the Blue Mouse itself, a USB charger, manual, 2 AAA rechargeable Ni-Mh batteries and a jewelry bag. The mouse design looks nice, but does have a peculiar shape to it. Opening the battery compartment is quite easy using the slide on the bottom. It also has a pairing button and an on/off switch on the bottom

The installation is quite simple using the Bluetooth setup assistant. Unfortunately there are no Mac instructions on pairing the mouse, only Windows. It's possible that setup of Bluetooth devices in Windows is not as streamlined and easy as the Mac, but still Instructions for pairing with the Mac would have been nice.

Using the mouse took some getting use to due to the shape of the mouse. But after using it for a while I did eventually get used to the shape. It performs well and it seems quite responsive in its tracking. If you don't use the mouse for a period of time, it will power off to conserve the batteries, giving more battery life. Also you can plug the USB charger into a USB port and to the mouse and keep using the mouse while it is charging.

Anycom did a great job with this Bluetooth mouse making it a great addition to any mobile users peripheral collection. The included jewelry bag is a nice little bonus as well. Being able to use the mouse while charging is a big plus. Unfortunately you cannot monitor the battery life of this mouse, but I have not found a non-Apple Bluetooth mouse that you can monitor the battery. Overall it's a very nice mouse and it will save you from purchasing batteries.

## iSee mini Protection for iPod mini Reviewed by Derek Meier



ContourDesign  
10 Industrial Drive  
Windham, NH 03087  
800-462-6678  
Fax: 603-893-4558

<mailto:info@contourdesign.com>  
<http://www.contourdeseign.com>  
[http://www.countourdesign.com/isee/isee\\_mini.html](http://www.countourdesign.com/isee/isee_mini.html)  
\$20 USD

**Requirements:** iPod Mini



**Strengths:** Nice price, adds additional protection for iPod mini, works with third party accessories.

**Weaknesses:** None found.

Purchasing an iPod is a small investment at \$249 a pop. Most of us don't have money to throw away for an item of this price. You'll want to protect it with some protection from scratches and nicks to keep you iPod in nice shape. Depending on your lifestyle, the abuse of our iPod can vary. So a little protection can go a long way in keeping your investment looking new and cool.

The iSee mini adds some additional protection. It snaps easily onto your iPod and is equally easy to take off. Like a knight in armor it covers and protects most of the iPod mini leaving open the click-wheel, headphone jack, hold switch, and the dock connector. It also has a built in lanyard cutout. And best of all you can still use most of the iPod accessories. I put on the Griffin iTrip and the case did not interfere at all.

For a price of \$20 USD, it's a small price to pay for added protection for the iPod. Protecting the iPod and still being able to use third party add-ons is a definite plus.



## iTrip Mini Reviewed by Derek Meier

**GRIFFIN TECHNOLOGY**

Griffin Technology 1619C Elm Hill Pike Nashville, TN 37210 615-399-7000 Fax: 615-399-

8041 <mailto:info@griffintechnology.com> **Product:**  
[http://www.griffintechnology.com/products/itrip\\_mini/](http://www.griffintechnology.com/products/itrip_mini/) \$40

USD **Requirements:** Apple iPod Mini



**Strengths:** Easy setup, Fits nicely on top of iPod mini. Low battery usage.

**Weaknesses:** None found.

"...I shall call him, mini me"

Austin Powers: The Spy Who Shagged Me



The *iTrip mini* turns your iPod mini into a mini radio station broadcasting you songs to any FM radio receiver. It comes in very handy in the car when you do not want to mess with headphones while driving. It comes with the iTrip, CD and Quickstart Guide.

Installation of the iTrip is quite simple. Simple as plugging it into the top of your iPod mini and tuning to 87.9 the iTrip's default station. You'll want to keep the volume 50% to 70%. If you have it higher, it tends to distort or if you have it lower, the iTrip will power off. It does sounds pretty good and you don't loose too much sound quality from the broadcast. The iTrip does not need any batteries. It uses the iPods battery for power. I did not notice a substantial battery life drop so that's a good thing.

If you want to use another station besides 87.9 you can use the included CD. Running the installer adds a playlist called *iTrip Stations* to your iTunes software. Plugging and syncing your iPod it will then transfer the *iTrip Stations* playlist to your iPod. You then can use the clickwheel to select the station you want from the playlist. Griffins site offers a station finder software for download as well as additional frequencies for the US and Europe.

I found the iTrip to be an essential accessory for any iPod mini user. It fits perfectly on the iPod mini and does not add too much to the height. The battery life of the iPod did not change dramatically as another mouth to feed was added. No wires hanging about makes it a better option than a cassette adapter. One thing I would have liked was maybe a selection of different colors to match the iPod mini colors. The iTrip is a nicely priced accessory that's a must have for any iPod Mini owner.

## Maxtor OneTouch™ II FireWire and USB Reviewed by Robert Pritchett



Maxtor Corporation  
28202 Cabot Road, Suite 425  
Laguna Niguel, CA  
USA  
1-408-894-5000  
1-800-2-MAXTOR (1-800-262-9867)  
**Fax:** 1-408-952-3600  
<http://www.maxtor.com/>

**Released:** September 20, 2004

\$330 USD 250GB \$380; USD 300GB

**Requirements** Macintosh or WinTel FireWire port or USB 2.0 or 1.1, 128MB RAM, CD-ROM drive, Internet.

**Comes with:** External hard drive, USB cable, 6-pin FireWire/1394/i.LINK cable, External AC power adapter, Vertical stand, Installation software CD, Dantz® Retrospect® Express, Maxtor OneTouch drivers, Maxtor OneTouch utilities, User's guide, Maxtor 2-year limited warranty

**Specifications:** Interface: FireWire®, IEEE 1394, i.LINK®, SBP-2, USB 1.1 and 2.0; Hard drive: 3.5 inch ATA with Ultra ATA 133 interface; RPM: 7200; Cache buffer: 16MB; Average seek time: 9.3ms; Sustained transfer rate (maximum) USB2 34MB/sec, FireWire: 41MB/sec; Bus transfer rate (maximum) FireWire: 400 Mb/sec; Operating temperature: 5°C to 35°C (41°F to 95°F); Dimensions: 1 5/8 x 5 1/2 x 8 5/16 inches (41 x 140 x 210mm); Weight: 3.1 lbs (1.38 Kgrams); AC input voltage: 100-240 VAC; Input frequency: 47-63 Hz AC.



**Strengths:** A hot-swappable one-button process for expanding or backing up existing systems.

**Weaknesses:** None found yet.

Last year, we reviewed the OneTouch™<sup>33</sup>, so when the Maxtor OneTouch™ II showed up, we wanted to know what was the real difference between the two (“New, improved!” detergent commercial – changed the box).

Well, yes, the box *was* changed. The price was also lowered. The RPMs were increased for the smaller-capacity drive to match the larger capacity drive and both now have combo ports instead of just a FireWire port. Oh, and the cache has been bumped up to 16 MB instead of 8. And a USB cable has been included in the package. And for the Mac environment the drive has been made bootable. The Dantz® Retrospect® backup software has been updated and a Maxtor DriveLock™ security feature has been added for data protection along with and better restore capabilities as well as historical backup recovery.

The default backup setting is daily as a fully mirrored backup and it runs in the background without interfering with open files.

The Maxtor DriveLock™ permits password-protected drive contents. Historical backups can be from yesterday to 2 weeks ago and the drive self-manages older versions and poofing them when the drive fills up. The interface has improved as well. Storage, security and backup are now integrated operations.

<sup>33</sup> <http://www.maccompanion.com/archives/october2003/hardware.html#1>

And there is nothing quite like the peace of mind knowing that if the main drive ever failed, we can reboot from the OneTouch II from recent backups.

If you look closely, the drive face imitates the Tower G5 grill with the cheese-grater look.

So to recap, we have a nicer looking drive with improved backup software for less price and with better security. Anyone in business should be getting one of these and tossing out their tape backup systems. Testing backups from the OneTouch II should be easy to do if you know the DriveLock password.

You know Murphy's Law. If you don't backup, you will get bit. If you do, you probably will never need it. If you don't, you will. Maxtor makes this maintenance chore incredibly easy. Think, no more calling your favorite IT person by name in the middle of the night to get things going again from tape backups (because you weren't trained how to do it). No more excuses and no more shelling out money to specialists and consultants for emergency and contingency backup systems. That alone puts this system way out front. Just ask Santa for one. And say we sent ya.



## RadioSHARK version 1.0.3 – USB AM/FM Radio Receiver and Time-Shift Recorder Reviewed by Robert Pritchett

**GRIFFIN** TECHNOLOGY

Griffin Technology  
1619C Elm Hill Pike  
Nashville, TN 37210  
615-399-7000  
FAX: 615-399-8041

<mailto:info@griffintechnology.com>

<http://www.griffintechnology.com>

**Product link:** <http://www.griffintechnology.com/products/radioshark/>

**Released:** September 24, 2004

\$70 USD, £40 UK

**Software update:**

[http://www.griffintechnology.com/software/software\\_radioshark.html](http://www.griffintechnology.com/software/software_radioshark.html)

**Comes with:** CD, manuelette and USB extension cable.

**Requirements:** large hard drive with lots of empty space, powered USB 1.1 port. For Mac OS X use.

Reviewed using Mac OS X 10.3.6.



**Strengths:** First cross-platform USB AM/FM Tuner - Recorder. Solid base.

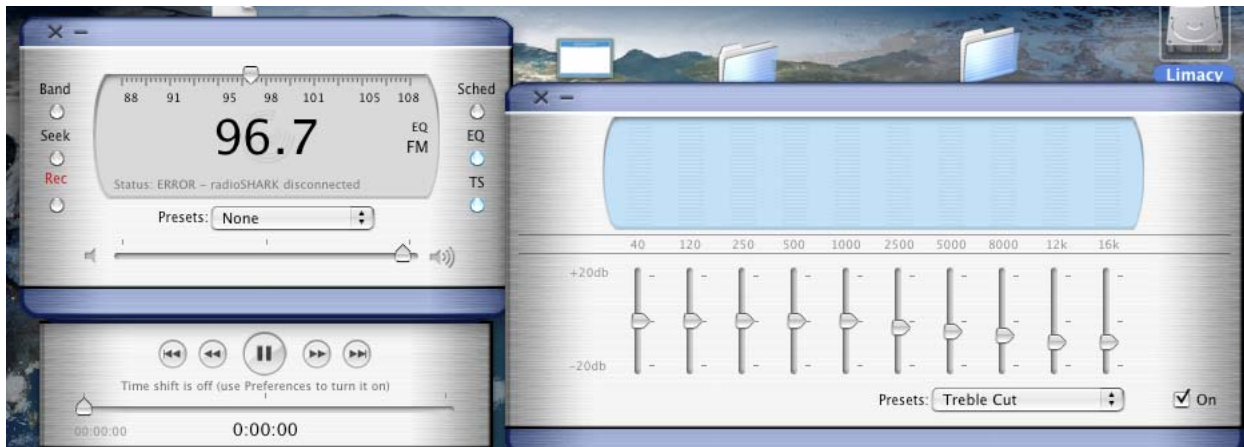
**Weaknesses:** Radio reception suffers. No MP3 recording capability.

The *radioSHARK*® by Griffin Technology is a nicely designed USB AM/FM radio, so why would you fork over \$70 when you can get a stand-alone radio for a lot less? It isn't because of the shark fin look, solid chrome base, or the blue-neon [on]/red neon [record] light. It is because it can record radio stations in a schedule for listening to later.

Your other choice is to use iTunes® and hunt for local web-based stations, but then again, you can't do TiVo™-like scheduled recordings.

The dock popup can begin the radio immediately upon startup or you can have it turned off. Using the mouse, radio frequencies can be selected between AM from 530 to 1710 or FM from 87.5 to 108.1. Version 1.0.3 allows for turning off the neon light and reception interference and scheduling repeats. Keep up to date using the software link I posted above. Griffin Technologies is listening to customer "I wished it dids" and aggressively acting on them.

What I liked about the popup display is that the presets for sound styles really works nice. The EQ has 10 adjustable sliders if the presents just don't cut it for you. I set mine to Treble Cut for best reception. I found that I could not have the 7 1/2" x 4" x 2" unit sitting next to the Yamaha speakers I still use (magnet interference) , but set it on to and it worked fine. I discovered that the little port out the back above the USB cable is not a power port, but rather, a combo-function external antennae/earphone jack port. This addresses the issue of radio reception via the internal antennae and also the headset/speaker issue. (I understand that coiling the USB cable onto itself helps too, but perhaps using the provided USB extension cable that has the toroidal filter accomplishes the same thing.)



For 30-minute recording purposes, a large hard-drive will be needed. Recording grabs around 10 MB per minute. There is no encryption and playback can be iPodded with AAC or AIFF or for WinTel systems, WMA or WAV, and accessed through iTunes (radioSHARK playlist) or directly by using an iPod.

There are reception presets in the radioSHARK Preferences as well for sensitivity.

Watch for future software enhancements for satellite broadcast recording.

Are there competing technologies that do the same thing? Yes, and many are free, but if used, we end up with Rube Goldberg projects, whereas with the radioSHARK, all that technology has been brought together nicely into one package deal. No radio-tuner card needs to be installed in either a Mac or Wintel box.

Currently, the radioSHARK software does not record streaming Internet audio and it is designed as a USB 1.1 device and not USB 2.0.

On the Mac, there is a radioSHARK Server installed. It remains active, so if you are in the habit of putting your Mac to sleep automatically, that is defeated. Manual sleeping is still possible, but defeats the purpose of being able to record scheduled events. If you need to put the monitor to sleep, that is a separate Energy Saver Preference item and does not affect the radioSHARK Server function.

The “skin” for the interface is somewhat customizable. I picked blue, but the default is silver. I like the version 1.0.3 function for being able to turn off the light indicator as an option.

Options for scheduling are for encoding bit rate quality in 64kbps increments. Events can be scheduled by the hour, day or week or weekend. So what is with the time-shift technology? It allows for skipping commercials and a delayed version jumps over those with a buffer length of 30 minutes. If talk radio is recorded, the 10 MB per minute rule can be reduced down to below 1 MB per minute using 64Kbps and the talk radio preset.

Next up on the wish list? RSS radio feeds for the radioSHARK.

So is scheduling of radio programming important enough for you to drop \$70 on your system so you can listen to programs later? And skipping the commercials? And being able to listen to those recordings on your iPod? If so, than this might make a nice holiday gift item. The software is only going to get better. And Griffin just might add an external antennae for the radioSHARK if Radio Shack doesn't provide one.

## Logitech Rumblepad 2 Vibration Feedback Gamepad Reviewed by Derek Meier



Logitech Inc. 6505 Kaiser Drive Fremont CA 94555 510-795-8500 <http://www.logitech.com> **Product:** <http://www.logitech.com/index.cfm/products/details/US/EN,CRID=11,CONTENTID=8674> \$30 USD **Requirements:** Mac OS 9 or Mac OS 10.x or later, or WinTel box, USB port.



**Strengths:** Good price, solid, very responsive, force feedback, comfortable.

**Weaknesses:** No Mac native software.

The *Rumblepad 2 Vibration Feedback Gamepad* by Logitech is available in wireless and wired versions. It comes with an Install Guide and a Windows-only software CD with Logitech Profiler.

Installation is as simple as plugging it in, as there is no Apple software included on the CD. The controller itself seems to be very sturdy and fits nicely in your hands. The controller consists of a directional pad, two analog thumbsticks, four buttons on the right, and four at the front. There are also four center buttons two of which are used for mode selector and the other for toggling vibration on and off. The mode button switched from on mode for flight games and the other for sports.

The Rumblepad 2 performed admirably in my tests with some games that support a gamepad. The controls can be configured in games that support gamepads. Using the gamepad I really appreciated the rubber handgrips that prevent slippage of the hands and comes in handy during those intense gaming moments where a slip can be costly. It's also very comfortable, which is good for those marathon gaming sessions. The gamepad is well constructed. It survived a few drops from my desk with no signs of damage.

As far as Force Feedback, the Rumblepad 2 has dual shock controller motors. I could feel the vibrations by toggling vibration on and off. It does give off a nice solid vibration. Unfortunately, I did not have any games that support force feedback except Wingnuts, but that only supports the Macally iShock 2 gamepad.

The Logitech Rumblepad 2 is a nice solid gamepad. It should please any gamer using it. It is well -constructed and very comfortable to use. Unfortunately the software is geared towards Windows-users, but it does not appear to be a big loss. There is a wireless version that may be more appealing to others. In the end, the Rumblepad 2 is worth the \$30 and much more.

## Shareware

Booxter Reviewed by Ted Bade

**Booxter** A personal librarian.  
At your service.

Deep Prose Software, LLC  
<mailto:info@deepprose.com>  
<http://www.deepprose.com/>  
\$15 USD

**Requirements:** Mac OS X 10.2; Internet connection for ISBN information search. Hand scanner or iSight for scanning bar codes. You also need a collection of books.

**Experience needed:** minimal.



**Strengths:** Easy to use, terrific interface, easily organize and search through your book collection.

**Weaknesses:** Using a hand scanner is clumsy (not a problem with Booxter however).

*Booxter* is one of those nifty little programs that anyone who is interested in organizing a collection of books should look at. All you need to do is enter or scan the ISBNs of the books in your collection and Booxter utilizes a variety of Internet information sources to gather information about the book. This is loads easier than entering information manually. Since the book you entered is in your personal library, Booxter also allows you to enter information specific to your collection, like where the book is located and who you have loaned it out to! This is a terrific application and is quite easy to use.

Booxter lets you organize your book collection using an interface (and the ease of use) like that of iTunes. You can import and enter data into a number of fields, just like the tag fields of an MP3 audio file. These fields include a wide variety of information about a book. While you might not be interested in all of them, any person organizing a book collection will be interested in some. Take a look at the screen shot to see what is included:

**Add Book** Fill in the fields that apply below and click the save button to add a new book to your library.

ISBN:  Search Cancel

Title:

Authors:  + -

Publisher:

Series:

Class:

Subjects:  + -

Format:

Published at:

Language:

Price:  Year:

Edition:  Pages:

Dewey Class:  Vol.:

Locale:

**Custom Info**

Genre:  Copies:  Rating:

Owned:  Price Paid:  Orig. Year:  Signed:

Location:  Orig. Lang.:

Obtained:  Read:  Date Read:

Date Obtained:  (M/D/YYYY)  Lent Out

Notes

Condition

Lent To:

Lent To Email:

Date Lent:

Date Due:

Description

Cancel Save

Entering all or even part of this information for a number of books would truly be a daunting task. This is where Booxter really helps out. After you enter the book's ISBN, you can tell Booxter to search a variety of Internet sites to download the information. These sites include Amazon (in a variety of languages and locations), the US library of Congress, The British Library, and even the National Library of Poland.

Booxter then culls the information from these sites, and inserts it into a record page for that book. You even get an image of the front cover! Once you get the general information about the book into the database, it is time to personalize the entry. The Booxter database provides many fields in this regard as well.

In the custom area of the entry field you can enter important information such as where it is located (I have 7 book cases, my wife has 4, and we share 3. Then there are the ones we keep in the bathroom for easy reference!), how much you paid for it, your personal rating (using a five star rating similar to iTunes), how you obtained it, how much you paid, any notes about the book important to you, and more.




Bade's library

**Add Book** Fill in the fields that apply below and click the add button to add this book to your library.

ISBN: 1-890570-39-7 Search Cancel Year: Genre: Location: LCCN: 97061039

Title: Help Wanted: ( Learn-to-Read Series)



Authors: Ted Bade  
Fred Rawles

Publisher: Huckleberry Press

Series: Aesop's fables learn-to-read series

Class: 9708 BOOK NOT YET IN LC

Subjects:

Format: Paperback

Published at: South Glastonbury, CT

Language: English

Price: \$4.95 Year: 1997

Edition: Pages:

Dewey Class: Vol.:

Locale: US

**Custom Info**

Genre: Children's Copies: 50 Rating: ★★★★★

Owned:  Price Paid: Orig. Year: Signed:

Location: everywhere Orig. Lang.: English

Obtained: Wrote it myself Read:  Date Read:

Date Obtained: (M/D/YYYY)  Lent Out

Notes: This is my book Condition: Excellent

Lent To: Lent To Email: Date Lent: Date Due:

Description: Honesty is the best policy. Business is booming at Ron Crockett's country store. He needs to hire some part-time help to take care of things when he can't be there. But how will he ever find someone he can trust with all the money?

Cancel Save

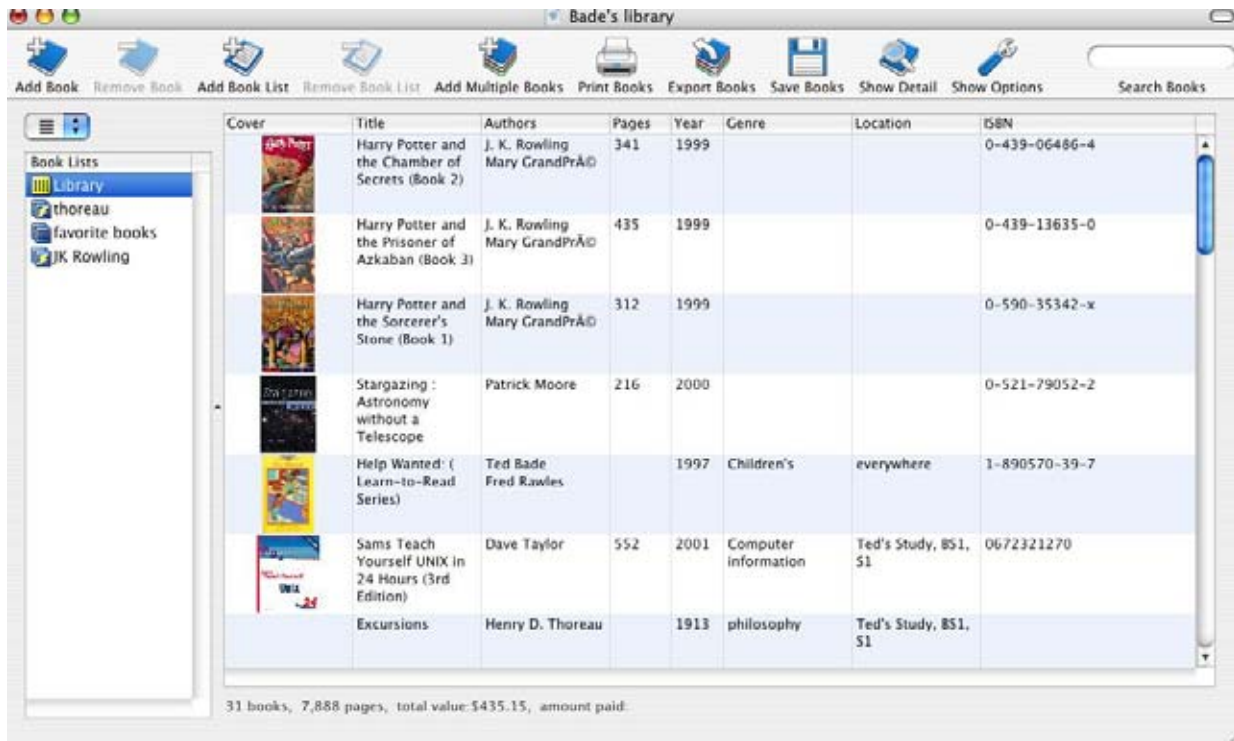
For the truly lazy (or perhaps, the keyboard impaired), Booxter will also take input from a hand scanner. That is to say you can scan in the ISBN, saving you the step of entering this “lengthy” string of numbers. There are many different hand scanner out there ranging from very cheap to very expensive. A friend who first told me a bout Booxter owns one of those called the CueCat. (one modified so that it doesn’t transmit data to “home base” as was originally intended!!). This hand scanner was a “freebee” for a short while.

One thing that attracted me to Booxter was that it works with Apple’s iSight, which works pretty well. The biggest problem I had working with the iSight was getting it to focus where it needed to. I would scan an ISBN, put the iSight down, process the book and do the next one. When I put the iSight down, it would often change its focus from close up to farther away. Which meant I had to fiddle with moving it about or use the manual focus controls Booxter offers to get it back in line. On a few occasions, I felt it might have been easier to just type in the ISBN. ;-).

I did find that scanning a group of books then getting the information was a better process for this. By choosing Booxter’s: “add multiple books” you can either scan or type a group of ISBNs. When you are done, click to enter the entire list into your library. This made it even easier to use my PowerBook to enter books. I would go to a bookshelf, enter a number of ISBNs, then connect to the Internet and get the information.

Once you have created a database, Booxter provides features to access the information. Booxter has an interesting way of organizing the data. The main window can either be in list or browse view. In list view, you select, using pulldown menus, criteria for the list. For instance, you would like to see what books are in a particular bookshelf, you then select location (assuming you were this specific when you entered the information), then select the location of interest and you get a list of items there. This same feature works with any other database field. The browse view just lists the books in your database. Clicking on it opens a drawer with more information about that book.





Another way of organizing your book collection is very similar to a playlist in iTunes. You can create a “booklist”. Just like in iTunes there are two types of lists, the regular one you plop whatever you like into and the “smart” type that culls from your library books that meet a specific criteria. So you can create a list of your favorite books, or a smart list with your favorite author, genre, or even those you have loaned out. Of course, like in iTunes, you can use the little search bubble and enter any piece of text and Booxter will sort the list based on the word you enter.

Booxter lets you take your database with you. You can export it as a file, which can then be used in another database program, (I don’t know why you would want to do this, since Booxter has plenty of power on its own). If you have a 3G iPod, you can export the list to the iPod and reference the list on the road. With your database on the iPod, you can check to see if your copy of “Gadding with Ghouls” is the same edition as that of your friends, or what is available in the bookstore. A wise shopper might keep a list of books they want or need to buy as gifts on their iPod, for quick reference.

Finally, you can play a game with Booxter. It is a simple timed multiple choice game. It asks a series of questions about the items in your book collection and you select from the answers provided. It is an easy game if you have read the books in your collection!

Who is the author of "Excursions"?

Joseph Jacobs

Henry D. Thoreau

J. Campbell

Charles Squire

Owen Linzmayer



Question: 9 of 20

Score: 502/800

Percent: 62%

Stop Game

Booxter is a terrific program. It can be used to easily create a database of information about the books in your book collection then access this information with the ease of use and functionality of iTunes. It uses the Internet to gather information about your books through the use of an ISBN, which you can either type or scan in. If you are interested in organizing your book collection, Booxter is a must have application! This has got to be the most valuable \$15 shareware program I have tried! Go get a copy!

## DesktopEarth 3D™ Version 3.0 Reviewed by Robert Pritchett



SubRosaSoft.com Ltd.

445 State Highway 30

Lake Rotoma, RD4

Rotorua, 3221

Bay of Plenty

New Zealand

+647 362 0050

<mailto:sales@SubRosaSoft.com>

<http://www.subrosasoft.com>

### Product link:

[http://www.subrosasoft.com/thestore/product\\_info.php?cPath=87&products\\_id=423](http://www.subrosasoft.com/thestore/product_info.php?cPath=87&products_id=423)

**Download size:** 19.2 MB

**Released:** October 1, 2004

\$15 USD

**Requirements:** Mac OS X.



**Strengths:** 3D “real-time” globe conditions.

**Weaknesses:** Preferences pop up each time the program is activated.

*DesktopEarth 3D™* by SubRosaSoft is a “screen saver” application that shows the world in “real-time” including clouds cloud cover. It also can superimpose the sun or moon over the earth surface. The 3D effect is something noticed when the screensaver is allowed to appear – and yes, it rotates as the earth moves.

This looks very close to another application reviewed earlier in macCompanion named EarthDesk, but it has some added features.<sup>34</sup> DesktopEarth 3D has a choice of views from some hi-res satellite maps of earth with cloud cover updates with phase shifts of the moon and live pictures of the sun from the Solar and Heliospheric Observatory.<sup>35</sup>

When activated, a little progress window pops up that accesses update data from the Internet. All instructions on each part of the current program is posted on the product link listed above.

There are 5 maps to choose from; color, a black and white, political map showing country/state/provincial borders, bio map showing living areas and an elevation map.

There are 5 tab settings to also choose from; *Desktop* for setting the size and the layout of the background image on the desktop, *Night* for selecting the style of shading for night/day image, *Clouds* for turning the cloud cover display on and off, *Sun* for selecting the location on where the sun image is displayed, the resolution and the camera selected for the image and *Moon* for selecting the location and resolution of the moon image.

<sup>34</sup> <http://www.maccompanion.com/archives/august2003/software.html#3>

<sup>35</sup> <http://sohowww.nascom.nasa.gov/>

The Screensaver functions in two modes; *2D* and *3D* with cloud overlays and spin cycle with night and day pattern.

To change preferences, do the obvious in Mac OS X. Click the dropdown menu and open Preferences. Again, there are options to Preview, *Full Screen*, *Real Size*, *Letterbox*, *Trim*, *Set Button*, *Cancel Help or Save*. There are also options to set for night and shade for day to night transitions.

For *Clouds*, weather can be monitored in real time and there is a layering function.

For the *Sun*, there is a camera menu for viewing at different ultraviolet wavelengths (adjusted by NASA so we can view the images).

There is also a setting for the *Moon*.

Now go compare this to Earthdesk and OSXPlanet<sup>36</sup>. What is missing is the Satellite view, but that is another application from ExtremeMac called FreeFall.<sup>37</sup>

I personally love the topology map with the cloud cover. I wish the background also updated like the screensaver function does – but then I’d be using EarthDesk instead. OSXPlanet takes both a little further by including earthquake and volcanic activity along with some storm activities in its rendition of Mother Earth – but that is another review.

We live on a fragile planet with little foreseeable known life elsewhere. By viewing the Earth from Space, we can awe at the wonder of it all and maybe even see just how silly our issues may appear once we put everything to a “global perspective”.

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<sup>36</sup> <http://otte.ucsc.edu/~gabriel/osxplanet.html>

<sup>37</sup> <http://www.xtrememac.com/freefall/index.shtml>

## EarthBrowser 2.1.0 Reviewed by Robert Pritchett



Lunar Software, Inc.

P.O. Box 14664

Portland, OR 97293-0664

Fax: 503-892-6427

<mailto:sales@lunarsoft.com>

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

**Product Download:** <http://www.earthbrowser.com/download.html> (3.9MB for Mac, 3.3MB for WinTel)

**Released:** October 12, 2004

\$30 <https://www.earthbrowser.com/purchase.php>

Requirements: Mac OS X 10.2 or WinTel; 64MB Hard Drive space; 128MB RAM; QuickTime; Internet.

<http://www.earthbrowser.com/screenshots.html>

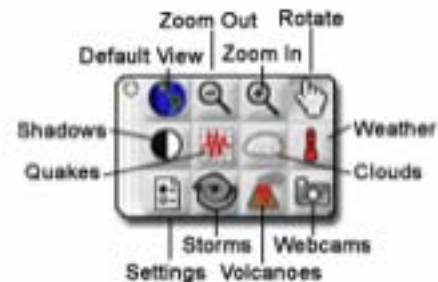


**Strengths:** Provides identification of political boundaries and links to more information and includes localized webcams.

**Weaknesses:** None found. Okay, earth views limited. Mapping limited. No moon or sun views.

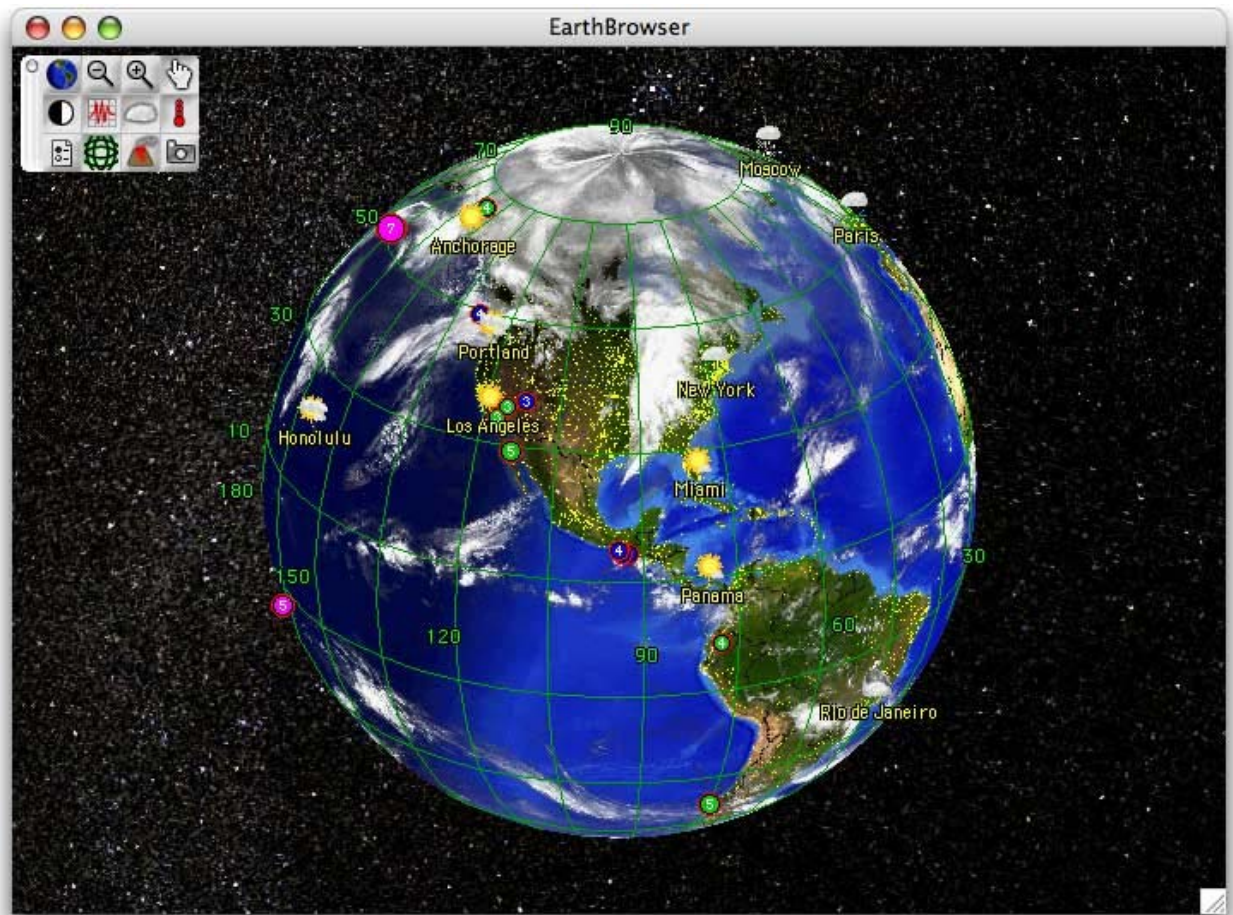
*EarthBrowser*, by LunarSoft is similar to the other earth reviews with 3D earth map (2k/pixel satellite view – 7 view locations) and real-time weather conditions, earthquake (last 40 from the USGS website) and volcanic activity (Smithsonian Global Volcanism Program - <http://www.volcano.si.edu/>) and cloud cover (3-hour updates). It also has webcam links for surface-level information for many locations and an option to add your own, including language options.

For weather watchers, a 7-day forecast can be presented including tropical storm activity, from around 17,000 locations around the world from 5 weather satellites. And the controls are customizable for a favorite city. If yours is missing, you can add it if you know the latitude and longitude (use negative signs for West and South coordinates).



**Diagram of Tools Window**





It can also look at political (with links to country facts via flag icons) as well as Tectonic Plate boundaries.

A night shadow also shows the season changes.

There is a downloadable 8-page instruction manual giving detailed instruction on how to use the program at



<http://www.earthbrowser.com/manual>.



If the database is corrupted, it can be reset. For Safari access for viewing volcanic activity from the Smithsonian, the Text-encoding submenu has to be changed to Western ISO-Latin encoding to be made visible. Country and city labels appear as you drill down closer from space.

So what we see is a little more flexibility with drilling down, discovering a little more about geography, real-time webcamming and customizing that is missing from the other spaceview programs.

Give it a go!

**OSXplanet 0.78 for 10.2-10.3** Reviewed by Robert Pritchett



# OSXplanet

Live Desktop For Mac OS X

**Developer:** Gabriel Otte

<mailto:gabriel@otte.ucsc.edu>

<http://otte.ucsc.edu/~gabriel/osxplanet.html>

**Freeware Released:** October 30, 2004

**Size:** 5.2 MB Download.

**Requirements:** Mac OS X 10.2.x or later.

**Documentation:**

<http://otte.ucsc.edu/~gabriel/osxplanet.documentation.html#ReleaseNotes>

**FAQs:** <http://otte.ucsc.edu/~gabriel/osxplanet.faq.html>



**Strengths:** Shows natural activity around the globe.

**Weaknesses:** Under construction.

*OSXplanet*, created by Gabriel Otte, is a program based on the popular program, *xplanet*<sup>38</sup>, made in Cocoa and Objective-C for Mac OS X.

What sets this program apart from the likes of *EarthDesk* and *DesktopEarth*, is that it provides views of other planets in the galaxy and projects a view of earth from those as well.

It also provides various projections of earth itself and can center on various cities around the globe.

The other parts that makes this program neat are the visual representations of Clouds, Storms (including hurricanes and depressions), Satellites, Volcanoes, and Earthquakes (weekly updates) in what could be considered to be “real-time” every 3 hours.

If you want real representation of satellites, get *FreeFall* from ExtremeMac. *OSXplanet* shows 2 satellites mostly (ISS and Hubble).

Actions take place from the icon that gets placed in the menu toolbar. If multiple screens are to be supported, then consider providing some donations to Gabriel through PayPal.

<sup>38</sup> <http://xplanet.sourceforge.net/>



## Software

### Carrara™ 4 Pro: 3D Animation and Design Solution Reviewed by Robert Pritchett



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Mountain View, CA 94041 USA  
650) 938-0515

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**Fax:** +33 (0) 556 47 80 61

[mailto:europa\\_info@eovia.com](mailto:europa_info@eovia.com)

<http://www.eovia.com>

Product Link: [http://www.eovia.com/products/carrara\\_pro/carrara\\_pro.asp](http://www.eovia.com/products/carrara_pro/carrara_pro.asp)

**Released:** October 25, 2004

\$580 USD, €80, Upgrade, \$190, €90

**Requirements:** Mac OS X or Wintel platform 128MB RAM, 320 MB Hard Drive space, 24-bit display card, CD-ROM drive.

**Trial Download:** <http://www.eovia.com/resources/download.asp>

**Features:**

[http://www.eovia.com/products/carrara\\_pro/carrara\\_pro\\_new\\_features.asp](http://www.eovia.com/products/carrara_pro/carrara_pro_new_features.asp)

**Training:** [http://www.eovia.com/products/carrara\\_addons/training\\_cd.asp](http://www.eovia.com/products/carrara_addons/training_cd.asp)

See the training CD reviewed last month.

**Comes with:** 650-page Reference Guide, 6-page Quick Reference Guide, 3 CDs containing application, content and Amapi™ Designer7

[http://www.eovia.com/products/amapi\\_designer/amapi\\_designer.asp](http://www.eovia.com/products/amapi_designer/amapi_designer.asp) (value \$480 USD).



**Strengths:** Cross-platform 3D animation and design.

**Weaknesses:** None Found.

*Carrara™ 4 Pro* by Eovia is the latest Mac OS X-friendly rendition of Carrara Studio. It is a high-quality 3D animation and design tool that interoperates with Adobe Illustrator®, Photoshop®, and Corel Painter®, web tools such as Macromedia Flash®, Shockwave® and video editing and effects software such as Apple Final Cut Pro®, Avid Xpress®, Premiere® and After Effects®. It was presented at the Apple Expo in Paris, France in August, but was released in October.

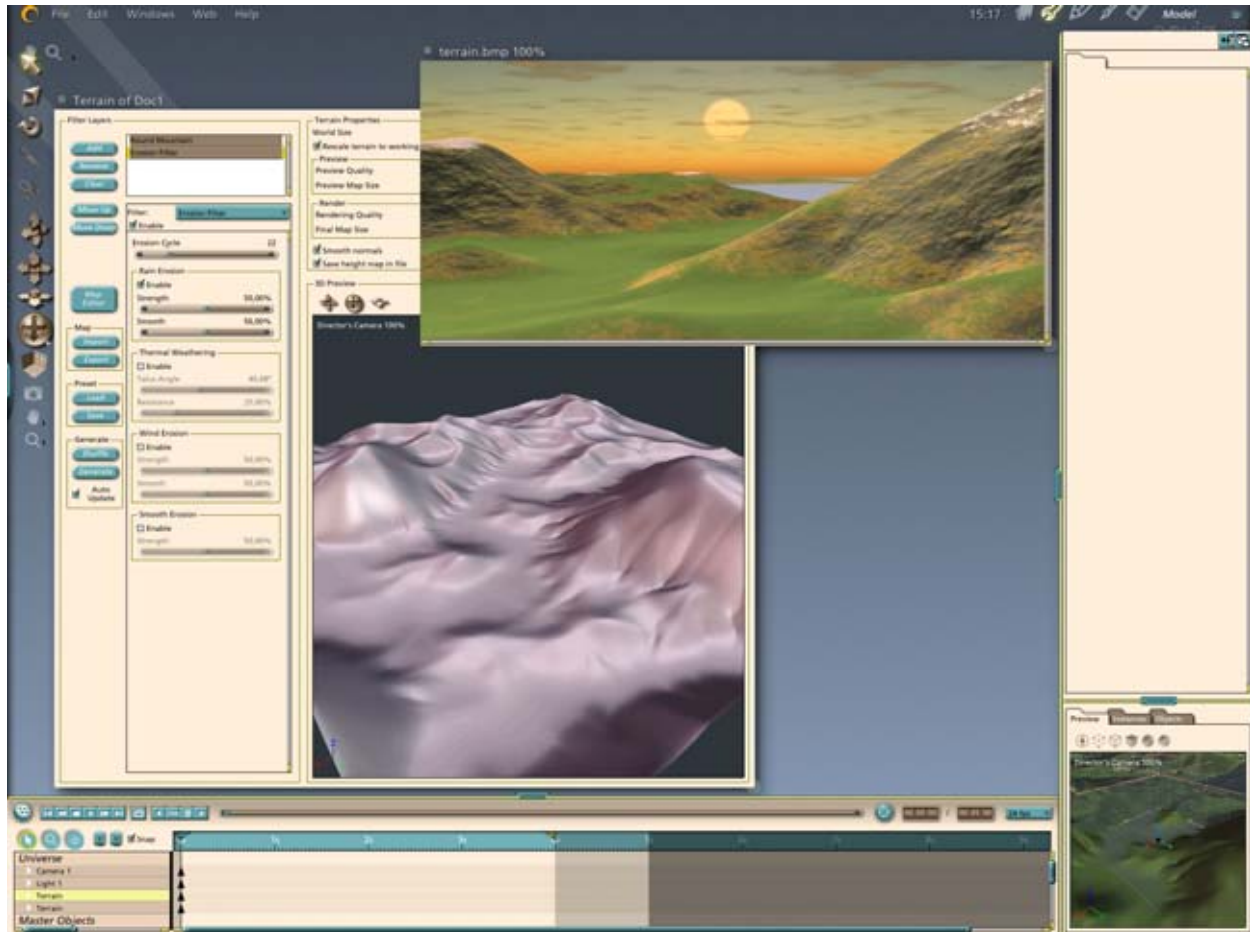
If you read the review in October of the book on Blender, here is a professional 3D package that is more than comparable to it.

I have provided the link above to the latest feature set added to the already long list from previous upgrades to Carrara. These include improvements to Scene Wizard, faster OpenGL functionality, raytraced depth of field, shader transforms and the ability to apply shaders to a group, and more accurate physics on the Macintosh® platform.

Included also are a sky module, a terrain module, new lighting and texture controls, improved rendering, IK (Inverse Kinetics), motion paths and timeline support.

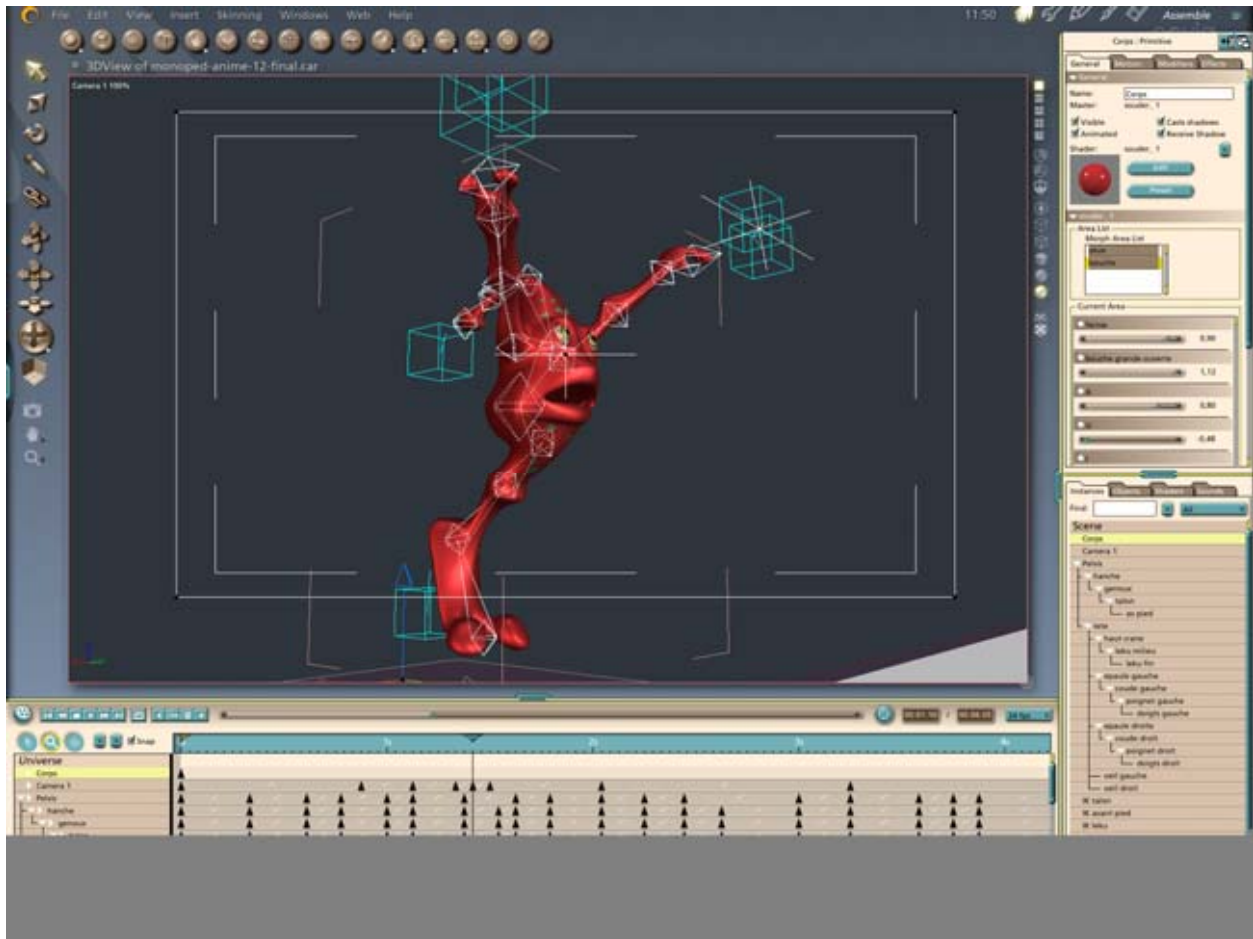
There is a new tool called SmartFlow. It provides an interface environment that walks through projects through a series of production steps and storyboarding.

If you are experienced in 2D design, you will enjoy learning 3D design either from downloading a copy of Blender or downloading a trial version of Carrara 4. In October we also published our review of the training CD for Carrara Studio 3. Carrara 4 Pro arrived in November.



Carrara 4 Pro supports the MetaStream file format for streaming over the Web.

There is a Standard Carrara version, but that one doesn't have vector and 3D motion blur, 4 new file imports, BVH (Biovision Hierarchical data), COB (Caligari's trueSpace format), FBX (VST audio sound preset files), LWO (Lightwave Objects), sound support in the timeline, network rendering and a full license of Amapi™ Designer 7 and Eovia's TransPoser and CADstyle plug-ins.

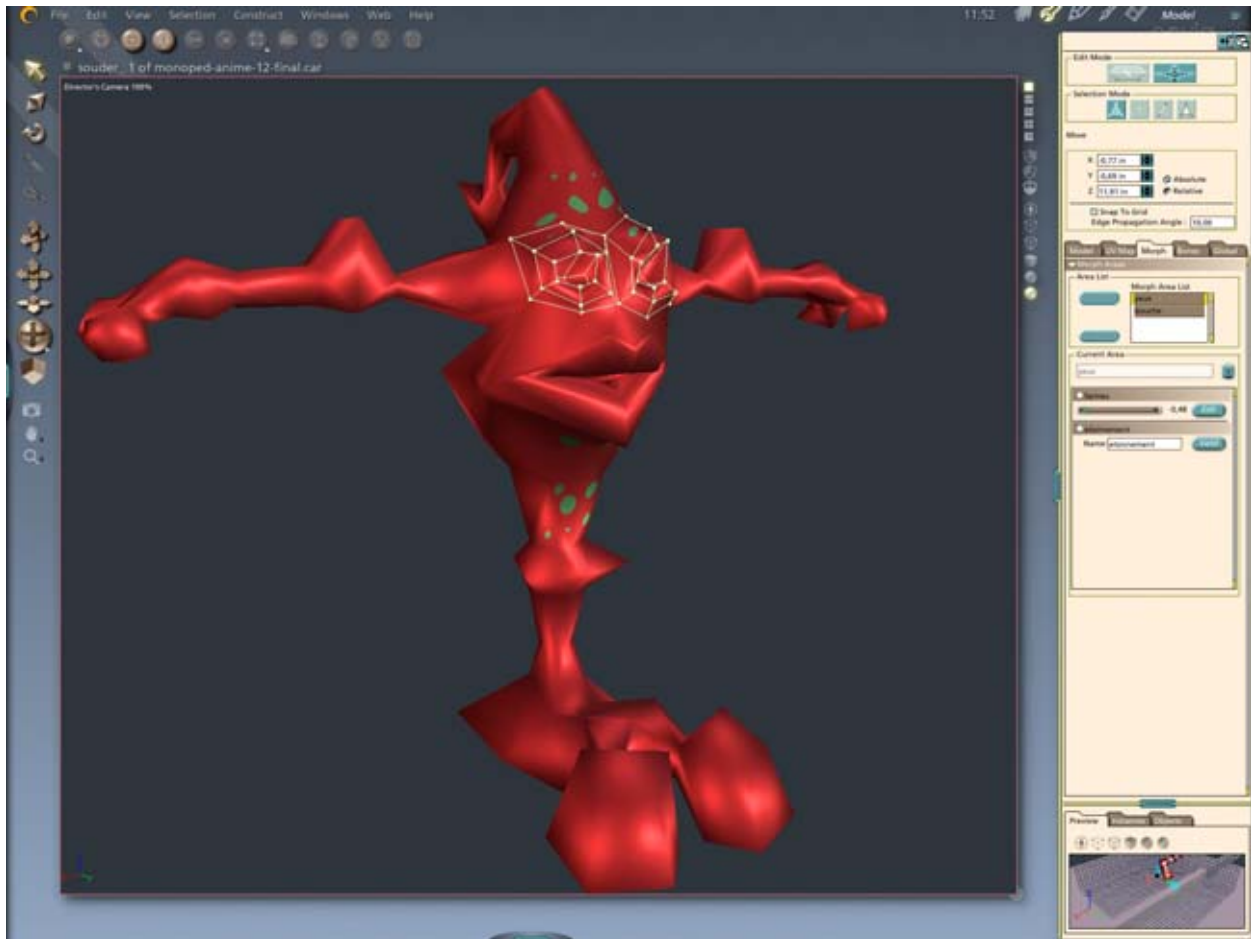


These are added to the already powerful tools of spline (adding cross-sections along customizable sweep paths) and vertex (polygon-level manipulation) modeling. And organic modeling functionality with the ability to add metaball-based shapes, bitmap-based terrains, particle-based effects such as rain and snow, and volumetric clouds and fog and adding control of vegetation trunk shape, leaf type, leaf twist with the Tree Maker engine.

The Texture Room offers shader functions such as Colour Gradient, Fractal Noise and an Environment option which shades terrains depending on their altitude, slope and orientation. The Overlay operator combines shading effects and a UV editing tool can be used to control texture map placement.

The 4 file imports of BVH, COB, FBX, LWO are added to the VET (Viewpoint Experience Technology for Windows environments) format that allows fully-textured 3D models for interactive viewing in a web browser and the W3D Shockwave format that incorporates 3D work into Director projects. To output to Flash SWF format, Eovia's VectorStyle plug-in is required.





High Dynamic Range Image (HDRI) creates realistic lighting in an attempt to get designs to look photo-realistic. With their Non Photo-Realistic (NPR) rendering engine named the geometry of a scene can be rendered as brush strokes with separate customizable controls over the main image, background, highlights, shadows and outline.

Interested in getting into 3D design? Here is a professional package that is considerably less expensive than the competition – and it is cross-platform.

# ESP

## Easy Software Products

Easy Software Products  
44141 Airport View Drive  
Suite 204  
Hollywood, MD 20636-3142 USA  
301-373-9600

Fax: 1-301-373-9604

<mailto:info@easysw.com>

<http://www.easysw.com>

Released: November 13, 2004

Product Link: <http://www.easysw.com/htmldoc/>

Screenshots: <http://www.easysw.com/htmldoc/shots.php>

Download: <http://www.easysw.com/htmldoc/software.php> 21-day demo available.

Documentation: <http://www.easysw.com/htmldoc/documentation.php>

Open Source Page: <http://www.htmldoc.org/>

FAQ: <http://www.easysw.com/htmldoc/faq.php>

\$50 USD; Pro version is \$500 USD.

Requirements: 4 MB hard drive space.

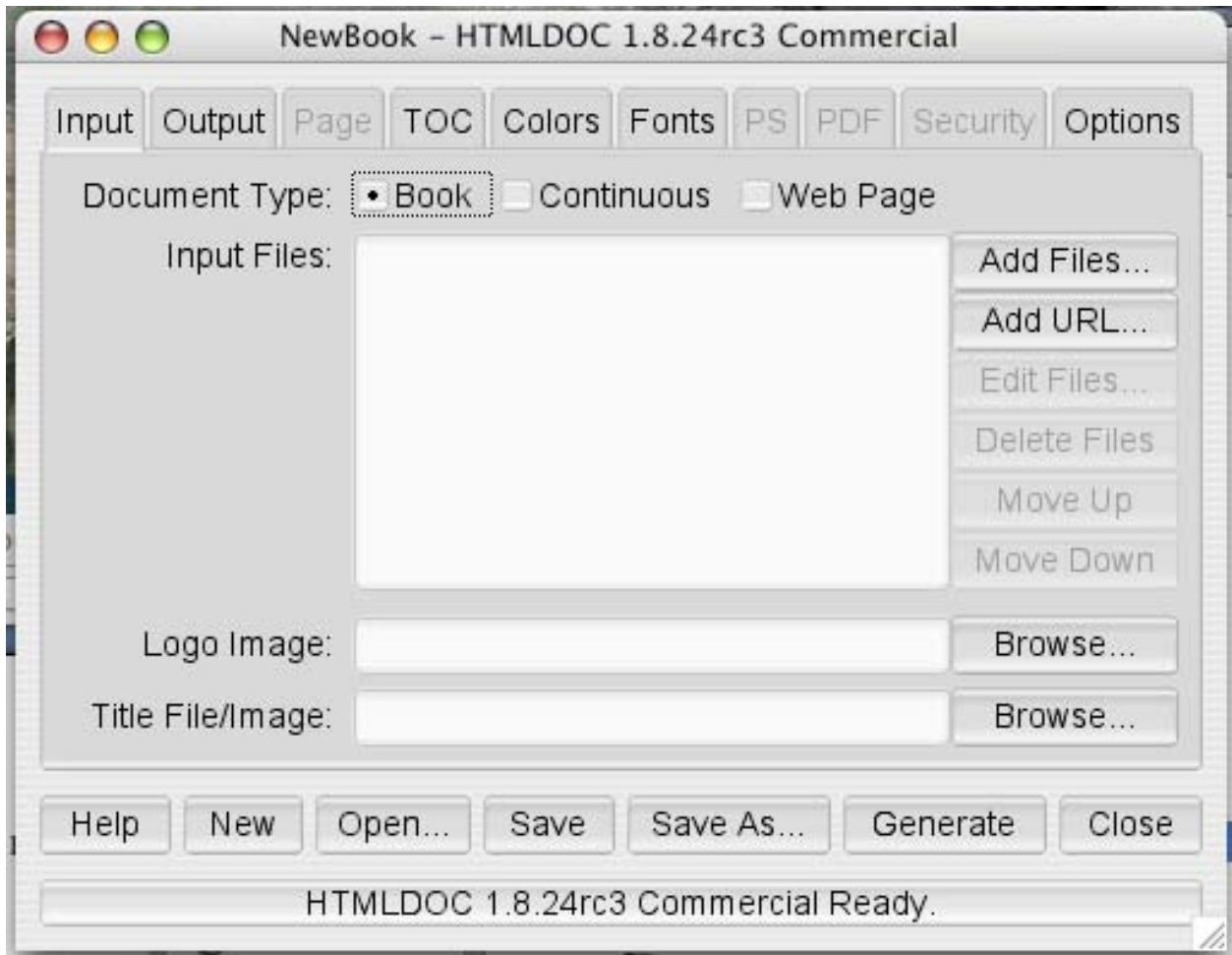


**Strengths:** Cross-platform Open Source HTML converter.

**Weaknesses:** Does not support CSS yet and has font limitations.

*HTMLDOC* by Easy Software Products is a cross-platform Open Source program that converts Hyper-Text Markup Language (HTML) files into table of contents for books or as indexed HTML, Adobe® PostScript®, or Adobe Portable Document Format (PDF) files. It works with most UNIX or Linux®2.4 or later, UNIX® (Solaris® 7 or later), and Windows® 2000 or later operating systems and also with Mac OS X® 10.2.x or later.

HTMLDOC is released under the GNU General Public License and as commercial software under a commercial End-User License Agreement with no restrictions on output. It can be used as a standalone GUI application, in a batch document processing environment, as a web-based report generation application, or in embedded environments to support printing of HTML content.



HTMLDOC features converting individual files or pages as well as managing large manuals and reports for publication. Book files can be created using the GUI to manage collections of files and pages that are updated regularly. It supports most HTML 3.2 elements, some HTML 4.0 elements but does not support CSS yet. The command-line application can be used for batch processing of HTML files or embedded in a web server to provide a PDF version of any pages on the server.

HTMLDOC Professional is \$500 US and adds one year of telephone and on-line support for general HTMLDOC usage questions and priority bug fixes.

I find it interesting that an intelligence agency initially commissioned the software build of this package and now it is possible for us to also grab HTML sources and either save those as PDFs or in electronic book form. The other “ESP” is Extra-Sensory Perception. If you need to study sourcecode for electronic books or websites, here is an easily perceptible way to gather your own “InTel” (Intelligence).

Product Features	Basic	Professional
HTML 3.2 <sup>1</sup>	✓	✓
International Text <sup>2</sup>	✓	✓
Standard Fonts <sup>3</sup>	✓	✓
BMP, GIF, JPEG, and PNG Images	✓	✓
Multiple Platform Support	✓	✓
Indexed HTML Book Creation	✓	✓
PDF Book and File Creation	✓	✓
PostScript Book and File Creation	✓	✓
Command-Line (Batch) Interface	✓	✓
Graphical Interface	✓	✓
Web Server Interface	✓	✓
Support for Installation and Licensing Questions	✓	✓
"How To" Articles		✓
Telephone and On-Line Support for General Usage Questions		✓
Priority Bug Fixes		✓

#### Notes

1. HTMLDOC supports the following HTML elements: A, ACRONYM, ADDRESS, B, BIG, BLOCKQUOTE, BODY, BR, CAPTION, CENTER, CITE, CODE, DD, DEL, DFN, DIR, DIV, DL, DT, EM, EMBED, FONT, H1, H2, H3, H4, H5, H6, HEAD, HR, HTML, I, IMG, INS, KBD, LI, MENU, META, OL, P, PRE, S, SAMP, SMALL, SPACER, STRIKE, STRONG, SUB, SUP, TABLE, TD, TH, TR, TT, U, UL, and VAR.
2. HTMLDOC supports the following character sets: CP-874, CP-1250, CP-1251, CP-1252, CP-1253, CP-1255, CP-1256, CP-1257, CP-1258, ISO-8859-1, ISO-8859-2, ISO-8859-3, ISO-8859-4, ISO-8859-5, ISO-8859-6, ISO-8859-7, ISO-8859-8, ISO-8859-9, ISO-8859-14, ISO-8859-15, and KOI8-R.
3. HTMLDOC supports the following standard fonts: Arial, Courier, Helvetica, Symbol, and Times.

## NovaMind 2.4.4 — Brainstorming (e.g., Mind Mapping) and More At It's Easiest Reviewed by Harry {doc} Babad, Edited by Julie M. Willingham

NovaMind Software Pty Ltd.

<mailto:info@nova-mind.com>

<http://www.nova-mind.com>

\$79 USD Single user.

**File Size:** ca. 10.7 MB

**Uninstaller:** Not included and no instructions provided.

**Requirements:** Mac OS 10.2+ (10.3 or later recommended).

20 MB of available hard disk space for NovaMind (additional 30 MB for Branch Proposal System Software.)

**Audience:** All user levels, from business users to students

This 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:** Mind mapping does not require you to buy a mind mapping application. You can draw mind maps in a diagramming program, but the odds are that you will spend more time thinking about drawing the map than about the reason why you are drawing the map. So, a mind mapping application is not a luxury. NovaMind is an impressive mind mapping application that helps you with the thinking process because the drawing process itself is mindless. There are also 5 free optional graphic libraries with a total of 1400 high quality images, which take up a total of 120 MB if you install them all.

**Weaknesses:** No weaknesses encountered except that despite detailed links to mind mapping information, the information available from the publisher's web site does not prepare a user to *think through* the act of brainstorming well. I've provided readers with links to sites that can aide in the 'thinking' aspects of brainstorming that you can convert to a mind map with the NovaMind software.

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

### Software Overview

NovaMind is a great way to organize your thoughts, remember information, generate ideas, solve problems, and focus on the main issues in an easy and creative way by using mind mapping techniques. It can aid you in project planning, brainstorming (including task prioritization), and diagramming the pathway to solving complex problems.

### Introduction

This review is both about the NovaMind Software and the act of brainstorming, because relative to this product, the two cannot be separated. One without the other creates a situation where the user has access to a powerful and easy to use tool that results in a GIGO result. NovaMind allows you to produce stylish, information rich, vivid diagrams to tie your ideas together, allowing for enhanced creative thinking, sharper management and organization skills, increased productivity, and compelling presentations. I think in words, not symbols or diagrams—a hard habit to break.

For background, when I worked full time, nary a week would go by without a group of us researcher types getting together to brainstorm how to best tackle complex problems in radioactive waste chemistry. Our main tool, initially, was a blackboard, and our work was documented in large tripod-mounted pads of paper. After capturing ideas, we processed them in the usual manner, first eliminating duplicates, then grouping concepts, and finally ranking our choices...paper and more paper. The paper sheets were then taped to the meeting room walls, with more wallpaper being created as we progressed though the brainstorming exercise. We created forward paths for what appeared to be the two or three most effective research routes, defined constraints, and where, as was the usual case, there were overlaps, we did some consolidation or integration of R&D steps. Of course, for the record, all of the scrawled meeting notes had to be captured, after our meeting, to provide a basis for convincing management that our approach was right or workable. The goal, to get funding of course, was to demonstrate that recommended approach(s) would at least work toward resolving our problem in an expedient, cost-effective manner.

Now there is software to take some of the mechanical tedium out of such work, something I never had available prior to retiring in 1996. As a result, I developed an interest in brainstorming tools to enhance group efforts to think out-of-the-box when attempting to solve problems.

In the February 2004 *macCompanion*, [Volume 2 Issue 2] I reviewed one such tool, Inspiration™ 7.5. As noted by its publisher, Inspiration 7.5 is a powerful tool that helps clarify and organize ideas and information in an easy to use visual metaphor. Inspiration's Diagram view makes it easy to brainstorm, plan, and explain the interrelationships between processes, variables, and events. I found the education-focused interface too cutesy for my taste and although I rated it highly, it did not suit my notion of proper brainstorming software (which was, of course, biased by my flat file [paper] experiences).

I had also previously tried and reviewed Tinder Box™ v. 1.2.2, personal content management assistant, for Macintosh in the February 2003 issue of *macCompanion*. Although not aimed at brainstorming, its feature could have been used for such a task. In the time I had to work with that product, I never came close to being comfortable with Tinder Box. This despite the fact that Tinder Box is often used by data management professionals to compile and relate data. When I stated working with Tinder Box, based on information found on the publishers site, I thought it might have been a great tool to capture ideas generated by brainstorming, and as a result, received a little bit of flaming for my review.

Since my frequency of brainstorming has dropped to only several times a year, I kept my eyes out for a tool that I could learn and not forget how to use, even when I only had an occasional need for it. Then along came NovaMind and I jumped at a chance to review it, intrigued by the publisher's detailed linking of their product to mind mapping, AKA brainstorming. Now, the practical difference between traditional brainstorming and mind mapping is the change from focusing on text to using images, with underlying text, to capture your ideas, the latter serving as a vessel for the text description of your thoughts.

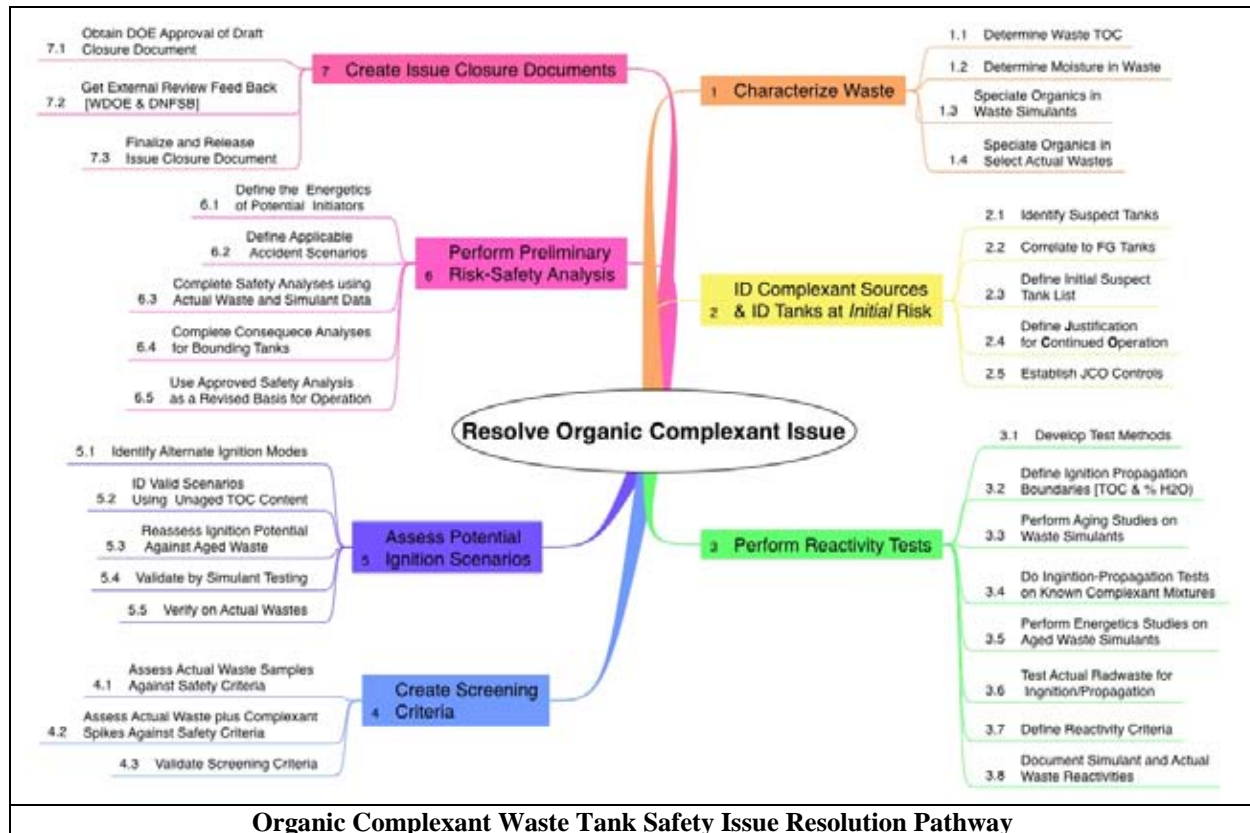
### **Working with the Product**

I have never comfortably used mind map software, as I am used to writing everything on paper. It's not that I'm too old fashioned to learn new ways of brainstorming, but I have always found that idea-generation programs and I didn't get along well. I was encouraged by the publisher's statement, which I paraphrase here, that "Businesses have found NovaMind a great way to plan strategies, projects, brainstorm and to create business oriented presentations in a way that is professional appearing, easy to understand."

Installation is simple. Drag the NovaMind application to your application folder. Double click in the application icon and you're ready to start to use the product.

With only a little bit of practice, I found that it supported and strengthened the idea creation process, and it does so in ways that you can customize to your ideas, doing the diagramming without having to deal with clumsy distracting diagramming interfaces. My primary test case focused around a past project that dealt with experimentally determining that waste soluble organic chemicals in Hanford's waste tanks did not pose a potential explosion hazard. (Yes, I cheated, having done this exercise several times over the years until that particular safety issue was successfully resolved.) Oh, the question in English is whether the high-level waste in tanks that contained organic chemicals left over from waste processing could, under any plausible circumstance, go bang in the night. The short answer is **no!**





And now, the details...

NovaMind has three user modes: Free Layout mode, Assisted mode, and Controlled mode. *Assisted mode* is the easiest mode to use, as the program automatically maintains spacing between the branches of your diagram, making it easy to see the relationships. Mind maps are rearranged by just dragging the branches. In *free layout* mode, you can drag around the canvas as desired. *Controlled mode* arranges everything around the Mind Map title. Everything is controlled by settings you use, which you've established in its control panel. I switched between modes, but so far have no favorite.

Starting from scratch, I completed a roughed out mind map for a closure pathway for the Hanford Tank Organic Complexant Safety Issue. The mapping mechanics were straightforward. I clicked to add branches and their siblings where I needed them, and when I needed room, I made it by dragging material out of the way. (When starting, I found *Assisted mode* too confining, so switched to *Free mode*.) As I worked, I found I was accessing tools from the menu, so modified the original default tool bar to include them.

After creating my initial sets of branches for issue closure, I started creating sub-topics (sibling branches) to flesh out each branches detail. As I worked, I found that some of my subtopics belong on other branches so I used copy, create a new sibling branch at the appropriate location and paste to create the appropriate location for that item. Then I deleted the original sibling branch by selecting and backspacing. As I worked, I could not figure out how a sibling branch could be detached and moved to snap it to another branch. Gideon King promptly provided me with the answer as well as correction factual errors in my pre-edit draft. I had thought about using the option key to facilitate such a drag, but I never tied it. "This is exactly what you can do – press the Option key and drag the branch to graft it onto another branch."

I don't like to work in outlines, so using the outline view to move things around wasn't my style.] Other sibling branches were out of logical order so I just dragged them to place they belonged on the branch to which they were attached. I then moved on to 'decorate' my creation by using the software's oval and rectangle features. Adding a splash of color to my geometric boxes was easy and I was ready to go.

I don't like to work in outlines, so using the outline view to move things around wasn't my style.] Other sibling branches were out of logical order so I just dragged them to place they belonged on the branch to which they were attached. I then moved on to 'decorate' my creation by using the software's oval and rectangle features. Adding a

splash of color to my geometric boxes was easy and I was ready to go.

Well not quite. Somewhere along the line, I had created a work sheet that was larger than 8.5 x 11 and since there was no page or print preview mode I was temporarily stopped short. Gideon A bit of trial and error, and in desperation I decided to print my product so see what happened. A small miracle occurred. The software's print dialog bounds told me I was outside the page boundaries so I allowed NovaMind to fix that and I got the map you see in this review. I exported the mind map into JPEG format, for use as a review illustration. Many other text and graphic options are available making your map available for a variety of desktop, print to web use. Gideon King also fed-back that "NovaMind allows you to use the Mac OS X standard print preview dialog, and also has options for scaling the Mind Map to single or multiple pages or % zoom."

One final confession. When I turned to the help in the menu bar, I found a tutorial that contained eight less that were simple and direct. Of course I only skimmed them, after all I found them only when prompted by Gideon's feedback. Take the tutorial, it's with the small amount of time!

Although I was fighting an unassisted leaning curve, without having initially found a formal manual, creating a three-level issue resolution strategy map was straightforward. There are a few features that I could not find or are missing that I would welcome on the next upgrade.

- The ability to see page boundaries (page grids) like the ones I see in my working document when using AppleWorks when working in draw or paint mode.
- Having a more easily available a page preview mode to check overall layout appearance
- More shortcut commands for those of us who work faster by using them. I did no, until Gideon pointed it out to me, note that the shortcuts page in the help menu contained shortcuts. "Just about everything is able to be done by keyboard shortcut."

I could work around all of these shortfalls and am quite pleased with the product I produced. I tried to map a few other projects, but because I may have been temporarily brain dead, none of them came out to my liking. In addition, for completeness of this review, I skimmed many of the sample mind maps that were located in the gallery section of the NovaMind website. The template and examples are a great resource for folks who either need ideas for mind map use or for the details of mind mapping.



Although the NovaMind software can't magically resolve issues for you, it can help plan and brainstorm issues to find resolutions and alternatives. Although I found the resulting eye-candy of my product irrelevant, it can certainly serve to highlight the various elements and points of the mind map, making communication of its content easier.

**The Big Picture** — Use NovaMind start to capture your ideas in your map by defining your problem in the diagram title. Around this central starting point, add all your ideas, in a nonjudgmental fashion, for resolving the issue. (The trick to brainstorming is that once you tap into the flow of ideas, just keep them coming)! Your top level branches that radiate from the title are your BOIs (Basic Ordering of *your* Ideas), categories, or chapter heading equivalents on the branches.

NovaMind can automatically arrange your page so all suggestions for issue resolution radiate from the title. After you've done this first brain dump, you've taken a big step forward by not losing the main focus, resolving your issue, and avoiding getting sucked into the details that automatically narrow your thought processes. It's the old "losing sight of the forest for the trees" paradigm. This technique allows you to plan problem resolution routes, make choices, and let you know where you are going and where you have been.

NovaMind includes the Branch Proposal System (BPS), which suggests words and phrases which relate conceptually or linguistically to the selected branch, but are likely to make you think of new ideas or directions for your thought patterns. I chose not to test this feature.

**Moving On** — When you have no more potentially discrete issue resolution ideas, consider and compare the ideas you have documented. If necessary, consolidate or separate the potential solutions into finer details, a traditional brainstorming technique. Do so by adding new subdivisions or relabeling items to clarify your solutions ideas. Then go on to select the best options and start to add detail to you resolution strategy. (Note: Since I was mapping a problem I had originally brainstormed many years ago, I skipped this step.) Record further resolution details (the how of it) under the selected preferred options by creating links to the individual resolution alternatives. (Notice that option selection is done by using some kind of decision analysis weighting system.)

Soon you will have diagrammed the steps and sub-steps required to achieve the desired outcome(problem resolution). In the publisher's parlance, by adding "child" branches under your BOIs to hold supporting data or additional detail, you flesh out the options and "sub-steps" needed to do your in-depth analysis for each resolution option. Then you can start, at another level of detail, to define time frames and other constraints for achieving issue resolution, perhaps as notes or at deeper levels of your map's outline.

The brainstorming methods, with help in diagramming and linking ideas with NovaMind, helps you tap into your ideas and identify ways to resolve issues, by never losing sight of the original (central) target. In a stepwise fashion, you or your team can work through the problem in manageable increments until you are able to focus in the benefits and risks to any given resolution method. With your key objectives in the diagrammed into middle of the Mind Map and the specific needed resolution requirements (e.g., information needs) broken down into logical and achievable steps, you can illustrate what would be involved in a format that is easy to understand by your management and coworkers

Alternatively, get a few folks together in a room with a PC projector and work the details and alternatives out together. If the contents you capture with NovaMind are unconstrained by premature judgment, the potential solutions generated will be the best available, given the group's knowledge. A very useful feature of this software, to this verbally oriented reviewer, was the ability to link text to branches for capturing details, making presentations, or printing a mind map. A subset of NovaMind's feature are included below — Check out the developer's website for more features.

<b>NovaMind – A Sampling of its Basic Features</b>	
<b>Fast Mind Map Creation</b>	Quickly create Mind Maps using keyboard hotkeys
<b>Easy Grafting</b>	Just drag your branches to a new parent branch to reorganize
<b>Instant User Feedback</b>	As you drag branches around, change their colors, fonts, and images, the changes are shown immediately
<b>Branch Notes</b>	Attach rich text notes to any branch to give detailed information about the topic
<b>Automatic Coloring</b>	Rainbow coloring mode or specified colors. Full transparency support is included, allowing for graphic overlays and special effects
<b>Change Branch Shapes</b>	Line, oval, rectangle, rounded-rectangle branch shapes or our patented FlexiBranch™
<b>Branch Images</b>	Images can be attached to any branch type, and the text placed above, centered, or below.
<b>Inter-Branch Links</b>	Link lines indicate related branches.
<b>Hyperlinks on Branches</b>	Hyperlinks can be attached to any branch, linking to web sites, email, NovaMind documents or other files
<b>Attached Graphics</b>	Attach images, shapes or text to branches – the graphics move when the parent branch is moved
<b>Branch Text</b>	The text on the branches can contain multiple fonts and colors
<b>Spell Checking</b>	Full support for checking spelling as you type, or checking of the whole Mind Map separately
<b>Printing</b>	Print the Mind Map scaled to a single page or multiple pages, or a percentage size. Print Mind Map outline. Full control over output and headers & footers etc.
<b>Contains an Integrated Outliner</b>	A fully featured outlining program is included, allowing for outline style editing of the Mind Map
<b>Drag &amp; .Drop</b>	Full drag and drop support of all file types for creating hyperlinks and adding graphics etc.
<b>Zoom</b>	Custom or pre-set zoom to see the Mind Map clearly
<b>Find &amp; Replace</b>	Find and replace text anywhere in your Mind Map
<b>Inspector</b>	Slide-out Inspector window with Branch, Graphics, Link Lines, Tree Display and Tree Layout tabs for full control of the Mind Map
<b>Auto-save</b>	Saves your files regularly. There is also support for automatically making backup files

What I, and other reviewers, liked best about NovaMind is that it doesn't make you think about drawing and laying out your thoughts. You can just start by clicking the branch buttons and enter text rapidly. Afterwards, you can improve the looks of your mind map, or you can set up your environment so you start with an elegant mind map layout each time you use the program. In terms of available templates, the publisher has plenty of example mind maps in the gallery section of the website.

### **The Definition and Objective of Brainstorming – You too can learn how!**

Brainstorming *n.*

- A method of shared problem solving in which all members of a group spontaneously contribute ideas and possible solutions to a given problem. In effect, group members storm a problem with their brains.
- A similar process undertaken by a person to solve a problem by rapidly generating a variety of possible solutions.

The objective of brainstorming is to be creative, and get all possible ideas “on the table”. In brainstorming, all ideas are accepted as presented with no question or argument. The facilitator records every comment exactly as made. Conventions of brainstorming require that every team member’s response be treated with equal value. All comments are valid and accepted. Part of brainstorming will involve a selection process. It is often used as a first step in the creative process. It is rapid-fire suggestions designed to get the creative juices flowing! When properly used it can generate new ideas or approaches to problem solving and release an individual or groups potentialities in thinking up ideas.

Brainstorming Info Sites

- [http://www.swlearning.com/web\\_resources/decision.htm](http://www.swlearning.com/web_resources/decision.htm)
- <http://www4.ncsu.edu/~twbuie/id318/id318index.html>
- <http://www.webster-dictionary.org/definition/brainstorming>

Note that a mind map is a way of visually depicting the result(s) of your brainstorming activity.

### **Software Limitations**

Lack of Discussion of Tools to Narrow Problem Solving Options — I was uncomfortable that both the NovaMind website and the linked pages about mind mapping were silent on the real need for using decision analysis weighting systems for quasi-objective and documented option selection. It is the linchpin for getting ideas and alternatives narrowed to those that can be best defended. Such tools need not be complex, but they must consider all the decision characteristics; e.g., technical feasibility, schedule restraints, cost constraints, defensibility.

Too Great an Implied Emphasis on Solo Mapping Efforts — My long experience with brainstorming has convinced me that only by putting an ad hoc team of knowledgeable people together, for an afternoon, can you get the a relatively complete insight into resolving your problem. All of us are trapped by our own experiences, and tend to focus only on the tried and true techniques, which are often inadequate to resolve complex problems. The lack of emphasis on brainstorming as a group activity calls the mind mapping guidance by the developer into question.

Sequencing Problem Resolution Steps — In real life issue resolution circumstances there are always activities that need to be done in parallel. Although, NovaMind is not the appropriate tool to do PERT analysis, mention of the often non-sequential nature of problem resolution would be helpful to users. I know this was implied by the discussion of identifying time frames for action in the information on the publisher's website, the nature of the linked diagrams leads one to thinking sequentially, a planning risk. However, other than using graphic elements and capturing details in outline-associated text, I could find no means of building time and sequence constraints in my Organic Issue Resolution mind map.

Limited Time Reviewer License – I have reviewed software for the last three or four years. NovaMind Software is the only company whose product I've reviewed that provides only a 3-month license to reviewers. I have not down graded the product for this pettiness, but was sorely tempted to do so. However, although I find the software useful and easy to brainstorm with, I shall not relicense it when the software expires, unless of course I have a business reason to do so.

### **Conclusions**

Using the software was straightforward and easy. The diagramming process did not, in my sample problem, detract from my thought processes. Remember, I waited to make it pretty until after I'd gotten the tiered details right. In 20-20 hindsight, I actually came up with a few lower-level approaches that would have facilitated solving the organic complexant safety issue. These *ex post facto* insights might have saved us a few false steps ten years ago.

Despite finding a few troublesome assumptions in the mind mapping details on the publisher's web pages, the software did what it claimed. It freed my mind to think more deeply about my sample issue resolution problem by freeing me from the mechanics of capturing the relationship associated with defining and details for issue resolution. As noted by the publisher, with NovaMind you can "spend more time on content, less on drawing - Let NovaMind do the drawing while you do the thinking."

I rate this product 4.5 macCs, with kudos to the publisher for continuing to respond to users suggestions and for his prompt late night feed back that served to correct a few initial errors of fact.



## <oXygen/><sup>TM</sup> XML Editor 5.0 Reviewed by A. David McKinnon

SyncRO Soft Ltd.  
str. Gilort, nr. 9  
Craiova, RO-1100  
Romania  
+40-251-461480.  
Fax: +40-251-461482.

<mailto:support@oxygenxml.com>

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

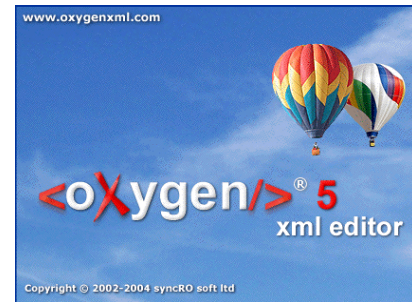
**Released:** October 15, 2004

**Professional:** \$96 USD, \$44 USD Upgrade

**Academic:** \$48 USD, \$22 USD Upgrade

Volume discounts are available, see website for details.

**Requirements:** Mac OS X 10.0 or later; PowerPC G3 class system or higher; 256 MB of RAM and 80 MB free disk space;



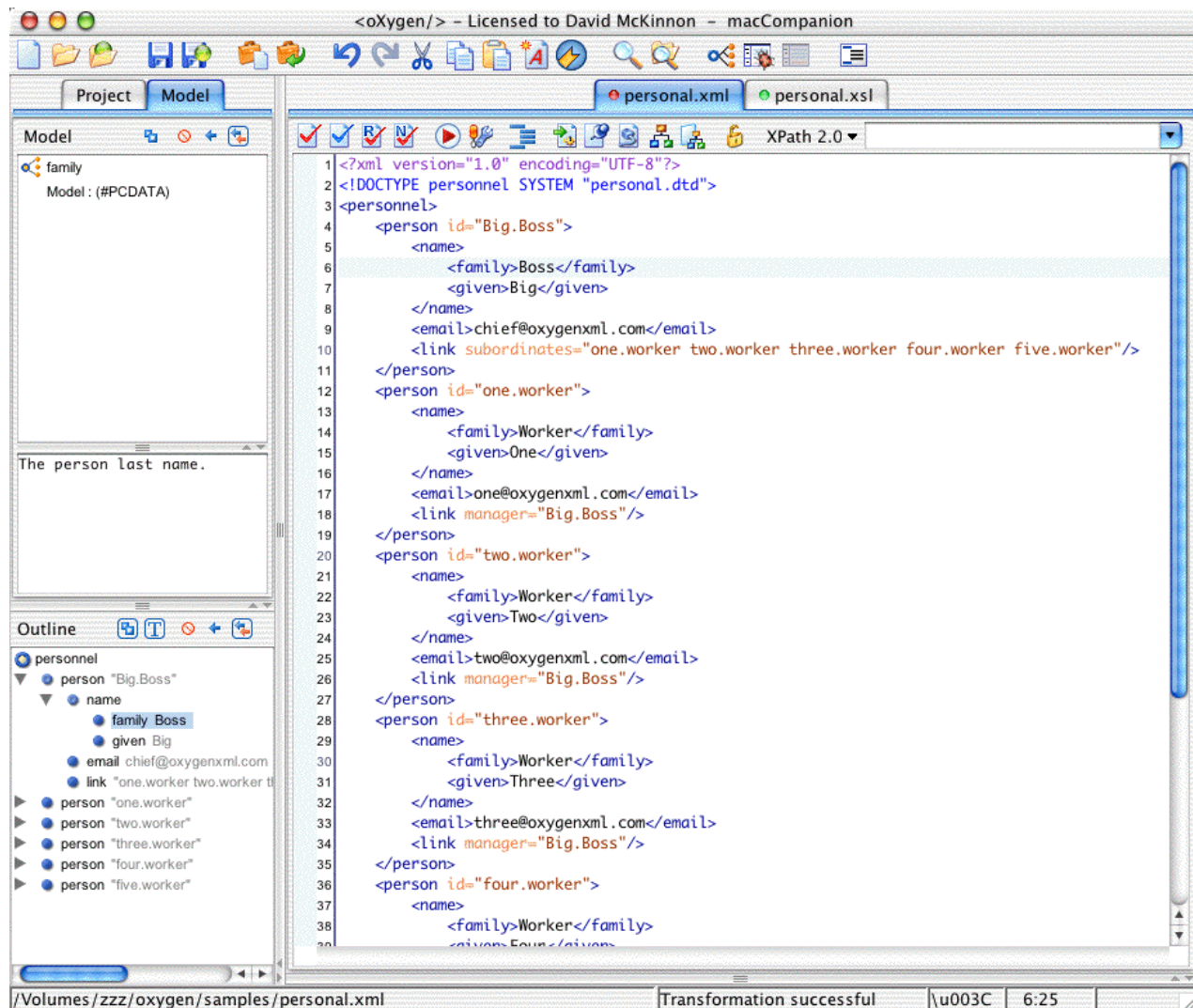
**Strengths:** Feature-rich XML editor and XSL/XSLT debugger. Supports editing XML, XML Schema, XSL, XSLT, and other XML-related file types. XSL/XSLT debugger allows for the side-by-side inspection of both the XML and XSL code during the debugging process. Support for many XML-related standards (DocBook, TEI, XSL:FO, XHTML, XPath, Relax NG, etc.). Cross-platform support (Mac, Windows, Unix/Linux, and Eclipse plugin). Multi-language support. Ease of installation.

**Weaknesses:** Lack of task-oriented documentation (i.e., no "cook book" or "hello world" type examples are presented in the documentation). This shortcoming will hinder the initial user experience with <oXygen/>, especially for novice XML developers

The <oXygen/><sup>TM</sup> XML Editor 5.0 was released in October 2004. It is a feature-rich XML editor and XSLT debugger with a successful past. This version is a significant upgrade that includes many new improvements and extensions. For example, XSLT 2.0 and XPath 2.0 are now supported and the editor now supports both XQuery and WSDL. For a full list of improvements, please refer to the <oXygen/> website at <http://www.oxygenxml.com/>. Many other features and subtle improvements have also been included, such the ability to support macros in the parameter values used for XSL transformations. Paul Everitt, one of the founders of Zope and also an <oXygen/> user, put together a short, narrated video demo of <oXygen/> (see Other Resources for the link).

### Background

Programmers and web developers have been editing files for decades. For over a decade text editors have supported color syntax highlighting and simple context sensitive help. This is often adequate for programming, but it is not enough for XML development. XML documents must be both well-formed and valid. An XML document is well-formed if it is syntactically correct (e.g., no misplaced angle brackets, all tags are fully nested). A document is valid if it meets all of the constraints imposed by its DTD (Document Type Definition). Simple syntax highlighting alone will not enable an XML developer to write well-formed and valid XML documents. <oXygen/> was developed to meet this need, by providing an easy-to-use environment where documents may be edited, tested for being well-formed, and validated.



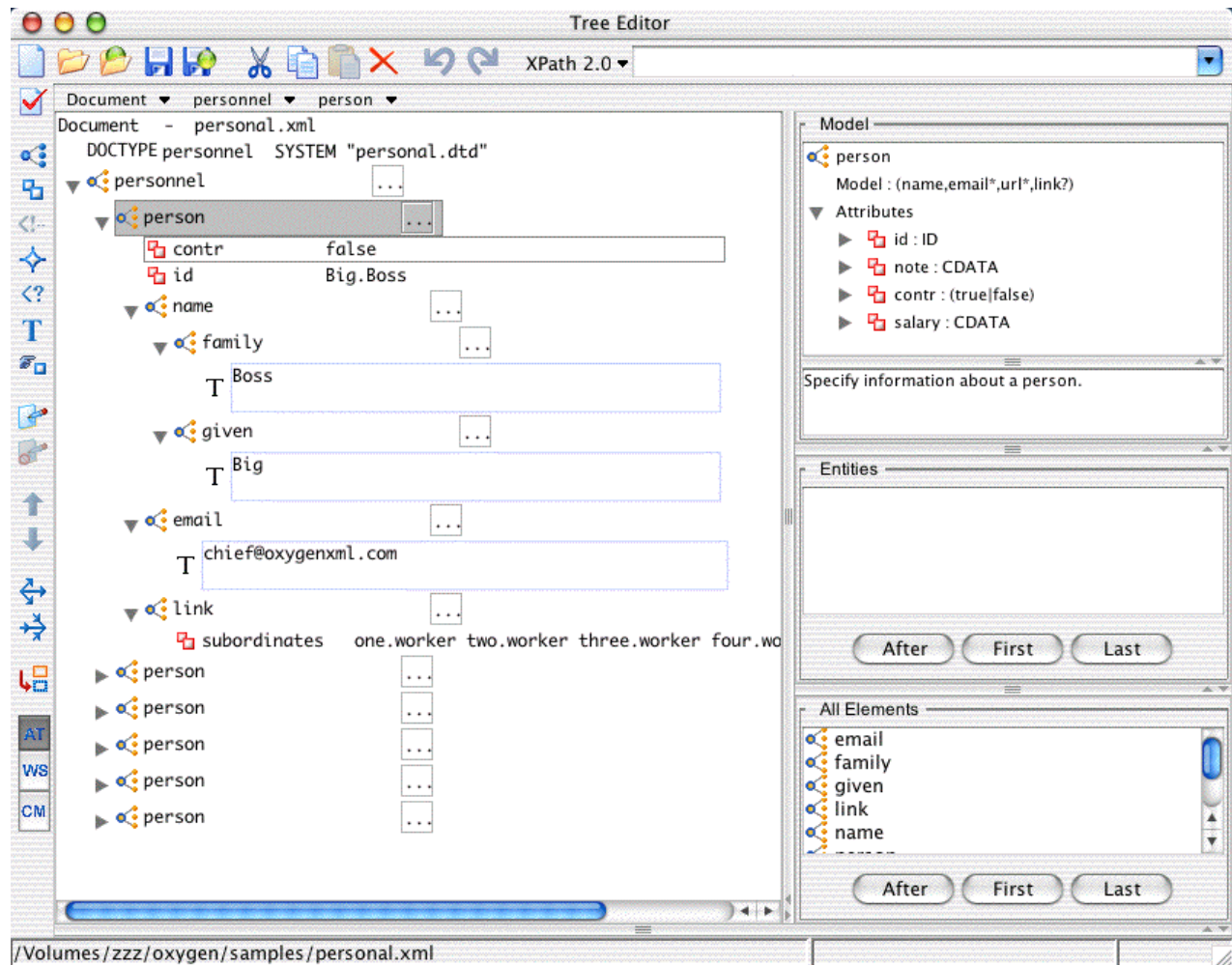
The Extensible Stylesheet Language (XSL) is an important XML-related standard that allows for transforming (XSLT) one XML document into another. The XSL standard also includes XSL Formatting Objects (XSL-FO), which specify display information so that XML documents may be appropriately displayed (e.g., web pages, PDF files). XSLT is based upon a functional programming paradigm that uses XSL templates to match and transform XML document data. An XSLT debugger is a useful tool because many programmers are not as familiar with debugging functional code as they are with debugging either procedural (e.g., C, Pascal) or object-oriented (e.g., C++, Java) code.

### <oXygen/> XML Editor 5.0

Installing <oXygen/> went smoothly and quickly. <oXygen/> is supported on four platforms: Mac OS, Windows, Linux/Unix, and the Eclipse IDE. Two versions of the <oXygen/> documentation exist, one for the stand-alone versions and another for the Eclipse plugin. The documentation is extensive and provides a detailed, feature-by-feature description of <oXygen/>. Unfortunately, for the new user, the lack of task-oriented documentation is a burden. Rather than follow a simple "cook book" or "hello world" example from start to finish, the new user must initially proceed by trial and error. Granted, this is not a major issue, but it does detract from the initial "out-of-the-box" experience. It is also an issue that the <oXygen/> developers are working to correct.

The strength of the <oXygen/> XML Editor is how well it integrates several XML-related components into an integrated document-centric editing environment. <oXygen/> leverages the extra structure and meaning of XML documents, gained by parsing the document's XML DTD or Schema, so that it can present truly context-sensitive help. For example, the content assistant only suggests auto-completion values for the current context, rather than all possible values. Additionally, as shown in the following screen shot, <oXygen/> can present a model view of the document's structure. The <family> tag is highlighted on line 6 of the "personal.xml" file, one of the many example

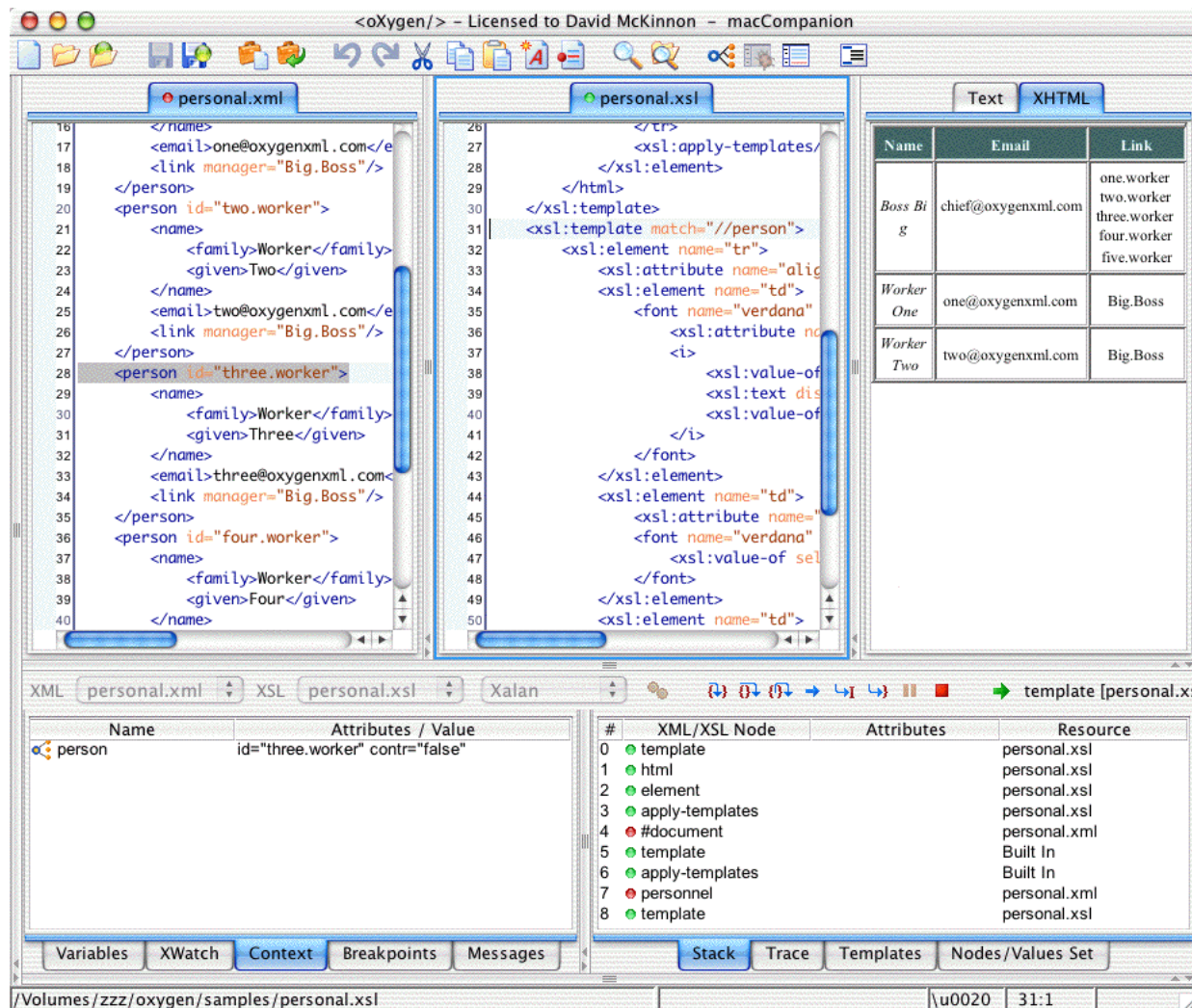
files included with <oXygen/>. On the left side of the screen, the <family> tag type is listed as #PCData and defined to be the "The person last name". In the lower-left corner, an outline view of the "Big Boss" and other workers is shown.



Another key feature of <oXygen/> is its ability to present an XML file in a structured tree-oriented view, as shown in the following screen shot. This tree editor view shows an expanded view of the "Big Boss" and collapsed placeholders for the other five workers listed in the "personal.xml" file. The information presented in the tree editor view is linked to the standard text-file view so that changes made in either screen will be updated in the other.

When debugging XML and XSL stylesheets, <oXygen/> enters a special mode that shows both the XML and XSL files side-by-side. This mode also shows the output of the XSL transformation; debugging status (e.g., variables, XWatch, context); and a stack trace of the current debugging session. The XML and XSL side-by-side nature of the debugging allows one to track the processing of the XSL transformations. The fact that the stack trace window, see the following screen shot, shows both current line in the XML file (red bullet) and in the XSL file (green bullet) provides further assistance in following the XSL transformation processing. <oXygen/> is bundled with both the Saxon and Xalan XSL transformation engines. It can also be configured to use other engines, if desired.





## Concluding Remarks

<oxygen/> is a robust and extensible XML editor and XSLT debugger that supports over a dozen XML-related standards (only a few of which were mentioned in this review). Its developers have taken care to integrate many separate tools (editor, XML validating parser, XSLT debugger, FO processing) into a comprehensive, easy-to-use XML editing/development environment. If you currently use a disparate set of XML-related tools, now might be time to consider "upgrading" to <oxygen/>. Existing users will find the new features and support for updated standards a strong motivator for upgrading to version 5.0.

## Other Resources

The <oxygen/> XML Editor website at <http://www.oxygenxml.com> provides a detailed overview of <oxygen/> and its features. This website also contains links to an <oxygen/> mailing list, online user forum, and a resource page that points to many XML-related standards supported by <oxygen/>.

Tutorials and articles on XML-related topics can be found at <http://www.xml.org>, <http://www.zvon.org>, and many other websites.

Paul Everitt's <oxygen/> demo and discussions of it are at:

<http://radio.weblogs.com/0116506/2004/03/23.html> (weblog article introducing the demo)

<http://zea.zope-europe.org/~paul/oxygen/oxygen.html> (the actual demo)

<http://www.oreillynet.com/pub/a/network/2004/11/11/primetime.html>

<http://weblog.infoworld.com/udell/2004/03/23.html#a951>

## Picture Rescue 1.1.0 Reviewed by Eddie Hargreaves

Prosoft Engineering, Inc.  
4725 1st St., Suite 270  
Pleasanton, CA 94566  
(925) 426-6100  
<http://www.prosofteng.com/>

\$59 USD **Requirements:** Mac OS X 10.2 or later; free disk space of twice the size of the media card being recovered from.



**Strengths:** Can recover deleted photos from digital camera media cards; Can see data after cards have been reformatted by camera; Adds custom icons to recovered photos; Erase Card function superior to reformatting in the camera.

**Weaknesses:** Erratic, unpredictable results; brushed metal interface is ugly, doesn't function properly.

Prosoft's Data Safety Suite is designed to help you backup, recycle, and rescue your data. Their latest software product, Picture Rescue, follows on the heels of Data Rescue, but is specifically designed to recover your photos and movie clips from digital camera media cards.

Picture Rescue's stated capabilities are:

- 1) Recover Deleted pictures from your digital camera media (single delete or delete all functions)
- 2) Recover pictures from a reformatted digital media card (except XD cards found in Olympus and Fuji cameras)
- 3) Recover pictures from a corrupt digital media card (one that is no longer mounting or showing up when plugged in to the camera or media reader)



Its user interface is similar to their other products, which use the brushed metal theme. Unfortunately, that means that it is ugly and sometimes hinders usability. The Image Recovery Window, for example, has a standard resize graphic on the bottom-right corner. Yet resizing the window horizontally doesn't increase the available width of the window, it simply increases the amount of brushed metal on the right border. Also, when choosing where to save

recovered images, the Save dialog box doesn't include a New Folder button, nor does it respond to the standard Command-N keystroke to create a new folder.

These cosmetic issues wouldn't matter so much if the program performed its true purpose well. Unfortunately, I found Picture Rescue's behavior erratic and sometimes problematic.

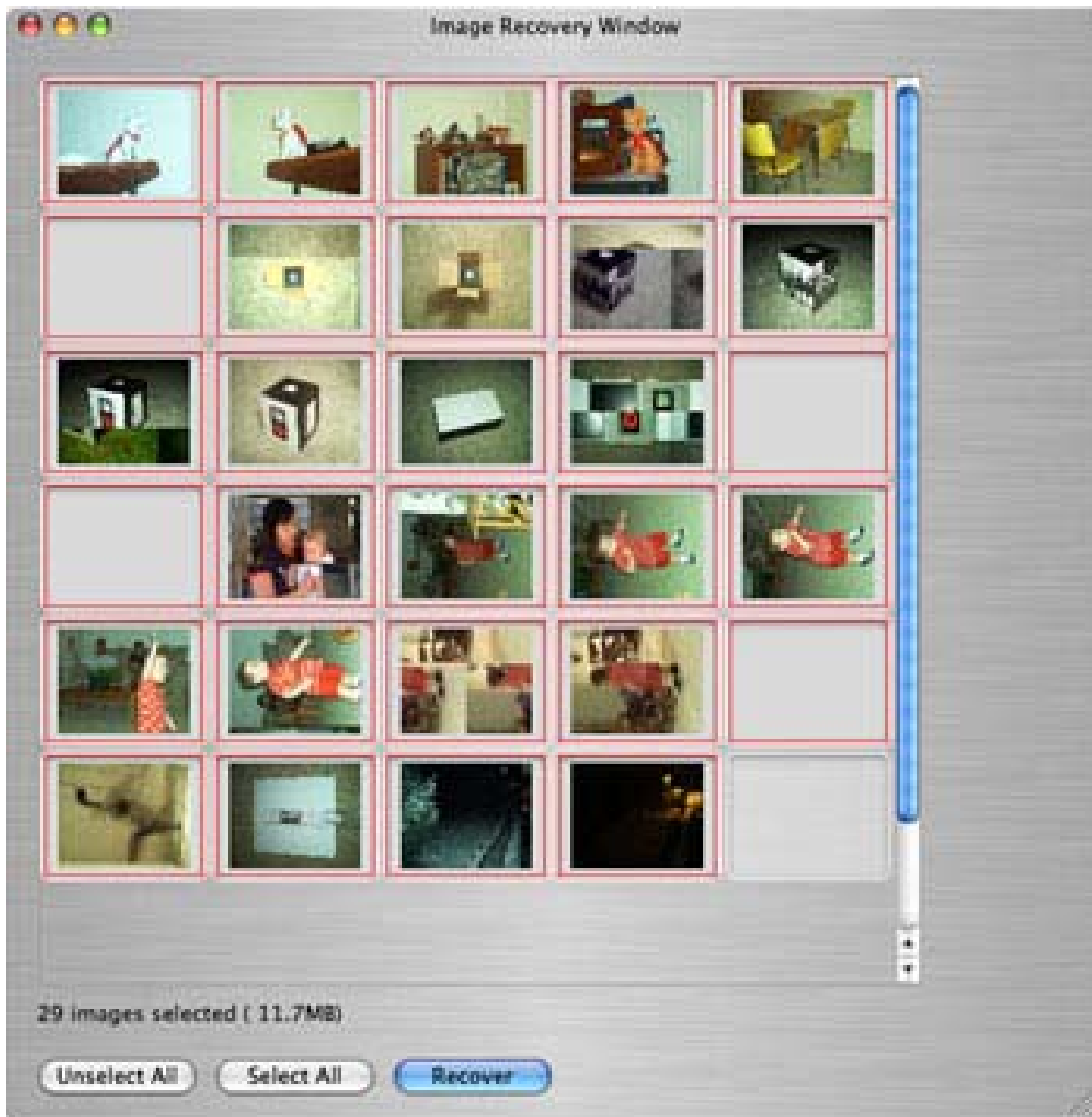
I took a few pictures with my digital camera on a 16MB CompactFlash card and deleted a couple within the camera's interface. I then connected the camera to my iBook and Image Capture launched (my default setting) and I was able to download (without deleting) the remaining images.

After quitting Image Capture, I launched Picture Rescue, which successfully saw and identified my HP PhotoSmart 318 camera and the mounted CompactFlash card. But a scan revealed no images in the Image Recovery Window, even the two non-deleted images on the card that were visible even in the Finder.

I repeated the process by taking a few more photos and deleting a couple of them. Picture Rescue gave me the same results, except that now it wouldn't quit successfully. A Force Quit command killed the application but now the card would not unmount from the Finder, stating that it was still in use.

There is a preference setting to "copy media to disk before scanning" that is unchecked by default. Checking it increased the speed of the scan immensely. It also provided the first successful results. The Image Recovery Window showed 29 images, totaling 11.7MB. What I found odd was that it didn't include some of the photos I had just taken and deleted. But it did include some photos that were almost two years old.






After completely reformatting the card in the camera, I scanned the card again with Picture Rescue and got the exact same results, which proves that the reformatting done by the camera is not definitive and that if you ever accidentally reformatted the card, Picture Rescue could be quite useful.

Although the program's main function is to recover pictures, it also has the capability to securely erase all the data on the card. That is a useful feature if you're concerned about someone else recovering the data on your digital media card despite having formatted it on the camera.

The erratic results I encountered may not be Picture Rescue's fault and may instead be due to the digital media card or the camera. But considering how many different types of cameras, cards, and connection protocols are available, it's impossible to predict how well the program will work for others.

I recommend that anyone interested in purchasing Picture Rescue first download the evaluation copy from Prosoft's Web site and test it out with their digital camera media card(s). If the test drive works for you, and you expect that you'll accidentally delete photos from a digital media card or need to recover someone else's, a purchase may be well worth your money.

## Voyager III part 2 - SpyPilot - Controlling Your Telescope Reviewed by Ted Bade

 <b>Carina Software</b>	Astronomy Software	Voice: 925 838-0695
	Telescope Control	FAX: 925 838-0535
	Equatorial Mounts	

Carina Software  
 602 Morninghome Road,  
 Danville, CA 94526. 925 838-0695 Fax: 925 838-0535 <mailto:sales@carinasoft.com> <http://www.carinasoft.com/>  
 (click on Voyager III in sidebar for trial version.) \$120 USD  
 (Comes as part of the Voyager III package.) **Requirements:**  
 System 10.1 or later. System 10.2 or later is strongly recommended. A 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. You will also need a Telescope with electronic controls and a Serial-to-USB adaptor. **Experience needed:** You need to know what type of telescope control you have and perhaps a little about serial communications.



**Strengths:** Makes controlling an electronic telescope a lot easier. Coupled with Voyager III you gains loads of information. Works natively in Mac OS X.

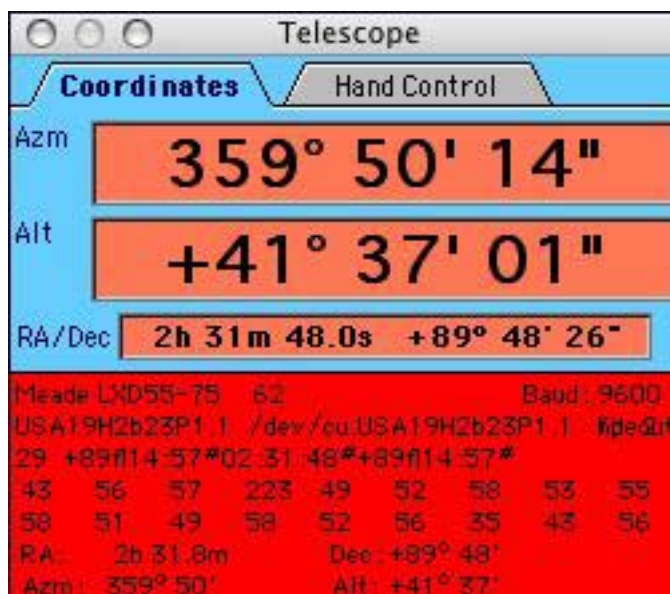
**Weaknesses:** Confirmation text window shows up blank, Red display shifts to full bright if changed, Adjusting telescope setups drives the display down. Manual slewing controls didn't work with my setup. Doesn't seem finished.

The Voyager III package, which I reviewed last month (Part 1) includes a program called *Sky Pilot*, designed to control an electronically controlled telescope. Sky Pilot will interact with most computer controlled telescopes. This is important because such telescopes ship with Windows-based controls only.

What makes this particular version of Sky Pilot interesting is it is the first version that actually controls a telescope in Mac OS X natively. Previous versions of Sky Pilot worked in the classic environment, or Mac OS 9. Since all telescopes use the older serial interface for computer controls and since all new Macs come with USB ports, you will need a USB to serial converter (which is not included In the package). There are a variety of these converters, some with a single serial port and some with dual ports.

I tested the telescope control using a KeySpan 19HS USB to serial converter. This is an inexpensive single serial port unit. My telescope is a relatively new Meade LXD75, which was released only a month or so before this version of Sky Pilot. Finally, I tested the controls using both my G5 desktop and my G4 Powerbook.

The list of telescopes supported by Sky Pilot is extensive. As with the Voyager III manual, the manual for Sky Pilot doesn't appear to have been updated to be in synch with the actual software. While the manual lists a wide variety of older telescope controls, it didn't include my new Meade Telescope. To my relief, it was listed as a choice in the actual software. Sky Pilot will also work with Encoder systems that can be added to a telescope mount that did not include computer driven motors.

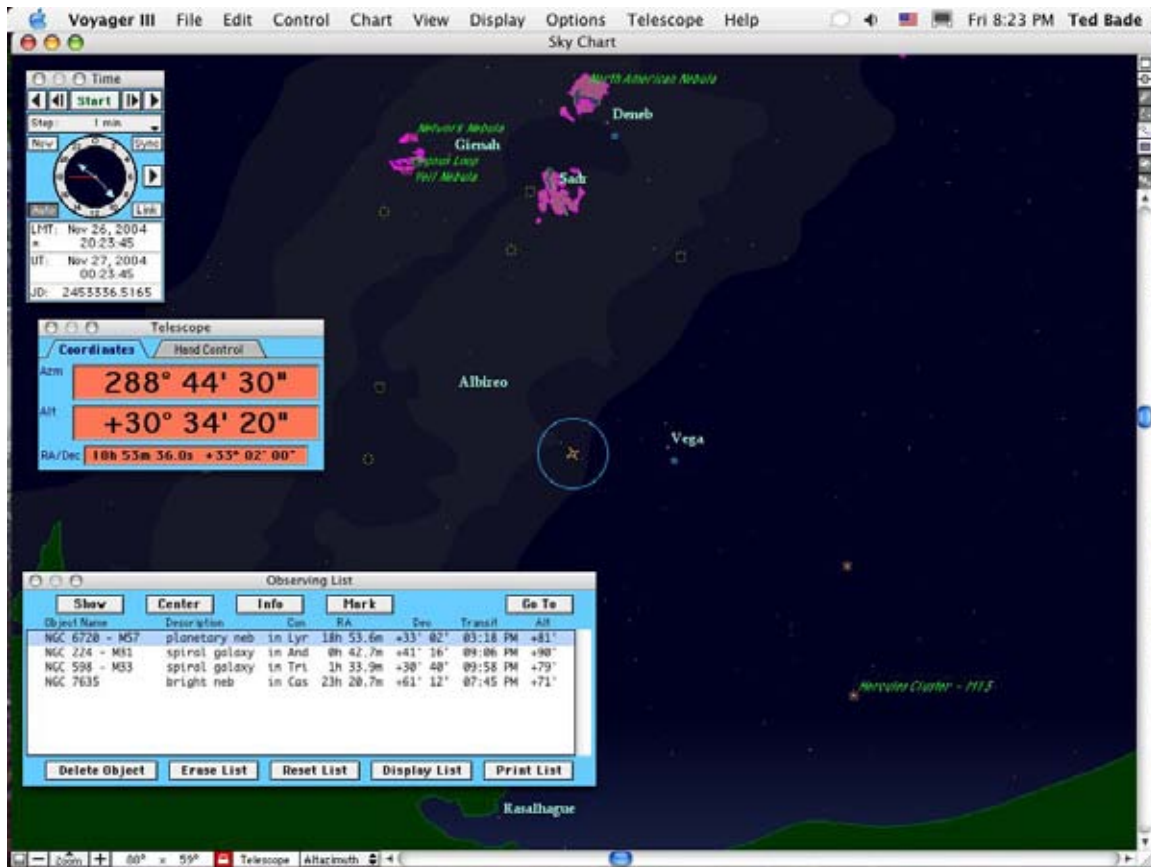


Establishing a connection to the telescope can be a chore, although not impossible. In an ideal world, you make the connection, select the correct telescope control and bingo, it works. But this doesn't always happen. When the process fails, you might need to delve into the archaic world of serial communication and attempt to speak to your telescope control in a language it understands.

One method of checking if you have a connection at all is to check with a terminal program. In our current graphical interface world of computers, few people remember the days of dealing with early data and interface connections. The voyager III CD includes a Mac OS 9 version of Zterm, a once very popular terminal application for Macs. But you will need to run Classic to run this version. If you need to use this program, I would suggest finding the beta of the Mac OS X version Zterm, which works fine. I am surprised that the Carina didn't provide this Mac OS X version as well.

The Sky Pilot manual provides information about how to connect to the telescope controls. If you run into problems, definitely read this section, it can be a lot of help. It even provides a few of the standard command strings needed to communicate with the controls if you use a terminal program. Additionally, the Sky Pilot software also offers a "Test" mode, which opens a display below the telescope control window that actually displays information coming from the telescope control. This can be useful to help troubleshoot the connection problem. Hopefully this will be all you need when you make the connection.

It is probably how the software was written, but it is really odd that when one chooses a telescope control in the Sky Pilot menu, it doesn't set up all the aspects of communicating with that particular telescope control. For instance, my Meade LXD75 comes with a German equatorial mount and apparently needs to use the "high precision" coordinate format. As far as I know, any LXD75 has these requirements, and I imagine other telescope controls are similar in that when you buy a particular model, they function with the same requirements. However, with the Sky Pilot software, one has to not only select the model of the telescope control, but also the type of mount, and the coordinate format. Perhaps doing it this way gives more control to owners of homemade systems. I would have been a lot happier if, when I selected my telescope model, everything was set up properly for that model. Isn't that called, plug and play?



Once you have figured out the settings for your particular telescope, you need to save a telescope setup file that you later load when using it. This setup file is saved and loaded manually. Be aware however, some of the setup data isn't saved in this file. For instance, the high precision setting required by my telescope was not saved in this setup file. So every time I use the telescope I must load the setup file and select high precision.

Once the connection to the telescope is properly established, you are ready to search the heavens for interesting things to see. Since the Voyager III software displays a simulation of the sky at your point of observation, it acts as a ready reference to what is in the sky. You can also use its ability to search for objects to help locate something you are interested in observing.

To use Sky Pilot you need to set up and align your telescope first. Once this is done, you connect the cables and turn on the telescope control. The telescope tells Sky Pilot where it is pointed, and this is passed along to Voyager III, which then centers on this location. A set of cross hairs shows the telescope's position in the Voyager III display.

For the newbie observer, the Voyager III display really helps. Alignment of a telescope isn't always perfect. A beginner might ask the telescope to show a particular sky object, the telescope swings to where it thinks the object should be, but not exactly to the correct position. Since the beginner has little or no idea of where the item should really be, or perhaps even what expect to see, it could get really frustrating. Using the Voyager software package can help in several ways.

First, Voyager III provides a map of your sky. You can see on the voyager III screen where the telescope is supposed to be pointing, what bright stars are near it and how they are positioned. Using these visual navigation clues makes it easier to adjust the telescope to actually see the object. Secondly, Voyager III provides images of some objects. While these images are really nice ones from very expensive telescopes, the beginner will get the idea of what the object should look like. For instance, when using my telescope's "go to" feature to view the Bubble Nebula, I had no idea what to expect. So when I saw a cluster of stars in a roughly bubble pattern, I thought I had it. However, Voyager III had an image of this nebula, which looks like a soap bubble. Apparently I didn't observe the right thing.



The ability to improve the telescope's alignment is another useful feature. If you didn't get the alignment perfect when you set up the telescope using its built-in controls, you can improve the alignment using the Sky Pilot program. Once you are observing an object or star and have it centered, you can click on the "align" button on this object's information page. This tells Voyager III that the telescope is aligned with the object.

Another nice feature of using the software is planning ahead. You can plan your night's observations during the day by setting Voyager III to the time you intend to observe. Then look at the sky and select a set of objects you are interested in observing. Voyager III lets you select an object and add it to an observation list. Which you use while observing. The observation list includes a "go to" button, allowing you to easily point your telescope toward the objects in your list.

While Sky Pilot and Voyager III worked well, there were some bugs. When observing the night skies, you don't want to look at a bright display. The telescope menu allows you to choose to display the screen in "red mode", which makes the screen visible using red light. (Red light doesn't affect your night vision as much). However, if a screen saver comes on the red goes away. Also if you change how bright or how dim the red display is (Voyager III offers 4 levels of brightness), the screen flashes to normal before the change occurs.

Knowing where you are is important. The Voyager III display doesn't display cardinal points unless you are moving your point of view. It would be really nice to glance at the screen and see it is pointing North or Northwest, or whatever.

Telescope controls worked well, but there were a few problems. You can set up Voyager III so that when you double click on an object, it will slew the telescope to that object. A confirmation window pops up to make sure you really wanted to do this. However, in the version I had, this pop up window had no text. Luckily, pressing return selects yes (or Okay) and the process continues. Also, whenever I changed anything about the telescope control set up, the Voyager III window aligned itself to a position looking down at a 45 degree angle, not any place to point a telescope!

With my particular setup, the ability to manually slew the telescope didn't work. Even though the buttons were



there, selecting them with the mouse didn't do much of anything. I didn't find this much of a problem, because when I needed to slew the telescope, I was standing up looking into the eyepiece, so the hand controller was a lot more accessible than the PowerBook.

Over all, the Sky Pilot aspect of the Voyager III software is very useful. It has a few bugs and a Carina representative told me that they are being worked on. Hopefully an update will be available that corrects them. However, Voyager III is still a good choice of software both as a sky simulator and as a telescope control program. It does make observing easier, provides a lot more information than the telescope does and using it while observing is better than trying to read a book while observing! I liked this software and suggest anyone with a computer-controlled telescope give it a try.



## Xirc 0.9.5 Reviewed by Julie Meier

**Author:** Gian Luca

Cannata <mailto:aquaticx@aquaticx.com> <http://www.aquaticx.com> **Download:** <http://www.aquaticx.com/downloads.htm> **Price:** \$20 USD **Requirements:** Mac OS X 10.2.8 or later and QuickTime 6.0 with a compatible Mic or DV Input S (only for DCC Audio Chat).

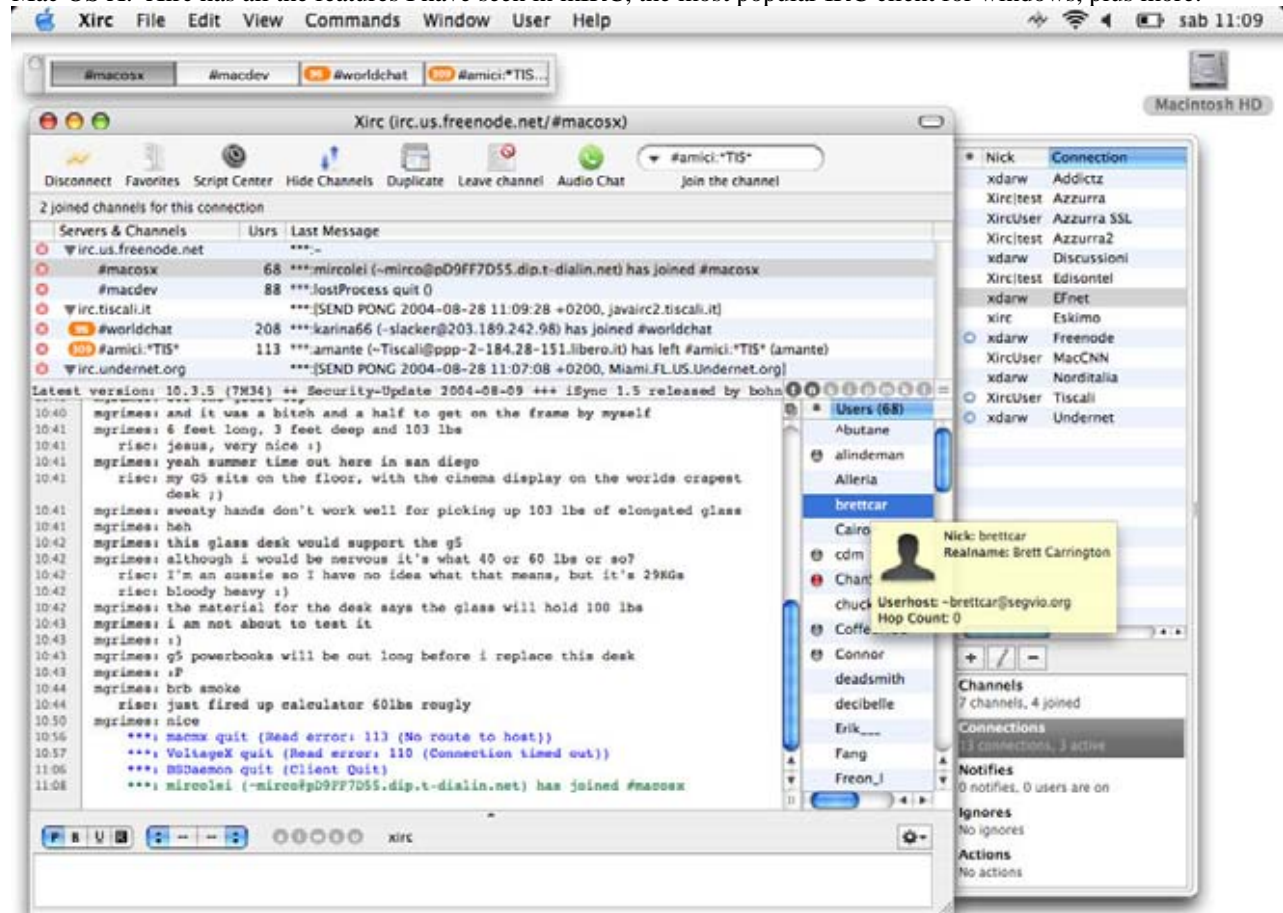


**Strengths:** Nice user friendly interface, tons of features

**Weaknesses:** Lack of help documentation, features might be too much for users who just want the basics.

### Introduction

Internet Relay chat or IRC started in 1988. It is a tool for users all around the world to communicate with each other through text on their computers. There are several different IRC clients available for Mac. Many of which don't compare featurewise to the IRC clients for windows. Xirc is a full-featured IRC chat client by Gian Luca Cannata for Mac OS X. Xirc has all the features I have seen in mIRC, the most popular IRC client for windows, plus more.



## **Installation**

Installation is as simple as any other Mac software installs. Basically you create a Xirc folder in your applications folder, then you click on the Xirc archive and extract all the files to the Xirc folder. Then you are done.

## **Look, Feel, and Usage**

Xirc has a user friendly interface that makes it simple to use even for those who are new to IRC. Gian has included every command and action imaginable by the click of a mouse. so that you don't have to type out the commands yourself. Underlining, changing colors and making the font bold are as easy as hitting a button.

The interface setup is very organized, unlike some other IRC clients I have tried. At the top you have your button icons that allow you to connect, go to script center, leave a channel, duplicate a window, audio chat and so forth. Then below is your main window. To the right is a list of users in the channel and their addresses. Right clicking on a nickname brings up all the typical commands you would expect to see, like whois, info, query, ignore plus a couple extras including audio chat and secure dcc chat. Above the main window you can have a channel list or you can hide it. I like having it open because I can easily see what channels I am in and how many lines of text have gone by in each channel since I last had the channel open.

If you click on preferences a panel pops up with button icons all laid out nice and organized so that the user can configure things with ease. I must admit I really like this. I didn't find myself having to click on all kinds of things trying to figure out what's where and under what.

Also included in Xirc is a spelling checker. The spelling checker always comes in handy when chatting! If the word you are looking to spell is not in English, don't worry. Gian has included several different languages for your convenience.

Something I have not seen in an IRC client before that Xirc has, is when you are in active channels and minimize Xirc, you will see a number pop up and the number will change. That number just tells how many lines of text have gone by in a channel since you last checked the channel. Also when Xirc is open and you have the channels list open at the top, it shows the number of lines that have gone by in each window that you are not currently in.

Most things in Xirc are quite simple and easy to figure out but when there was something I could not figure out I went up to help at the top. I found out that there was no help available. I hope this is something they are adding in the future. I was able to get the help I needed from the Xirc webpage for now.

## **Conclusion**

I have gone from being a Windows user to a Mac user and I was having trouble finding any IRC client s as good as mIRC with all if its features. I believe I have found that IRC client. Xirc has all the features I need and more. Gian thought of about everything to put in this IRC client. With a few updates, Xirc will be hard to beat. Good job!

## macCompanion Media Kit

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

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

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

### Statistical Analysis

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

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

### Advertising with *macCompanion*

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

### Site Ad Rate

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

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

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

### PDF Ad Rates

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

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

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

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

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Well that's it for this issue and this year. Please come back again!